

Titel:

Gender and descriptive representation in the 2019-2024 European Parliament

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Kurzzusammenfassung

The European Parliament is considered an equality champion almost since its first elections in 1979. A growing number of female MEPs testified to their political competence in an institution that has become both more powerful and gender-sensitive. This chapter demonstrates the shift towards parity – with today 40.6% of female MEPs. It examines differences in descriptive representation among Member States and party groups and how current changes are mirrored in intra-EP leadership positions. It concludes with a brief treatment of potential policy implications during the new 2019-2020 EP term.

Schlagworte

Gender, descriptive representation, substantive representation, leadership, gender equality policies

1. Introduction

The European Parliament (EP) “is heralded as one of the most gender-equal elected bodies in the world” (Fortin-Rittberger & Rittberger 2014, p. 496). It is considered an equality champion almost since its first elections in 1979, when Holocaust survivor Simone Veil became its first female president. It has regularly registered a higher share of female members (MEPs) than Member States’ national parliaments (in short NPs) – originally owed to the *second order* character of EP elections. Its lack of real power made candidacy less interesting for male politicians, inducing parties to recruit women. A growing number of female MEPs testified to their political competence in an institution that, ironically, has become both more powerful and gender-sensitive over time (Abels 2019), rendering EP elections salient. The 1979 elections raised the share of female MEPs to 16%; the “critical mass” threshold (Childs & Krook 2009)

of 30% was achieved in 1999. Twenty years later, it entered the *gender balance zone*: today, 304 of 748 MEPs (40.6%) are female.¹

Research on women's descriptive (quantitative) representation in parliaments builds on two different models: *Supply-side models* study eligible candidates and their socio-demographic characteristics; *demand-side models* examine recruitment patterns, including nomination procedures, electoral rules, etc. Political cultures, ideologies, institutions and party gatekeepers matter, as do gender quotas and their impact on recruitment practices and electoral success. These factors also influence EP elections, notwithstanding its peculiar institutional environment. This chapter demonstrates the EP's shift towards greater parity. It examines changes in descriptive representation among Member States as well as differences among party groups and how these changes are mirrored in intra-EP leadership positions. I conclude with a brief treatment of potential implications during the new EP term.

2. Differences among Member States

While the share of female MEPs reached a record high (40.6%), the average rate in NPs still falls below 30%. The “national-EP gender gap” (Fortin-Rittberger & Rittberger 2014, p. 498) follows a consistent pattern (Figure 1).

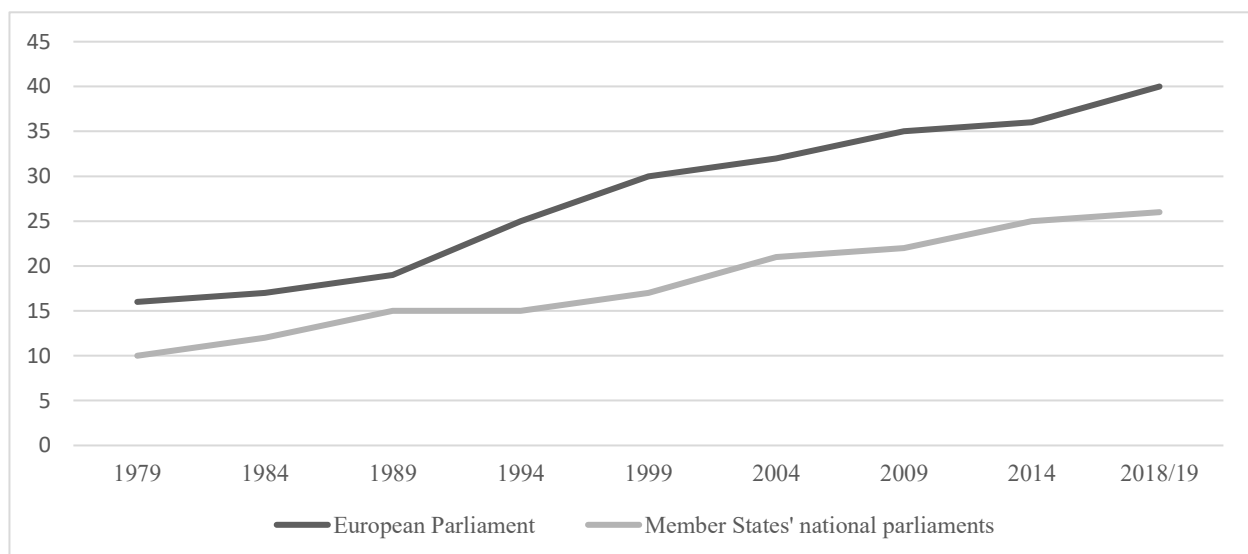


Figure 1: Women in EP and in national parliaments

Source: EP 2019c, 1; information for 2019 compiled by the author

¹ This “zone” ranges from 40-60% for women. As of this writing, three seats held by Catalan separatists remain vacant. When the UK leaves the EU, a further reshuffling will occur affecting the gender balance. Without the 34 UK female MEPs, women's share will drop to 38.2% among 705 MEPs, though some new MEPs benefiting from the redistribution of 27 seats to other Member States might be female.

Why is this the case? What explains cross-country variation? Electoral rules are generally the same for both national and EP elections, yet the institutional context influences recruitment patterns. Vallance and Davies (1986) have argued that the lack of EP powers had led to less competition from male candidates in the intra-party recruitment process. Yet, due to treaty changes the EP today resembles more a full-fledged parliament endowed with substantial legislative powers. We can assume that its empowerment has affected intra-party competition and recruitment strategies.

Electoral systems matter. Proportional representation (PR), utilised in EP elections, is more *women-friendly*: it is easier to combine with quotas, allowing women candidates to be placed strategically on party lists, ideally using a zipper system. Since the 2000s, compulsory legislative quotas have become an important element of electoral reforms (Celis et al. 2011), supplanting previous voluntary party quotas. In 2014, eight Member States had legislative quotas, rising to 11 by 2019, added to 10 Member States with party quotas: a total of 21 of 28 Member States have some kind of gender quota in place. But not all quotas look alike: different thresholds (33-50%), candidate placement (ranking) rules and sanctions (e.g. financial penalties, rejection of lists) have an impact and explain their dissimilar outcome.² National quotas do apply also to EP elections.³ They had an impact on the 2014 EP outcomes (Buzogány 2015, pp. 362-4), but the degree of change varies; differences between quota and non-quota countries are, on average, smaller than one would expect (EP 2013, p.11). Indeed, some states *without* legislative quotas lead the pack at national and EU level: Sweden (party quotas) and Finland (no quotas). Beyond electoral rules, national contexts, political cultures and institutional factors matter (Lühiste & Kenny 2016; Fortin-Rittberger & Rittberger 2014, 2015; Xydias 2016).

In 2019, the overall share of female MEPs rose by 4.4%, again displaying strong variation among Member States (Table 1). Women's share increased in 18 national delegations, ranging between 2.7% in Italy and 19% in Hungary. This is all the more striking considering electoral gains by right-wing parties, which usually adhere to traditionalist gender roles and often

2 Women's share in NPs ranges between 18.5% in Croatia (HR, despite a 40% quota), and 39.6% in France (50% quota). Greece, has a low number of female MEPs (23.8%) and in the Hellenic parliament *Vouli tōn Ellinōn* only 18.7% women – despite a formal 33.3% quota; it lacks both sanctions and placement rules.

3 In 2018 a reform of the European Electoral Act – setting the framework for EP elections in all Member States – was discussed. The EP sought to introduce gender quotas explicitly for EP elections, a proposal rejected by the Council of the EU (EP 2019d, p. 9).

misogynist assumptions. In others, the share of female MEPS decreased by 23.1% in trail-blazer Finland (yet, still parity).

Table 1: Female MEPs by country, 2014 and 2019, and compared to national parliament

	Electoral system	Number of MEPs (n)	2014 election		2019 election		Difference 2014-2019	Lower house	2019 EP-NP
			women (n)	women in %	women (n)	women in %	in %	last national election	difference (in %)
Austria	PV	18	7	38.9	9	50.0	+11.1	37.2	+12.8
Belgium	PV	21	7*	33.3	8*	38.1	+4.8	42.7	-4.6
Bulgaria	PV	17	3	17.7	5	29.4	+11.7	25.8	+3.6
Croatia	PV	11	6*	54.6	4*	36.4	-18.2	20.5	+15.9
Cyprus	PV	6	1	16.7	0	0	-16.7	17.9	-17.9
Czech Repub.	PV	21	5	23.8	7	33.3	+9.5	22.5	+10.8
Denmark	PV	13	4	30.8	6	46.3	+15.4	39.1	+7.2
Estonia	PV	6	1	16.7	2	33.3	+16.6	29.7	+3.6
Finland	PV	13	10	76.9	7	53.8	-23.1	47.0	+6.8
France	CL	74	32*	43.2	37*	50.0	+6,8	39.7	+10.3
Germany	CL	96	35	36.5	35	36.5	0,0	30.9	+5.6
Greece	PV	21	5	23.8	5*	23.8	0.0	20.6	+3.2
Hungary	CL	21	4	19.1	8	38.1	+19.0	12.6	+25.5
Ireland	STV	11	5	45.5	5	45.5	0.0	22.2	+22.3
Italy	PV	73	28	38.4	30*	41.1	+2.7	35.7	+5.4
Latvia	PV	8	3	37.5	4	50.0	+12.5	31.0	+19.0
Lithuania	PV	11	2	18.2	3	27.3	+9.1	21.3	+6.0
Luxembourg	PV	6	2	33.3	3*	50.0	+16.7	25.0	+25.0
Malta	STV	6	3	50.0	3	50.0	0.0	11.9	+48.1
Netherlands	PV	26	10	38.5	13	50.0	+11.5	36.7	+13.3
Poland	PV	51	13*	25.0	18*	35.3	+10.3	29.1	+6.2
Portugal	CL	21	6*	28.6	10*	47.6	+19.0	35.7	+11.9
Romania	CL	32	9*	28.3	7*	21.8	-6.5	20.7	+1.1
Slovakia	PV	13	4	30.8	2	15.4	-15.4	20.0	-4.6
Slovenia	PV	8	3*	37.5	4*	50.0	+12.5	24.4	+25.6
Spain	CL	54	26*	48.2	24*	47.1†	-1.1	47.4	-0.3
Sweden	PV	20	10	50.0	11	55.0	+5.0	47.3	+2.7
UK	CL	73	28	38.9	34	46.6	+7.7	32.0	+14.6
Total		751	272	36.1	304	40.6	4.5		

Note: STV: Single Transferable Vote; PV: Preferential Voting; CL: Closed lists

*legislative quota in place

†three seats are still vacant; thus, percentage is based on 51 taken seats.

Sources: <https://data.ipu.org/women-ranking?month=7&year=2019>; <https://election-results.eu/mep-gender-balance/2019-2024/>; http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-07/18/c_138235241.htm, EP 2019b, 1; Source: IPU/1 July 2019; data for Greece 18 July 2019; compiled by the author

National delegations of 15 Member States have entered the *gender balance zone*; seven have reached gender parity. Again, patterns differ, since some (Latvia, Slovenia) are located in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), often seen as a difficult region with fewer women in NPs (Chiva, 2018). The established pattern still applies, featuring the Scandinavian countries as the best performers, followed by certain Western European countries (France, Netherlands, Luxembourg), and a mixed picture for CEE states: whereas Poland and Hungary register increases, Romania, Bulgaria, Lithuania, and Slovakia are among those with a female MEP share below 30%. Greece and Cyprus are clear laggards. Many national delegations are small, however: Half possess fewer than 20 and six have only 6 to 8 MEPs. Thus, a single MEP can make a significant percentage-point difference.

The national-EP gender gap persists as of 2019: Among 24 delegations, the female share of MEPs is higher than in NPs. In Hungary the EP proportion (in percentage points) is three times larger than the NP share, and almost five times bigger in Malta. Even among the best performers in Scandinavia, the share (in percentage points) of female MEPs is larger.

Equally important is the trend towards increasing partisan fragmentation. The new EP hosts 184 national parties (232 in 8th term); they average 4.1 MEPs per party, though a majority (110 parties) only have one or two MEPs. The rise of *single-seat parties* owes not only to small national delegations but also to the fracturing of party systems in larger Member States with low or no electoral thresholds. This fragmentation has gender implications. Given the high number of male normed mini-parties seated in the EP, parity will be difficult to achieve, as the German example illustrates: The 2019 EP election saw a record number of parties (40) running a record number of candidates – 479 (34.7%) of 1,380 were women (LpB, 2019). As a result, and given the lack of an electoral threshold, 96 German seats were allocated among 14 parties. The female MEP segment (n=35; 36.5%) is slightly better than their total share among the candidates: 22 women, a majority, represent leftist parties (Table 2). Compared to their limited presence in the Bundestag, the high proportion of female FDP and the CSU MEPs is striking.

Table 2: Female German MEPs in major parties and their EP political group affiliation

	Linke	SPD	Greens	FDP	CDU	CSU	AfD	Total
MEPs (n)	5	16	21	5	23	6	11	87

women (n)	3	8	11	2	5	3	2	34
women (%)	60.0	50.0	52.4	40.0	21.7	50.0	18.2	39.1
Political group	GUE/NGL	S&D	Greens/EFA	RE	EPP	EPP	ID	

Source: compiled by the author based on:

<https://www.bundeswahlleiter.de/europawahlen/2019/gewaehlte/bund-99.html#41e25380-5a49-4b6c-a682-ff29d60b353a>, accessed: 15. June 2019

Of the 96 German seats 9 are distributed among seven small non-federal parties, in which female MEPs are underrepresented (Table 3). Many were established by men, who, in turn, nominated male candidates for top-ballot slots. The conservative Family Party (Familien-Partei) did not list a single woman among its top-10 candidates.

Table 3: Female German MEPs in small parties, according to EP political group affiliation

	Familien-Partei	Freie Wähler	Piraten	ÖDP	Die Partei	Volt	Tier-schutz partei	Tota l
MEPs (n)	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	9
Woman (n)	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Pol. group	ECR	RE	Greens/EFA	Greens/EFA	Greens/EFA NI	Greens/EFA	GUE/NGL	

Source: compiled by the author based on:

<https://www.bundeswahlleiter.de/europawahlen/2019/gewaehlte/bund-99.html#41e25380-5a49-4b6c-a682-ff29d60b353a>, accessed: 15. June 2019

3. Differences across political groups

Research attests to substantial party differences. Parties displaying greater appreciation for social equality issues favour of gender equality and offer more spaces to female politicians. These are usually centre-left parties, i.e. Green, left-wing and social-democratic parties, which were among the first to introduce voluntary party quotas and which, today, widely advocate for compulsory legislative quotas. Given the surge of right-wing populist delegates in the 2019 EP, hence, the current leap into the gender-balance zone is even more surprising. In general, liberal, centre right, and especially right-wing parties are rather reluctant to introduce gender quotas. Quite noticeable in the German case, this left-right division also applies when we analyse EP candidate recruitment patterns, leading to variation in the gender balance among political groups. This pattern is quite stable, even if the number of female MEPs has grown over time among all political groups (Figure 2).

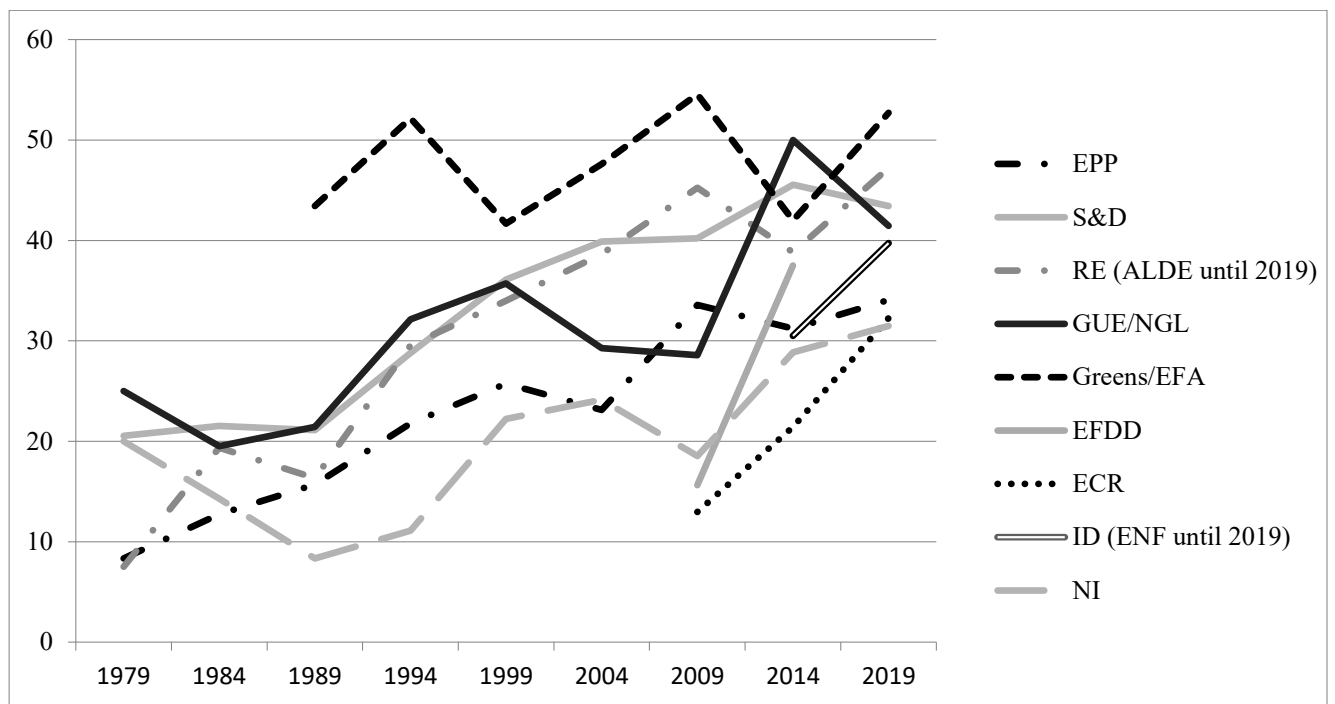


Figure 2: Gender composition by political groups, 1979-2019

Source: Kantola & Rolandsen Agustín 2019, 3; data for 2019 compiled by the author

The 2019 election results produced some reshuffling among political groups, indicative of greater fragmentation and necessitating a search for a new majority: EPP + S&D plus RE and/or Greens/EFA. The new EP has seven political groups, five of which were represented in the outgoing EP (female MEPS in brackets; data as of 29 Sept. 2019): EPP: 182 (62), S&D: 154 (68), RE: 108 (51), Greens/EFA: 74 (39), ID: 73 (29), ECR: 62 (20) and GUE/NGL: 41 (18). Identity & Democracy (ID) is a new group, combining the previous ENF and former right-wing populist EFDD members; it is the fifth largest group. The number of non-affiliated MEPs (NI) has also risen to 57 (17 women), consisting mainly of the Italian Five-Star-Movement and the new UK Brexit Party.

Not surprisingly, the share of female MEPs is greater among leftist political groups (Table 4). Some trends are nonetheless striking: First, the number of female MEPs in the GUE/NGL group, though still above average, has shrunk considerably, due to strong fragmentation (20 political parties from 14 countries); only four national delegations (Germany, Greece, Spain and France) occupy five or more seats. Small delegations are likely to be male-dominated. While the Green/EFA group is also fragmented (24 parties from 16 countries), it is dominated by the German Greens (21 seats) and the French EELV (12). In both cases zippered party or legislative quotas exist. As for the RE group, the French delegation is the largest (21 seats), where strict parity regulations also apply, and the British Liberal Democrats (17 seats) comprise

the second largest delegation. The LibDems have a 40% voluntary quota, which they *over-filled* in the EP (58.8% female MEPs). The below average performance of the EPP and ECR groups, encompassing centre-right and conservative Eurosceptic parties, is not surprising, while 39.7% females among the right-wing populist/extremist ID group is remarkable.

Table 4: Percentage of female MEPs by political group 2014 and 2019

	GUE/ NGL	S&D	Green s/ EFA	ALDE	EPP	ECR	EFDD	ENF	NI	Avera ge
2014	51.9	44.0	40.4	45.6	28.6	22.7	39.9	29.7	18.2	36.1
	GUE/ NGL	S&D	Green s/ EFA	RE	EPP	ECR	--	ID	NI	
2019	43.9	44.2	52.7	47.2	34.1	32.3		39.7	31.5	40.6
Differenc e	-8.0	+0,2	+12.3	+1.6	+5.5	+9.6		+10.0	+13.3	+4.5

Note: GUE/NGL: European United Left - Nordic Green Left; S&D: Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats; Greens/EFA: Greens/European Free Alliance; RE: Renew Europe (formerly ALDE); EPP: European People's Party; ECR: European Conservatives and Reformists; EFDD: Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy; ID: Identity and Democracy; NI: Non-attached Members

Source: EP 2019c, p. 1; <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meps>; compiled by the author, accessed: 29 September 2019

The ID figures owe to a clear quota effect (Table 5): While the Italian Lega was an all-male group (5 MEPs) in the 2014-2019 EP, today the 28 MEPs are *gender balanced*, as mandated by the 2017 Italian quota law. The French Rassemblement National also achieved gender parity as a result of compulsory national quotas. The German AfD strictly opposes quotas; again, women are less *underrepresented* (18.2%) in the EP when compared to the AfD's Bundestag caucus (10% women).

Table 5: Gender composition of the ID political group

	Lega	RN	AfD	FPÖ	Vlaams Belang	PS	SPD	DF	EKRE	total
MEPs	28	22	11	3	3	2	2	1	1	73
women (n)	15	11	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	29
women (%)	53.6	50.0	18.2	0	0	1	0	0	0	39.7

Note: RN: Rassemblement National, France; AfD: Alternative für Deutschland; FPÖ: Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs; PS: Perussuomalaiset (The Finns); SPD: Freedom and Direct Democracy, Chezia; DF: Danish People's Party; EKRE: Estonian Conservative People's Party.

Source: Compiled by the author. <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meps/>. Accessed: 10. December 2019

4. Female MEPs in intra-EP leadership positions

In sum, the trend towards gender parity is positive. This development is also mirrored in leadership positions, at least with regard to four EP leadership types: the presidency, and the chairs of political groups, standing committees and delegations, respectively. The *presidency* holds important prestige value, entailing symbolic and real powers. While equality advocates hoped that the new EP would elect a female EP president to boost symbolic representation, the new president is another male.⁴ Perhaps as compensation, the majority of vice-presidents is female, 8 of 14, (57.1%), compared to 5 of 14 (35.7%) during the 8th legislative term.

From 2014-2019, 18.2% of *political group (co-)chairs* (Table 6) were female (Ska Keller, Greens/EFA; Gabi Zimmer, GUE/NGL), a figure that has risen to 30% (GUE/NGL: Manon Aubry; S&D: Iratxe Garcí; Greens/EFA: Ska Keller) – reflecting a left-right pattern.

Table 6: Female (co-)chairs of political groups (n)

	GUE/ NGL	Greens / EFA	S&D	ALDE (RE)	EPP	ECR	EFDD	ENF/ ID	Total
8 th EP	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	2	11
female	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
9 th EP	2	2	1	1	1	2	-	1	10
female	1	1	1	0	0	0	-	0	3

Source: Compiled by the author <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meps/>. Accessed: 10. December 2019

Committees are key actors in the EP legislative process. Thus, chairpersons exercise real leadership functions. Traditionally, female MEPs – including chairs – have been assigned to less important or *soft* policy committees. During the 8th term, eleven of 22 (sub-)committees had a female chair, including some high-profile committees (Table 7). As of 2019, committee chairs are gender-balance and many vice-chairs are also women.

Table 7: Female full members in standing and sub-committees, January 2018 and July 2019

Committee	8 th term (data as of Jan 2018)			9 th term (data as of July 2019)		
	Chair w/m	Number of female MEPs (%)	Compared to EP average* (36.1%)	Chair w/m	Number of female MEPs (%)	Compared to EP average* (40.6%)
AFCO	w	24.0	--	m	21.4	--
AFET	m	20.5	--	m	29.6	--
Subcommittee DROI	m	33.3	-	w	36.7	-

⁴ The only women to have held this post were Simone Veil (1979-1982) and Nicole Fontaine (1999-2002).

Subcommittee SEDE	w	26.7	-	w	20.0	--
AGRI	m	26.1	-	m	38.3	-
BUDG	m	26.9	-	m	24.4	--
CONT	w	16.7	--	w	36.7	-
CULT	w	41.9	+	w	45.2	+
DEVE	w	39.3	+	m	46.2	+
ECON	m	21.3	--	m	21.7	--
EMPL	m	49.1	++	w	60.0	++
ENVI	w	44.9	+	m	51.3	++
FEMM	w	78.4	++	w	91.4	++
IMCO	w	40.0	+	w	42.2	+
INTA	m	43.9	+	m	47.5	+
ITRE	m	28.4	-	w	40.3	±
JURI	m	40.0	+	w	32.0	-
LIBE	m	50.0	++	m	44.1	+
PECH	m	44.4	+	m	40.7	±
PETI	w	55.6	++	w	44.1	+
REGI	w	34.9	-	m	39.5	±
TRAN	w	42.9	+	w	34.7	-
	50%			50%		

Note: * ± = deviation less than 1%; -/+ = between 1-10% deviation from average; --/++ = more than 11% deviation from average

AFCO: Constitutional Affairs; AFET: Foreign Affairs; DROI: Human Rights; SEDE: Security and Defense; AGRI: Agriculture & Rural Development; BUDG: Budgets; CONT: Budgetary Control; CULT: Culture and Education; DEVE: Development; ECON: Economic and Monetary Affairs; EMPL: Employment & Social Affairs; ENVI: Environment, Public Health & Food Safety; FEMM: Women's Rights & Gender Equality; IMCO: Internal Market & Consumer Protection; INTA: International Trade; ITRE: Industry, Research & Energy; JURI: Legal Affairs; LIBE: Civil Liberties, Justice & Home Affairs; PECH: Fisheries; PETI: Petitions; REGI: Regional Development; TRAN: Transport & Tourism, TERR: Special Committee on Terrorism

Source: EP 2018, p. 11, compiled by the autor, <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/>. Accessed: 10. December 2019

Some *women's pockets* in relation to committee memberships, however, still exist. While this is typical for CULT and FEMM memberships (almost exclusively female), it was less predictable for committees with heavier legislative loads, such as INTA, EMPL and ENVI. The most prestigious committees (AFCO, AFET, ECON) are still strongly male-dominated. Finally, 12 of 44 *delegations* were chaired by female MEPs (27.3%) between 2014 and 2019, in contrast to the newly elected EP in which 16 of 44 delegations are currently chaired by women (36.4%).

5. Conclusions

Women's descriptive representation in the EP has finally entered the gender-balance zone. Yet, gender equality goes beyond numbers and requires incorporating gendered interests and producing gender-sensitive policy output. Will descriptive representation have an impact on substantive representation in the 2019-2024 term? The short answer is: it depends. First, the relationship between representational dimensions is always complex. Gender scholars assume that a *critical mass* (more than 30%) will prove beneficial for gender-interest representation; it moreover helps to increase diversity *within* the group of women, thus augmenting diverse perspectives. I argue that the institutionalization of representative claims via specific procedures and structures can be helpful. The EP has fostered such institutionalization and is therefore assumed to champion gender equality (Ahrens & Rolandsen Agustín 2019).

Second, also “critical acts” (Mushaben 1999) and “critical actors” matter (Childs & Krook 2009). Hence, the appointment of a first female Commission President, Ursula von der Leyen, is important who, moreover, has placed gender equality high on her agenda. She will advance the Commission's new gender equality strategy. There are also positive signs of critical actors mobilizing within the EP. The new S&D chair, Iratxe García, for example, has identified herself as a feminist (Politico 2019).

Third, the FEMM committee, “the central gender equality policy actor” within the EP (Ahrens 2016, p. 778), will acquire new significance despite its “limited power” and “weak position” (p. 779). Its special status “contributes to institutional persistence, thematic inclusion, organisational attention and networked integration”; its members act “across political groups in favour of gender equality, exploiting EP rules and routines in order to maximise its capacity” (p. 779). All committees have members responsible for gender mainstreaming (GM); there is also a network of GM committee delegates, coupled with gender experts in the political groups. Fragmentation and polarisation have also affected FEMM membership, however.⁵ A small centre-left majority (19 of 35 MEPs) still exists, which is not necessarily advantageous since partisan voting in FEMM is not typical, and FEMM decisions might not be confirmed in plenum.

⁵ FEMM has 35 MEPs (in brackets female MEPs): GUE/NGL: 2 (2); S&D: 7 (6); Greens/EFA: 4 (3); RE: 5 (5); EPP: 9 (9); ECR: 3 (3); ID: 3 (3); NI: 2 from Brexit Party (1) and M5S (1). M5S tends to align with the left, while EPP, ECR and, most clearly, ID as well as the BREXIT Party are more conservative when it comes to gender equality.

Finally, the actual partisan-political constellation in the EP and across the EU is crucial. Centre-left political groups in the EP have always been more supportive, right-wing populist and conservative parties take a negative stance on gender equality (Kantola & Rolandsen Agustín 2016, 2019). They, for instance, tried to block the adoption of a 2015 gender equality strategy (Ahrens 2018, p. 60). Ultimately, previous voting behaviour, added to the EP's current composition, could make it tougher to achieve a majority for gender equality policies. Much will hinge on the liberal Renew Europe group. While critical mass, actors and acts in the EP are conducive to advance gender interests, in the end it all depends also on the Council of the EU.

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