Democracy and Transgender

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Aims and objectives

- Aims and objectives: To explore different forms of democracy in relation to trans* in Europe, as follows:
  - electoral democracy
  - participative democracy

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Electoral democracy

- Literature on trans and electoral democracy is in its infancy

- Different electoral systems may affect the election of trans* parliamentary candidates

- However, the nature of the political party may be more important
Participatory democratic mechanisms may form a fruitful means of trans*political engagement.

For example, in Spain and in the UK, various consultative structures are in place.

However, there are difficulties with participative democracy (e.g. under-resourcing, ‘loudest voices’, co-option, wider social context).
“it feels really quite problematic trying to get funds, simply from the fact that the funds in [region of] Wales are all focused very much on one little area, and you can’t really run a group, apart from the problems that [interviewee’s partner] mentioned, because we are quite a small minority, you probably wouldn’t get more than sort of, I mean we’ve got sixty registered members, we occasionally get others who come and drop in, erm, but as I say if you split that up in about six, you’ve got about ten members per area [laughs]” (Trans Group Organiser, Wales, in Richardson and Monro 2012)
Concluding thoughts

• There is a need for more research about trans* people and democracy.

• Trans people need to be represented politically – in both descriptive and substantive ways.

• Trans* has implications beyond the trans* populations – for example, if binary gender quotas are in place, what happens with non-binary trans* people?


• Grodzka, A. (2013) ‘As the world’s only transgender MP, I want to ensure our voices are heard’ Available at: http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/may/17/transgender-mp-voices-heard
