

Measuring Representation at the Intersection of Race and Gender

FMPI: Frank's Made-up Privilege Index

INTRODUCTION

Diversity is often touted as an ideal to strive for in any organization, whether on college campuses, in the workplace, or within a professional network like the Global Shapers. There is a growing understanding that not only is diverse representation important in spaces where important decisions are being made, but an increase in diversity also offers divergent experiences that fundamentally strengthen the quality of those decisions and work being done.

Yet when promoting diversity, even in common measurements such as race and gender, there runs a risk of [tokenism](#). Looking at our own membership of the New York Hub of Global Shapers, we run the risk of tokenism if while in the pursuit of better gender and racial participation, we end up with more white women and men of color, and continue the injustice of denying women of color a viable presence. We were eager to explore these ideas in our own membership, so in 2015 we conducted a “hub census” which revealed that our Hub was comprised nearly two-thirds by men, and over two-thirds white.

We wanted to know what would happen if we applied this same analysis to public bodies such as The US Senate, The US House of Representatives, and CEOs of Fortune500 companies. Here's what we found.

OUR PROCESS

We wanted a simple metric that would capture this intersection of gender and race, with an eye towards better inclusion and representation. The result is a measure we call “Frank's Made-up Privilege Index” (FMPI), which is calculated by dividing the number of women of color by the number of white men of a population. You can explore the results of our Hub analyses in [2017](#) and [2019](#). Here is how the FMPI is calculated:

$$FMPI = \frac{\text{total number of women of color}}{\text{total number of white men}}$$

From there we got the idea: what would happen if we evaluated public bodies with FMPI? We then analyzed the FMPI of the 2018 US Congress, as well as the CEOs of Fortune 500 companies.

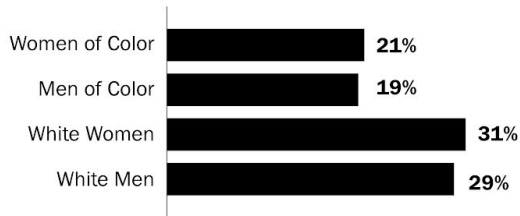
First, we obtained a list of all of the members of the US Senate, House of Representatives, and CEOs of Fortune 500 companies. Next we assigned a value of “1” (“0” if no) to the category(s) each member would fall into: Woman, Person of Color, Woman of Color, and White Man. After inputting the raw data we aggregated the values for each category. Lastly, we divided the total number of ‘Women of Color’ by the total number of ‘White Men’ to calculate the FMPI Index Value. The data for Congress can be broken down by party affiliation and the Fortune 500 CEOs can be broken down into industry as well for further granularity. We then compare these numbers to the FMPI of the United States’ population at large, which offers a benchmark at what equal representation would be. **You can view our data [here](#).**

We recognize that gender is a spectrum, however for the purposes of this study we are using binary gender terms. While this leaves out many people who identify as trans, queer, fluid, or other non-binary identities, we’ve done so in order to focus on the dominance of cisgender men in positions of power. The criteria used for gender is based on the gender perceived or the self-identification of each individual. The criteria used for race is based on the modern constructs of race in American contexts, which is of course imperfect. For consistency sake, European groups, including those who historically were discriminated against, would fall under “white” (Irish, Italian, Polish, Jewish, Russian etc.) Non-white would include those of indigenous/native (including Hispanic/Latino), African, Arab, multiracial, as well as Central-, South-,Southeast- and East Asian. While these identity group lines are imperfect, and possibly perpetuate the narratives we seek to overcome, it is necessary to use these constructs to take a frank look at representation in bodies of economic and political power.

OUR FINDINGS

What we find is telling. While the FMPI for the US at large is .688, none of the bodies analyzed remotely reflected similar representation. Beginning with the House of Representatives, we find an FMPI of .107, which demonstrates that women of color are nearly underrepresented by two thirds, while white men are overrepresented by almost two and have times the general population. In the Senate the disparity is even greater, with an FMPI of .054. This means that within the Senate women of color are underrepresented by over 80%, while white men are overrepresented by a factor of two. Our most troubling finding is the FMPI of Fortune500 CEOs, which has an FMPI of .002. This means among CEOs, there were less than 1% of the women of color we’d expect from the population, while white men were overrepresented threefold what would be expected.

U.S. POPULATION (ACCORDING TO CENSUS)

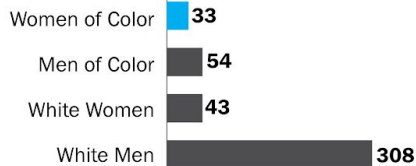


0.688

FMPI

According to the 2018 U.S. Census 60.7% of people are white alone and 50.8% are female

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

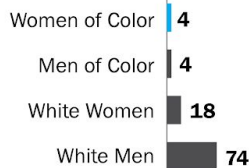


0.107

FMPI

Out of 448 House of Representatives there were 33 women of color.

U.S. SENATE



0.054

FMPI

Out of 100 Senators there were 4 women of color.

FORTUNE 500 COMPANY CEOS



0.002

FMPI

Out of 500 CEOs there was 1 woman of color.

NEXT STEPS

There is a wealth of historic data that is still waiting to be analyzed through the FMPI. Our next steps include taking a look at the congressional and Fortune 500 demographic makeup over the past 10, 20, 50, 100 years. This extended analysis will be toward two ends - to first quantify who has historically maintained power in the US, and then analyze how far we have actually come in improving inclusion in the recent past. Power is clearly still maintained by one group - we want to know how much the needle is moving.

HOW YOU CAN TAKE ACTION

While gender and racial parity might be difficult to achieve within professional networks like the Global Shapers, we strive to improve where we stand. The metric might not yield exact results but they are measurable and easy to calculate. When evaluating the FMPI results of your organization, we believe that the closer it is to that of the population you are sampling from,

whether your local community, region, or the US general public, that the improved representation will also contribute to better outcomes, as you better leverage the knowledge, skills, and experiences of the full community available toward your organization's mission.

To help you get started, we have created a toolkit [here](#). It includes prefilled calculations and classifications to make it easier for you to get results in minutes.

The FMPI is replicable because of its simplicity. Our hope is that you take this metric and apply it to your own organizations and workplaces. Feel free to share your findings with us as well. We'd love to add your contributions to our dataset. Our priority is to encourage other organizations to do this analysis and evaluate where they can do a better job in promoting diversity and inclusion in their ranks.

This research and report was compiled by Global Shapers of the New York Hubs with the help of Adegboyega Asanpaola, Anjelica Battiste, Betty Chang, Frank Fredericks, Marvin Mathew, Jasmine Mbadugha, Marianne Hoeft, Samir Goel, Yukari Yamahiro, and Nan Zhang.