

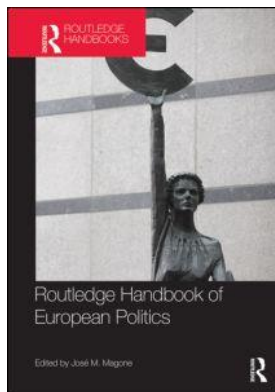
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José M. Magone

### **Gender and European politics**

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## Gender and European politics

*Alison E. Woodward*

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The great transformations of history that shaped the last 50 years of European politics have been accompanied by one of the greatest social transformations of the twentieth century. Women are now full political and economic citizens in most countries of Europe. The European waves of state transformation, expanded citizenship and welfare, moves from social democracy to neo-liberalism, an increasingly contentious civil society and increasing European integration have all been intertwined in a complex net outlined in the chapters of this book. This net encompasses the changing position of half of human kind. Today it is unbelievable that women in Lichtenstein only got the vote in 1984, and that more than one-third of major European democracies did not allow women to vote at mid-century. But for those living in 1948, the idea that European major powers, such as the UK (Margaret Thatcher 1979–90), France (Edith Cresson 1991–2) or Germany (Angela Merkel 2005–present) would have a female prime minister, or that Spain, Germany, Finland, or Latvia would have a woman defence minister would have seemed like science fiction.

The change in the role of women in formal politics in European countries is nothing short of revolutionary, even if some may call it an ‘incomplete revolution’ (Waylen *et al.* 2013b: 3). Today many European parliaments are near gender parity, thanks to measures including various forms of quota either used by political parties or mandated by law. Further, European nations frequently feature in the top of indexes such as the UNDP or the World Economic Forum Gender Gap Index (World Economic Forum 2013) where 11 of the top fifteen countries are European, thanks in part to the empowerment of women. Political representation has changed radically, as both European political parties and states have imposed targets and quota regulations in electoral and administrative settings (Franceschet *et al.* 2012). European legislation today reflects the principle of equal treatment for women and men, and many countries require that the state carry out gender mainstreaming. New administrative machineries for women and gender equality have been introduced in most countries as well as at the level of the European Union. Still, these dramatic changes have not led to full gender equality as the European Institute for Gender Equality’s Index shows (European Institute for Gender Equality 2013). Continuing economic pay gaps, the persistent absence of women in top decision-making positions, as well as cutbacks in welfare provisions and questioning of bodily rights indicate that important roadblocks remain.

References to women in politics in political science were few and far between up until the mid-1960s. Only Duverger (1955) had carried out any overview of the importance of women in politics. In the eighties works such as Lovenduski's on women and European politics (1986) started the ball rolling. By the end of the twentieth century a lively community of scholars worked on gender and politics, with one of its most important hubs in Europe. Research on the subject of women in European politics has become a multi-dimensional industry. A major Oxford University Press handbook covers Gender and Politics in general in 872 pages (Waylen *et al.* 2013a). The European Consortium on Political Research section on Gender and Politics organizes biannual conferences with an attendance above 500. Given the volume of recent scholarship on gender in both formal and informal politics, this chapter can only hint at the importance of gender for understanding major themes in the transformation of European politics and provide some signposts to a gendered understanding of European politics. After a short comment on the theoretical work on European women, gender and politics we turn to the major issues in formal politics, namely changing citizenship, representation in terms of numbers (descriptive representation) and content (the substantive representation of women), and the role of women's movements and the state in changing the position of women in politics and in the economy. The welfare state, specific policies and machineries designed to advance the position of women and an expansion of politics to include women's interests have all contributed to change. A special focus will be on the role of the European integration process in Europe and gender. Both the widening competencies of the European Union, with its treaty commitment to equality between men and women, and the changing landscape after 1989 with the disappearance of the Soviet-socialist model of emancipation are vital. Finally, some key elements of the policy approach to gender issues used by European countries will be scrutinized, with particular attention to women's policy agencies and tools such as gender mainstreaming, anti-discrimination legislation and a widening usage of quotas beyond politics.

### Thinking gender in European political theory

The evolution of European political scholarship about gender follows a trajectory from research on 'women *in* politics' to research on 'women *and* the state' to a concern for the gendered nature of political conceptualization and practice and the impact of critical feminist scholarship on policy. Along the way there have been efforts to reconceptualize what we call 'politics'. The variety of experiences in Europe has made it a laboratory for the global development of gender and politics scholarship.

One of the main early concerns of feminist investigations in political theory was rediscovering women in political thought and politics. Looking for women in political theory easily turned up numerous European women with political theory agendas – most famously Mary Wollstonecraft (1792). Across Europe women thought and wrote about the nature of politics and women's role in society – ranging from Olympe de Gouges's early pleading for universal suffrage in 1791 to socialists Rosa Luxembourg and Clara Zetkin in Germany (LeGates 2001), Alexandra Kollontai in Russia (Holt 1980) and Simone de Beauvoir (1949) in France. Discovering the women who were left out of European political theory was an important step pioneered by gender scholarship (Okin 1979), but even more crucial were the contributions of feminist critical scholarship to rethinking the canon of political concepts (Blakeley and Bryson 2007; Bryson 2003; Squires 1999). These investigations and rediscoveries often crossed the Atlantic, and in the 1970s and 1980s included women formally in academia and women consciously and purposefully outside the academy, but in the women's movement. They demanded the reconceptualization of politics and participation. Major debates surged around

the questions of the personal as political. Politics needed redefinition going beyond its formal institutional frame to take into account the role of politics in structuring gendered relations. Another important debate centred on the tensions between biological and social sex and the implications for policy, the so-called Difference and Equality debate within feminism (Phillips 1993), which took a concrete political form as what was called the Wollstonecraft dilemma of demanding equality while recognizing women's specific needs (Lombardo 2003). Other topics included the role of the body, including reproductive and sexual rights (Elman 2007), the place of law in achieving radical feminist demands (MacKinnon 1989), and the relation between feminism and Socialism (Eisenstein 1979). This list of primarily Anglo-Saxon authors does not do justice to the variety of authors and accents in the debate, which took very different forms in Scandinavia, France, Germany and the Anglo-Saxon context. The debates took on extremely confrontational and divisive forms in the women's and feminist movements in all European countries, and cannot be summarized here. Each feminist political debate is associated with different sorts of national political impact. For example the Nordics focused on the welfare state and women's interests (Bergkvist *et al.* 1999) while the French debated parity in politics (Jenson and Sineau 1994).

Thus research concerns changed from 'women in politics' – localizing them and discussing their absence in academics and political life – to an increasing concern with the implications of feminism for basic concepts in politics (Goetz and Mazur 2008) and for strategies. The explosive activism of the 1970s reflected in the debates about difference and equality, sexual orientation, race and class harbingered later discussions about not only what 'equality' for men and women would actually entail, but also a standard chronological depiction traces a development from liberal approaches, seeking equal treatment for women and men, to socialist feminist approaches questioning the role of capitalism and patriarchy in the oppression of women, to a larger discussion of the extent to which women are different from men and need special treatment, the above-mentioned 'equality versus difference' debate. In retrospect these debates seem to be reflected in the demands placed on policy makers. At the level of the European Union, for example, one can trace an evolution of policies from first aiming to ensure equal treatment before the law to later focus on actions designed to take account of the specific situation of women in society, with a recognition of 'difference', before ultimately leading to a consideration of the inter-relationships of inequalities, and the launching of the concept of gender, leading to a need for transformational strategies such as gender mainstreaming. The concept of 'gender' itself, with its focus on the process of the social construction of masculinities, femininities and gendered structures in inter-relationship, was crucial for moving the focus beyond women as objects, and to the inter-relationships between the sexes and how a gendered social order reproduces and maintains inequalities and specificities.

## Full citizenship and representation

### *What/who is a citizen? Embodying citizenship and sex*

In the questioning of basic concepts and political participation, a central concern is the nature of citizenship. Scholars such as Ruth Lister (Lister 1997; Lister *et al.* 2007) early brought the precarious situation of women as citizens into critical consideration. Women at mid-century in Europe were nowhere full citizens. Civil and economic and social rights were all unequal between women and men in every single country here under study. The lack of fundamental civil rights for women, and discriminatory legislation, leading to unequal pay, inability to independently make financial transactions, and finally to exercise full political rights as voters and office holders,

not to mention the curtailments on physical freedom due to restrictions on sexuality, reproduction and the all-pervasive violence with a basis in gender inequality, deprived women in Europe of full citizenship. One of the major transformations in the last 60 years in most European countries has been a radical transformation and harmonisation of legal codes to gradually introduce increasing legal equality between women and men. Even here, the record is far from complete. Feminist debate and scholarship in Europe and beyond made major contributions to a reconsideration of citizenship, moving beyond T.H. Marshall to include in citizenship rights an understanding of social citizenship that covers intimate relationships (Gendered Citizenship in Multicultural Europe, Europe 2014). In Europe citizenship discourse expands to consider the interactions between gender and other citizenship exclusionary categories such as ethnicity, which is a particularly European concern with its multiple layers of citizenship beyond the nation state (Halsaa *et al.* 2013).

### *Women in decision-making: descriptive representation*

What is democracy in Europe and where did it begin? Paxton's (2008) pithy critique of Huntington's democratic waves argued that where there is no woman's suffrage there is no democracy, and that many European countries are thereby relatively new democracies rather than old ones as argued by Huntington. In 1913 only one European country (Finland, 1906) allowed women to vote. It was not until after 1975 that more and more parliaments crept above 10–15 per cent women, but then the creeping became an explosion (Rodríguez-Ruiz and Rubio-Marin 2012). Breaking the log jam holding women out of parliamentary politics became an important focus for European women's activism – and an action point of the EU. Both within parties and from outside, pressure continued to increase the presence of women in politics (Leijenaar 1997; Phillips 1995; Dahlerup 1998) or, as some put it, end the 'over-representation' of men (Waylen *et al.* 2013a: 25).

Today the descriptive presence of women is seen as an important indicator of the level of gender equality in a country. A demand for more women in decision-making in general was made both on the grounds of democratic representation and of justice. Most rankings of gender equality include the percentage of women in parliaments and governments (e.g. United Nations Women Empowerment Index, World Economic Forum Gender Gap, EIGE, Gender Equality Index) as an important indicator of women's empowerment. In the old member states of the European Union the change in the last 20 years has been considerable, beginning in a wave in Northwest Europe, where Sweden reached parliamentary gender balance as early as 1994. Comparative research reveals that explanations for progress are multiple (Dahlerup and Leyenaar 2013; Paxton *et al.* 2007). Electoral institutions matter as well as the status of women and the type of welfare state, but more generally cultural climate, gender relations and party culture are also important in explaining some of the deviant cases such as the situation of European countries in transition. Under socialism there was almost parity representation of women (Scott 1977, Matland and Montgomery 2003) but after 1989 the formal representation of women took a deep dip. These countries are much less likely to use systems that have been effective in Western Europe, such as internal party quotas or legal quotas, to propel change (Dahlerup 2006; Dahlerup and Friedenvall 2011). They thus score lower in terms of women's formal representation, despite having prerequisites such as integration in the labour force and high educational attainment. Other exceptions also persist, such as the UK, meaning that the revolution in terms of sheer numbers is still ongoing. Nonetheless, as Figure 46.1 indicates, European women enjoy some of the best descriptive representation in the world.

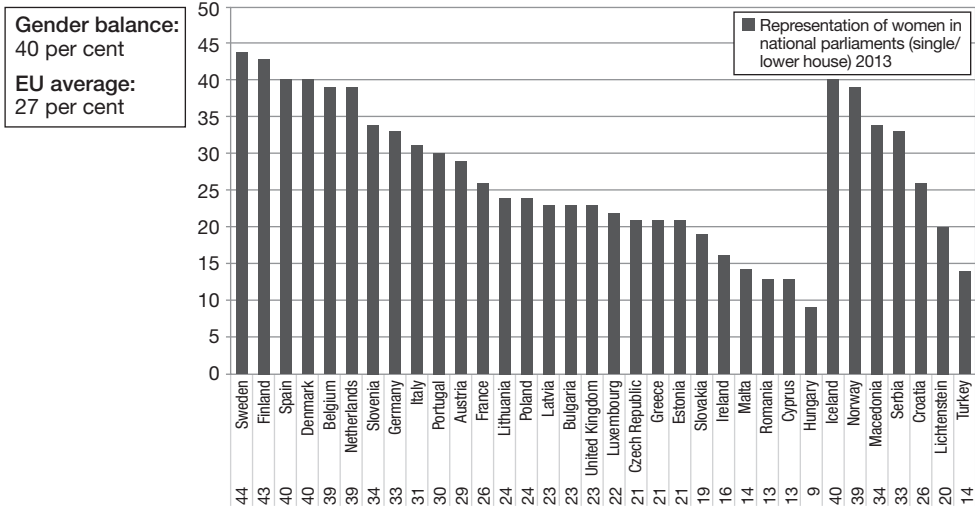


Figure 46.1 Representation of women and men in national parliaments (single/lower house, 2013)

Source: European Commission Directorate General for Justice (2013: 22).

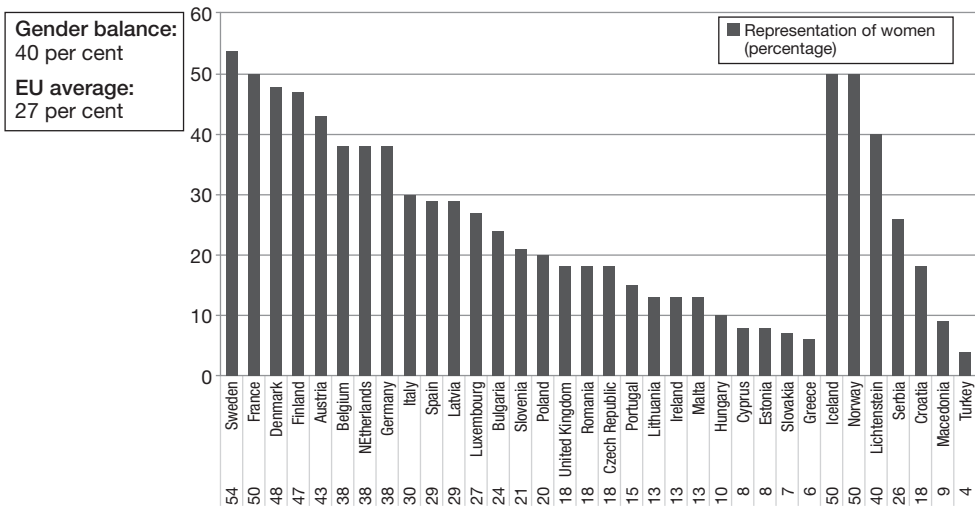


Figure 46.2 Representation of women and men in national governments (senior ministers, 2013)

Source: European Commission Directorate General for Justice (2013: 20).

It is also the case that women in Europe have occupied almost all executive functions from Prime Minister and President to top ministries (Bauer and Tremblay 2011). Governments such as Sweden and Norway also have targets for the gender balance of the composition of the cabinet. As can be seen in Figure 46.2, women in several countries are nearly in parity in the executive. However, evolution is slow. Between 2004 and 2013, the representation of women in national government posts as senior ministers evolved from 21 per cent to 27 per cent (European Commission Directorate General for Justice 2013: 20).

In terms of content, there is still considerable horizontal segregation as far as ministerial specialization and headships of commissions. Women are found disproportionately in social-cultural fields such as health, education and family affairs, but by now women have also held the high status posts of finance, foreign affairs and defence minister in both large countries such as Spain, France and Germany and the smaller Nordic and Baltic states. Still there is a tendency to allocate basic governmental portfolios such as Internal Affairs or Defence to men, while women disproportionately receive the socio-cultural responsibilities. This segregation actually increased in the period from 2004 to 2013 (European Commission Directorate General for Justice 2013: 21). A concentration of women in feminine domains could be related to one of the main arguments for more women in politics, that women would be better placed to represent women's interests.

### *Do European women in politics make a difference? Substance of politics*

Although the motivations for more women in decision-making can be because of egalitarian and justice considerations, one important argument has also been that an increased proportion of women in decision-making would lead to changes in both the process and the content of decision-making, or the substantive representation of women's concerns (Phillips 1998; Celis *et al.* 2008). In terms of the institutional practice of politics, gender equality considerations in Scandinavian parliamentary settings, for example, led to changes in meeting hours and provision of measures for work-life balance. The Scottish Parliament was designed consciously to be more gender friendly in terms of its hours and electoral system (Brown 1998). However, this has not been the case overall, as shown by several mediatized cases of top female figures in France or in Belgium not taking time off after having babies and the continued harassment of female politicians, including women of colour. The same mixed record can be found in terms of the content of decision-making. There are several elements to the question of women's impact on the substance of decisions. A long-simmering debate has been about what women's interests would actually be, given the diversity among women. How would we know if women's interests were being served, if we cannot identify what women's interests are? Nonetheless, there is research that demonstrates that critical female actors are disproportionately responsible for bringing issues that are almost incontrovertibly related to gender equality on to the agenda. The key word here is critical actors – it is not necessarily sufficient just to have a critical mass of women in parliament to be sure that issues of particular concern to women come on to the agenda (Childs and Krook 2009). While the quantity of women in a legislative assembly could have an influence, some authors note that it might also be the case that high proportions of women could lead to male legislators becoming recalcitrant and threatened, and to a higher degree of backlash. The jury is still out on many of these issues. This institutional change is really recent. Only a few European parliaments have been above 30 per cent for any significant amount of time. Comparative studies of the extent to which higher percentages of women in European parliaments lead to more 'women-friendly' or women's interest representation are still few.

## The state in Europe

Political representation is important in democracies because it is the major mechanism for steering the state. Throughout this *Handbook* it is evident that states in Europe have evolved and changed dramatically. For the situation of women, the nation-state and its policies have been crucial in constituting and constraining women as economic, social and sexual citizens, as we have discussed. Parliaments draft the legislation that is the framework for state action and nation-states participate in international treaties in the accelerating dance of global governance. A first remark is that these complex factors have changed the nature of the European nation-state significantly, and these changes are also reflected in the laws and policies of the state. Not only have women achieved enfranchisement, but more and more states include formal ambitions and guarantees of the equality of men and women in their constitutions and founding documents. With these legislative bases, women can make claims on the state and demand rights.

A major focus of discussion in scholarship has been on the role of the state in guaranteeing opportunities for women to be integrated in the economy and to be empowered. The state in Europe has been a target of gender critique in terms of its negative role in shaping gender emancipation possibilities, but also seen as a tool for guaranteeing rights and providing support.

### *Welfare state as tool*

The role of the welfare state, which is highly developed in Western Europe, but in a multitude of forms, is particularly important for shaping different possibilities for women (Sainsbury 1999). The variety of welfare states in Europe, products of history, culture and religion and political engagement, provide an exceptionally fruitful ground for comparison (Sainsbury 1996). Welfare state scholarship predominantly focused on the role of the state in redressing socio-economic inequality, but feminist criticism brought to the fore the fact that the state was a fundamental agent in producing different gender regimes (Lewis and Ostner 1995, Walby 1997, Orloff 2009). European variety, stretching from the female worker citizens so typical of the Nordic states to the familial focus on the woman as mother in Continental and Southern European states, could be argued to be directly connected to success or failure in terms of women's autonomy and well-being.

The discussion about the role of the state in imposing one model or another, and particularly the role of the European Union in Europeanizing one or another gender regime above all others (dictating that women should be in paid employment, promulgating policies for early childcare and rating countries against one another on this indicator), has been intensive. It is of course tied to political ideologies about the role of the state in relation to family and the private sphere in general. In the Nordic countries, long-term women's movement political activism combined with social democratic visions produced situations where women enjoy substantial autonomy of income and social support, and are highly active in the labour market and politics. Yet, the discussion of the extent to which the welfare state was actually 'women friendly' raged, given that much of the employment was in the welfare sector itself, employing women to allow other women to go to work (Borchorst and Siim 2008, Bergkvist *et al.* 1999, Hernes 1987, Haavio-Mannila *et al.* 1985, Van der Ros 1994).

### *Women's policy machinery*

A criticism of the state was the invisibility of women, except as a special concern in their sex roles (as mothers, as sex workers, as those to be protected) (Guerrina 2010). With the



enfranchisement of women and their growing economic inclusion and political voice, as well as thanks to external demands from activists, on the one hand, and international bodies such as the UN and the EU, on the other, for more attention to women's issues, national administrations in Europe began to include special offices for women's issues or women's policy agencies. Often these offices were combined as Ministries for Family, Youth and Women, but gradually the internal and external pressures led most Western European nations as well as many Central and Eastern European countries to develop an address within the state apparatus for women's issues. In part due to international treaty obligations to provide information on the status of women (CEDAW/UN), one could begin to talk about specific women's policy machineries or architectures in most of the countries treated in this *Handbook* by the mid-1980s. An influential survey (Stetson and Mazur 1995) mapped the presence of these agencies and their varying roles (pro-neutral or anti-feminist) in providing state administrations for the improvement of women's status. Agencies and ministries of varying format and form with openly feminist aims became major allies to women's movement actors outside the state. Scholars applied the name of 'state feminism' to patterns where the state administration openly advocated issues advancing gender equality. A major finding was that not all such agencies worked for women's emancipation, and that the alliances between political parties and elected officials, civil society and administration were often decisive for whether outcomes in European national policy were favourable to women. The Research Network on Gender, Politics and the State particularly focused on a number of key issues in politics both clearly related to women (abortion and political representation) and dealing with more general issues such as job training, or top issues in politics, to measure the impact of women's policy machineries in primarily European polities. They discovered a multitude of complex alliances that underwrote the ability of women's agencies to have an impact on politics ((Hausman and Sauer 2007, Lovenduski *et al.* 2005, McBride and Mazur 2011; Outshoorn and Kantola 2007). Other research (Lombardo and Forest 2012; Verloo 2007) has focused on the extreme variation in how European state actors frame gender issues, relating to the aforementioned variation in gender regimes and political culture. These varying framings correlate with the large variation in outcome for women, and help explain the fact that in most indices the European states are distributed widely among the top 100, with many developing countries scoring better than the industrialized and highly educated North (Verloo and van der Vleuten 2009). As we will see, the research shows that Europeanization does not act as a magic homogenizing gender blanket producing equal status for women and gender equality in politics everywhere.

## Public policy

European theoretical debates about the origins and nature of gender inequality, the global women's movement and the specific contours of the European nation-state have influenced the evolution and formation of policy instruments and approaches for gender equality. Several authors characterize the logic of policy instruments utilized to improve gender equality as following several stages (Rees 1998, 2002; Squires 2007; Woodward 2012) that have sometimes been chronological and sometimes transversal/crossing depending on the context and players. The first step included eliminating legal discrimination and guaranteeing equal treatment, which stems from the logic of liberal feminism. In Europe, pension schemes, hiring, wages, property ownership, and civil and social rights were frequently divided into men's rights and women's rights. Equalizing treatment became a first and fundamental principle of improving the balance between men and women. The European Union played a fundamental role in guaranteeing equal treatment thanks to a number of decisions in the European Court of Justice (ECJ) which

meant that member states had to harmonize their legislation and conform to equal treatment in all areas even remotely related to the labour market (Hoskyns 1996). Although it could be cynically remarked that equal treatment has frequently meant a loss of women's benefits (van der Vleuten 2007), the guarantee of equal treatment has also made litigation possible. However, the logic of equal treatment ignores the real situation of difference in the positions of women and men in society, and fails to address the longstanding cultural devaluation of women's worth. The argument was made that *de jure* equality did not equal *de facto* equality. Thus a second policy approach has been to recognize the real differences between women and men in society. Here the aim was to improve women's status vis-à-vis men, and offer compensation and recognition for women's differences through strategies of positive or affirmative actions, involving extra training for women, explicit hiring techniques and other measures to support women's real life situations (childcare, etc.) and stimulate their participation in society. The equal treatment approach (women should not be treated differently from men) and the women-centred rehabilitation policy (women as women need special measures due to their specific situation) reflected the 'equality-difference debate' described above. However, transversally other interpretations of the problem in academia were also gaining tread in political and policy circles. Notably the idea of gender and the inter-relational aspects of inequality seemed to offer a solution to the Wollstonecraft dilemma. The inequality between men and women was not a simple matter of men oppressing women, but was a product of structural and informal relationships that were socially constructed. The sociological concept of gender underlined the role of interaction in the production of gender relationships and also clearly implicated both sexes. A fundamental aspect of this concept is that gender permeates society. All social and political activities, not just the ones where the roles of men and women are clearly visible, are gendered. Thus a third policy approach was born, that of gender mainstreaming, requiring a recognition that all public policy had intended or unintended impacts on the relations between the sexes. An analysis of the policy *ex ante* in terms of its impact on gender equality could therefore help design policy that would not negatively affect one of the sexes, and potentially also provide stimulus for more gender equality. Judith Squires (2007) described these steps in policy-making as presence, voice and process, and visionarily added a fourth possible policy dimension in which men and women would be brought into a discursive situation, leading to true democratic transformations. However, the empirical research on the status of gender equality policy in Europe in 2014 seems to indicate that budgetary crises, demands from other equality groupings and inertial/policy fatigue have led to a stand-still in addressing the remaining policy roadblocks to a fairer, gender-equal society in Europe. Indicators such as the percentage of women in decision-making in science, the economy or even politics, the wage gap, the situation of violence against women, all show a recalcitrant stagnation.

## European integration

Of all the transformations affecting European politics and the position of women, none is more important than the transnational impact of increasing European integration under the aegis of the European Union. The emergence of the EU as a prominent intergovernmental force has also been essential for the translation and export of certain visions of gender equality. In what has been described as a boomerang effect (Zippel 2006) or a pincer effect (van der Vleuten 2007), ideas and policy practices on gender equality exchanged between EU member states on the one hand became enshrined in Treaty law for EU members and aspiring members, and on the other hand became discursive benchmarks in debates about what true gender equality in political and social life might entail.

While no one would argue that gender equality was ever a main goal of the European integration process, by the 50-year anniversary of the Union it was seen as one of the major normative achievements. Beginning from a modest sentence in the Treaty of Rome guaranteeing equal pay for equal work, and thanks to tireless activism from within and without the Brussels edifice (Hoskyns 1996), gender equality has been enshrined as a fundamental value in the Treaty of Lisbon (Art. 2, van der Vleuten 2012). Further, the tool of gender mainstreaming is recognized in the treaty as the major instrument for achieving equality between men and women (Abels and Mushaben 2013; Lombardo and Forest 2012).

The EU approach to promoting gender equality runs on several tracks (Abels and Mushaben 2013; Kantola 2010; Squires 2007). First, thanks to the legislative framework, the EU increasingly acts as an arbiter through the ECJ. The directives guaranteeing equal treatment in the labour market dating from the 1970s have been crucial tools in underwriting court cases both nationally and at the ECJ, and leading to harmonization of law in member states so that women can enjoy equal rights. The process of adjustment in the 1980s in the older member states brought about major changes in social and economic rights (e.g. pension schemes) and spilled over into other areas. Today many member states also include gender equality as a goal in their constitutions (e.g. Germany since 1949, Belgium 2003). Progress in the 1990s under the Treaty of Amsterdam provided an even broader base by not only guaranteeing equal treatment, but further obliging the member states to promote equality and forbid discrimination (Art. 13). Crucially, the framing of Article 13 in the Treaty of Amsterdam also included other important grounds that were protected against discrimination (race, sexual orientation, age, disability and religion). This has led to extensive activity before the ECJ in terms of discrimination, and also to an intense discussion about the interactions of different inequalities, in terms of multiple discriminations and intersections.

A second role of the EU has been as an exporter and promulgator of its norms. Through its presence in international fora it has increasingly claimed to be a model, while also actively pursuing the attainment of equality by providing resources as well as requiring enforcement. The formal norms of treaty ambitions and directives have been accompanied with action plans from the EU to provide means and guidance to member states as well as benchmarks for achievement. Particularly in the golden years between 1985 and 2000, a number of action plans were implemented that worked to strengthen the position of women in employment. The approach had only limited elements of hard law, as after 1995 getting formal directives for many of the remaining questions became more and more difficult. Use of comparisons, constitution of expert groups and national administrators, and ultimately the establishment of a European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) have all been steps that have helped create a community of expertise on gender equality. Further, a requirement of the anti-discrimination law was the establishment of machinery for handling discrimination complaints, which led to those countries who did not yet have a women's policy machinery needing to create offices at least specializing in discrimination issues. These and many other activities have pushed a Europeanization of gender equality approaches (Liebert 2003), even if the picture is still not homogeneous, as studies such as those by Lombardo (2003), Verloo (2007) and Halsaa *et al.* (2013), among others, report. There is substantial diversity in understanding what gender is. Particularly relevant has been the rapid expansion of the EU in 2005 and 2007, enfolding many countries who had not been debating the issue of gender equality in the frame being used in the EU. Central and Eastern European countries in particular had pursued very different trajectories, and there were large gaps in public opinion about the importance of gender equality issues, not only about the role of women, but also in terms of sexuality, reproduction and sexual orientation (Einhorn 2010;

Galligan and Clavero 2012). While required to take aboard the *acquis* which included the provisions on commitment to promoting gender equality and guaranteeing equal treatment, several of the countries involved had rather different interpretations of what would be required. In particular, issues around bodily freedoms and abortion, as well as gay and lesbian rights, are extremely problematic in some member states.

In terms of political representation, the EU and its funded civil society organizations, such as the European Women's lobby (Strid 2009), have actively campaigned since the mid-1990s for more women in decision-making, with particularly notable campaigns around elections to the European Parliament causing that body to move above the 30 per cent mark. However, other areas of decision-making, such as finance, science and business, are moving more slowly, and the EU has been debating the use of quotas to change the composition of corporate boards (Dahlerup and Friedenvall 2011; European Commission Directorate General for Justice 2013).

An important role in the exportation of norms and practices has been played by the EU in financing the collection of statistics. In the 1990s the first data base on women in decision-making was funded based in Berlin. For the first time statistics were available about women in parliament, as well as in other political functions. This data base has since been taken over by DG Justice, and now includes many other levels of governmental decision-making, providing an important comparative resource for both scholars and activists.

### Future concerns: the research agenda

The research agenda for the future is a varied one. First of all, the increasing diversity of European citizens and issues of migration, resurgent religiosity and integration raise new questions about gendered representation and its interface and intersections with other identities. How can these be represented in European politics? A typical example of the issues at hand is the widespread debate about the veil, which takes extremely varied forms in different nation-states (Rosenberger and Sauer 2011; on the veil discussion, see Chapter 4). However, the role of religion in relation to gendered politics has also continued in importance, whether it be the Vatican or the Muslim Brotherhood. A gendered perspective also implies further research on men and masculinities (Hearn and Pringle 2009), both in relation to violence and in relation to political behaviour, to enrich insight beyond the popular press into figures such as Silvio Berlusconi and Vladimir Putin. The socio-economic crisis beginning in 2008 had gendered impacts on state policy and the position of women, altering their economic resources and potentially undermining their potential for political participation. What will this mean for civil society capacity and the role of the state in promoting equality? Changes in the political climate in Europe, including the role of populist and right-wing political movements in many European countries, challenge fundamental rights of women. Finally, what about the role of Europe as an exporter of gender norms for women and politics internationally? Is the EU really such a front runner? These are all questions to be dealt with in future research.

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