

WHEN DOES HE SPEAK FOR SHE?  
MEN REPRESENTING WOMEN IN PARLIAMENT

By

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## ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

When Does He Speak for She? Men Representing Women in Parliament.

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This project develops our understanding of the representation of women's interests in politics by considering the role that men can play in advancing the substantive representation of women (SRW). I draw on the case of the United Kingdom Parliament, which over the last three decades has seen significant changes in the sex balance of Members of Parliament (MPs) in the House of Commons. Using quantitative analysis of two legislative activities – Early Day Motions, and the annual International Women's Day Debates – I first establish the patterns of men's engagement in SRW. I argue that men's role in representation women can be understand as what I term an “ancillary representatives” for women, which is a role that draws on a vantage point not accessible to women to help advance the SRW, while also remains secondary to women's leadership role. The role played by men remains fairly consistent over time, with some evidence of a mainstreaming of women's issues over time as the number of women in politics

increases. Then, using interview data from 30 original interviews with sitting MPs (both men and women) and analysis of transcripts of interviews carried out with women MPs in 2004, I develop the idea of men as ancillary representatives by showing that they see themselves as holding a very distinct role in the representation of women, largely as a supporter or ally for women. The findings from the interview data also reinforces and develops the existing work in the literature on women's representation first by showing that the logic of women's difference and the importance of life experience in shaping the perspective of women in politics also applies in the case of men; and second by showing that an additional often unseen impact of women in politics is that they have the ability to also influence their male colleagues.

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For Mum and Dad

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION .....	II
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	IV
TABLE OF CONTENTS .....	IX
LIST OF FIGURES .....	XI
I. INTRODUCTION: BRINGING MEN INTO THE SUBSTANTIVE REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN ..	I
Descriptive and substantive representation of women.....	3
Bringing men in .....	16
Men as “Ancillary Representatives” .....	36
The case of the UK .....	43
Overview of the dissertation .....	51
2. GENDERED DIVISION OF LABOR AND THE SIGNING OF WOMEN’S ISSUES EARLY DAY MOTIONS .....	56
Early Day Motions .....	56
Data & methods .....	62
Hypotheses .....	69
Findings.....	72
3. MEN IN WOMEN’S SPACES? INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S DAY DEBATES .....	85
International Women’s Day .....	86
IWD in the House of Commons.....	87
Data & coding.....	92
Findings.....	95

4. HOW DO MEN SEE THEIR ROLE IN REPRESENTING WOMEN? .....	124
How do men see their role? .....	129
Placing it in a broader context of equality and fairness .....	130
A distinct role for men .....	133
Discussion .....	148
5. WHAT ARE MEN’S MOTIVATIONS? THEORY OF GENDERED EXPERIENCES .....	149
Underlying Motivations? Theory of Gendered Experiences .....	149
Direct Experiences .....	154
Relational Experiences.....	157
Resonant Experiences .....	166
Discussion .....	168
6. WOMEN’S IMPACT ON MEN IN PARLIAMENT .....	173
Harman-Shepherd Archival Collection.....	173
Women’s Impact .....	175
7. CONCLUSIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH .....	199
Broader Implications.....	202
Avenues for future research .....	204
WORKS CITED.....	207
APPENDIX .....	227

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Women MPs in the House of Commons, 1974-2017.	45
Figure 2: Rebellion rates for MPs, September 2018. Source: <a href="http://www.publicwhip.org.uk">www.publicwhip.org.uk</a>	46
Figure 3: Average number of EDM signatures per day per eligible MP, by parliamentary session	61
Figure 4: Number of WEDMs per day by Session	72
Figure 5: Types of WEDMs proposed, 1991-2015	73
Figure 6: Rates of WEDM proposing (as a percent of all EDMs signed), by gender, averaged by Government	74
Figure 7: Rates of WEDM signing (as a percent of all EDMs), by Gender, Averaged by Government	75
Figure 8: Gender balance of Women's Early Day Motion Signers	77
Figure 9: Gender balance of Women's Early Day Motion Proposers	77
Figure 10: Directionality of WEDMs proposed	79
Figure 11: Gender balance among WEDM signatories	83
Figure 12: Party Breakdown of WEDM Proposers	84
Figure 13: Number of appearances by MPs 1998-2014.	96
Figure 14: Sex and party balance of Conservative and Labour MPs participating in IWD debates, 1994-2018, averaged by government.	97
Figure 15: Proportion of MPs participating in IWD debate coded as 'skeptical', averaged by government	98
Figure 16: Gender balance of MPs participating in IWD debates, 1994-2018.	103
Figure 17: Mean Number of MPs participating in IWD debates adjusted for length and averaged by Government	104
Figure 18: Proportion of MPs participating in IWD who make a speech, averaged by Government	106
Figure 19: Percent of all MPs who participate in IWD debates, averaged by government, 1994-2018.	122

## CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION: BRINGING MEN INTO THE SUBSTANTIVE REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN

Research on women in politics has rightly focused on the presence and actions of women. However, women have ultimately gained rights from decisions made by male political leaders and majority male legislative bodies. Historical accounts of political progress include many examples of men who have been committed advocates for women: Frederick Douglas was a key advocate for the Declaration of Sentiments (Wellman 1991) in the USA; 19th Century Member of Parliament and philosopher John Stuart Mill's was a leading voice in the suffragist movement in the United Kingdom (Mill 1861, 1869); then Senator Joe Biden proposed the groundbreaking Violence Against Women Act in the US Congress (Gibbs 2014); and in 2011 Swedish Member of the European Parliament (MEP) Mikael Gustafsson became Chairman of the European Parliament's Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality (Sawer, Palmieri, and Freidenvall 2013). There is also support and advocacy at a global, mass level: the United Nations launched a campaign in 2014 to engage men and boys in the fight for gender equality. Entitled "HeForShe," the campaign has over two million registered supporters, most whom are men.<sup>1</sup> HeForShe has attracted endorsements from high profile leaders in politics and beyond, including former US President Barack Obama, successive UN Secretary

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.heforshe.org/en>

Generals, along with business leaders, university presidents, celebrities and many heads of state.

Existing accounts of the pursuit of women's substantive interests focus on the role of women's presence. The presence of consistent examples of men as advocates for women does not negate the importance of understanding women's relationships to women's issues, nor does it suggest there is no "need" for women in politics. Rather, existing frameworks for understanding the substantive representation of women do not fully account for or explain the substantive representation of women by men beyond an implicit acknowledgement that it is possible and happens.

This dissertation seeks to broaden conceptualizations of the role of a legislator's gender in their engagement with women's issues in politics by considering the (gendered) role that men play in representing women. Starting from the astute observation Carver made when titling his book, that "Gender is Not a Synonym for Women" (Carver 1996), this project looks to how men engage - or fail to engage - on policy issues related to women, asking how, when, and why men substantively represent women in politics. A focus on men is built upon the idea that men are not a static or neutral baseline against which women can be compared, and also allows for the possibility that men may be changed by the presence of women. Gender is ultimately relational – the identity and actions of men defined in part in relation to the identity and actions of women, and vice

versa – and by looking to men’s role this study seeks to better understand the nature of that relationship.

#### DESCRIPTIVE AND SUBSTANTIVE REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN

Pitkin (1967) offers a helpfully straightforward definition of representation, arguing that to represent is to “make present again”. Though an initially simple definition, Pitkin’s seminal treatise on representation goes on to outline the multiple and multifaceted possible ways to see representation. Pitkin’s capturing of both the essence of representation and the multiple modes and forms has led many scholars writing on gender and representation to begin with Pitkin’s typology in their theorizing. Pitkin’s typology addresses the multitude of ways in which the concept of representation is used, and points to four distinct (but related) forms of representation: formalistic representation, which concerns the institutional arrangements that create and sustain representation; descriptive representation, which is the extent to which representatives resemble the represented, for example through shared gender, race, age etc.; substantive representation, concerned with the actions of the representatives and the extent to which the actions are aligned with the interests of those that they represent; and symbolic representation, which is measured by the response invoked in the represented, asking if the referent *feels* represented.

While gender is present in all aspects of politics, perhaps the most visible gendered dynamics in politics is the sex of politicians, and the sex imbalance of most political bodies. As of late 2018, men make up more than three quarters of all legislators in National parliaments,<sup>2</sup> and this is true even after decades of significant progress and legal gender quota provisions in more than 100 countries (Krook 2009). A substantial body of work has addressed the causes and consequences of these gender imbalances, seeking to understand what factors determine the levels of descriptive representation in a country, and the relationship between descriptive and substantive representation in the case of women. I too look at the descriptive and substantive representation of women, but I pay particular attention to how men might “make present” women’s interests, and how the presence of women shapes the role of men in the representation of women.

Before getting to the question of who is doing what representation, we must reckon with the difficult business of defining “women’s interests”, and thus determining what it would look like for women’s interests to be made present by men in the political process. The next section of this chapter addresses this question. Then, I discuss the existing work on the connection between descriptive and substantive representation and make the case that a gendered examination of men needs to be brought in. After establishing the existing theoretical and empirical findings on the role of men, I lay out

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<sup>2</sup> <http://archive.ipu.org/wmn-e/world.htm>

my key contribution: a theory of men as “Ancillary Representatives” for women. The chapter concludes by presents the case selection of the United Kingdom and offers a preview and justification for the range of methods used in the remainder of this dissertation.

### **What are women’s substantive interests?**

The challenges in defining women’s substantive interests are a key reason that scholars have reached disparate conclusions on the nature and strength of the connection between descriptive and substantive representation of women. Dahlerup and Freidenvall (2010) argue that differences in conclusions reached by researchers studying the impact of women in politics is in large part a product of differing definitions of the substantive representation of women. Put simply, conceptualization and operationalization matter.

The question of who or what defines women’s interests is difficult because of a bigger, underlying question: who or what defines the category “woman”? This is not only a question of biological definitions – though both post-structuralist feminism and queer theory has demonstrated the severe limitations of biological form as a basis for a meaningful category (Butler 1990; Lorber 1994; Jagose 1996; Duong 2012). Even if we allow for the existence of categories with clear membership, the vast diversity of experiences and identities of half of the world’s population makes it hard to see how there might be a coherent set of issues or interests that could constitute “women’s

interests”. This lack of obvious coherence comes from the fact that though there are biological roots, what exactly it means to live as a woman is a cultural construction. As Beauvoir famously stated, “One is not born, but rather becomes, woman.” (Beauvoir 1949, 330). Given that what it means to be a woman is a result of time and place, there is not a single or concrete set of issues that could be understood as “women’s issues”.

The contingent and multiple nature of what constitutes “women” and thus “women’s issues” is made especially clear in light of the work of intersectionality theorists, who amongst other essential insights have illuminated the dangers of failing to recognize the multiplicity of women’s experiences. Intersectionality demonstrates how a person who exists in the overlapping space of two marginalized groups experiences marginalization that is greater than and distinct from the sum of its parts (see: Crenshaw 1991; Smooth 2013; Carbado 2013). Intersectional feminist theories show us that when there is a single story about womanhood, it is not random which story is told; rather the preferences and interests of white, cis, heterosexual, wealthy women are amplified and prioritized.

Despite the challenges, political necessity and sociological reality means there is value in the category “woman” and its use in defining substantive interests. Political groupings and categories can be – and indeed perhaps mostly are – temporary and contingent. So even if not reflective of an essential truth about humankind, accepting the

category of “women” and some set(s) of issues as “women’s issues” is meaningful in its reflection of a shared position within a social structure that consistently reflects male power. And though this shared position does not lead to unity on any single issue, and the nature of women’s lives is not static over time or place, the world and thus political debates, are still infused with gendered assumptions and implications. As Phillips puts it:

*“... the variety of women’s interests does not refute the claim that interests are gendered. That some women do not bear children does not make pregnancy a gender-neutral event; that women disagree so profoundly on abortion does not make its availability a matter of equal concern to both women and men; that women occupy such different positions in the occupational hierarchy does not mean they have the same interests as men in their class.” (Phillips 1995, 68)*

Being convinced of the possibility of policy areas that constitute “women’s interests” does not make the identification of women’s substantive issues easy, and as such definitions of substantive representation of women (SRW) used by scholars in empirical research have varied on a few dimensions. First, there is variation in what issue areas should be included. Solutions have included defining SRW as: those concerns belonging to the private spheres as understood from women’s traditional role (Meyer 2003); issues affecting “women’s everyday life” (Swers 2002); and policies explicitly designed to increase the autonomy and well-being of women (Bratton 2005; Wängnerud 2000).

Other scholars have looked to existing determinations from outside sources in their defining of SRW. This has included looking to an aggregated sense of individual

women's stated interests by defining women's issues as those areas where there is a gender gap in public opinion (Burrell 1996; Dingler, Kroeber, and Fortin-Rittberger 2019). Or, drawing on more concrete external sources, some scholars have used internationally agreed upon standards of women's rights as the determination of women's issues. For example, Reyes-Householder (2016) uses those standards laid out in the UN's Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), arguing that as a long standing treatise signed on by most countries in the world, it offers a broad and inclusive conception of women's interest – a tactic that Baldez (2011) also advocates for. And in a similar but more US focused vein, Cowell-Meyers and Langbein (2009) use the policies identified by the Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR) as that which can be said to define women's issues.

However, international institutions' standards and aggregate public opinion are ultimately measures of the status quo perspectives by those in power, and especially in the case of internationally agreed upon standards are not dynamic measures reflecting women's interests in a particular moment. For this reason, Celis's (2006) examination of women's substantive representation in the Belgian parliament uses the agenda of the Belgian's women's movement as an indicator of the substantive representation of women – this had the advantage of being extremely dynamic measure which was useful for Celis's study of almost eight decades of politics. Similarly, Weldon argues that we should be looking to women's movements, organizations and policy agencies to get a full

articulation of what constitutes the substantive representation of women, as these are the collective spaces in which women's substantive interests are conceptualized (Weldon 2002) But, as Strolovitch (2006) shows, even organizations seeking to uplift underrepresented and marginalized groups such as women in turn deprioritize marginalized groups within the larger group. Thus, women's organizations are not a pure representation of women's issues broadly and in fact may be articulations of systematic biases.

Even once the difficult business of deciding what constitutes a woman's issue is resolved, there remains a question as to whether substantive representation involves holding a particular position on the issue, or whether simply engaging in a given issue is sufficient for women to be substantively represented. For example, does engaging in discussion and legislating on abortion constitute substantively representing women, or must one take a pro-choice stance? For this reason, Celis and Childs (2012) distinguish between "feminist interests" and "gendered interest", with the former representing women's issues that reflect feminist inclinations of empowering and expanding opportunities for women, and the broader category of gendered interests referring to those issues that have particular import to women. Other scholars argue that *only* those representative acts that actively promote women's opportunities and autonomy can be considered SRW (Reingold 2000). Dahlerup argues that women's interests should be understood as only those policy preferences that "challenge male dominance," because

definitions of SRW need to be grounded in ideas from feminist theory that take into account the structural foundations of male dominance, as it is women's position in relation to male dominance that creates the shared condition of women upon which women's substantive representation is based (Dahlerup 2014)

A final way in which scholars have varied in their definitions of SRW is in determining at what stage in the political process substantive representation has occurred. Franceschet and Piscopo (2008) argue in their work on Argentina that it matters "where" you look for SRW, and draw a distinction between influencing the *process* of lawmaking and influencing the *outcome*. Franceschet and Piscopo find that women in Argentina largely failed to substantively represent women if looking only at outcomes but had been active in the pursuit of women's substantive interests (as they define them), and in this sense had substantively represented women. Depending on the operationalization used in this case, one could reach very different conclusions about the "impact" of women and the connection between descriptive and substantive representation.

For this reason, scholars have looked in a variety of places for the SRW, beyond roll call votes and bills passed. Measures used include the cosponsorship of bills related to women (Celis 2006; Swers 2005), participating in debates on policy matters related to women (Piscopo 2011; Catalano 2009), asking parliamentary questions (Bird 2005;

Saalfeld 2011), and participating and cooperating in caucuses on women's issues (Barnes 2016; Mahoney 2018).

More fundamentally, Tamerius (1995) demonstrates that gender differences in politicians can be expected to be seen in the earliest stages of law making processes, and this is in part because men's historical numerical and cultural dominance of political bodies has made men better placed to achieve their goals. The political process itself is gendered, and privileging the latter stages gives greater weight to male practices of politics. Further, the reason that we might expect women and men to "act differently" is because of the different life experiences that gendered power structures afford them, and it is in the earliest stages of law making where sex differences in experience (including perspective, a sense of mutuality with other women, and gender composition of networks), attitude (awareness and commitment), and resources (including expertise) are most significant. The later stages in the legislative progress are fairly flat measures of political behavior (a roll call vote offers only a dichotomous measure of support on a single issue, for example), and in many political contexts, including the UK where this study focuses its attention, a roll call vote is mostly an indicator of the party whip's stance, and does not tell us very much about the preferences of the individual MP. By contrast, earlier stages of the legislative process such as agenda setting and policy formulations offer much more space for individual variation and expression of perspective, and for a group such as women who largely remain a minority we would expect that it would be in

early rather than later stages of representation that they act in ways that are distinct from their male colleagues.

As well as missing an important swathe of legislative activity (that is important in influencing political discussion and decisions), ignoring earlier stages of legislative process is problematic, I argue, because these acts themselves – even if not ultimately resulting in a law being changed – are acts of representation on behalf of women. Pitkin’s definition of representation reminds us that representation is about “making present” a person or viewpoint, and even if not ultimately successful in achieving the outcome desired by an actor, a politician who represents women’s perspective in early or peripheral stages of lawmaking – be it in discussions, petitions, questions asked, drafting of bills that get ignored – is making the substantive interests of women present.

In this project I opt for broad definitions, drawing distinctions later within larger categories rather than limiting the scope in the research design at the start. In terms of issue areas, I consider those issues where women or their concerns are the primary subject matter, and include all those issues “that bear on women for either ‘biological’ or ‘social’ reasons” (Cockburn 1996, 14). This broader definition recognizes the policy areas that result from biological differences between the sexes, as well as the – ever changing - social reality of women’s lives.

In terms of directionality, my focus throughout is on broadly feminist representation – that is, substantive representation of women as those actions that seek to expand the opportunity and possibilities for women. However, at various points – including in the Early Day Motion chapter, and in interviewing an anti-feminist man - I consider and compare the patterns of representation of gendered interests that are not also feminist.

And finally, my multi method approach – analysis of different legislative behaviors coupled with wide ranging semi structured interviews with MPs – considers multiple points in the legislative process. A key finding is that the stage in legislative process that one looks to, as Tamerius suggested, in part determines the role that men play. The nature of gendered structures both in society and in parliament mean that men are much more likely to engage in lower cost, later stage legislative acts. Thus, not out of difficulty in definitions but rather a desire to have variation in legislative steps, I chose multiple points in the political process.

### **Does descriptive lead to substantive representation for women?**

The idea that there is a connection between descriptive and substantive representation is not new, nor did it begin with Pitkin; the assumption of some connection between descriptive and substantive representation is central to the principles of representative government and democracy. As J. S. Mill wrote in 1861 in his treatise on

the principles behind representative government "... in the absence of its natural defenders, the interest of the excluded is always in danger of being overlooked; and, when looked at, is seen with very different eyes from those of the persons whom it directly concerns" (Mill 1861).

When the "excluded", as Mill terms it, enter politics the empirical question of whether they will address overlooked interest arises. As touched upon in the previous section on women's interests, this question arises from theoretical assumptions of gender difference and the impact they have on politicians - different life experiences that result in distinct preferences and priorities. Given the breadth of experiences within the subset of the category "women", the theoretical limitations of categories of gender to explain behavior in any kind of deterministic way, and the plethora of formal and informal institutional norms shaping the behavior of legislators, the conclusions from research on whether increased descriptive representation of women leads to increased substantive representation of women is unsurprisingly mixed. There is evidence, from a range of national contexts, that there are importance gender differences in approaches to the substantive representation of women. For example, Wängnerud (2000) found that in the case of the Swedish Parliament over twenty years, 75% of women in parliament addressed issues of social and family policy, compared to 44% of men. In the US context, Osborn (2012) and Swers (2002, 2013, 2001) both find a small but significant difference between male and female legislatures, with women being more likely to represent

‘women’s issues’. Similarly, gender differences in the SRW have been found amongst MPs in parliamentary systems: in the asking of parliamentary questions, signing of parliamentary petitions, and in the tabling of Private Members Bills (Bird 2005; Childs and Withey 2004; Tremblay 1998).

However, other research finds small and sometimes even non-existent gender differences (e.g. Schwindt-Bayer and Corbetta 2004), especially in contexts where parties are polarized and powerful (Frederick 2009). In a review of the literature, Wängnerud (2009) describes “mixed” results, and thus limited empirical support for the theory of the politics of presence; Dodson (2006) argues that the link between descriptive and substantive representation is at best probabilistic, and not deterministic.

The work on the connection between descriptive and substantive representation has an important corollary body of research that recognizes the limits on women substantively representing women once they are elected, regardless of their desire to do so. In big and small ways, feminist institutionalist have demonstrated the enduring power of masculinist institutions (Kenny 2007; Kenny and Verge 2012; Bassel and Emejulu 2010; Chappell 2006; Waylen 2014), which in some cases amounts to explicit resistance of women’s power and of the pursuit of women’s interests (Krook 2016; Franceschet and Piscopo 2008; Wittmer and Bouche 2013; Rincker 2009). Important work has been done to nuance accounts of the connection between descriptive and substantive representation

by considering the factors that mediate this relationship, such as the existence of caucuses and committees to facilitate women working together (Mahoney 2018; Barnes 2016; Piscopo 2014; Allen and Childs 2018), and the role of parties and especially party leadership (O'Brien 2012; O'Brien et al. 2015; Bruhn 2003; Erzeel and Celis 2016).

### BRINGING MEN IN

Given the longstanding focus (implicitly and explicitly) in political science on men in politics (Tolleson-Rinehart and Carroll 2006; Hawkesworth 2005), it might seem counterintuitive that an interest in gender, and in women in particular, would lead one to call for an increased focus on men. However even if a feminist political science is primarily or even wholly interested in women in politics, closer examination of men's representation of women serves to illuminate the concepts of gender, representation, and presence. Thus, I make the case that a gendered analysis of men – and especially of men's role in the substantive representation of women – is important for a number of key reasons.

First, feminist scholarship should be committed to exposing the “false neutrality” inherent in the study of politics – the idea that men are the norm, and women are “different.” As Carver reminds us in his book title, “Gender is not a synonym for women” (1996). Using a gendered lens to analyses men's behavior also helps to in part address a problem Murray observes, when she argues that an exclusive focus on women

in the study of gender and politics “perpetuates the status of men as the norm and women as the ‘other’” (Murray 2014).

Relatedly, addressing the role of men in the SRW allows us to better contextualize women’s substantive representation of women. As already discussed, research on the substantive representation of women usually focuses on the ways that women deviate from the male norm – and this perhaps makes some sense given women’s continued minority status in almost every legislative chamber in the world. However, I posit that this focus on where women act “differently” in order to substantively represent women is deeply flawed. Inherent in hypotheses and claims of women’s “difference” is a comparison being drawn – a base from which we can say that women are “different”. This “neutral base” against which women’s behavior is measured is male politicians; fully understanding gender dynamics in politics, therefore, is impossible if we only at how women deviate from men and don’t also understand the contours of the equally “gendered” behavior of men in politics.

Second, due to men’s continued numerical dominance in most legislative bodies, even a low level of engagement on the part of men has a significant role in shaping policy advocacy and outcomes. Celis and Erzeel’s (2015) survey asked MPs in ten European countries about their representative role, and concluded that almost half of those MPs they categorize as “Critical Actors” for women are men. Thus, understanding the

motivations, influences, and modes of representation of men is important. Even if men's advocacy for women is at a significantly lower rate to that of women, given men amount to more than three quarters of all legislators in the world,<sup>3</sup> even a low rate of engagement amounts to a significant amount of activity. As a UN report discussing the role of men and boys in the pursuit of gender equality around the world put it, "Men's power over women in many contexts necessitates working with men to change the conditions of women's lives" (Lang, Greig, and Connell 2008).

Third, and perhaps most fundamentally, men also have a gender and their relation to gendered policy making deserves a theoretically grounded framework to understand. Men are not simply non-descriptive representatives and cannot be understood only via their absence of female-ness when considering their role as a representative. Further, by looking mostly at women, we fail to see the ways that male gender identity intersects with other important identities that we know to be significant in shaping political and legislative behavior, including but not limited to race, sexuality, class, and age. Intersectionality theory and empirical research on intersectionality in politics has demonstrated the enormous variation within women, and how important these intersecting experiences of identity shape politics in significant ways (Hawkesworth 2005; Brown 2014). Just as 'femaleness' has very different implications for white and

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<sup>3</sup> Members of the lower house or single house, as per IPU data -- <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>

black women (for example), so too does maleness, and its relationship to women and the SRW, vary on dimensions including race and sexuality. Further, in ignoring change over time, we miss important shifts in gender dynamics in legislative bodies and political arena more broadly.

Fourth, a focus only the actions of women themselves means we miss a potentially additional “impact” of women’s presence: that women influence the actions of the men around them. The value of understanding women’s “impact” on men is not to *justify* the presence existence in legislative bodies but to *reveal* the additional work of representation that may be being carried out by women, and to point to the limitations of male dominated chambers. This research ultimately reveals unseen ways in which women are significantly impacting upon the political discourse and legislative behavior in the case of the United Kingdom.

Understanding the impact of the presence of women on men, moreover, also helps avoid falsely attributing changes behavior to women. For example, if one imagines a scenario where women MPs act fairly consistently over time on a given issue, but men change over time in a way such that they are now more similar to women, analyzing only the sex difference of women (by, for example, using the coefficient for ‘women’ in regressions as an indicator for a “gender gap”) might lead one to conclude that women

are no longer “making a difference” or changing the legislative body in any significant way, when the opposite may in fact be in the case.

I advocate then, for both a critical examination of men’s role and a holistic approach to understanding gender roles in the SRW. I argue that we should shift away from looking at sex difference, and instead consider the gendered divisions of labour – considering how both men and women do or do not represent women, and how the actions of men and women interact with one another. This approach opens conceptually important avenues of empirical exploration.

### ***Men and representation***

Though the focus in gender and politics has been on women a few areas of political science serve as notable exceptions. In International Relations (IR), for example, feminist IR scholars have long been attuned to the masculinist norms and practices in the realm of international politics and war (Enloe 1989; Dudink, Hagermann, and Tosh 2004; Hooper 2001; Messerschmidt 2010). Political scientists considering the role of men have often looked to work in sociology, where there has long been work on men and masculinities (Messner 1993, 1997; Carrigan, Connell, and Lee 1985; Ducat 2005; El Feki, Heilman, and Barker 2017; Kimmel 2013, 2010; Chapman and Rutherford 1988). In the study of men and masculinity in both IR and sociology the focus has been on masculinist

norms and the way that men's behavior is shaped by their gender, with the power and constraints that that brings.

Recent work in comparative gender and politics on men and representation has taken a similar approach to the study of men. An emerging area of work has considered the ways that masculine norms in politics shape women's descriptive representation; they have argued that the continued underrepresentation of women should be seen as a problem of men's overrepresentation (Bjarnegård 2013, 2018; Johnson 2018, 2016). This conceptual shift, as Murray argues (2014), causes researchers to ask new questions, and rather than looking to the areas where women are lacking, attention is focused on areas where men are protecting their power in ways that cause women's exclusion.

Bjarnegård's work has focused on the importance of homosocial capital as a resource that men are able to use to gain and maintain power, and her 2013 book focused on male networks of power in Thailand. Johnson's work on Russia (2016) and Iceland (2018) illuminated the role that impermeable male networks of power play in the continued exclusion of women in politics, given the power of the importance of male networks and the fact that "women do not come to politics with the social capital of being male, with an easy way of meeting the criteria for being the (masculine) ideal political leader, or with the possibility of homosociality with those who dominate elite networks" (Johnson 2016, 648).

This work on men and descriptive representation usefully sets the stage conceptually by making the case for the importance of moving away from studying men as “the unquestioned norm, as non-gendered political beings” (Bjarnegård 2018, 5). My key contribution builds on this and looks beyond women or men’s inclusion or exclusion from politics, to what men and women do once they enter political spaces, particularly in terms of attempting to represent women – and in doing so my project represents an important new direction for this emerging body of work.

### ***Men and the substantive representation of women***

A small body of work in political science, along with work in other fields on analogous contexts, offer clues as to the role that men do or could play in substantively representing women. As argued already, though engagement is usually at lower rates than that of women MPs, rarely is the substantive representation of women *only* carried out by women. Though usually not explicitly theorized, accounts of politics across time and space include acknowledgement of the presence of men in the substantive representation of women. We see this acknowledged implicitly in work on the substantive representation of women by women where rarely, if ever, do accounts of SRW claim that the work is being carried out *solely* by women actors. More explicitly, as mentioned above, Celis and Erzeel’s (2015) asked (men and women) lawmakers whose interests they think they represent, as well as what they have done as a lawmaker to substantively represent

women. Using their self-reported answers, they categorize almost half as “Critical Actors” for women. Though women men are underrepresented in this group relative to their presence in the legislative group, this still represents a significant set of actors.

Recent conceptualization of men and women’s relationships with SRW comes from Bergqvist, Bjarnegård, and Zetterberg (2016). They distinguish between ‘external’ and ‘internal’ mandates to substantively represent women. External mandates constitute the expectation from others that they will represent groups or issues; an internal mandate is the extent to which an individual internalizes this kind of expectation and feels a sense of responsibility to act on an issue. Bergqvist et al. find that women are subject to significant external mandates to represent women’s issues, in a way that men are not.

They describe this phenomenon as “gendered leeway”: “Female politicians are blamed if they do not pursue ‘women’s issues’ while male politicians get credit if they do,”(6) giving men in politics “the privilege of larger maneuvering room that enables them to speak within the gender-equality discourse without being delegitimized when they prioritize other issues” (ibid.). Bergqvist et al. illustrate their argument by looking at party officials and debates within the Swedish Social Democratic Party (a party that self-identifies as feminist) on the issue of parental leave policies. They conduct in-depth interviews with high level Social Democrats to gain insight into the underlying expectations men and women had for themselves and their colleagues in terms of who is

responsible for gender equality issues, and find strong evidence of dynamics of gendered leeways.

Work from psychology and sociology helps bolster the finding that men have a diminished sense of internal mandate on the issue of gender equality. A key concept here is the idea of “psychological standing”, which is “a subjective judgment of legitimacy to perform an action” (Miller, Effron, and Zak 2011). A lack of psychological standing in men on the issue of gender equality means that men do not get as actively involved because of a belief that, as men, it is not appropriate or their place to do so. Psychological standing is an important concept to understand the motivation (or lack of motivation) for otherwise supportive men to get involved in gender equality efforts and advocacy. Psychological standing is distinct from enthusiasm or boredom, or favorable or unfavorable attitudes – a man could be both enthusiastic and feel very favorably about the issue of gender equality, but a lack of psychological standing on the issue may lead them to decide not to actively get involved on an issue related to women or gender equality. The idea of psychological standing offers a good distinction that reminds us of the lack of direct correspondence between attitude and action.

Work in sociology has found that psychological standing amongst men is indeed a key determinant of their engagement in gender equality initiatives. Sherf et al. found that lower levels of male participation in gender-parity initiatives in the workplace can be

explained by the lower psychological standing they experience; a man with a similar level of attitudinal support for gender parity policies as a female colleague is less likely to participate than the female colleague (Sherf, Tangirala, and Weber 2017). Similarly, men were less likely to join a pro-choice organization than their similarly passionate women counterparts, presumably because of a lack of direct connection and thus psychological standing (Ratner and Miller 2001).

It is not only men that are shaped by their sense of psychological standing (or lack thereof); in another study by Ratner & Miller (2001), when faced with the scenario of a shift in funding away from an issue that specifically affects men (research on a cure for a male disease), even those women who were opposed to a similar degree as men were more reluctant to act on the issue (for example, by going to a meeting).

In some ways, these differences in willingness to engage on an issue reflect simple self-interest – humans tend to be more interested in problems and policies that directly affect us. However, self-interest does not fully capture the dynamics of psychological standing. It is not only those directly affected by an issue that might have some sense of psychological standing, but also those who feel a subjective sense of shared experiences or group membership. For instance, Sherf et al. note that membership of a social group can result in individuals feeling a sense of legitimacy to act on an issue that impacts others in their group, even if they are not directly impacted. They give the

example of gay men engaged on the issue of restroom access for transgender people – where gay men may feel a greater sense of legitimacy to act despite it not being an issue that impacts them, because they “share the larger sexual minority space” (Sherf, Tangirala, and Weber 2017, 196).

These findings about the possibility of psychological standing for fellow group members broadly defined points to the import of looking at variation with men in understanding when or why men might seek to represent women. Gay men, for example, may feel more of a sense of legitimacy to act on issues of gender equality given their experience with the limitations of heterosexual masculinity (and their shared membership with women of the group of people who are not heterosexual men).

Another way in which people can feel a sense of psychological standing even if not directly impacted comes from membership of a social group somehow culpable for a larger transgression; Miller and Effron (2010) offer the example of men who feel a sense of legitimacy - and even responsibility - to act in the case of violence against women even when they have not committed any such acts.

Finally, the lack of internal mandate for men to act for women is accompanied by, and in some sense caused by, a lack of external mandate for men to act on women’s issues (and, because many see them as synonymous, gender equality issues more broadly). Clayton, O’Brien and Piscopo’s (2019) experimental study touches on a part of

this, in considering the perceived legitimacy of decisions made by all-male panels versus gender-balanced panels. The all-male panels were viewed as less legitimate by both male and female citizens, especially in cases where women's rights are being rescinded. The design of this particular study, however, makes it hard to distinguish between perception legitimacy of men acting on this issue versus the perception of legitimacy attributed to the gender imbalance. At a minimum though this example demonstrates an intuitive point: men speaking for women alone are likely to be viewed as less legitimate than conversations where women are also speaking.

### ***Can the presence of women change men?***

The question of how and when women's presence politics could change men's behavior has not been extensively addressed. A small body of scholarship in political science on the influence of presence in legislative bodies, and a larger series of pieces addressing close or analogous cases, provide a basis for my theoretical and empirical contributions.

In one of the few pieces that does directly considers the influence women might have on men in politics, Kokkonen and Wängnerud (2017) looked at the impact women in local politics in Sweden had on their male colleagues' self-reported attitudes and behaviors. The study offers mixed results for such an impact - a phenomena they term the "spillover effect" of women in politics. Kokkonen and Wängnerud find a positive

correlation between the proportion of women elected in a locality and male politicians' commitment to gender equality as an ideal, but the effect is weak and does not reach statistical significance.

Perhaps more importantly though, while they find some purported positive attitudinal change, this is not reflected in personal action on the part of men. Kokkonen and Wängnerud find that a change in local council composition, from “from 25 [...] to 55 percent female politicians reduces male politicians' willingness to personally strive for women's interests by 0.13 units, from 3.16 to 3.03 [on a scale that ranges from 1 to 4].” (13). There was no similar pattern found among female politicians when the gender balance in the local councils changed. They theorize that there is a benign neglect on the part of men who, though supportive, feel less of a sense of urgency to engage in issues of women's equality when their legislative chamber is more gender balanced.

In a broader exploration of similar dynamics, Kokkonen and Karlsson (2017) look at “intergroup friendship” as a possible complement to descriptive representation for achieving substantive representation. They too use a survey of elected representatives in Sweden's municipalities, which includes questions about their friendship ties with five historically disadvantaged groups: women, immigrants, youths, pensioners, and blue-collar workers. Their survey results suggest, in general, a significant correlation between a representative's friendship ties to these groups and their commitment to represent them.

However, there is variation within groups; while friendship ties with youth and blue-collar workers is significantly predictive of a desire to substantively represent those interests, no such effect is found in the case of women. One conclusion to draw from this finding is that women's presence politics is not likely to impact men's behavior, given that in this example they seem impervious to influence. However a couple of reasons suggest caution. First, friendships outside the context of the political body represent a different kind of relationship and discursive context than female colleagues. And second, unlike the other groups asked about in Kokkonen and Karlsson's study, women are largely integrated into broader society and men's daily life. So while there maybe variation in contact with female friends that the survey was able to capture, women are integrated into men's life such that the survey question may not have been able to capture the meaningful differences in these relationships (for example, one might imagine that having female colleagues who are your equal is differently impactful to having female friends you know through your spouse).

This study was testing the principle of longstanding ideas within sociology and psychology about the impact that intergroup contact can change attitudes towards outgroups. Often known as "contact theory", the basic idea is that the experience of coming to understand a group that you do not belong to via contact reduces stereotypes and other negative beliefs and increases the chance that a person might be empathetic towards that group. Pettigrew (1998) outlines four interrelated mechanisms that explain

this effect: first, intergroup contact leads to learning, and the correcting of previously held incorrect views about the outgroup. Second, new situations require conforming to new expectations and behavior adjustment based on new information. Third, intergroup contact can lead to affective ties, including empathy and admiration, that changes the way that the group and their actions are viewed. The fourth and final mechanism, that has the potential to bring about larger changes, is ingroup reappraisal as a result of the contact and attitudinal and behavioral changes. (Pettigrew et al. 2011)

Allport (1954) held – and scholars since have reiterated – that there are factors that while not determinative can facilitate reduced prejudice and increased attitudinal sharing: “(1) equal status of the groups in the situation, (2) common goals, (3) intergroup cooperation, and (4) the support of authorities, law or custom.” (quoted in Pettigrew et al. 2011, 273). This theory would suggest that politics could be a productive place for influence via intergroup contact, given that elected office provides both the support of law and equal status<sup>4</sup> amongst MPs.

Empirical work testing the impact of women’s presence on male behavior from contexts outside of politics tests the theoretical ideas of contact theory. In particular,

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<sup>4</sup> The relationship amongst MPs does not reflect one of perfectly equal status; seniority and positions within parties hugely determine status within parliament, and we know that these are likely to be gendered in terms of who has status. However, there is an equality amongst MPs, each of whom have a single vote and were elected by a constituency.

research on the judiciary finds connections between the presence of women on panels of judges and the outcome of the group. This work considers not only if the sex of a judge effects first their own decisions (individual effects), but also if the presence of a woman judge effects the decision of their fellow judges (panel effects). In an important piece that tests the prominent theories of sex effects on judging, Boyd, Epstein & Martin (2010) find that in the case of judgements around sex discrimination, there are both individual and panel effects. They find that deciding in favor of the party claiming discrimination decreases by about 10 percentage points when the judge is male (thus, there are individual effects), and when there is a woman serving on a panel with a man, that man is significantly more likely to rule in favor of rights of the litigant claiming discrimination (panel effects). This work would suggest that, especially in forms of political activity and engagement that involve discussion and working together, the presence of women may affect the decisions and outlooks of men.

Such an effect also seems to take place at an institutional level in the context of workplace norms: Bartel et al. (2015) find that fathers in occupations with a high share of female workers much more likely to take paternity leave, suggesting that the presence of more mothers taking leave may make it easier for fathers to do the same without feeling like this will disadvantage them in the workplace.

### **Impact of familial relations on men**

One manifestation of the ideas underlying contact theory is seen in research on the impact of family connections, and in particular men who have daughters. This body of work suggests there may be a sense in which men can become greater advocates of the substantive representation of women when they are more exposed to the gendered experience of girls and women's lives – to an extent that goes beyond contact theory by suggesting that it is not only exposure by the fact of kinship ties that make familial relationships impactful.

The most directly applicable finding here comes from work on how having a daughter shapes the voting of male politicians. Washington looked at the US Congress and found that a Member of Congress's propensity to vote liberally on reproductive rights increases as the number of daughters increases (Washington 2008). However, this effect is small one, and recent work reevaluating this claim found that the effect disappears when controlling adequately for party (Costa et al. 2019). In another political decision making context - that of the courts - Glynn and Sen (2015) find that US Courts of Appeals judges who have daughters vote in a more feminist fashion on gender issues than judges who have only sons.

Similar theory has motivated work on the impact of having a daughter on the opinion and voting patterns of voters. Results are mixed: research on UK in the from the 1990s and early 2000s suggested that, controlling for other factors, each additional

daughter increased the change a parent would vote for a left-leaning party (Labour and Liberal Democrat) increased by approximately 2 percentage points (Oswald and Powdthavee 2008). Conversely, in the US context, Conley and Rauscher found that having a daughter consistently and significantly increased the chance the person will vote Republican (Conley and Rauscher 2010), and Lee and Conley examine the question again in the context of both the US and Europe, testing for robustness of effect, and find null effects of the sex of the child (Lee and Conley 2014).

In a more recent study on fathers in the US, Sharrow et al. (2018) focus not on partisan allegiances in general, but look at gender equality policies in particular and the impact of having a daughter(s) on the father's attitude. They find that while the effect of having a daughter in general, or and the effect of having a higher proportion of daughters, does not appear to shift gender equality attitudes, the experience of "first-daughterhood" (having a daughter as your first child) does indeed increase fathers' support for policies aimed at increasing gender equality. In a similar enquiry, using cross-sectional and experimental survey data, and looking to the 2016 US Presidential election, Greenlee et al. (2018) confirm this finding on the importance of first-daughterhood, and find that fathers who have daughters as their first child were more likely to vote for Clinton (as well as fictional candidate making an appeal to fathers to support women for the sake of their daughters, in an experimental setting).

Of course, a father-daughter relationship is in most ways different to the impact of the presence of women in parliament. However, it does speak to the broader question of whether men's attitudes on policies effecting women based can change based on their day-to-day interactions and their understandings of women's lives – which, in different ways, is true of both female family members and the presence of women in politics. This work demonstrates the possibility of broader influences on one's gendered viewpoint than solely an individual's identity. And there is reason to believe that the presence of women, at least in some situations, shifts the perspective held by men, with at a minimum some greater consideration given to the lives of women.

### **Impact of the presence of other minority groups**

Finally, research on the impact of the presence of other underrepresented groups in politics points to the possibility of small groups of legislators influencing their colleagues. Haider-Markel, Joslyn, and Kniss (2000) studied the effects of the presence of lesbian and gay legislators in US local politics and found that not only did gay and lesbian legislators themselves advocate – and in many cases successfully achieved substantive policy outcomes for gay and lesbian voters - but also that their presence had an effect on non-gay elected officials. Thus, this suggests that women might change the decisions of their male colleagues with regard to substantive representation of women even while still a minority of MPs.

Work on alliances between minority ethnic groups and women in the case of the US also provides useful analogy. As Barrett (2001) showed, black men are more likely than white men to support women-oriented policies in state government, with levels of support similar to that of white women; Minta and Brown (2014) find similar patterns in their examination of minority legislators in Congress, with women's interests being pursued through the efforts and minority men and women (minority and white). They conclude that diversity is important not only from a direct correspondence between descriptive representatives and groups they descriptively represent (e.g. women and women legislators), "rather, it is the collective commitment by minority men and women legislators to represent underrepresented constituencies and to cooperate to achieve those goals that make greater attention to women's issues possible." (267).

These patterns suggest that it is possible for internal mandates to come from an intersectional empathy, but also – as Minta and Sinclair-Chapman (2013) argue – a "diversity infrastructure", where minority and underrepresented groups come together to pursue their interests in the absence of a numerical majority that allows groups to independently pursue their interest.

This is an example of how minority groups in politics can achieve policy gains by working with other minority groups, suggesting that the presence of women working with particular groups of men, such as gay or ethnic minority men, could lead to women

having an impact beyond only their own actions. Further, it points to the importance of looking for within group diversity among men, and considering how membership of a marginalized group shapes men's behavior towards women. As I explore in chapters 4 and 5, gay and minority ethnic male MPs in the UK context articulate a sense of shared aims with women, as well as a greater understanding of what it means to be oppressed or underrepresented in power. However, the fact of shared or similar oppression certainly is not a sufficient condition to result in alliances amongst underrepresented MPs - Celis and Erzeel (2013) and others show that underrepresented or minority groups can sometimes become competitors rather than allies.

#### MEN AS "ANCILLARY REPRESENTATIVES"

Men have always been present in some form in the substantive representation of women, and their role and the interaction of this role with women's presence represents a conceptual gap. As eluded to earlier in this chapter, theorizing of men's role in the SRW not only adds to an understanding of the processes of substantive representation of women, it also exposes the false neutrality in many discussions of the 'impact' of gender in politics, which is most often implicitly or explicitly understood to be the ways that women are different to men. Such assumptions are based upon the idea that men are a neutral and unchanging base, devoid of gender and thus a straight forward baseline from which women can be understood.

Using men as a neutral base for SRW rests on flawed logic and misses a key aspect of gendered political behavior – men’s engagement with women’s issues. I argue that men’s engagement in SRW is not done despite a man’s gender identity but because of it – and this is true even though men tend to be less engaged in issues of substantive importance to women. As I explore in Chapter 5, there are facets of some men’s identities and experiences that shape, in very gendered ways, their role as representatives for women.

I argue that men’s engagement in SRW is a significant act of representation, and I theorize the role men are taking here as that of “ancillary representatives”. The word “ancillary”<sup>5</sup> captures the secondary but distinct role of men in the representation of women and references the supportive nature of the role that many men take on in the case of substantively representing women. I theorize that it is largely the case that men play a less significant role than women in the substantive representation of women, and men’s role is not only a smaller version of the role played by women, but is different in deeply gendered ways.

Though legislators engage with varying degrees of engagement across all issues regardless of whether they are descriptive representatives or not, I argue that male

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<sup>5</sup> Ancillary is defined in the OED as “Subservient, subordinate, ministering,” and “Designating activities and services that provide essential support to the functioning of a central service or industry,” (“Ancillary, Adj. and n.” n.d.)

engagement in SRW is distinct. The nature of legislative bodies as gendered institution means that this representational relationship is unique and worthy of a theoretical framework. As Puwar (2004) evocatively discusses in her book *Space Invaders*, political institutions have long been dominated, but numerically and culturally, by men. In most issue areas then, men's voices are not subservient and may even be elevated due to their being the somatic norm. The instance of men engaging in representation of women, because of the topic in hand, is a rare exception to this. As Puwar outlines, in both material and immaterial ways legislative bodies are designed and function with men in mind, meaning that when women and underrepresented ethnic minorities enter, they are viewed by others and themselves as "space invaders" – disruption that occurs when the oppressed take places reserved for the privileged. Irigaray describes the multitude of forces that together communicate to men as a "palace of mirrors" (Irigaray 1985, 137) – which Puwar points to as a useful way of understanding the experience for white men navigating the UK parliament, who walk through corridor walls adorned with pictures of predecessors who look much like you. One of many results of the gendered space and order of parliament is a gendered division of labor on tasks of representation, and it is in this context that men's substantive representation of women is a distinct – and ancillary – mode of representation.

Thus, the gendered nature of the space itself makes men's engagement on women's substantive representation distinct, but also telling. The ways in which men do

or do not engage on issues of women's representation can tell us things about the gendered order of the institution; I explore this aspect of men's ancillarization in chapter 3, where the case of International Women's Day debates offers an example of an unusually feminized space, and the reaction of male participants is illustrative of their lack of both familiarity and comfort with the situation. My theory captures three ways in which men play ancillary roles: as secondary actors, from a distinct vantage point, and shaped by women.

#### **(I) Men as ancillary representatives: secondary actors**

First, men largely act as secondary actors in the representation of women - in non-leadership roles, and engaged in legislative behaviors that are lower intensity than that of many women. This is a dynamic recognized by both men and women, and is understood as a product of men and women's different relationships to the lives and experiences of women. This aspect of men's role as ancillary representatives is seen when comparing types of legislative behavior undertaken by MPs: in Chapter 2, I find that men and women sign onto petitions at similar rates, but men are much less likely to propose a petition on women's issues themselves. In Chapter 3, men who attend International Women's Day debates are much less likely than women who attend to make a substantive speech, and when they do speak often acknowledge that they are not the primary subject of debates on women's issues and are cognizant of this more limited role.

The idea of men as secondary actors in the SRW is, implicitly at least, already well established by the literature on women in politics that shows that it is mostly women who are the primary actor in the case of SRW (the corollary of this being men as the secondary actor). This pattern it is also intuitive when considering the politics of presence; Phillips notes that though women will have allies among men but we can't expect the "degree of vigor" that people bring to "their own" concerns (Phillips 1995, 186).

However, an important nuance I add to our understanding of men's secondary role is recognizing that though the vigor may be less than that of some women, experiences and identities adjacent to women's experiences can mean that, at least partially, women's issues can come to be "theirs". For example, as I discuss in chapter 5, some gay male MPs described a partial understanding of women's experiences that comes from their own experiences being marginalized for not conforming to the male heterosexual norms. These men felt that they shared with women an understanding of the limits of patriarchal structures, and as a result felt somewhat connected to issues of the SRW.

## **(II) Men as ancillary representatives: a distinct vantage point**

Second, men as ancillary representatives substantively representing women offer a distinct vantage point, reflective of the gendered power structures they exist in. Importantly, the perspective men can bring is not only defined by a lack of female-ness

but comes with both resources and perspectives that arise out of being men in politics. In some cases, men have access to legitimacy and respect, male dominated networks and, due to continued gender imbalances and historic organization of parliament, political power. In Chapter 4, some men describe their responsibility as men in politics as to elevate the status of women's issues, aware as they are of the credibility, they can bring to it in a still male dominated institution. In addition, in the same way that women's lived experiences make them more connected to women being represented, many issues specifically pertaining to women – such as domestic violence – involve the lives of men, even when the focus of the policy is to protect women. In Chapter 5, I discuss how some male MPs I interviewed were engaged on the issue of violence against women not despite but because of their being men, feeling that as a man was familiar with the way men talk about masculinity and violence they were well placed to contribute to the topic. In other words, while their gender makes men secondary in the act of substantively representing women, they can bring unique contributions to the table that can be helpful.

### **(III) Men as ancillary representatives: shaped by women**

Third, ancillary representatives are necessarily engaged with – influenced by and influencing – women who are seeking to substantively represent women. This aspect of men as ancillary representatives reflects the conceptual shift that motivates this project, recognizing that men and women's actions in in substantively representing women are

necessarily interconnected. Neither can be used as a neutral comparison group for understanding the other; they are interdependent and fundamentally related. Gender is, after all, relational; as Carrigan, Connell and Lee put it, “the change in one term of a relationship signals change in the other” (Carrigan, Connell, and Lee 1985, 551).

Further, in the case of SRW, men’s role is distinctly shaped by women’s leadership because women are the descriptive representatives. This project finds that much of the work men are doing to substantively represent women is not separate to efforts of women, but rather – as the choice of word ancillary indicates – in support of the efforts that women are already engaged in. As I outline in Chapter 4, men I interviewed who were active on women’s issues spoke of their role as not that of a leader, but rather as an ally or a supporter. This is particularly noteworthy and significant in the context of politics more broadly given the masculine and male-dominated nature of legislative bodies; SRW is a rare area where fitting the somatic norm of male does not afford a Member of Parliament immediate authority on an issue.

The reverse is also true: men’s ancillary representation shapes what is possible for women MPs. If the substantive representation of women is reliant on the efforts of women, there is a tension with a desire to see women able to focus on issues that particularly affect women on the one hand, and the goal to see women fully a part of traditionally ‘male’ policy spheres that impact but are not specifically concerned with

women on the other hand. If we want women at every table, and to also have “tables” that remain focused on issues pertaining to women in particular due to the continuing deeply running inequalities in society for women, then if men do not join the “women’s tables” one of three things will happen: women are expected to do additional work, as full participants of ‘mainstream’ policy issues as well as being particularly engaged on SRW; or, women focus on SRW and as a result other areas of politics are even more male dominated than the overall political body; or, women’s issues get comparatively neglected. The larger point here is that women’s actions as descriptive representatives do not exist in a void, and the role of men is key to shaping women’s opportunities and what they deem necessary to take on. Similarly, the very role of ancillary representative as I theorize it is itself shaped by women and their leadership and example.

#### THE CASE OF THE UK

This project draws on the case of the United Kingdom to illuminate, test, and theory build ideas around men’s representation of women’s interests, and what it means to be an ancillary representative. This provides a good case to study the impact of women in office primarily because the House of Commons has seen significant changes in the representation of women in parliament over the last three decades, as demonstrated in

Figure 1, with significant variation in both the proportion of women and the rate of change of proportions (with a particularly large influx of women following the 1997

election). In 1997 the number of women in parliament doubled from 60 to 120, a change almost entirely due the Labour party's contingent of women going from 37 to 101 (Duckworth, Cracknell, and Keen 2015), which in turn was a result of both the party's landslide electoral victory and the introduction of their gender quota measure 'All-Women Shortlists' (AWS) policy. Gender quota measures are a key cause of the increase in women's representation around the world (Krook 2009), and in the UK the party-specific implementation of the quotas creates useful cross-party comparisons.

Evidence to date tentatively indicates that, at least in some senses, the influx of women in the House of Commons has increased the substantive representation of women by women. In interviews with Labour's Women MPs from the 1997 cohort, Childs finds that many women claim to have acted 'for women' (2004a). Childs' interviews suggest that many of these women believe this influence has been done 'behind the scenes', as indeed is the case of much of the political activity in the UK Parliament. Both causes and impacts of an increased number of women has been widely studied – including the fate of women elected via the Labour Party's internal party quotas (Allen, Cutts, and Campbell 2016; Allen 2013; Nugent and Krook 2016; Childs and Withey 2004, 2005), and the 'style' of women MPs following the increase in 1997 (Childs 2004a; Devlin and Elgie 2008; Cowley and Childs 2003). Despite this substantial research agenda around what is a pertinent issue in contemporary British politics, male substantive representation is to date unexamined.

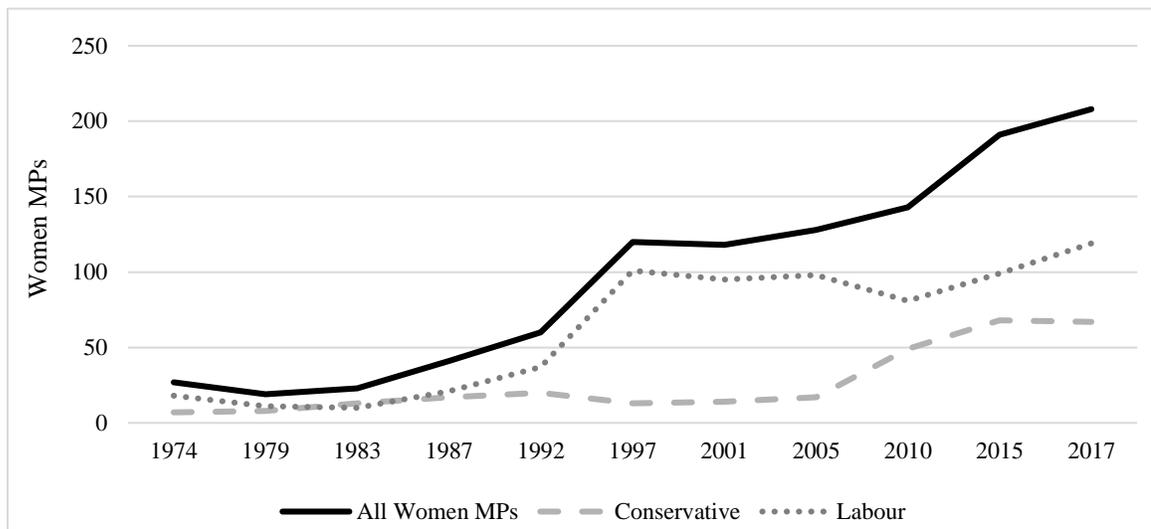


Figure 1: Women MPs in the House of Commons, 1974-2017

### *Measuring parliamentary behavior*

When considering representation and the roles of an MP, voting is the most obvious and arguably significant formal action of an MP as an elected representative. It is in their ability to cast votes that the power of an MP ultimately lies. In part because of the importance of votes in parliament – also known as ‘roll call votes’ – as well as the rich data that MP’s voting records can offer, voting is often used by scholars seeking to measure the substantive representation of women in politics. The use of roll call votes to measure the substantive representation of women most looks for sex differences in male and female voting patterns, usually controlling for party to try to isolate the role that

individual's sex plays (E.g.: Burrell 2013; Hogan 2008; Vega and Firestone 1995; Simon and Palmer 2010; Frederick 2009; Osborn 2012).

In the case of the House of Commons, however, MPs' voting records offer little insight into how an individual's identity (in this case, gender) might shape their representative actions. This is largely due to extremely high party loyalty: almost half of MPs currently in the House of Commons have never rebelled against their party whip in a vote, and 99% of MPs have rebelled in fewer than 5% of votes, as Figure 2 shows.<sup>6</sup> Thus, voting is important, but in the UK context is almost entirely a reflect of party position, and thus tells us little about how individual traits of MPs shape their role as a legislator and representative.

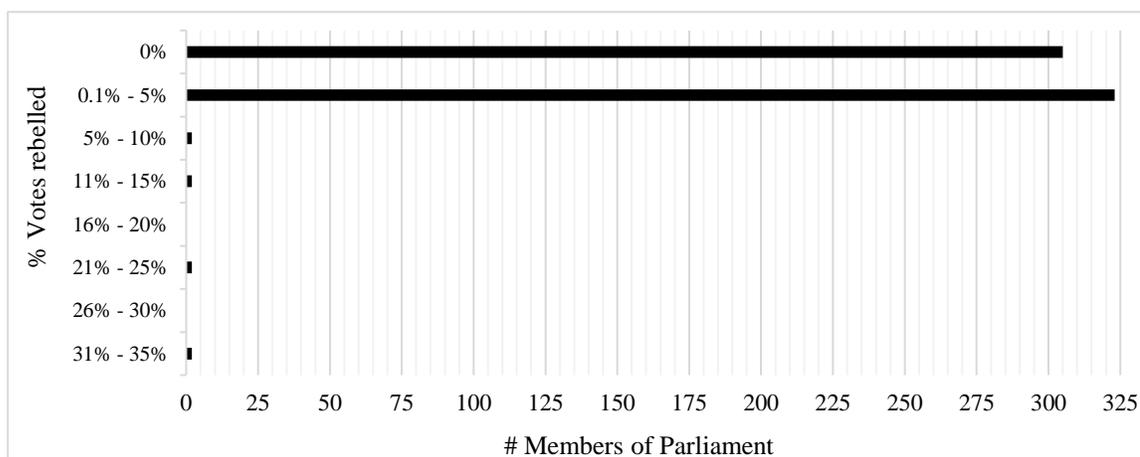


Figure 2: Rebellion rates for MPs, September 2018. Source: [www.publicwhip.org.uk](http://www.publicwhip.org.uk)

<sup>6</sup> Analysis based on data from <http://www.publicwhip.org.uk/mps.php?sort=rebellions>

For this reason, very little research on the UK Parliament on women's substantive representation uses MPs' votes as a measure of MP's policy positions. A notable exception amongst work on women and politics is that of Cowley & Childs (2003), who exploit the rarity of rebellion to look at sex differences amongst MPs. Following the Labour Party's use of All-women shortlists and the subsequent historic election of 101 Labour women MPs in 1997, this cohort of women – nicknamed in the media “Blair's Babes”<sup>7</sup> – were subject to significant scrutiny in the media and by other politicians, with headlines including “Why I am sick of women MPs,” (Mitchell 1998) and “Are Blair's babes dumb?” (The Independent Voices 1998). Cowley and Childs tested one dimension of these critiques: that the newly elected Labour women were ‘spineless’ and blindly loyal to the party.

Cowley and Childs found the 1997 cohort of Labour women were indeed less likely to rebel from the party line in votes than their male colleagues; however, as Cowley & Childs – as well as the MPs they interviewed – argued this could equally be described as a different style of politics, rather than a weakness on the part of women. The strategic decision to rebel here is not necessarily a weakness and may not even be a difference in policy preferences, but rather a slightly different style or approach to

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<sup>7</sup> Named following an iconic photo was taken with Labour party leader and newly elected Prime Minister Tony Blair and all of the women newly elected. Years later newly selected women in the Conservative Party under David Cameron leadership would be named “Cameron's Cuties” (Groves 2009).

politics. In a parliamentary system party loyalty is a necessary condition for career progression within parliament, and relatedly loyalty is necessary if an MP wants to influence their party's position and agenda. As a result, not only are deviations from party line in votes rare providing few data points for study, but loyalty to the party is also a function of strategic alliances and thus a poor indicator of policy or ideological preferences of individual MPs.

Many of the limitations of votes as a measure are a product of the formal and informal rules in the House of Commons; yet, even in legislative chambers where legislators have more independence and thus roll call votes can give some insight in political position, voting for or against a motion is still a limited piece of data. That an MP ultimately agrees to vote in favor of a motion does not indicate the strength of their support for that issue, nor how they prioritize that issue over others.

Because of the limitations of roll call votes as a measure, and because it is a central function of legislative bodies, bill proposing is another measure often used to measure legislators' behavior and preferences in general and substantive representation of women in particular. Bill proposals – and in some institutions, sponsorship and co-sponsorship - demonstrate a level of commitment beyond that of voting and is usually a reflection of the legislators' strongest held preferences and priorities. A notable example of the use of bill sponsorship is scholarship on SRW in US politics. The US Congress

provides members with significant leeway to sponsor legislation themselves, and for other members to join as co-sponsors, and so scholars studying SRW at the national and state level in the US have commonly used bill sponsorship to operationalize the substantive representation of women by women (Swers 2002, 2014; Wolbrecht 2002; MacDonald and O'Brien 2011; Osborn and Kreitzer 2014; Osborn 2012). Similar institutional features in many South American countries' legislatures have led to many scholars of SRW in South America to examine bill sponsorships (Escobar-Lemmon, Schwindt-Bayer, and Taylor-Robinson 2014; Barnes 2016; Taylor-Robinson and Heath 2003).

Bill proposing does not translate into useful measure of SRW in the context of the UK House of Commons. As in many parliamentary systems, individual MPs do not have the ability to propose legislation: the governing party holds majority control of the House of Commons and is largely in control of the legislation proposed and debate agenda. There is a notable exception in the UK is the provision for Private Members Bills, which allow individual MPs not in the Government to propose legislation. However, they are rare and extremely limited in the scope granted to MPs (Rush 2005, 167; Norton 2011, 327). Private Members Bills (PMBs) can be easily derailed by procedural mechanisms (usually enacted by the Government), and only around a dozen days a year are dedicated to PMBs, and rarely progress as legislation.

PMBs are occasionally successful – most notably, David Steel’s (now Lord Steele) 1966 Private Members Bill that became the 1967 Abortion Act, effectively legalizing abortion in the UK. But as with most PMBs that succeed, this was only possible because the Government was already supportive of such a bill, and Steel’s high position in the ballot to propose that year<sup>8</sup> provided a handy vehicle for the issue (see: Stetson 2001). The need for Government support is evidenced by the fact that no PMB from an MP of an opposition party has been successful in making it into law for in the last 10 years (Priddy 2017).

Other scholars have approached the dilemma of measuring the representative acts in a system of parliamentary government by looking not at proposing or voting on legislation, but instead on what MPs say in debates (Back, Debus, and Muller 2014; Catalano 2009; Celis 2006; Pearson and Dancey 2011) or in written questions (Bird 2005). This can prove a useful, both of legislator’s policy preferences and priorities as well as an act of representation itself, and this analysis of debates is an approach I use in Chapter 3 when looking at International Women’s Day debates. However, any given debate or issue will only capture a small proportion of MPs and does not allow us to get a fuller picture of positions taken – or not taken - by MPs more broadly. The aim of this chapter is to

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<sup>8</sup> A random ballot determines which backbench MPs are able to propose their PMB, and in what order (Governance Office 2016).

look at as full a picture of possible when considering who is seeking to represent women and how.

In sum, many of the measures scholars might use in other cases of legislative chambers, are not viable – or at the least very limited - in the case of the UK Parliament. This is not to say that MPs have no significance, however. As Ross puts it, in parliamentary systems “...most real work is done outside the chamber.” (2002, 192).

Thus, alternate measures are required, that in part can serve as proxies for an MP’s behaviour and policy positions more broadly. One such example of a useful proxy, that I use in chapter 1, are Early Day Motions (EDMs). EDMs are parliamentary petitions proposed by MPs, and supported with signatures from their colleagues, that have no policy impact but allow MPs to express a sentiment on the record. EDMs have the advantage of being free from constraints of party whips, and also of being easy to propose and sign which results in there being a large number of EDMs each session. This means that the body of EDMs in any given year provides a rich picture of MP perspectives, that offers a good clue as to how MPs might act in other situations in their political life that may be more impactful.

## OVERVIEW OF THE DISSERTATION

The solution I opt for, as will be elucidated in future chapters, is to use multiple points in the legislative process, and to draw on both direct observations of legislative

actions (speeches, formal petitions, attendance of a debate) and on accounts from the MPs themselves on how they see their place in Parliament. I also use mixed methods, with chapters 2 and 3 mostly drawing on quantitative methods, and chapters 4 through 6 using qualitative analysis of interviews. Mixed methods help to gain a holistic picture, capturing aspects of the political process that would not be visible if using only one methodological approach (Bamberger, Rao, and Woolcock 2010; Cresswell and Clark 2011; Lieberman 2005).

Chapter 2 uses Early Day Motions on women's issues – or as I term them, Women's Early Day Motions (WEDMs) - to look levels of support for women's issues over time. I look at the sex and party of both proposers and signers of WEDMs from the early 1990s to 2018 and use quantitative tools to consider how the composition of WEDM supporters changes (or doesn't) over time, and what role men take in the proposing and supporting of WEDMs. I find that men's role in the signing and proposing of WEDMs over time is remarkably stable, but find evidence of some diffusion of engagement on women's issues amongst men across the party spectrum. I find evidence of the secondary nature of men's role in support my theory of men as ancillary representatives: though there are similar rates of WEDM signing, there is a clear gendered division of labor in the proposing of WEDMs with women MPs consistently initiating motions on women's issues.

Chapter 3 looks at men's role in International Women's Day debates, which have taken place most years since the early 1990s in the House of Commons on International Women's Da. These debates again provide multiple indicators of engagement – including who spoke at all, who gave a speech, and what the direction for their speech was. The chapter draws on data on all speakers at International Women's Day debates, as well as data on each debate to track changes over time. The chapter also takes a qualitatively look at how men's place and role in the debate is discussed in the course of the debate speeches; expressions by men of their sense of ancillarization are illuminating and reveal how they see their relationship to women's issues and consequently how MPs view the space of the House of Commons more broadly.

The latter half of the dissertation uses in-depth interviews with (mostly sitting) MPs that I conducted in 2018 with 30 politicians. To compliment this, I also use a set of archived in-depth interviews, the Harman-Shephard Collection, of 80 mostly women MPs conducted in 2004. This rich data source allows me first, in Chapter 4, to draw out the ways in which men and women see the role of men in SRW. I explore a tension in the accounts of the male MPs between, on the one hand, seeing their engagement on women's issues as like any other issue they deal with in as an MP as part of a broader set of commitments to equality, and on the other hand seeing the SRW as a distinct mode of representation for them as a men representing women. I expound on this distinct role and

the way in which men can use their position in the gendered power structure of parliament to successfully advocate for women.

Chapter 5 looks at the “why” of men’s SRW and explores how men describe their decisions to engage on the substantive representation of women and their motivations. I theorize that men’s motivations to engage in the SRW are theoretically consistent with feminist theories about the importance of women’s representation, and I develop a typology of key motivating gendered experiences that shape men’s participation in the SRW – namely relational, direct, and resonant experiences. Chapter 5 thus serves to develop ideas of positionality and the importance of lived experience in political representation.

The final substantive chapter looks at the relationship between men’s SRW and women’s presence in parliament. Drawing especially on the observations of women MPs in my interviews as well as from the Harman-Shepherd collection, I identify three key ways in which women are shaping men’s role, in ways that (by design) usually go unseen. In particular, I outline the ways that women’s presence facilitates men’s role as ancillary representatives for women through changing culture, galvanizing interests in women’s issues, and serving as a resource for men looking to serve as a support.

Taken together, the look across time and in different settings, and with accounts from a range of MPs, I offer a theory of the role man can and do play in the

representation of women's issue. I point to the existence of men's ancillary representation of women, that is implicit in much of the existing literature on the substantive representation of women. In making men's role in the representation of women explicit, I offer a clearer account of the inextricably connected roles that men and women play in the representation of women's interests in politics. As one interviewee told me while he was grappling with ways to explain the impact he felt women had made in politics, "because this isn't a laboratory experiment we can't separate stuff out"<sup>9</sup> – and in that vein this dissertation does not make firm deterministic causal claims, nor will it account for every act of SRW by men. But rather, it presents a picture of men's place in the gendered order of parliament by observing the role they play in the substantive representation of women and analyzing the framing and experiences of MPs themselves.

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<sup>9</sup> Interview 22

## CHAPTER 2: GENDERED DIVISION OF LABOR AND THE SIGNING OF WOMEN'S ISSUES EARLY DAY MOTIONS

This chapter looks to legislative behavior of Members of Parliament (MPs), and in particular the case of Early Day Motions. I ask two questions: first, what is the role of men in the proposing and signing of Early Day Motions (EDMs) on women's issues? And second, has the gendered division of labor and role of men in the signing of women's issues EDMs changed over time?

### EARLY DAY MOTIONS

Early Day Motions (EDMs) are a type of parliamentary petition MPs can propose, second, and sign. Parliament's website describes EDMs as "Formal motions submitted for debate in the House of Commons. However, very few are actually debated. EDMs allow MPs to draw attention to an event or cause. MPs register their support by signing individual motions."<sup>10</sup> EDMs can be tabled by any MP and must be a single sentence consisting of no more than 250 words (the desire to maximize the words the in the motion while still complying with this requirement results in many semi-colons). EDMs appear in the printed 'vote bundle' of bills before parliament every day, are reprinted when an

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<sup>10</sup> Parliament Official Website's EDM page: <http://www.parliament.uk/edm>

MP's name is added, and are accessible online.<sup>11</sup> There are a large quantity of EDMs tabled each parliamentary session, with a yearly average of 2000 tabled EDMs and 90,000 signatures over the last decade.<sup>12</sup>

While some MPs refuse to sign them in light of their “ineffectiveness” and in opposition to the administrative cost involved, and convention dictates that Ministers do not sign EDMs,<sup>13</sup> most MPs regularly propose and sign Early Day Motions – with an average of just over 80% of all MPs signing or proposing at least one EDM in a given year.<sup>14</sup> An Early Day Motion can be a way to raise an issue in parliament, appease an interest group, or express opinions in order to demonstrate members’ support. EDMs can also be an important way for MPs to demonstrate responsiveness to voters in their local constituency – demonstrated in the regularity of local press reports covering the tabling of Early Day Motions. It is quite common for an MP to table an EDM to congratulate a local sports team on a particularly impressive victory. One important feature of EDMs – and where they differ from simply a public statement – is that they are subject to

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<sup>11</sup> It is reprinted for the rest of the week it was first proposed, as well as the week after, if any other MPs add their name. It is then reprinted on any Thursday thereafter if names have been added during the preceding week. EDMs fall at the end of each session (Rogers and Walters 2004, 271).

<sup>12</sup> Calculated from the EDM database: <http://www.edms.org.uk/>

<sup>13</sup> Parliament Website, ‘What are Early day motions?’: <http://www.parliament.uk/about/how/business/edms/>

<sup>14</sup> Numbers taken from data analysis of EDMs 1990-2017.

parliamentary privilege, offering MPs more scope in the remit of discussion than is offered in general and in the public. Further, they go on official records, allowing the MP in question to say that they ‘tabled a motion in Parliament’; if an MP mentions an EDM in the context of a debate in the House of Commons the full text of the EDM will be transcribed in Hansard, the record of all debates in parliament (Flynn 2012, 60).

Due to the non-binding nature of EDMs, MPs are free to sign EDMs as they please. Further, unlike House of Commons votes, EDMs can be signed while not physically in Parliament through an online system: so whereas the variation in attendance at votes is partly shaped by the fact some MPs live a lot closer to Westminster, this is not an issue with EDMs. Thus, though not the source of significant policy change, EDMs have value as an indicator of political feeling in Parliament. As Rogers & Walters (2004) note, they can be “useful source of intelligence for the whips” (272), and Paul Flynn MP writes in his book *How to Be an MP* that “Early Day Motions are still the best gauge of parliamentary opinion” (Flynn 2012, 59). As one MP noted in a Parliamentary committee on the subject: “I know that they can be used to demonstrate cross-party support for issues as part of a wider campaign”<sup>15</sup> – and given that there are effectively no formal expressions of cross-party support in the form of bills or votes, EDMs fill a void of

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<sup>15</sup> House of Commons Procedure Committee: Early Day Motions. First Report of Session 2013-2014: <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmselect/cmproced/189/189.pdf> pp. 6

information. Though many EDMs do not garner more than a handful of signatures, widely signed motions can serve as an important indicator of feeling in Parliament and thus as impetus for a campaign; notable examples include an EDM proposed by Margaret Thatcher in 1979 which led to a vote of no confidence in the Callaghan government (Flynn 2012, 61), ultimately paving the way for her own Prime Ministerial career.<sup>16</sup> The fact that EDMs are used as a gauge of MP opinion means that EDMs are in themselves a mode of substantive representation. Further, that they are used by party leaders and insiders as a useful measure of means that EDMs suggests they are useful indicator for my purposes.

Early Day Motions have not been very widely studied, nor have they been used often as a measure of ideology, representation, or parliamentary behavior. One notable exception is Kellermann's (2012) model that used the signing of EDMs to create a measure of ideology, and found that "The estimates obtained have greater face validity than previous attempts to measure preferences in the House of Commons, recovering the expected order of parties and of members within parties." (263). This lends support to Early Day Motions as a reasonable measure of other activity and ideological positions in

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<sup>16</sup> Of course, the claim that the EDM 'led to' the no confidence vote is hard to prove; indeed, it is unlikely that absent the ability to propose such an EDM the Callaghan government would have stayed in power. There are many other routes by which MPs can bring about no confidence votes. The relevant observation here is simply that EDMs are a tool that can be used to have a very public record of MPs support on an issue, facilitating party leadership or coalitions of MPs to bring about an action safe in the knowledge that they have sufficient support, and that they provide good and high profile indicator of MP and party feeling.

the Commons. In later work, Kellermann (2013) suggests that EDMs are an effective political tool for MPs in engaging their voters, in demonstrating both that there is a positive and significant relationship between sponsorship of EDMs and better electoral outcomes, and that MPs from competitive constituencies introduce more EDMs than those from less competitive districts.

There is also existing work that suggests EDMs are a viable and utilized means through which MPs might substantively represent women. EDMs were mentioned by a number of the Labour women MPs Childs interviewed as a means by which they can raise and promote issues important to women (Childs 2002, 144). Childs and Withey (2004) looked systematically at EDMs and at the sex differences in the signing to see if Labour's women MPs were indeed 'acting for women' in this regard, and looking at all of the EDMs in the 1997 session (around 5000) they found that Labour's women are more likely than Labour's men to sign "women's", and especially feminist, EDMs. In another piece, Childs and Withey (2005) illustrate the use of EDMs as a means to substantively represent women with the case of the campaign regarding Value Added Tax (VAT) on sanitary products. VAT is only levied on products deemed 'luxury' items, and until 2000 this included sanitary products. In response, and reflecting discussions by the women in the Parliamentary Labour Party (PLP), Labour MP Christine McCafferty tabled three EDMs on the issue. The three motions were widely signed, particularly by Labour Women (receiving a total of 174, 188 and 247 signatures). The Treasury eventually made

the decision to change the tax status of the products. It is hard to pin down the precise cause' of the policy change, and it seems the immediate trigger was an appearance by McCafferty on the popular radio show "Woman's Hour." It is clear though EDMs were at the very least a *part* of the process of substantively representing this feeling (Childs and Krook 2008b, 137–38). Finally, we can see evidence that EDMs are an act of representation by observing that MPs behavior area appears to be responsive to election cycles: as the below graph demonstrates MPs are more active in the proposing and signing of EDMs in the parliamentary session immediately before an election (shown as the darker bars on Figure 3).

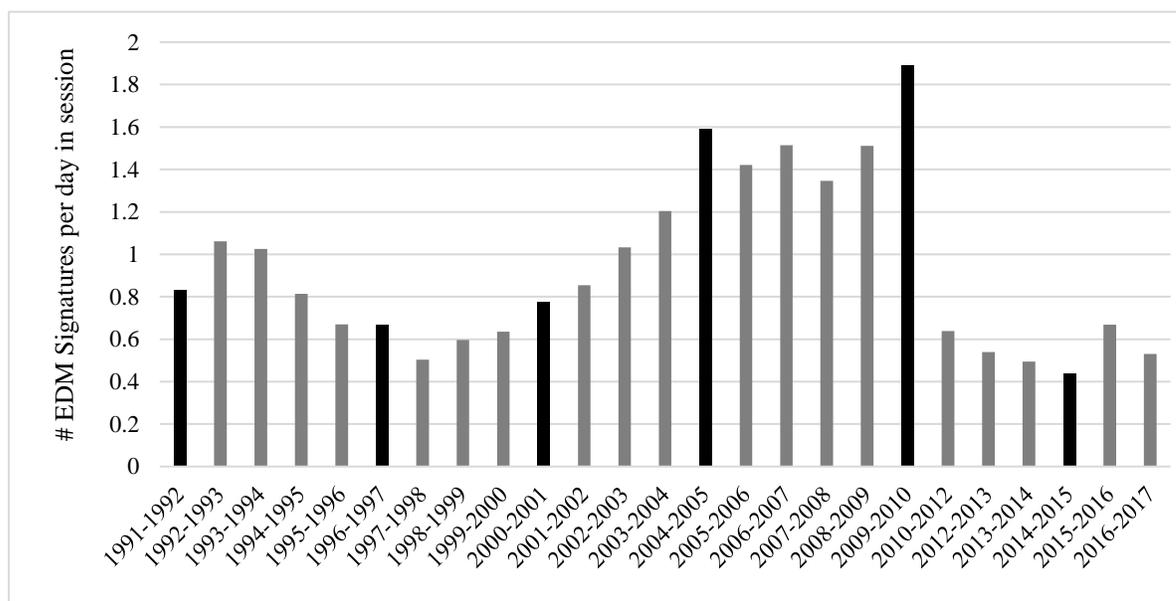


Figure 3: Average number of EDM signatures per day per eligible MP, by parliamentary session

Like all measures that essentially serve as proxies - here as a proxy for an MP's policy preferences and priorities - Early Day Motions are a limited measure. EDMs have

no actual policy implications, and are merely an expression of a viewpoint; as Flynn notes they are often derided as ‘parliamentary graffiti’ (Flynn 2012, 59). But, just as graffiti artists markings are not random and may well tell us important things about the artist, EDMs are indicative of an aspect of MPs preferences and have the advantage of being numerous in number and unconstrained in their rules.

## DATA & METHODS

I collected the Early Day Motions proposed during each parliamentary session immediately before and after a general election between 1991 and 2016.<sup>17</sup> This period – from the early 1990s up to almost the present – constitutes both a significant chunk of time and is a politically coherent era. The start of the 1990s marked the start of the post-Thatcher era (Biddiss 1987), and importantly for any study on gender in politics, the time period of British politics that incorporates significant changes in the number of women as explained in Chapter 1.

In order to maximize the time span over which the study covered, I selected the years immediate before and after each general election, capturing the bookends of each Government, and including the pre-election year which as Figure 3 and the work of

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<sup>17</sup> EDMs came from <http://www.edms.org.uk/>, which is a project of mySociety, a non-for-profit social enterprise. The Early Day Motions come directly from Parliament’s website.

Kellermann (2013) demonstrate includes the significant pre-election years. This gave me 12 years' worth of EDMs, with the length of these sessions, and the number of motions and signatures shown Table 1

Session	Days in Session	# Motions	# Signatures
1991-1992	83	1,089	30,727
1992-1993	240	3,156	135,747
1996-1997	86	830	30,349
1997-1998	241	2,029	72,108
2000-2001	83	768	33,930
2001-2002	201	2,179	97,081
2004-2005	65	1,116	55,743
2005-2006	208	3,194	166,153
2009-2010	60	1,328	57,473
2010-2012	295	3,124	93,008
2014-2015	133	944	26,456
2015-2016	158	1,089	30,727

Table 1: Parliamentary sessions before and after general elections between 1991 and 2016.

I then identified all those EDMs that could be considered a 'Women's Early Day Motion', which I define broadly as any Early Day Motion that explicitly has women, or some subset of women, and their concerns as the "primary subject matter" (Reingold 2000, 166–67) – meaning the main concern of the motion, with the women's related issue

being the central feature that appears to be the motivating force for the motion. An EDM was categorized as “women’s” when it is explicitly particular concern of women for either “biological or social” reasons (Cockburn 1996, 14–15; Lovenduski 1997, 708; Childs and Withey 2004). For example, both childcare - which is of particular concern to women due to their disproportionate caregiving responsibilities but not as a result of biological necessity - and pregnancy or abortion provisions are included, pertaining to social and biological necessity respectively. The following example was included as one where women’s issues were the “primary subject matter”

EDM 399, 1992-93, Maternity Services: *That this House welcomes the Health Select Committee report on Maternity Services; and calls upon the Government to make the necessary arrangements to ensure the recommendations of this report are brought into practice at the earliest opportunity.*

By contrast, the follow EDM was not included:

EDM 1279, 1992-93, Doorstep Milk Deliveries: *That this House recognises the importance of maintaining a comprehensive service of doorstep milk deliveries, which have not only been a long-standing feature of life in Britain, but which provide especially for old and disabled people, and for mothers with children, and which act as an informal social service through the visits of those who make the deliveries; and calls upon Her Majesty's Government to adopt policies that will secure the continuation of that service in the future.*

EDM 1279 was not included, despite the fact there was an explicit reference to women as mothers (and not “mothers and fathers”), but here the provision of milk and its nutritional value is clearly central to the motion in question. While reference to mothers and children is not accidental – and a sign of an important gendered consideration – the spirit of the motion would be intact if the reference to mothers was excluded. By contrast,

the spirit and gist of EDM 399 is inseparable from the issue of Maternity services – an issue that is inherently centered on women.

To identify WEDMs in my sample years I first used key word searches using synonyms of women's and girls and words surrounding issues that specifically pertain to women.<sup>18</sup> I also skimmed through the title of all EDMs for each session, reading the full motion of any title that seemed like there was a chance it could pertain to women or women's issues. After being identified I went through and read the text of the motion in detail and included only those motions where women and their concerns were the 'primary subject matter'. The most common exclusion at this stage was motions that included the word 'women' in the course of describing, for example, "brave men and women serving in the armed forces". I also excluded motions about a particular woman who had done something noteworthy, unless either the noteworthy act or the EDM's description of the noteworthy act was particularly relevant to the fact of their gender. For example, the following *was* classified as a Women's Early Day Motion:

EDM 2022, 1992-3, Rebecca Stephens: *That this House offers its best congratulations to Rebecca Stephens upon her brilliant and unique achievement in being the first British woman to ascend Mount Everest.*

And the following was *not* classified as a Women's Early Day Motion:

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<sup>18</sup> Such as women, woman, girls, ladies, lady, female, gender, sex, mothers, children, childcare, pregnancy, pregnant, abortion, contraception.

EDM 446, 1996-7: Death Of Iris Bentley: *That this House is saddened by the recent death of Iris Bentley, who loyally and unstintingly devoted her life to winning a posthumous pardon for her brother Derek, hanged 44 years ago on 28th January 1953 for the murder of PC Sydney Miles; extends sympathy to her family and sends its best wishes to her daughter, Maria Dingwall, who promised her mother to continue the campaign; also remembers the family of PC Miles and expresses its deep sympathy for their suffering; and urges the Homes Secretary to bring forward a rapid final decision in order that this unpleasant chapter in British judicial history is brought to an end.*

In EDM 2022, the fact of her being a woman was central to the motion – the “achievement” that was being referenced was her being the first woman to do it. Conversely, though the primary subject matter of EDM 446 was the life and death of a woman, nothing about the motion indicates that there the author was female; if the name Iris was switched out for Ivan (and “mother” switched for “father in the second subclause), the meaning of the motion and its sentiments would remain the same.

I then code for two additional features of the motion. First, directionally, utilizing the principles used by Childs & Withey (2004), coding each EDM as either feminist, neutral, or anti-feminist. Feminist is defined as “those that sought to expand women’s opportunities” and anti-feminist motions are those that “sought to restrict women’s opportunities” (Childs and Withey 2004, 555). Almost all of the anti-feminist motions proposed were anti-abortion, along with a few seeking to limit access to birth control or limit the space where women can breastfeed on parliamentary property. “Neutral” were most commonly issues such as women’s health – where the policy or principle was of particular concern to women but was not directly related to an expansion or loss of rights

*as women*. Neutrally coded EDMs also included, per Childs and Withey, issues where there was debate amongst feminists (such as on sex work or pornography).

Second, I distinguished between ‘policy’ and ‘non-policy’ motions; policy motions were those calling on the government to enact, continue, or end some kind of policy action. Non-policy EDMs are those that state some view, that may have policy implications, but that do not specifically advocate for a solution, or advocate for some other non-government body to do something. Once the women’s EDMs (WEDMs) were identified the proposer, seconder(s)<sup>19</sup> and signatories for each motion were compiled. The number sex of the proposers, and the sex breakdown for seconders and signatories were also recorded for each motion. This motion is an example of a “policy” motion:

*EDM 1364, 2010-12, Women Bishops: That this House welcomes the current moves by the General Synod of the Church of England to pass legislation permitting women to be bishops; notes that the Synod is currently engaged in consulting the Dioceses on the Women in the Episcopate: draft bishops and priests (consecration and ordination of women) Measure; further notes that General Synod expects to debate the final approval stage of the Measure in July 2012; encourages the House of Bishops to commend the Measure as currently drafted; and calls on Her Majesty's Government to remove any exemptions pertaining to gender under existing equality legislation, in the event that the Measure has overwhelming support in the dioceses but fails through a technicality to receive final approval in General Synod.*

And the following was classified as “non-policy” motion:

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<sup>19</sup> Proposers of EDMs can opt to have ‘seconders’ for their motion – other MP(s) who also are founding signatories of the motion. Not all EDMs have seconders.

EDM 526, 2014-15, Women Bishops: *That this House welcomes the adoption by the Church of England of legislation which will allow women to be ordained as bishops in 2015; praises the work and words of the Archbishop of Canterbury who said that men and women are equally icons, witnesses and vessels of Christ for the world; notes that the first women priests were ordained in 1994; and is looking forward to welcoming the first women bishops.*

While both EDM 1364 and 526 are on a similar topic, and express similar sentiments, only has implications for government action; EDM 1364, in calling on the Government to amend equality legislation to allow the Church of England, has implications for government in a way that is not true of EDM 526.

In order to compare the patterns of WEDM proposal, I also collected and analyzed data regarding proposing and signing patterns of MPs for EDMs more broadly. This created two additional datasets. First, a dataset that included every MP that proposed at least one EDM in a given session, including sex and the number of EDMs proposed for each session between 1991 and 2017 – a total of 7,823 MP-session cases.<sup>20</sup> The second dataset included every MP that signed at least one EDM in a given session, again with added variables for the sex of the MP; this dataset includes a total of 12,979 MP-session cases and includes data on parliamentary sessions between 1991 and 2017. This data on general EDM activity is used to contextualize the patterns of WEDM proposal and signing, and in particular the number of EDMs proposed and signed in a given session

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<sup>20</sup> “MP-session cases” because this dataset does not include 8423 unique MPs but rather MPs for a given session – as each session is circa one year and most MPs appear more than once.

(broken down by sex) is used as a denominator in some of analysis to garner rates of WEDM proposal in the context of overall EDM proposal.

## HYPOTHESES

As discussed in chapter one, scholarly research and lay intuition tells us that fewer men than women will sign and proposer women's EDMs: both internal and external mandates are more likely to foster the signing and proposing of WEDM for women. These differing senses of mandates amongst men and women MPs would also predict the gender gap to be particularly acute in the case of more significant and costly tasks – in the case of Early Day Motions, we would predict that there would be a significantly decreased role for men in the proposing of WEDMs, but a more equal gendered division of labour in terms of signing of WEDMs. .

Work from psychology on the idea of “psychological standing” (Ratner and Miller 2001) reinforces this idea: men's relative lack of psychological standing on issues concerning women might make men cautious to take on the leadership-esque role of WEDM proposer. Proposing is also costlier an action than simply signing – involving drafting the motion and using finite time and political capital to get colleagues to sign on. This is consistent with Kokkonen and Wängnerud's (2017) work, which found that while men are just as likely to profess a commitment to feminist ideas in surveys (a measure close in cost to the act of signing an EDM), commitment drops off when it comes to

proposing legislation (i.e. a costlier act than declaring support). This leads to my first hypothesis:

*H1. Men will take on a more limited role in the pursuit of Women's Early Day Motions, signing at WEDMs at a lower rate than women and proposing at a lower rate still.*

As outlined in chapter 1, the period of my study includes significant changes in the number of women in parliament (see chapter 1,

Figure 1). Work from sociology and psychology on the impact of a group and network level attitudes on individual attitudes would suggest that the changed gender balance could bring about changes in men as well as women. 'Social comparison theory' suggests that one assesses the correctness of views by comparing to those views held by those around them (Festinger 1954; Visser and Mirabile 2004; Suls, Martin, and Wheeler 2002) – and by this logic, the increased presence of women should encourage men in parliament to show greater support for women's issue. Work from other contexts – including workplace dynamics, judge panels, and public opinion (as explored in chapter 1) suggests that the presence of women's perspective could widen the set of views against which men are assessing their correctness, and thus we might expect at least marginal shifts in the views of men.

Chapter 1 also addressed the most direct study of this question to date, namely the work Kokkonen and Wängnerud (2017) who look directly at the question of women's influence on men in politics using a survey of local politicians in Sweden. They find only limited evidence of a "spillover effect" of women's presence on men's behavior, and only in the profession of support (rather than in engagement any costly action). This important distinction suggests caution in predicting the degree of impact of women on men, and suggests that in line with the patterns of engagement predicted in H1, the impact of women's presence on men's behavior will be mostly limited to the signing of early day motions. Thus, H2 cautiously predicts that:

*H2: Male MPs will be more supportive of women's issues as the presence of women MPs increases, and will sign WEDMs at a higher rate.*

Finally, a consideration of broad impacts of women in politics would suggest that the increased presence of women in parliament could lead to mainstreaming of issues that women are more likely to raise – including across party lines. The broad party politics literature on contagion theory (see Duverger 1954), as well as the applications of contagion theory in the case of gender policies, tentatively suggests an increasing competitive imperative to engage on women's issues. Matland & Studlar (1996) found 'microcontagion' effects in Norway - parties were more likely to put forward women candidates when other parties had done so in the same district. Similarly, Caul (1999)

found that other parties having a gender quota is a significant predictor for a party to adopt one. Even though the trajectory of women in parliament in the UK has been one of continued party differences, as discussed in chapter one (and illustrated in

Figure 1). Though the representation of women in politics and policy issues aimed at women's equality have traditionally been dominated by Labour women, over time we might expect some diffusion of support for women's interests by MPs – male and female – across the parties due to the pressures of contagion. While hard to isolate the dynamics at play here, change over time in engagement in women's issues by the various parties is a likely outcome of mainstreaming of women's issues and broad institutional change. Thus, my third hypothesis is:

*H3. Women's issues will become less confined to one party over time, and men and women of all parties will become more likely to engage in the proposing and signing of WEDMs over time.*

## FINDINGS

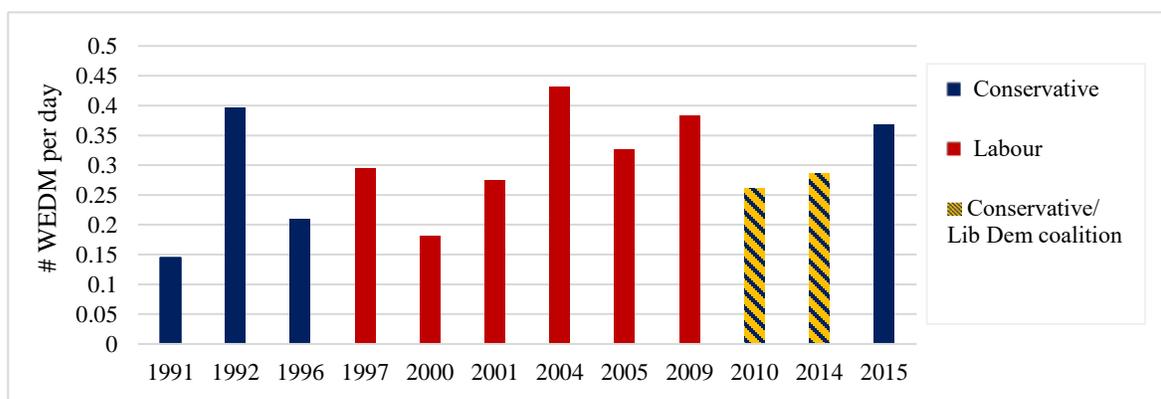


Figure 4: Number of WEDMs per day by Session

In total I identified 558 Women’s Early Day Motion (WEDMs). As Table 1 showed, there is significant variation in the length of each sessions (ranging from 60 to 295 days sitting for the sessions in my sample), so Figure 4 shows the number of WEDMs identified per sitting day for each session. The bars are color coded to indicate the party in Government during that session. Figure 5 shows the breakdown of WEDM each session according to the three categories – feminist, neutral, and antifeminist. Feminist motions constituted the plurality of WEDMs every year except 2000 and 2001, when neutral motions only just overtook feminist motions to become the most common type of WEDM.

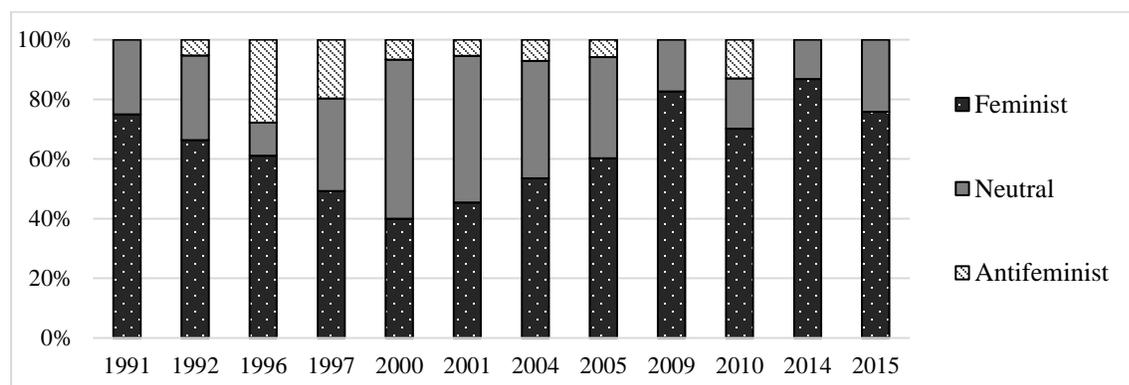


Figure 5: Types of WEDMs proposed, 1991-2015

### ***Proposing and signing WEDMs***

Almost half (48%) of all the WEDMs in this sample were proposed by men. This is in large part because of the substantial numerical gender imbalance amongst MPs during this period, where men made up approximately 4/5 of all MPs who proposed at

least one EDM (on any topic). To account for the difference in numbers of men and women MPs, figure 6 shows WEDMs proposed by men and women as a percent of all EDMs each group proposed, averaged by Government. There is a persistent and significant gap between the rates that men and women propose WEDMs: approximately 10% of the EDMs women MPs proposed were ‘Women’s EDMs’, compared to less than 2% of male MP’s EDMs.

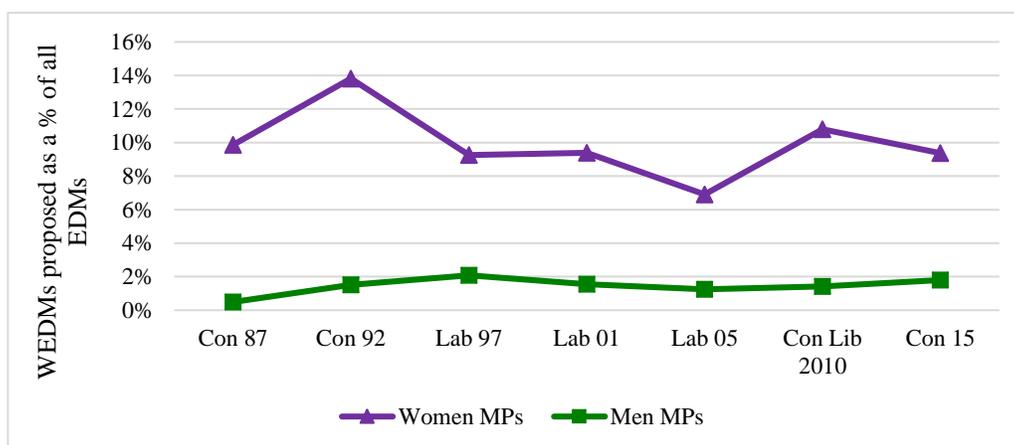


Figure 6: Rates of WEDM proposing (as a percent of all EDMs signed), by gender, averaged by Government

The gender gap in the case of signing is much smaller than in the case of proposing, as a comparison with figures 6 and 7 illustrates. The gender gap does also somewhat narrow over time - due both to men’s slight increase in rates of signing and women’s slight decrease. Though the changes are small and the causal story hard to ascertain, this observation demonstrates the importance of looking not only at how women deviate from men, but how both men and women might change.

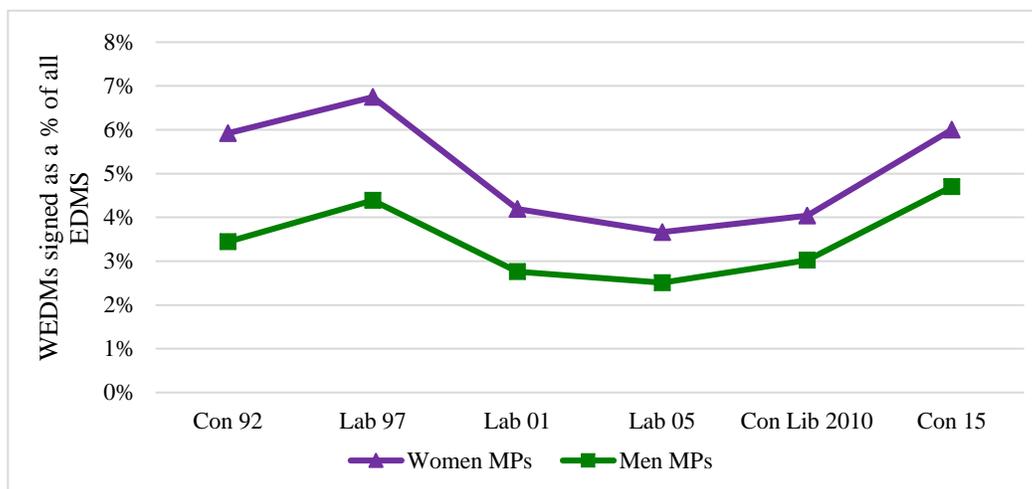


Figure 7: Rates of WEDM signing (as a percent of all EDMs), by Gender, Averaged by Government

Looking at the gendered division of labor a different way, by looking at the gender balance amongst proposers and signers of WEDMs (rather than as a proportion of overall EDM proposing and signing as in figures 6 and 7), tells a slightly different story. Figure 8 and Figure 9 show the gender balance of proposers and signatories respectively for WEDMs, averaged across governments and compared to the overall percentage of Women MPs (illustrated with the black line). In both cases, the gendered imbalance in activity (i.e. the gap between women's share of activity and the overall share of women MPs) is less acute than when looking at rates of signing compared to proposing. That the gender gaps looks more stark in the comparison between figures 8 and 9 (compared to figures 6 and 7) is in part because women and men MPs have somewhat different patterns of EDM signing and proposing overall. In general (for all EDMs, not just WEDMs), women propose fewer motions. During the period of 1990 and 2017, the average women

MP proposed just over 5 EDMs in a given session and garnered an average of 47 MPs' signatures for each of those EDMs. By contrast, men proposed more EDMs – an average of 6.1 EDMs per session – but, each EDM received fewer signatures, averaging at just under 37 MPs. This is both a statistically significant and substantively important difference, with men proposing 20% more EDMs than women overall, but women getting 28% more MP signatures for the EDMs they do propose.<sup>21</sup> As in the case of proposing EDMs, men *sign* more Early Day Motions overall, averaging 142 per session compared to women's 131 (a gender difference that is statistically significant at  $p < 0.05$ ).

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<sup>21</sup> It could be that women (on average) are more selective in their proposing of EDMs, and thus part of their increased success in getting signatures comes from their higher quality petitions that better gauge feeling amongst MPs.

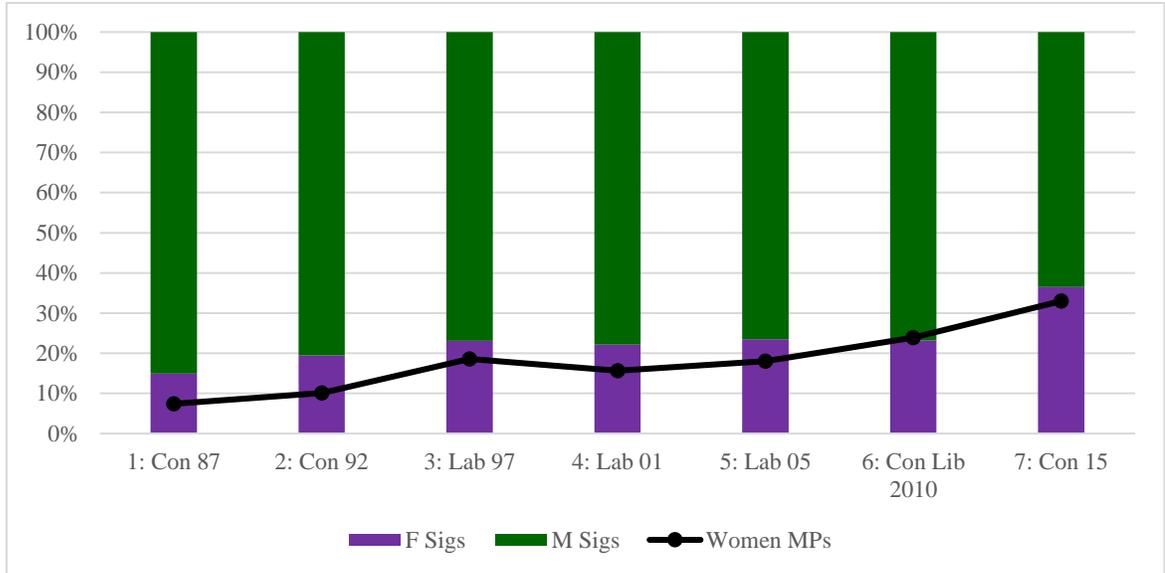


Figure 8: Gender balance of Women's Early Day Motion Signers

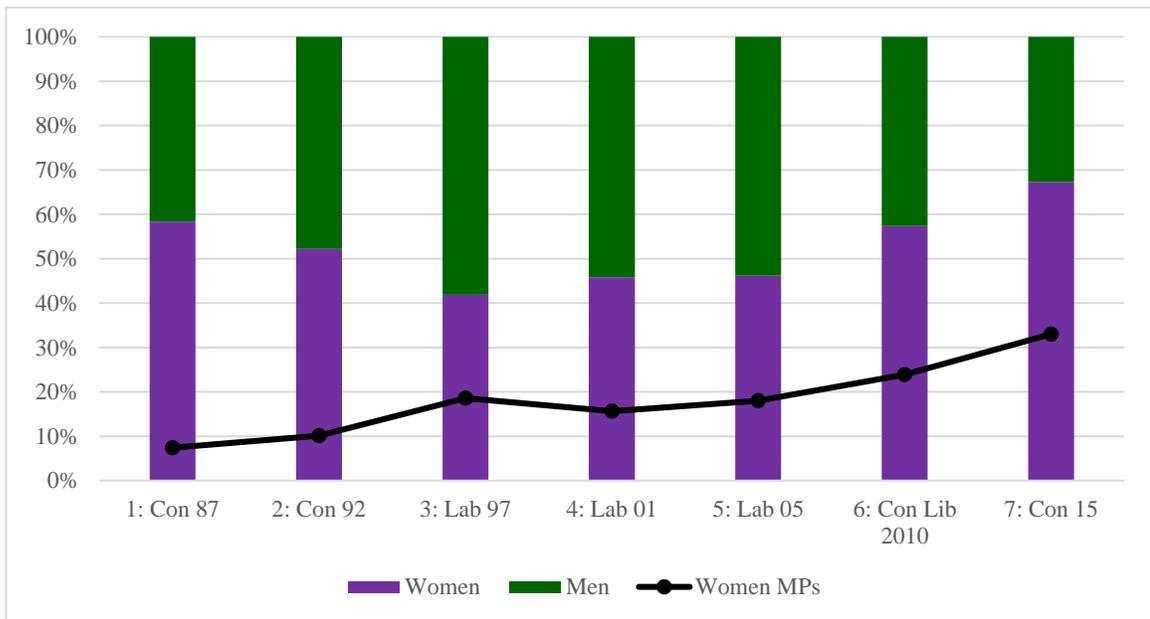


Figure 9: Gender balance of Women's Early Day Motion Proposers

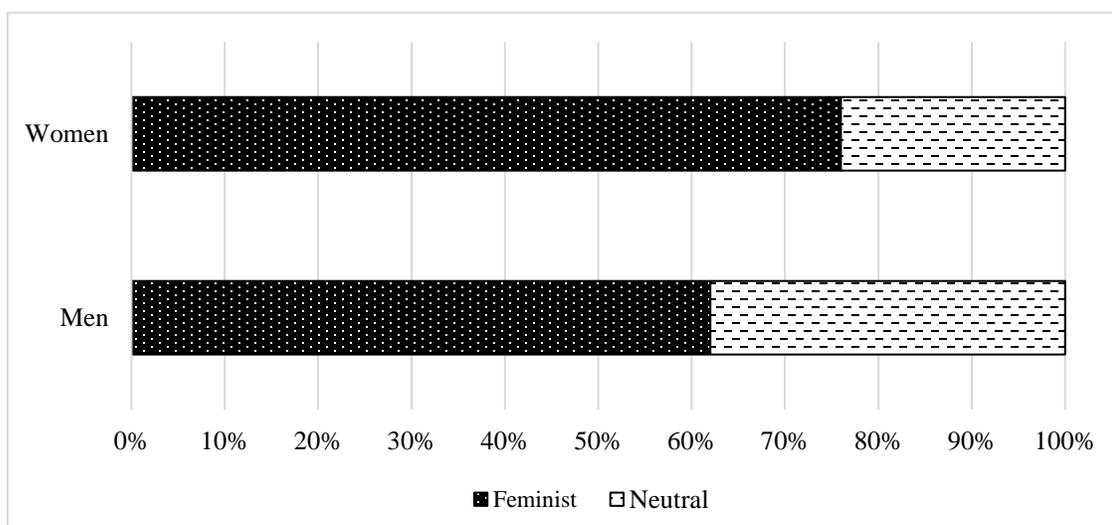
But, even when accounting for these overall differences in men and women's EDM proposing and signing, the gender gaps in signing and proposing of WEDMs are more acute than the gender gaps in EDMs generally.

This difference in gendered divisions of labor between the act of proposing and signing Women's Early Day Motions speaks to the ancillary nature of the role men take on in substantively representing women – they are less likely to be leaders and more likely to be supporters only (be it for reasons of interest and commitment, or because they do not want to speak for women), and are also less involved in higher cost activities. This finding mirrors the conclusions of Kokkonen and Wängnerud (2017) who find that while men and women profess similar levels of support for issues of women's equality, they are not equally likely to actually work on proposals related to women's equality.

### ***Types of WEDMs***

74% of all the WEDMs were 'policy' related – calling on the Government to take, or continue, some action. There were gender differences here were small and not statistically significant: 76% of women proposed WEDMs were policy related versus 71% but insofar as there are gendered patterns here, they are consistent with the idea of men as less engaged in costly political commitments or actions.

Much more significant gender differences are found in terms of the directionality of WEDMs, with women much more likely to propose feminist motions. Looking just at the breakdown between feminist and neutral motions, Figure 10 shows that a much greater proportion of the WEDMs proposed by men were neutral – 38% compared to only 24% for women (this difference between men and women is statistically significant, at  $p < 0.001$ ).



**FIGURE 10: DIRECTIONALITY OF WEDMS PROPOSED**

To get a fuller picture of how the types of actions men take in substantively representing women through WEDMs differs from women, I used a logit regression in order to test multiple variables simultaneously. The outcome predicted is the proposer being a man, with the independent variables being whether the motion was neutral and whether it was concerning an actual government policy, along with a control variable of being proposed by a Labour MP. The full regression output can be seen in Appendix One,

but the key take away was that it was the type of motion – being a ‘neutral’ WEDM – that was the only significant predictor of the sex of the proposer; male proposed WEDMs are more likely to be ‘neutral’ than female proposed WEDMs. The other variables, including party and whether it was a policy issue, are not significant predictors when controlling for what appears to be the more significant feature of direction of WEDM.

***Does the sex of proposer matter?***

In order to understand what if any significance the role of an WEDM’s proposer has, we can look at differences in numbers of signatures garnered for WEDMs, dependent on the sex of the MP proposing. Overall, motions proposed by women garnered 54.7 signatures, compared to 47.6 signatures for men ( $p=0.035$ ). But this seems mostly to be driven by the impact a female proposer has on female signers; a WEDM proposed by a woman gets an average of 13.9 women signers, and a WEDM proposed by a man gets on average only 9.5 women signers. Women proposed motions also garner more male signatures, but the difference is much smaller and does not meet traditional standards of statistical significance; whereas a female proposed WEDM gets 40.6 male signatories, a male proposed WEDM gets an average of 38 male signatories.

The impact of a female proposer seems to be most acute in the case of feminist motions. A female proposed feminist motion gets an average of 58 signatures (15 Women,

43 Men) compared to 46 signatures for a male proposed feminist motion (9 women, 37 Men).

	# Male Signatures		# Female Signatures	
	M Proposed	F Proposed	M Proposed	F Proposed
Feminist	37.2	43.3	<b>9.7</b>	<b>15.1</b>
Neutral	47.0	40.0	11.2	13.7
Anti-feminist	<b>7.5</b>	<b>16.7</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>3.6</b>

TABLE 2

Bolded and colored red are those values there is a statistically significant difference between the male and female proposed motions. A neutral WEDM proposed by a male MP will yield the highest number of male signatures (an average of 47). For women's signatures though, it is a feminist WEDM proposed by a woman that will yield the most women MPs signing the petition (with an average of 15). The sex of the proposer is a significant predictor of the number of signatories for feminist motions, but only for women MPs signing (women proposed feminist WEDMs do get more signatures than male proposed WEDMs, on average, but the difference is not statistically significant). The sex is not statistically significant for neutral motions, for both male and female signatures. For anti-feminist motions, having a female proposer is a significant and substantively large difference; having a female proposer more than doubles the average number of both male and female signatures.

It seems that for WEDMs, having a male proposer is only advantageous for garnering signatures if the motion is neutral, and the advantage for male proposers only extends to collection of male signatories. It could be that a male proposer on a neutral women's issue further signals the neutrality (vis-à-vis feminism), thus making it safer to sign, and limiting any danger that men are concerned for a lack of fellow male support. One could surmise that the increased signatures on WEDMs proposed by women is a feature of their greater perceived legitimacy in advocating on women's issues – and the lack of this effect on neutral motions seems to support this theory. Similarly, the particularly acute gap between male and female proposed anti-feminist WEDMs suggests that the salience of gender and gender inequalities is relevant to how impactful the gender of the proposer is.

***Conclusions: What has changed and what remains the same?***

The overall gendered division of labour of WEDM signing has come to much more closely reflect the gender balance of MPs (see Figure 11). But the shift in gendered division of labour has not changed significantly, and the most striking illustration of men's ancillary role in the substantive representation of women - the much larger gender gap in the case of proposing over signing (as seen in figures 6 and 7) remains remarkably consistent over time.

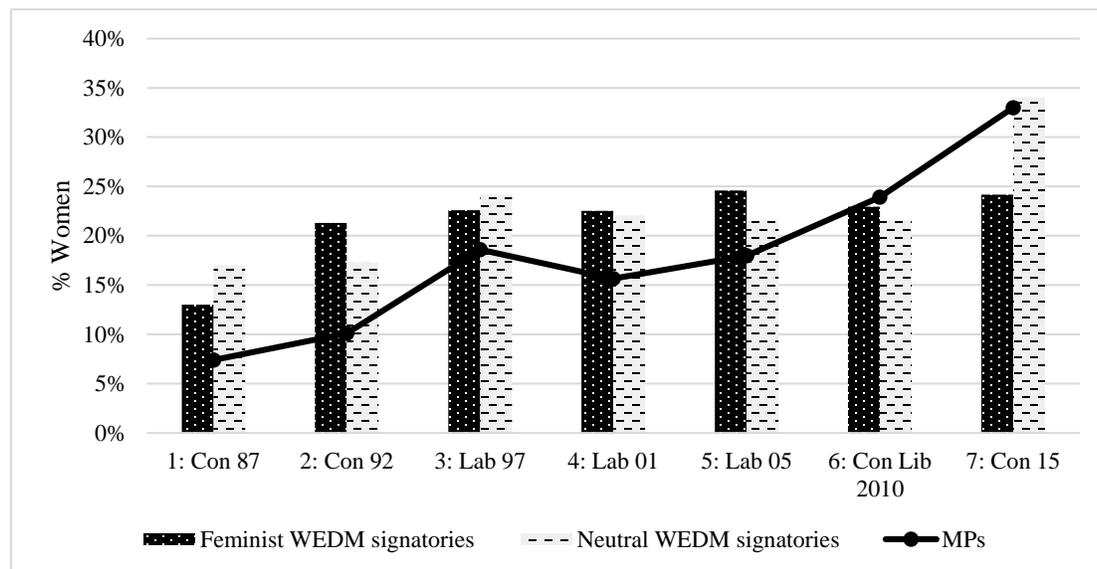


FIGURE 11: GENDER BALANCE AMONG WEDM SIGNATORIES

One area where significant change can be seen is in the party breakdown of those MPs engaged, namely a weakening of the Labour Party monopoly on women's issues. This has been in part from increasing engagement from members of the Conservative Party, but more significant has been engagement from third party MPs. In the most recent parliament - per the 'other' bar in Figure 12 – this has consisted largely of Scottish National Party MPs. Some of the variation in Figure 12 is a result of the changing party make up of the House of Commons over time – in particular, relative rise of the Scottish National Party since 2015. In 1991 when the Labour party held around 40% of the seats in the House of Commons, Labour MPs made up more than 90% of WEDM proposers. By contrast, in 2015 when Labour were again in opposition and holding around 35% of seats, they made up around 35% of all WEDM proposers.

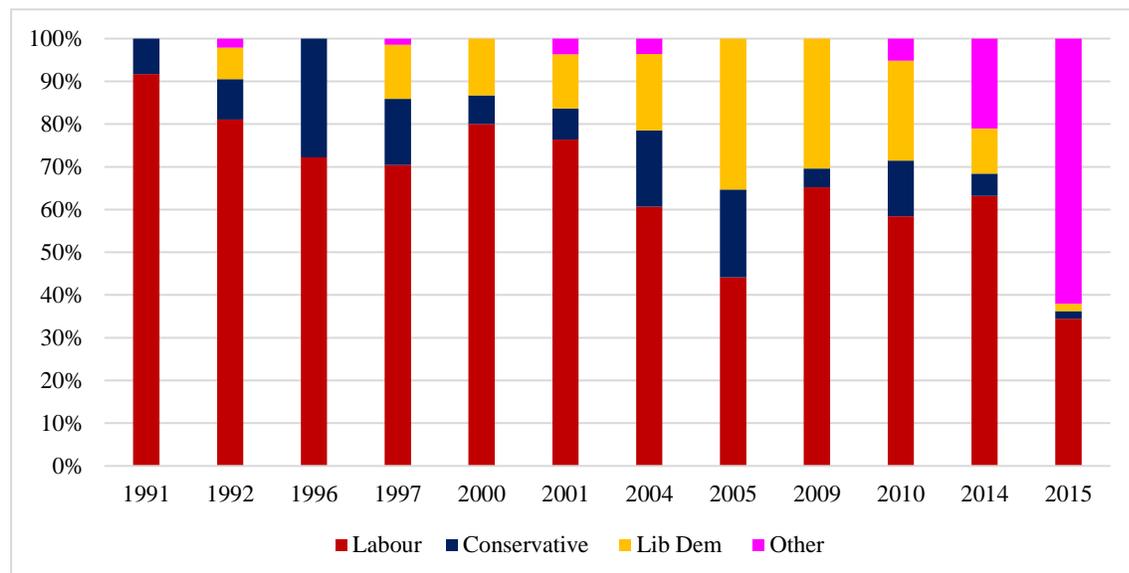


FIGURE 12: PARTY BREAKDOWN OF WEDM PROPOSERS

The role of men is in many ways remarkably consistent over time, and remains ancillary to that of women. The responsiveness of both men and women the gender of the proposer of an EDM, particularly when the motion in question is especially gendered, suggests that MPs may take cues from who is leading on an issue in determining what is worth supporting. Further, though slow and limited in reach, there is some diffusion going in, with a greater range of MPs - including men - from different parties engaging in the substantive representation of women.

### CHAPTER 3: MEN IN WOMEN'S SPACES? INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY DEBATES

To better understand the role and perspective of men in discussions specifically related to women, I now turn to a site of debate in the House of Commons that is explicitly designed to represent women substantively: the annual “International Women’s Day” debates. The case of International Women’s Day (IWD) debates offers a unique and useful site for exploration of the role of men first because participation in an IWD debate is unambiguously an attempt to – in some way – partake in the substantive representation of women. Though all policy issues debated in parliament have gendered implications and considerations, IWD debates are *primarily* concerned with women and their status. IWD debates are also a useful site of study for understanding of men’s role in the representation of women because they are an example choosing to enter into an explicitly feminized debate, not simply responding to an event or issue that comes up or fulfilling their obligations as an MP or to their party. Few other areas in parliament are focused solely on women in this way; while in some sense this makes IWD debates limited as means of gaining a more general understanding of men’s representation of women, IWD are a rare opportunity to illuminate dynamics that exist in smaller ways in the everyday business of the House of Commons.

This chapter analyses every IWD debate that has taken place since the first one in 1994 (a total of 24), using quantitative analyses to sketch the general patterns of

participation and qualitative analysis of debate transcripts to theorize further the role men play in the debates. The chapter proceeds first with background on International Women's Day and on IWD debates in the House of Commons. Second, after outlining data collection and coding procedures, I present the findings of the statistical analyses and, drawing also on the qualitative analysis, offer two key arguments: firstly that there has been a decrease in skepticism in, and increased consensus around, the value of IWD debates; and secondly, an a distinct role emerging for men in the debates, a role I term "ancillary representatives" in the substantive representation of women.<sup>22</sup>

#### INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

The first incarnation of International Women's Day was declared by the Socialist Party of America, who celebrated "National Woman's Day" in February 1909<sup>23</sup> with a rally in New York City. Through an international network of socialist activists, and spurred forward by a proclamation at the 1910 Socialist International Women's Conference in Copenhagen, "International Woman's Day" became recognized annually by socialists in America and Europe and usually marked protests on labor issues (Kaplan

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<sup>23</sup> Some accounts of the history of International Women's Day have claimed that the first IWD was a commemoration of an 1857 demonstration in New York City by women garment and textile workers, during which protesters had been brutally dispersed. As argued by Kandel and Picq (1982) and discussed in Kaplan (1985), this was in fact a legend created in 1955, perhaps to provide an origin story apart from the Soviet account.

1985). In the early years it was celebrated variously in February and March. Following International Woman's Day protests in Russia on March 8<sup>th</sup> 1917,<sup>24</sup> which played a key part of the 1917 revolution (see: Rosenthal 1977, 377), March 8<sup>th</sup> became the international recognized day to celebrate 'woman' (Kaplan 1985, 170). Communist nations, notably Soviet Union under Lenin and China under the communists, celebrated it as a communist holiday until the late 1960s. In late 1960s and early 1970s it was revived in the USA – a revival that included a switch from singular “Woman” to plural “Women” (“International Women's Day History” 2018). Accounts of this movement are sparse (one account, in Kaplan 1985, gives credit to a woman's group at the University of Illinois), but the efforts were ultimately brought to fruition during the United Nations “International Women's Year” in 1975 when it officially adopted March 8<sup>th</sup> as “International Women's Day” (*United Nations* 2018; Borland 2009).

#### IWD IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

The first recorded mention of International Women's Day in the House of Commons comes in March 1951. Conservative Member of Parliament John Baker White asked an oral question about the “Festival of Britain” - a national exhibition and fair that was take place later that year – because he was concerned about the government having

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<sup>24</sup> The date was February 23<sup>rd</sup> in the Julian calendar, which Russia was using at the time; the equivalent date in the Gregorian calendar is March 8<sup>th</sup>.

given the festival authority to official associated with the “International Women’s Day committee.”<sup>25</sup> The Minister’s reply indicates it was “Communist influence”<sup>26</sup> of the group that was of concern, and that the government therefore did not endorse the group.

The next mention does not come until 1987 when, during a debate on “Inner City Areas”, Conservative MP Harry Greenway mentions with great skepticism that the Labour run council in his constituency of Ealing had set aside £10,000 for the celebration of International Women’s Day.<sup>27</sup> The mentions of International Women’s Day that follow (one in 1988, two in 1990, and one in 1991) are cursory references in debates in early March, where an MP talks about an issue relating to women and notes that it is pertinent given the proximity to International Women’s Day,<sup>28</sup> or as a way to pivot to the impact a policy has on women.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Mr. Baker White asked: “asked the Prime Minister whether it was with his sanction and authority that the Director-General of the Festival of Britain issued a statement associating the Festival with the International Women’s Day Committee.” -- <http://bit.ly/2EJzrNo>

<sup>26</sup> The Minister, Herbert Morrison MP, answered: “I have been asked to reply. It was not with my sanction and authority that the Director-General of the Festival issued this particular statement, and it would not have been issued had he then been aware that this formerly non-party body had come under Communist influence.” -- <http://bit.ly/2OyF45o>

<sup>27</sup> “A sum of £10,000 has been set apart to build so-called peace parks and another £10,000 is for the celebration of International Women’s Day.” - <http://bit.ly/2EBqvJK>

<sup>28</sup> Jo Richardson, Labour MP, 1988: “I understand that the Government said that if the Equal Opportunities Commission recommended contract compliance, they would consider it. There could be no better time than now — during the week of international women’s day—for the Minister to honour his assurances to the Equal Opportunities Commission and to the women of this country on this matter and to bring forward an amendment in line with what is proposed in “Equal Treatment for Men and Women — Strengthening the Acts.” - <http://bit.ly/2ODN5pK> In a debate on

The significant engagement in the House of Commons with International Women's Day, and the phenomena that is the focus of the remainder of the chapter, are debates held specifically to mark the occasion of International Women's Day. The first of these took place in March 1994,<sup>30</sup> proposed by Labour MP Clare Short as a debate for "Opposition Day".<sup>31</sup> As Table 3 details, at least one debate has taken place most years - 21 out of 24 years since 1994. Attempts - that were ultimately unsuccessful - appear to have been made in the years without an IWD debate; in 2000 the then Leader of the House Margaret Becket said that the Government "have to give priority to their

Anglo-Soviet relations in 1991, Labour MP Terry Fields mentions the IWD that had just passed: "Last week we celebrated—in this country and internationally—International Women's Day. That coincided with a poll published in the Soviet Weekly on 7 March, which questioned women in the Soviet Union on their attitudes to the state and what was happening." -- <http://bit.ly/2OChXHc>

<sup>29</sup> On March 8th, 1990, during Prime Ministers Questions (PMQs), Labour MP Stan Orme's question to Margaret Thatcher is: "The Prime Minister will be aware that today is international women's day, which is being celebrated throughout the world. In this country, however, millions of women are suffering from the Conservative Government's economic policies? Will the Prime Minister now take steps to help many of those women by increasing child benefit immediately?" -- <http://bit.ly/2PbfMtp>. And in a debate on a food safety bill later that day, Labour MP Gordon Oakes makes reference to Orme's comment during PMQs: "As my right hon. Friend the Member for Salford, East pointed out at Question Time, this is international women's day. Whether or not their wives go out to work, it is right that men should do their share of the housework." -- <http://bit.ly/2PaHITO>

<sup>30</sup> In the IWD debate in 1998, Conservative MP and former Minister Gillian Shephard appears to claim that she had been present at an IWD much earlier, in 1988. She says: "Some of us were in the Chamber for the very first such debate, which was initiated by the then Member for Derbyshire, South and junior Health Minister on 10 June 1988." [https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1998/feb/27/women-government-priorities#S6CV0307Po\\_19980227\\_HOC\\_37](https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1998/feb/27/women-government-priorities#S6CV0307Po_19980227_HOC_37) The debate in question was on Women's Health, but includes no mention of International Women Day, thus Shephard's claim is only true in the sense that a debate focused on women's issues had taken place before. The 1988 debate can be found: <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/1988-06-10/debates/2b7b5507-5b12-4dd4-a785-9b6fedeb80c1/WomenSHealth>

<sup>31</sup> There are 20 days each session allocated to opposition - 17 days to the official opposition (i.e. largest opposition party), and 3 days amongst the smaller parties - per Commons Standing Order No. 14 (Priddy 2018).

legislative programme,”<sup>32</sup> and in 1997 and 2001 it is likely that the fact of Parliament being dissolved for a general election (Kelly 2017) meant there was limited time for both the government and backbench agendas.

Most debates have taken place in the main debating chamber for the House of Commons, but four debates have taken place in “Westminster Hall” – a second chamber introduced in 1999. Debates in Westminster Hall are usually on issues raised by backbench MPs (rather than by the Government), and are usually not debates on proposed legislation (Atkins 2016); thus debates in Westminster Hall are usually less prestigious, as well as being in a smaller venue.

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<sup>32</sup> <http://bit.ly/2EJK1UC>

Year	Topic	Place	Proposer		MPs	Hrs.
1994	Sex Discrimination	Chamber	Clare Short	Opp (Lab)	40	5.25
1995	Lives of Women in the UK	Chamber	Clare Short	Opp (Lab)	33	5.1
1996	Women (Equal Opportunities)	Chamber	Cheryl Gillian	Opp (Con)	31	5.25
1998	Women (Government Priorities)	Chamber	Harriet Harman	Govt (Lab)	36	4.9
1999	Women	Chamber	Tessa Jowell	Govt (Lab)	36	5.6
2002	Women & Equality	Chamber	Patricia Hewitt	Govt (Lab)	26	4
2003	International Women's Day	Chamber	Patricia Hewitt	Govt (Lab)	21	4.5
2004	Women, Equality & Human Rights	Chamber	Patricia Hewitt	Govt (Lab)	21	3.9
2004	International Role of Women	W. Hall	Helen Jackson	Govt (Lab)	8	1.5
2005	Working, Caring & Life Balance	W. Hall	Jacqui Smith	Govt (Lab)	11	2.6
2006	Violence Against Women	W. Hall	Fiona Mactaggart	Govt (Lab)	22	3
2007	Women, Justice & Gender Equality	Chamber	Vera Baird	Govt (Lab)	30	5.5
2008	International Women's Day	Chamber	Harriet Harman	Govt (Lab)	42	5.5
2009	Support for Women (Economic Downturn)	Chamber	Harriet Harman	Govt (Lab)	25	5.5
2010	International Women's Day	Chamber	Harriet Harman	Govt (Lab)	21	1.5
2011	UN Women	Chamber	Eleanor Laing	Govt (Con)	29	4
2012	International Women's Day	Chamber	Fiona Mactaggart	Opp (Lab)	23	1.3
2013	UK's Development Work (Girls & Women) *	Chamber	Justine Greening	Govt (Con)	29	1
2014	Women's Contribution to the Economy	W. Hall	Caroline Spelman	Cross-party	13	2.25
2014	Security of Women in Afghanistan	Chamber	Robert Smith	Cross-party	17	1.5
2015	International Women's Day	Chamber	Maria Miller	Cross-party	19	2.7
2016	International Women's Day	Chamber	Mims Davies	Cross-party	54	3
2017	International Women's Day	Chamber	Jess Phillips	Cross-party	20	2
2018	Vote 100 & International Women's Day	Chamber	Amber Rudd	Govt (Con)	38	4

TABLE 3: INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY DEBATES 1994-2018

\* This "debate" took the form of a ministerial statement by the Secretary of State for International Development Justine Greening and MPs asked her questions afterwards.

W. Hall = Westminster Hall

## DATA & CODING

The transcripts for all International Women’s Day debates were identified through Hansard, the Parliamentary record, with assistance from the House of Commons Library to ensure I had the identified all debate transcripts across Hansard’s multiple databases. I include only those debates explicitly called in honor of International Women’s Day, indicated in the opening remarks given by the Member of Parliament proposing the debate. International Women’s Day was mentioned in a number of debates about women’s equality, but unless explicitly stated as the impetus for the debate, these debates are not included. For example, in a second reading of a bill entitled “Women into Parliament” in March 1994 then Minister Teresa Gorman notes that International Women’s Day is upcoming, and that “It is fortuitous that we have this opportunity today,”<sup>33</sup> – this and the comments that follow make it clear it was not intentionally an IWD debate but rather a debate in March on women’s issues. As Table 3 shows, this resulted in 24 debates to be coded.

I then went through each debate to identify speakers (excluding the Speaker of the House or Deputy Speaker, whose interventions are procedural), noting their sex and party, whether their contribution was a speech (where the Speaker gives an MP the floor)

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<sup>33</sup> <http://bit.ly/2NX649H>

or an intervention (when another MP agrees to let a colleague make a short intervention during their own speech), if a speaker was currently serving as a Government Minister, and if they were the proposer of the debate. Finally, I coded for whether a contribution was ‘skeptical’ – which included negative or critical discussion of the existence of the debate, or comments in opposition to the spirit of the debate as it had been defined, which was normally some motion about the value of women, importance of equality, and the need for more to be done for women’s rights.

Using this data to measure which MPs chose to support and partake in this debate, and more generally using it as a proxy for an intent to represent women, is not without its limitation. First, I only capture those MPs who spoke at the debate, and not including MPs who showed up in support of their colleagues. There are occasionally indications in one of the IWD debates that MPs have attended in a non-speaking context, and perhaps in ways that are meaningful to colleagues and the course of the debate. For example, in the 1996 debate, during her concluding remarks for the opposition, Labour MP Angela Browning said: “It was extremely encouraging to note the gravitas that the Labour party attaches to the debate, in the form of the deputy leader of the Labour party, who attended the opening speeches. One thing that women are good at is reading body language. I watched the right hon. Gentleman carefully, and although he said nothing, except from a sedentary position, his body language said it all.”<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1996/mar/07/women-equal->

While being able to capture all forms of participation would be ideal (but not possible given Hansard only notes speaking and votes, not attendance), the act of speaking in the debate is the key representative function, and the one with the most impact. Further, except for Prime Minister's Questions, most MPs only attend debates they hope to speak in in some form, and thus it is likely most MPs' participation is captured.

The second, related, limitation is that this captures only those who were ultimately able to speak in some form, not those who wanted to speak. The Speaker (or the Deputy Speaker) chooses speakers,<sup>35</sup> balancing a number of factors including party balance and length of time in the debate ("Rules of Behaviour and Courtesies in the House" 2015). In most of the IWD debates, the Speaker at some point remarks that there are many MPs wishing to speak – often in the context of urging MPs to keep their remarks short to allow for time for others – which leaves the possibility that some MPs had requested but not succeeded in their attempts to speak. Though as The Speakers often mentioned during the debate and as is true in most debates, the aim is to allow all MPs who wish to speak to speak, and speech time limits are often adjusted accordingly.

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opportunities#S6CV0273Po\_19960307\_HOC\_384

<sup>35</sup> MPs do this by "catching the Speaker's eye," usually by rising or half-rising from their seat at the of another MP's remarks. This is also known as "bobbing". ("Rules and Traditions of Parliament" n.d.)

To the extent that not all MPs who want to be able to speak in these debates, there is reason to believe that the women are more successful than men in gaining permission to speak in International Women’s Day debates. In most years, the Speaker has at some point noted not only the high number of MPs wanting to speak, but the high number of women MPs wanting to speak, implying that it is especially important in the context of this debate to make sure women MPs who want to speak are able to. For example, in 1994 the Deputy Speaker said “Before I call any hon. Members in this debate, I must tell the House that no fewer than 22 Members wish to catch the Chair's eye, of which 15 are hon. Ladies. Although there is no time limit on speeches, a little self-discipline would be of some assistance.”<sup>36</sup> Thus, it may be that the gender balance is not a direct reflection of interest or effort on the part of male MPs to partake, but also in part a product of the Speakers preference to ensure women who want to are able to speak.

## FINDINGS

The 24 debates yield 641 MPs – 200 men and 445 women. It gave me two datasets: one of the 24 debates and their features (m/f speakers, length, format of debate, proposer information, title), and one of all speakers (including sex, party, speech or intervention, and how many previous IWD they had attended). As will be discussed

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<sup>36</sup> [https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1994/mar/10/sex-discrimination#S6CV0239Po\\_19940310\\_HOC\\_403](https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1994/mar/10/sex-discrimination#S6CV0239Po_19940310_HOC_403)

further in in the analysis, the dataset of speakers includes many repeat appearances; of the 641 participants in IWD debates over the 24 debates, 325 were first time appearances (meaning the dataset has 325 unique MPs), and 316 appearances by MPs who had participated in a previous year's IWD debate. The number of total appearances of MPs, broken down by gender, can be seen in Figure 13.

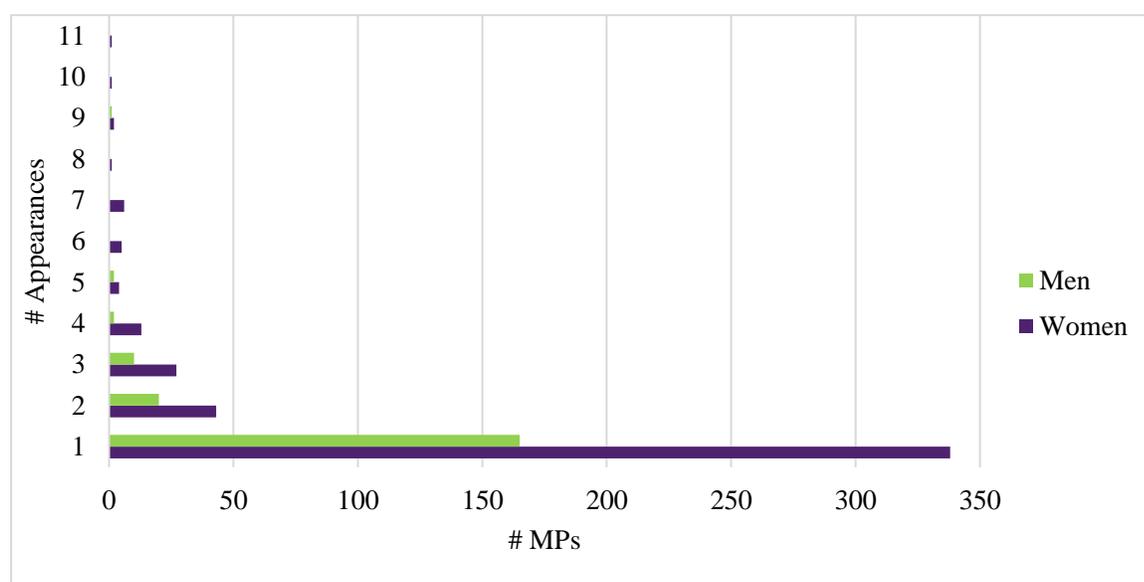


FIGURE 13: NUMBER OF APPEARANCES BY MPS 1998-2014.

### *Party balance*

A key thing that has changed over time about women's participation, apart from it being a smaller portion of all women MPs, is the changing party composition. Figure 10 shows the gender and party breakdown of MPs participating in the IWD debates from the two main parties, Conservative and Labour. Labour women have proved to be

consistently been the largest group in most years, a result of being both the largest group of women, and the also as women from the party that has historically been the most ideologically committed to women's equality and to the importance of women in politics (Childs 2001; Annesley, Gains, and Rummery 2007; Perrigo 1996; Childs 2004b)

This pattern of party diffusion over time is also evident in the institutionalization of the event as a fixture in the Parliamentary calendar for all parties, reflected in both the increased regularity of debates over time, as well as the Conservative party participation and in most years since 2014 the debates themselves have been proposed by cross-party sets of MPs.

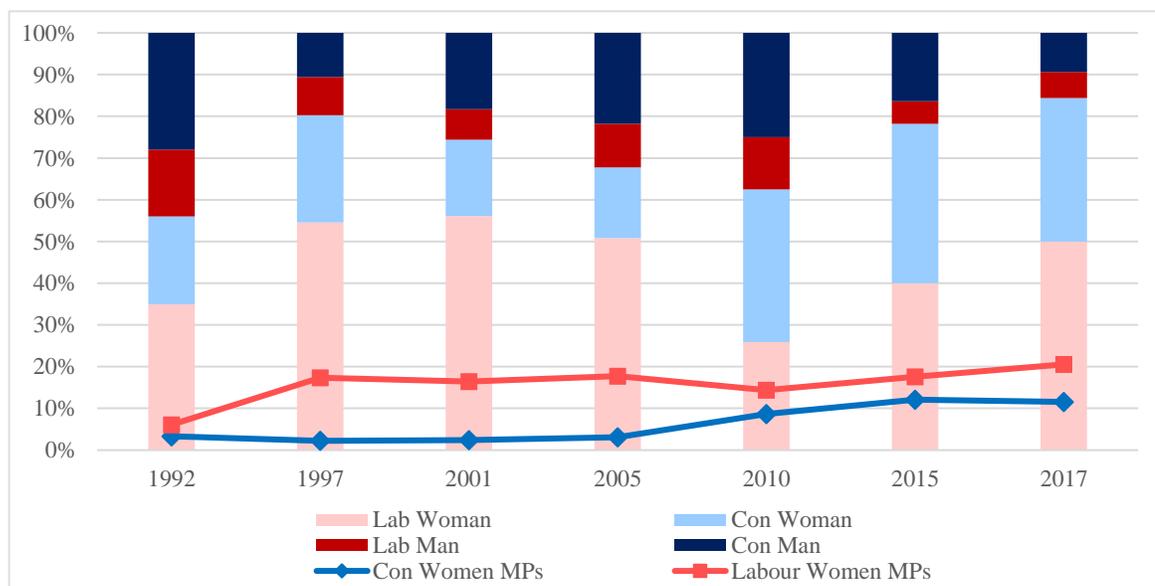


Figure 14: Sex and party balance of Conservative and Labour MPs participating in IWD debates, 1994-2018, averaged by government.

### *Tone of debates: Sceptics disappearing*

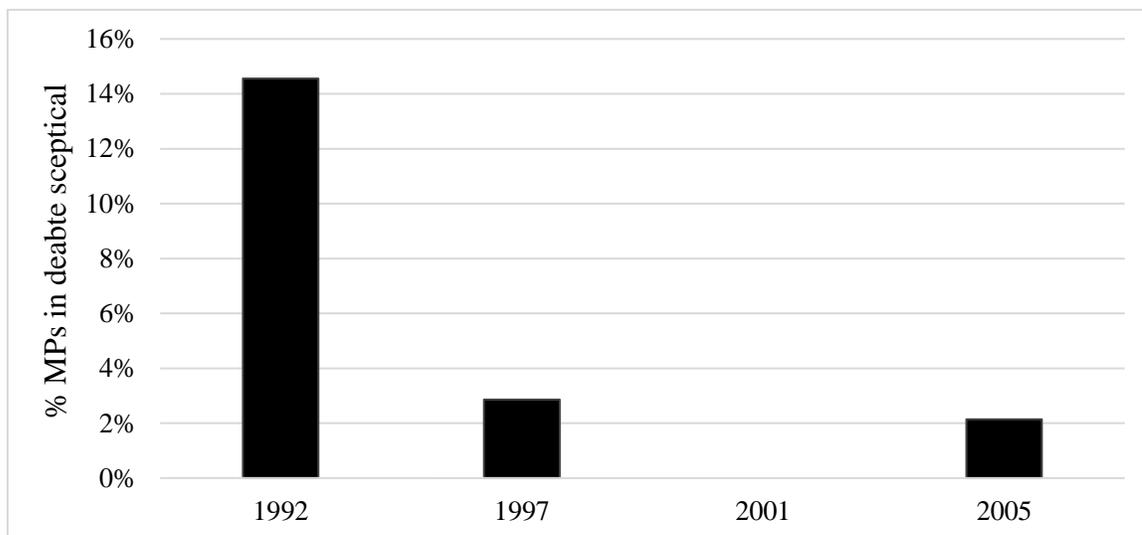


FIGURE 15: PROPORTION OF MPS PARTICIPATING IN IWD DEBATE CODED AS 'SKEPTICAL',

Looking at the debates over time reveals an emerging consensus around the importance of an IWD and of the principles behind IWD, and a related decrease in critical skepticism of IWD and issues surrounding it. This is first evident in the way that IWD has become institutionalized over time. As table 3 shows, while the practice began as a debate petitioned for by opposition party as a part of their “Opposition Day” debate slots, IWD debates have since become a part of the agenda proposed by the government or by cross-party group of MPs, and have taken place every year since 2002. It is clear that Conservative MPs, and likely many Labour MPs too, were skeptical of the need for such a debate. In the second ever IWD debate, which took place during “Opposition Day” time, Labour’s Clare Short notes in her opening remarks that after the first debate in 1994 she had written to the Minister with responsibility for women (at the time the

Secretary of State for Employment) to suggest the Government facilitate an annual debate; the Minister responded that there were ample opportunities to discuss sex equity.<sup>37</sup> Thus, the change over time in the institutionalization of the IWD debates was evident when, in 2014, Conservative MP Caroline Spelman described “the tradition of our Parliament to have a debate as close as possible to the date of international women’s day.”<sup>38</sup>

Pressure has been applied – mostly by Labour women MPs - not only to hold a debate for IWD, but to secure the most debate time and prominence as possible. For example. This too has improved over time, with the last five debates taking place in the main chamber (rather than the less prestigious and smaller Westminster Hall), despite Conservative party control of Parliament. MPs discussion of the location and timing of the debate demonstrate this perceived progress; in 2008 Labour MP Katy Clark commented during that year’s IWD debate: “I welcome the fact that this debate is taking place in this Chamber today. On previous occasions, it has not always been possible to have the international women’s day debate in the Chamber, and it is a sign of the progress

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<sup>37</sup> <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm199495/cmhansrd/1995-03-07/Debate-1.html>

<sup>38</sup> <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmhansrd/cm140306/halltext/140306h0001.htm>

that has been made and the impact that the Leader of the House has had that we are having it here today. We should all welcome that.”<sup>39</sup>

In addition to the status of the debate itself, there has been an increasingly sense about the importance of IWD and the issues it promotes. That is not to say that there is anything close to universal agreement to how women’s rights and issues of gender should be approached, nor that there is universal support amongst MPs for women’s equality. But rather, that there has been a shift over time in at least the public debate amongst MPs on the issue of IWD and women’s equality. In the earliest debates, there is evidence of outright hostility. In her speech to open the first IWD debate in 1994, Labour MP Clare Short noted: “When the Leader of the House announced at Business Questions last Thursday that the Opposition had chosen this subject for debate, there were jeers and catcalls from hon. Members on the Tory Benches”<sup>40</sup> It may simply be that those MPs who did or would have jeered at the idea of a debate on IWD no longer do so in the Chamber, and that the underlying attitudes remain the same or similar. However, the fact of needing to restrain in public is itself significant, making IWD debates more easily attained. Relatedly, whereas in the first few IWD debates a not insignificant part of the debate was concerned with whether the debate should be taking place at all. In 1996, Conservative

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<sup>39</sup> <http://bit.ly/2OoLIMC>

<sup>40</sup> <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm199394/cmhansrd/1994-03-10/Debate-3.html>

MP Elizabeth Peacock noted in a tone not dissimilar to that of a number of her colleagues, “Such debates are demeaning and patronising, and it is time that we took them out of the parliamentary calendar. It is a waste of parliamentary time to listen to this sort of claptrap.”<sup>41</sup> And even amongst those seemingly supporting the existence of the debate, the terms and tone of the debates have changed over time. In the 1996 debate, for example, Conservative MP Peers Merchant described the comments of a Labour woman MP as “psycho-babble about feminine issues.”<sup>42</sup>

That is not to say that sceptics have disappeared altogether, but that they are now decidedly outliers. Most notably in recent years, Conservative MP Phillip Davies has been vocal about the biases in parliament in favor of talking about women; he said in 2005 “The problem is virtually everything we do in this House and debate in this House seems to start with the premise that everything is biased against women and something must be done about it – never an appreciation that men’s issues can be just as important and that men can be just as badly treated in certain areas as women,”<sup>43</sup> and in response to

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<sup>41</sup> <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm199596/cmhansrd/v0960307/debtext/60307-15.htm>

<sup>42</sup> <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm199596/cmhansrd/v0960307/debtext/60307-26.htm>

<sup>43</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2015/nov/19/philip-daviestory-mp-politically-correct-males-pander-to-militant-feminists>

continued IWD debates has pushed for an International Men’s day debate in parliament.<sup>44</sup> In my 2018 interview, he claimed there was a “gender obsession” in parliament, and that International Women’s Day was just another example of “gesture politics”.

### ***Men as “Ancillary Representatives”***

An understanding of men as ancillary representatives can be demonstrated through looking at a number of features of the IWD debate data and transcripts: men’s persistent secondary status in terms of participation levels; men’s discursive place in the debates, with their ‘out of place-ness’ continually noted; and an emerging distinct role from men with some male participants offering a perspective that a woman would not be able to offer.

The data over the 24 debates demonstrates a consistent gendered division of labor, with women overwhelming taking leadership in these debates. Importantly, there are not only large differences in likelihood to partake (made especially acute given the low levels of women’s representation in parliament), but distinctions amongst the types of participation that men and engage in in IWD, with the gendered division of labor in favor

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<sup>44</sup> Efforts that have been successful – debates have been held in 2015, 2016 and 2017 around International Men’s Day. <https://hansard.parliament.uk/search/Debates?searchTerm=%22International%20Men%E2%80%99s%20Day%22&startDate=10%2F29%2F2013%2000%3A00%3A00&endDate=10%2F29%2F2018%2000%3A00%3A00>

being most stark in those activities that require more time, effort, and political capital on the part of the MP, as Tamerius (1995) showed in the case of the US Congress.

Women constitute the majority of attendees virtually every year, despite being a minority of MPs. As Figure 16 shows, women's proportion in IWD debates far surpasses their presence in parliament (as indicated by the black line)

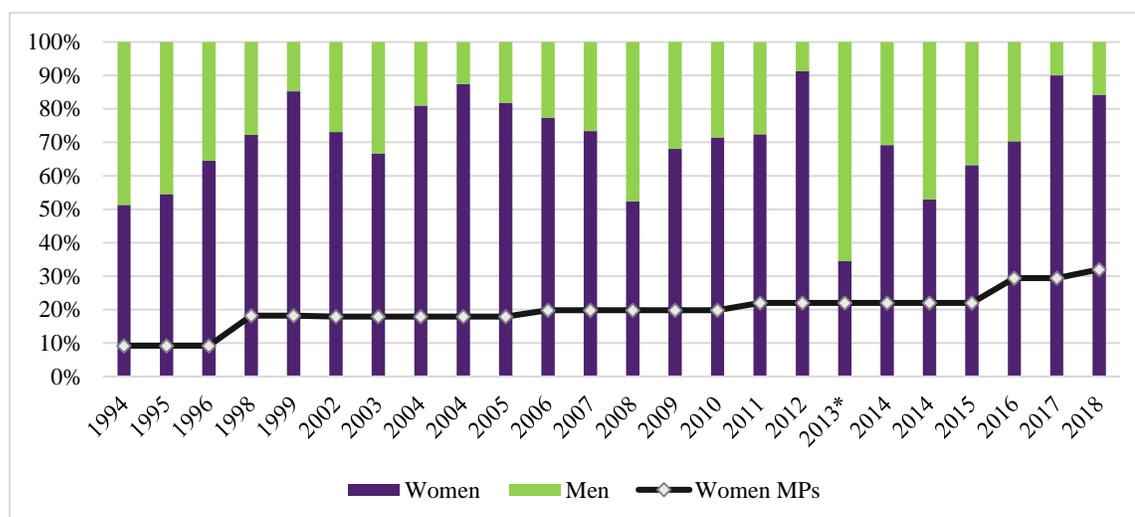


Figure 16: Gender balance of MPs participating in IWD debates, 1994-2018.<sup>45</sup>

As shows, more MPs have attended the debates over time, but this change is driven largely by an increased number of women MPs partaking in the debates (which is

<sup>45</sup> As notes, the “debate” in 2013 took the form of a Ministerial Statement by the Minister for International Development, with MP’s able to ask questions. Thus, this year is in many ways dissimilar to others, but it was a statement and question time prompted by, and explicitly in honor of, IWD so it is included in the analysis.

itself driven by the increased number of women in parliament), and the number of men partaking in the debates has remained fairly constant.

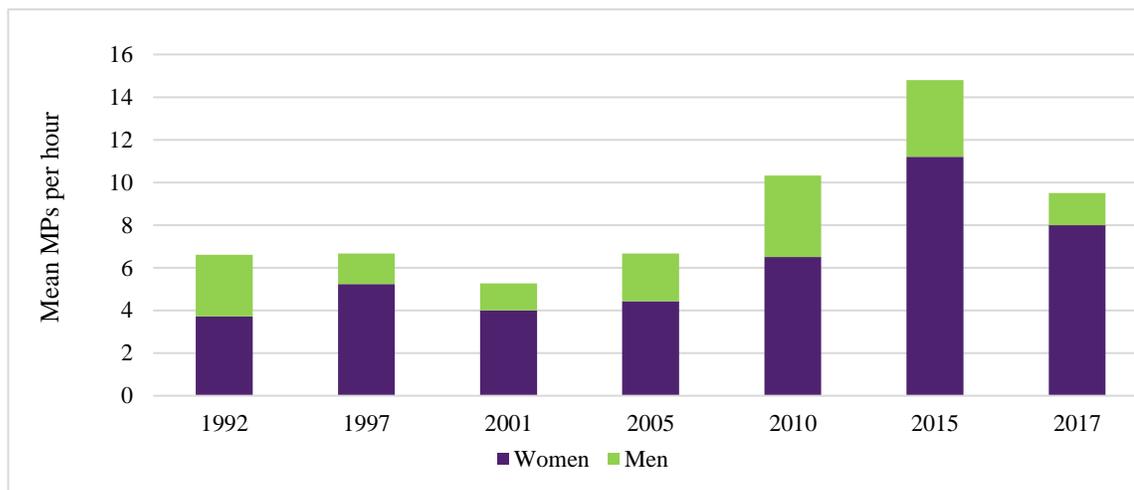


Figure 17: Mean Number of MPs participating in IWD debates adjusted for length and averaged by Government

However, not all IWD debate participation is alike. As evident in Figure 13, women are much better represented amongst those group of MPs who have participated in multiple years' debates: while men make up 33% of the MPs who attended a single IWD debate, they make up only 25% of those MPs that attended 2 or more debates, and are just 3 of the 23 MPs – 13% - who have attended 5 or more. In other words, women are even more overrepresented in the ranks of those MPs who are seasoned IWD debate attenders than amongst the average IWD debater.

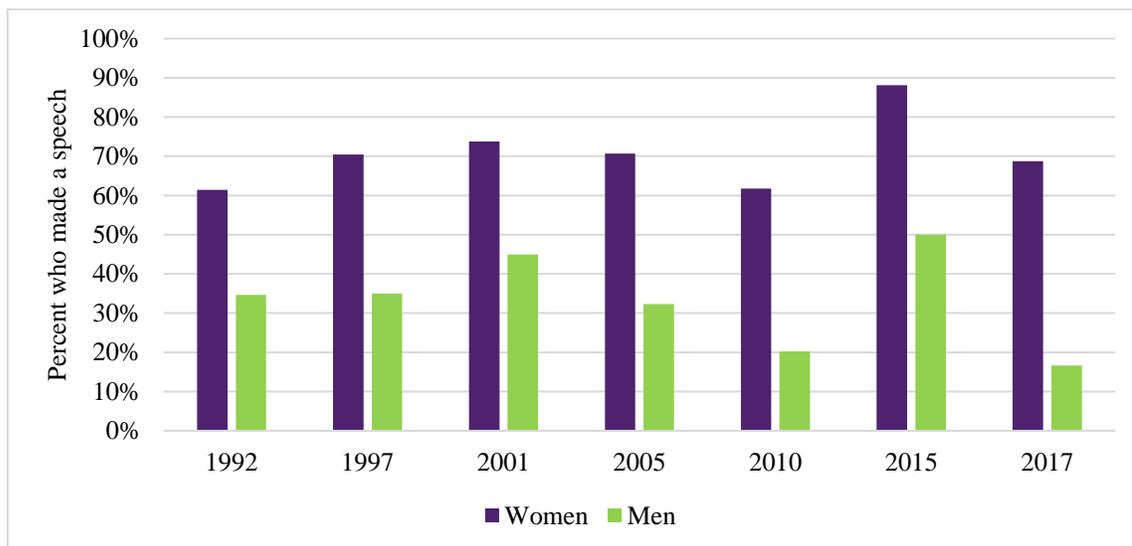
Another example of this same phenomena is when we distinguish between the two types of participating: giving a speech and giving only an intervention.<sup>46</sup> Giving a speech in parliament in the debate is a more significant and involved action. Delivering a speech requires an MP to commit more time to the debate - especially for backbenchers - since MPs often have to wait a good amount of time, while ‘bobbing,’<sup>47</sup> and convention dictates that those giving speeches will stay for the duration of the debate and hear the wrapping up speeches from the government and opposition representatives. Like many debates in parliament, the IWD debates often went on for quite some time – the longest debate (in 1999) lasting for more than 5 and a half hours, and the mean debate lasting just over 3 and a half hours.

The act of preparing and giving a speech itself is also a costly exercise. The speech time limit varies by debate (and sometimes at various points during a debate, depending on demand), but MPs are often allotted around 10 minutes, (“Time Limits on Speeches in the Chamber” 2018). Most MPs come to the debate with pre-prepared remarks they or their parliamentary assistants have researched.

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<sup>46</sup> Most MPs giving a speech also offered one or more interventions. However these are mutually exclusive categories, so those coded as ‘intervention’ only gave an intervention, and those coded as speech givers gave a speech and potentially also intervened at another point in the debate.

<sup>47</sup> MPs get called on to speak by “catching the Speaker’s eye,” usually by rising or half-rising from their seat at the of another MP’s remarks. This is also known as “bobbing”. (“Rules and Traditions of Parliament” n.d.)



**FIGURE 18: PROPORTION OF MPS PARTICIPATING IN IWD WHO MAKE A SPEECH, AVERAGED BY**

Figure 18 shows the percent of participants in the IWD debates who gave a speech, averaged by government and broken down by gender. The gender gap has persisted and widened – in the most recent debate in 2018 (which accounts for all of the debates in the 2017 government), only one man gave a speech. At its most gender balanced, in the 2001 government years, women were still giving speeches nearly 40% more than men who participated in the debate, and some years women were speaking as much as 75% more than men.

A final aspect of MP involvement in the SRW that takes place through IWD is the proposing of the debate itself. Especially in earlier years when there was no established consensus around the importance of the debate, this involved MPs appealing to the backbench business committee. In addition to the time and effort involved, pushing for a

debate involves using a significant amount of political capital. As predicted by the theory of ancillary representation, and in line with the other findings about women's primacy in the case of SRW through IWD debates, also only one of the 24 debates that was proposed by a man (a debate on women in Afghanistan, and one of two IWD debates that year), making up 4% of proposers.

Taken together, the gendered divisions of labor in each these different ways of participating – proposing, making a speech, attending in multiple years – give us two key insights. That there is a gendered division of labor in all forms of participation in IWD debates that persists over time, and further there is difference in magnitude of gendered division of labor, that is inversely proportionate to the level of involvement required. In other words, throughout the nearly quarter century of IWD debates men's role in the IWD debates decreases the higher the cost of the activity.

This is perhaps not surprising – and, if we believe there something to be inherently important about women's voices being represented by women, not necessarily a bad thing. But the starkness of gendered division of labor for the most costly and timely activities is a key and central feature of the role of men in the representation of women, and the ancillary role men play in this should be theorized, in the same way we theorize the nature and meaning of women substantively representing women.

### ***Expressions of “Ancillarization”***

We can understand more about men's role in these debates by looking not only at the fact of their engagement, but also looking at the content of those engagement. The discourse evident in the IWD transcript reinforces the conclusions that one can draw from the gendered patterns of attendance and speaking in IWD. In the same way that men's attendance and participation is indicative of an ancillary role in the SRW, the content of the speeches in the IWD debates include both explicit recognition of the primacy of women (including the acknowledgement that it is important to allow women MPs the chance to speak), and explicit recognition in men and women's speeches of the secondary and also distinct position of men.

The transcripts are also interesting because the way that men's role is discussed (by both men and women) makes clear that IWD debates are unlike most other spaces and debates in the House of Commons – many men express a level of discomfort in their “out-of-placeness”, and women make a point to note the presence of even a small number of men as remarkable. In the context of a majority male institution, neither of these facts are ordinarily true. Thus the closer examination of the discourse in IWD debates that follows is illustrative of the role of men in SRW, but also in revealing more clearly the gendered contours and power dynamics in Parliament more broadly. The fact that MPs all acknowledge the ways that women's dominance is out-of-the-ordinary tells us powerful things about the nature of the “ordinary”.

Men's ancillary role in the IWD debates exists within the broader context of an overwhelmingly male institution. Puwar speaks to this evocatively in her book *Space Invaders* which, as the title suggests, describes the experiences of women and ethnic minority MPs entering politics and the reception they receive. Puwar argues that the idea of white men as the somatic norm in parliament is deeply embedded in the institution. This same observation is made in theoretical and empirical contributions by feminist institutionalists, who argue that parliaments are "gendered institutions", with the gendered order historically focused on male dominance (Acker 1992; Chappell 2006; Kenny 2007; Krook and Mackay 2011; Bolzendahl 2014).

One consequence of a male-dominated institution that has developed gendered norms and rules based upon this fact is that the entrance of actors who do not fit the somatic norm – women, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, cause a "disruption" to the institution. The sense of disruption is evident an amplification of women and ethnic minority's presence; as Puwar states, "As bodies out of place or unexpected bodies, they are highly conspicuous. This is a visibility that comes from not being the norm" (Puwar 2004, 49).

The sense of a male space, and of an amplification of those "space invaders" entering the institutions is illustrated in a quote from Churchill who, speaking of the recent arrival of a woman MP, "I find a woman's intrusion into the House of Commons

as embarrassing as if she burst into my bathroom when I had nothing with which to defend myself, not even a sponge” (quoted in Puwar 2004, 13). While Churchill was describing his feelings about a House of Commons many decades in the past, some lessened version of a sense of territory and expectation of male dominance and comfort continues to be the case. This became apparent in the wake of the 1997 Labour electoral victory, when the number of women doubled (from 60 to 120) in the course of the election. A news article at the time described the reaction of MPs upon seeing more women in parliament, quoting a male Labour MP as saying “I don't know what they do to the Tories .... but by God, they frighten me.” When asked why said “Dunno. Just don't know what to make of them.” (McElvoy 1997). And though the change was indeed significant – with a 100% increase in the number of women – men still made up more than 80% of all MPs.

Labour MP Sally Keeble described the response as reminder her "of the way people treat asylum-seekers, seeing themselves as 'flooded'. It felt like an institution that was bracing itself for something alien." (quoted in B. Campbell 2003). That an increase in women results in a feeling of being “flooded” - despite women’s continued position as a minority group – reveals that the entrance of even a small number of women amounts to an significant aberration from the appropriate power relationships of male dominance. In a similar way, the feeling of discomfort on the part of male MPs in IWD reveals a deeper

belief about the kinds of spaces men are used to inhabiting in parliament, and to some extent the status of women in politics.

Thus, because of the institutional comfort for men,<sup>48</sup> and the relative newness of women's presence, International Women's Day debates are an unusual case of a space explicitly assigned to women's issues and women's voices. This is made clear by the reactions of male MPs, who in their vocalizing of a discomfort or in recognizing an incongruence, reveal the comfort and sense of belonging they are usually able to feel while engaging in politics in the House of Commons.

### **Men's incongruence in women's space**

In most cases of men making a speech, the possible incongruence of their speaking is noted, often with the male MP expressing nervousness in speaking in the debate. This self-confessed anxiety in speaking is rarely present in advocacy on other issues and is indicative of the fact that this role as an ancillary representative is one men specifically and perhaps uniquely play in the case of women's issues. For example:

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<sup>48</sup> This does not, of course, mean that all men are automatically comfortable in and have a sense of entitlement to being in parliament. Ethnic minority men and openly gay men, for example, have also been implicitly and explicitly excluded from politics.

*John Maxton (Labour)*: “It is with some trepidation that I rise to speak as the token Opposition male.”<sup>49</sup>

*Barry Porter (Conservative)*: “I am a most unlikely person to take part in a debate on women's rights, and I feel somewhat overwhelmed by the serried ranks on the Opposition Benches.”<sup>50</sup>

*Matt Warman (Conservative)*: “One of my faults is usually overconfidence, but I confess that I begin to speak in this debate with a degree of nervousness”<sup>51</sup>

In every IWD debate, there are consistently moments where men note the female majority, and recognize the need for women to speak in the debate; for example a Conservative male MP who declined to take an intervention and responded to the MP attempting to intervene by *saying* “I should like to move on, as I want to give hon. Ladies on the Government Benches a chance to contribute.”<sup>52</sup> This kind of comment doesn't necessarily indicate ill feeling towards the female-dominated space, and in may be motivated in many instances by a feminist desire to empower women – but nevertheless, this helps establish the fact of the unusually female nature of this debate.

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<sup>49</sup> 1994 - [https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1994/mar/10/sex-discrimination#S6CV0239Po\\_19940310\\_HOC\\_490](https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1994/mar/10/sex-discrimination#S6CV0239Po_19940310_HOC_490)

<sup>50</sup> 1996 - [https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1996/mar/07/women-equal-opportunities#S6CV0273Po\\_19960307\\_HOC\\_231](https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1996/mar/07/women-equal-opportunities#S6CV0273Po_19960307_HOC_231)

<sup>51</sup> 2018 - <http://bit.ly/2OR3YNP>

<sup>52</sup> Michael Fabricant, 1998 - <http://bit.ly/2OR3YNP>

Of course, though a predominant theme, the feeling that women's voices should take primacy in the IWD debates is not a universally held position. In a number of years – particularly in the earlier years (as the above discussion on sceptics reveals) some MPs complained that women were taking priority, and that this was an unwelcome form of reverse sexism. For example, in 2008, Conservative MP Mark Pritchard attempted to intervene a remarkable 36 times during Labour MP and then Leader of the House Harriet Harman's 24-minute speech that opened the debate. When this was unsuccessful – and after Harman took several interventions from women MPs – Pritchard tried to appeal Speaker through Points of Order:<sup>53</sup>

*“On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We are debating a very serious issue, and this is a very serious point of order. I feel discriminated against in this female debate. We need some male representation.”*

*“On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I should not have to join the 350 people in the west midlands who apply for a sex change every year in order to be called in this Chamber.”<sup>54</sup>*

This is an extreme example; such repeated attempts to intervene (for what later transpired to be a fairly minor point about the importance of women in the judiciary) are not common in either IWD debates or debates in the House more generally. Nevertheless,

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<sup>53</sup> Points of Order allow an MP to appeal to the chair if they believe a point of procedure has been violated. In this case, the Deputy Speaker in the chair rejected each of his points of order, as it is entirely up to the MP who has the floor to determine which interventions they will accept.

<sup>54</sup> <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmhansrd/cm080306/debtext/80306-0006.htm#08030641000003>

this exchange is indicative of the presence of MPs who remain resistant to the idea that it is entirely or primarily a space for women's voices.

### **Drawing connections to the debate**

Another demonstration of ancillarization is demonstrated in the prevalence of male MPs who feel a need to provide a connector to the debate – some reason that justifies their presence in the conversation. While at some level this is true of MPs' speeches in many debates, with MPs attempting to gain credibility and authority on an issue, such appeals are notably absent in women's IWD speeches and are consistent and thorough in men's IWD debate speeches. The justifications take several forms, and sometimes are mostly attempts at humor, but still serve the purpose of illustrating their awareness of their 'out-of-place-ness' - something that men do not usually display in parliament. For example:

*Michael Fabricant (Conservative): "I feel privileged to be the first man to take part in the debate on the Government's priorities for women. Although I am patently not a woman, some of my best friends are. I tried that out on the hon. Member for Barking in the Tea Room, and she thought that it would go down well. Clearly some Members on the Government Benches do not share her sense of humour."<sup>55</sup>*

*Hugo Swire (Conservative): "I am almost uniquely unqualified to take part in this debate on women and equality, according to my wife. She says that she will read the debate in Hansard, so I must mind what I say. For years, she has been trying to get me to read "The*

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<sup>55</sup> 1998 - [https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1998/feb/27/women-government-priorities#S6CV0307Po\\_19980227\\_HOC\\_98](https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1998/feb/27/women-government-priorities#S6CV0307Po_19980227_HOC_98)

*Female Eunuch* by Germaine Greer, and a book that is apparently called, "Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus". I have read neither of those books, so I cannot argue about what they might contribute to my greater understanding of the problem."<sup>56</sup>

Others attempt to draw connections between themselves and the debate by referring to female relatives, arguing that these relationships have given them the desire and/or perspective that allows them to participate:

*Andrew Selous (Conservative): "I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak in the debate, not only on behalf of all my women constituents but, from a personal point of view, because I have three young daughters. I want them to grow up in a world where they have every possible opportunity to fulfil all their potential in whatever way they choose."*<sup>57</sup>

*Angus Brendan MacNeil (SNP): "Member for Glasgow East raised her eyebrows when I arrived in the Chamber today. She asked whether I was hoping to speak in the debate, and I confirmed that indeed I was. I therefore feel that I should, at the outset, lay out my qualifications to speak. I feel qualified to speak because, after painstaking research, it has been revealed to me that exactly 50% of my ancestors are women. [...]. And I can inform the House that, so far, 100% of my descendants are female."*<sup>58</sup>

*Stephen Metcalfe (Conservative): "I know all too well the importance of women in the economy, having worked in my family business for the last 25 years with my wife, my sister, and the founder of the company—my mother, who built up the business."*<sup>59</sup>

*Barry Sheerman (Labour): "Some of us have been in Committee during this debate, but some of us have very powerful women in their family; I have three daughters and a wife, and also a lot of women constituents."*<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> 2002 - [https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/2002/mar/14/women-and-equality#S6CV0381Po\\_20020314\\_HOC\\_346](https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/2002/mar/14/women-and-equality#S6CV0381Po_20020314_HOC_346)

<sup>57</sup> 2002 - [https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/2002/mar/14/women-and-equality#S6CV0381Po\\_20020314\\_HOC\\_360](https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/2002/mar/14/women-and-equality#S6CV0381Po_20020314_HOC_360)

<sup>58</sup> 2011 - <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm110310/debtext/110310-0002.htm#11031052000002>

<sup>59</sup> 2014 - <http://bit.ly/2PplUhY>

*Andrew Griffiths (Conservative): “... it is great to see so many men taking part in today’s debate, because this issue affects all of us. It affects our wives, sisters, daughters and grandmothers. None of us in this House would accept it if our daughters were prevented from reaching their true potential, if our wives were paid less than a man doing the same job, or if our mothers were discriminated against. We must all work together to ensure that we bring fairness and equality to Britain, and this debate is an important part of that.”<sup>61</sup>*

## Male Perspective

Another aspect of men’s distinct role is on display when they speak from an explicitly male perspective, offering an angle on issues related to women or gender equality that come from their experience as men. This included the role men should play in advocating for women in the workplace, the role of men in supporting their daughters, and the conditions that lead to men perpetrating gendered violence.

*Rob Marris (Labour): “My right hon. Friend has been speaking about women in public life but perhaps she will outline the Government’s proposals to tackle the fundamental scourge of domestic violence, which by its nature is usually hidden behind closed doors—and tends to repeat from generation unto generation, particularly among boys who grow up in that unacceptable environment.”<sup>62</sup>*

*Henry Smith (Conservative): “Raising my daughter over the last 10 years has been one of the most important roles I will ever carry out. I seek assurances from my right hon. Friend that when it comes to DFID projects, fathers and responsible male role models are, wherever possible, made part of the upbringing of disadvantaged girls?”<sup>63</sup>*

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<sup>60</sup> 2015 - <http://bit.ly/2OWZ29Y>

<sup>61</sup> 2016 - <http://bit.ly/2CNRVKo>

<sup>62</sup> 2003 - [https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/2003/mar/06/international-womens-day#S6CV0400P1\\_20030306\\_HOC\\_211](https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/2003/mar/06/international-womens-day#S6CV0400P1_20030306_HOC_211)

<sup>63</sup> 2013 - <http://bit.ly/2Rl9vc2>

*Paul Uppal (Conservative): “The role of men, and being a proper father, is crucial. Sometimes, not just politicians, but men in business and of all backgrounds need to talk about their contribution to the family.”<sup>64</sup>*

*Matt Warman (Conservative) “I could too easily end up saying that women need to step up when the truth is that grotesque imbalances at a senior level often mean that it is men who need to step up and work with women to deconstruct the obstacles that stand in the path of female progress. We need more men from all sides of the political debate to step up and speak up about that in this place.”<sup>65</sup>*

Some male MPs articulated this unique role men have – not as leaders, but as allies. Notably both of these quotes, and expressions of similar sentiments, come in the most recent debates.

*Chris Elmore (Labour): “I passionately believe that men must be far more vocal on these injustices. Ultimately, the fight for gender equality should be led by women. However, as allies in the fight, we male MPs must use the platform that we have been given to highlight the injustices.”<sup>66</sup>*

*Matt Warman (Conservative): “As a man, and as someone on the Select Committee [for Women and Equality], it is an absolute privilege to be able to call to arms every single man in this country to say that standing up and championing equal rights is not just a job for women, but a job for every single one of us—it is a job for every man in our country, too. That is why I am absolutely privileged to end up speaking in today’s International Women’s Day debate.”<sup>67</sup>*

## **Women’s articulations of men’s place**

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<sup>64</sup> 2014 (Chamber debate) - <http://bit.ly/2CJwx8B>

<sup>65</sup> 2018 - <http://bit.ly/2OR3YNP>

<sup>66</sup> 2017 - <http://bit.ly/2ORGHeu>

<sup>67</sup> 2018 - <http://bit.ly/2OR3YNP>

Men's distinct role as ancillary representatives is also visible in the way that women MP talk about the presence – and absence – of men in the IWD debates. Though no women MP seems to be suggesting that men should be leading on women's issues, the presence of some men is positive and significant. The presence and/or relative absence of men is noted in virtually every IWD debate; for example:

*Eleanor Laing (Conservative): "It is very good to have some support on this side from gentlemen colleagues. I see that the hon. Member for High Peak has just resumed his place, thereby doubling the number of gentlemen on the Labour Benches. It is sad that there is so little support there."*<sup>68</sup>

*Sandra Gidley (Liberal Democrat): "I do not want to be too churlish, but it is a shame that in the [other IWD] debates last Friday and today, only women have taken part."*<sup>69</sup>

*Jo Swinson (Liberal Democrat): We have heard excellent speeches today from Members on both sides of the House, although not quite enough men have contributed to the debate. I hope that in future years more of our male colleagues will be tempted to take part, and I offer my sincere thanks to those hon. Gentlemen who have taken part today."*<sup>70</sup>

Eleanor Laing (Conservative): "I welcome the fact that there are so many hon. Ladies on the Government [Labour] Benches—but there is not one single hon. Gentleman. So much for gender equality in the Government. I am not suggesting for a moment that the hon. Ladies on the Government Front Bench, or indeed any other hon. Ladies, need any support from their male colleagues, but their absence is just so starkly obvious. [...] It is remarkable that male Labour Members of Parliament think that a debate on gender

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<sup>68</sup> 2002 - [https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/2002/mar/14/women-and-equality#S6CV0381Po\\_20020314\\_HOC\\_282](https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/2002/mar/14/women-and-equality#S6CV0381Po_20020314_HOC_282)

<sup>69</sup> 2004 - [https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/westminster-hall/2004/mar/09/international-role-of-women#S6CV0418P1\\_20040309\\_WH\\_14](https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/westminster-hall/2004/mar/09/international-role-of-women#S6CV0418P1_20040309_WH_14)

<sup>70</sup> 2015 - <http://bit.ly/2Ripk3e>

*equality and justice on international women's day is nothing whatsoever to do with them.*"<sup>71</sup>

Unsurprisingly, most of the praise and accusations about the presence of men was done by MPs attacking an opposing party. For example, in response to Eleanor Laing's comment above in 2007, Labour MP Fiona Mactaggart responded by saying "Is the hon. Lady placing so much emphasis on the presence of hon. Gentlemen on the Conservative Benches because it is not possible for the Conservatives to muster as many women Members as the 17 who are sitting on the Labour Benches at present?"<sup>72</sup> The underlying political motivations do not take away from my central point here, however: that men have a distinct and meaningful role in IWD debates, and that their presence and absence is noted in gendered ways.

It is also worth noting that men's presence is perhaps sometimes overemphasized; as Bergqvist et al. (2016) argue when putting forth the concept of 'gendered leeway', men are especially praised for engaging on women's issues because it is not automatically expected as a duty of male politicians. This is demonstrated by Conservative MP and then opposition spokesperson on women Cheryl Gillan who, in the 1998 debate, said in summing up for the opposition: "My hon. Friend the Member for Lichfield, who was the first Conservative male to make a contribution, made a valiant attempt to strike the

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<sup>71</sup> 2007 - <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200607/cmhansrd/cm070308/debtext/70308-0008.htm>

gender balance. [...] My hon. Friend the Member for Ashford made an excellent speech that put the gender balance fairly and squarely back in the middle.”<sup>73</sup> In fact, the debate participants were almost three-quarters women, and 80% of the speeches given were from women MPs. While this may just have been a turn of phrase on the part of Gillan, it could also be that the presence of men was made more visible and noteworthy due to the topic incongruence, and as a result is overestimated by observers.

Furthermore, this hyper visibility of men in IWD debates is a fascinating role reversal; as Puwar describes, the presence women and ethnic minorities in parliament are often amplified (as Sally Keeble MP noted in the quote above, with people seeing the influx of even a modest number of women as being “flooded”) – “As bodies out of place or unexpected bodies, they are highly conspicuous. This is a visibility that comes from not being the norm” (Puwar 2004, 49). IWD is a rare case of the reverse being true, with men not being the norm and thus being conspicuous.

A key reason that the presence of men seems to be notable, in addition to the simple fact of conspicuousness, is the ability of men’s presence to make issues of women and equality seem important, credible, and mainstream. In this way, though there is a

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<sup>72</sup> <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200607/cmhansrd/cm070308/debtext/70308-0008.htm>

<sup>73</sup> [https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1998/feb/27/women-government-priorities#column\\_674](https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1998/feb/27/women-government-priorities#column_674)

sense that women’s dominance in the IWD debate space is assured, the full credibility and authority of parliamentary voices is not automatically granted, and debaters are aware of this. Perhaps because of this awareness, many women articulate gratitude for male attendees:

*Vera Baird (Labour): [summing up the debate] “I want to take a minute or two to thank everyone who has participated in the debate, male and female. It is good to welcome our brothers, whether or not we agree with them [...] it is good to see them participate fully in a debate that centres on women's issues. Once they are raised, everyone sees them as human issues and carries them forward.”*<sup>74</sup>

*Caroline Spelman (Conservative): “... from time to time, an hon. Gentleman has entered the Chamber, and we are very grateful to those who have intervened—which is incredibly important.”*<sup>75</sup>

*Sarah Champion (Labour): I am grateful to have the voice of the honorary sister, my hon. Friend the Member for Ogmore [Chris Elmore], here. I make a lot of speeches about gendered violence and gender inequality, and I tend to speak to rooms full of women. I am looking forward to the day when debates in the Chamber about women are attended 50:50 by men and women.”*<sup>76</sup>

*Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi (Labour): “Does she not agree that it is the collective responsibility of all of us—not just women, but men too—to ensure that we have equality in all senses of the word?”*<sup>77</sup>

### ***Changing Women’s, but not men’s, role***

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<sup>74</sup> 2010 - <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmhansrd/cm100311/debtext/100311-0013.htm>

<sup>75</sup> 2015 - <http://bit.ly/2Rj96qE>

<sup>76</sup> 2017 - <http://bit.ly/2mtCrRY>

<sup>77</sup> 2018 - <http://bit.ly/2RkQeYf>

I hypothesized that the increased women's presence over time in parliament might change the role that men play, making them more interested and informed about women's issues. The change in tone over time, with an emerging consensus that women's equality is both a worthy goal and a legitimate agenda item for parliament (themes that will be explored more in the remaining chapters), points to ways that women have changed parliament and the men within it.

However, the most significant changes over time have come in the role of women MPs. Over time, the number of MPs participating in IWD debates – in both absolute numbers and MPs per hour of debate (see table 3 and figure 17 respectively) – has increased. Women have remained the majority of these MPs over time. However, the same period of time has also seen a significant rise in the number (and proportion) of women MPs in parliament; whereas for the first debate in 1994 women made up less than 10% of all MPs, the most recent IWD debate in 2018 took place in a parliament where almost a third of MPs are women.

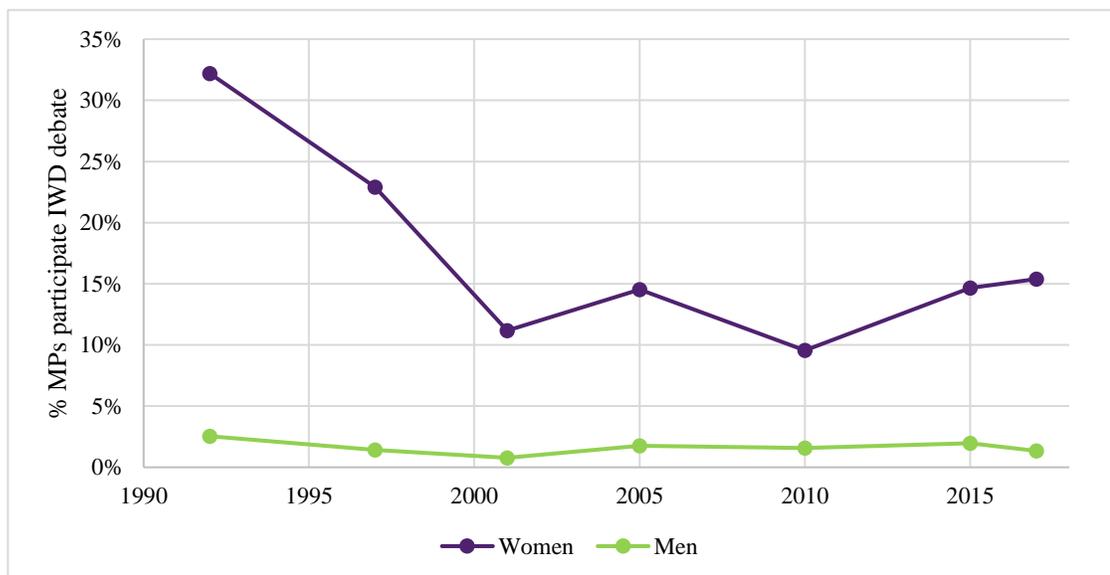


FIGURE 19: PERCENT OF ALL MPS WHO PARTICIPATE IN IWD DEBATES, AVERAGED BY GOVERNMENT, 1994-2018.

So, while the absolute numbers of women taking part in the debate have not changed, the increasingly gender balanced composition of MPs means that the women who partake in IWD debates represent an increasingly small proportion of all women MPs, as Figure 19 demonstrates.

This is significant for a number of reasons, but most notably because it lessens that burden that gendered divisions of labor have on women. If – for reasons that one could view as normatively good, bad, or neutral – we want to see women leading and constituting the majority of conversations about women’s issues, increasing the number of women is essential to making this happen while still allowing for the fact that there are many other issues areas where individual women might want or have the skills to get involved beyond those explicitly targeting women. In addition, the gendered experiences and expertise are also needed on issues that are not explicitly ‘about’ women but may have a gendered dimension to it (i.e. all things).

The case of International Women’s Day debates offer an unusual example of women centered and women MP dominated debate and discussion in the UK Parliament. But though in some senses an aberration from the norm, the debates and the role of men therein offer insights into the larger norms in parliament. The relative frequency of participation and speaking of men and women, as well as the content of their contributions, also illustrates the remarkably consistent role of men as offering a distinct

and important vantage point, including the ability for men's involvement in a discussion to be seen as a sign that it has become more "mainstreaming" and thus significant.

#### CHAPTER 4: HOW DO MEN SEE THEIR ROLE IN REPRESENTING WOMEN?

Previous chapters have pointed to the theoretical and empirical holes in existing accounts of substantive representation, focused as it has been on the actions of descriptive representatives. My analysis of legislative behavior has suggested that men play a distinct role, and a role that is not *only* a more limited version of women's role, but also has distinct qualities by virtue of men's position uniquely gendered ways. I have termed this prevalent mode of representation "ancillary representation", encapsulating a role that is secondary, supportive, and with different strengths and focuses.

I now turn to interview data to delve deeper into the meaning and motivations for men's SRW, from the perspective of both men and women MPs. This seeks to further elucidate the legislative behavior observed in chapters 2 and 3 and capture prevailing views of what the appropriate role for men in representing women. The following three chapters explore aspects of men's substantive representation of women. This chapter looks at how men who have engaged in the substantive representation of women view their role in such efforts, offering support for my theory of men as ancillary representatives. This chapter, along with the following two which also use qualitative analysis of interviews, point to the importance of men's gendered perspective and

experiences. This insight, however, does not diminish the importance of descriptive representatives (i.e. women), but by showing the ways that gendered experiences of men are important demonstrating in turn the continued need for women and the knowledge from their experience to be present in political spaces), and further making visible the role that women MPs have in facilitating men as ancillary representatives.

## **Interviewing MPs**

The key source of my data comes from interviews I conducted with politicians in the United Kingdom in 2017 and early 2018. Most of my 32 interviewees were current MPs (28), along with two members of the House of Lords, and two were former MPs. 19 of my respondents were men, and a majority (18/32) were Labour Party MPs. The full gender and party breakdown of interviewees can be seen in [Appendix I](#).

Interviewees were selected through a combination of a purposive and snowball sampling. At the outset, I identified men who had – at any point in their parliamentary career – engaged on an issue that could be conceived as a ‘women’s issue’ – that is, a policy area that disproportionately impacts on women in some way. To identify these members, I looked first to MPs who had proposed and/or spoken in debates focused on women’s issues. I used search terms including ‘women’, ‘gender’, ‘sex’, ‘girls’ in Hansard (the parliamentary debate records) to identify such issues. Using data collected as part of earlier components of this project, I looked particularly closely at all male

participants of International Women's Day Debates since they began in 1994, and also men who proposed Westminster Hall Debates on women's issues. In addition, I identified all members (current and former) of the Women & Equalities Committee, which was instituted in 2015. The final category of interviewees sourced was from membership lists of All-Party Parliamentary Groups (APPGs)<sup>78</sup> on women's issues – groups such as APPG on Women & Work; on Women's Health; on Sex Equality; and on Women, Peace and Security.

Women were selected with a slightly more selective approach; I contacted women MPs who had engaged significantly on women's issues (so whereas a man who was a member of one APPG on women's issues would be contacted, a woman would be contacted only when she was a chair of the same APPG). This included current and former party spokespersons on Women & Equalities, current and former members of Women and Equalities Select Committee, and consistent proposers and supporters of debates on women's issues. I took a more selective approach with women MPs because a central goal of my interviews with women was to better understand what role men play, anticipating that the most active women on women's issues that would likely have the best "lay of the land" on the question of men's involvement.

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<sup>78</sup> APPGs are groups of members from both the House of Commons and House of Lords, and consist of "members coming together on a basis of shared interests or backgrounds, independent of party"(Norton 2008, 240). They are

The second way in which I identified interviewees was through snowball sampling, by asking interviewees for suggestions of additional people to speak to. Of course, snowball sampling runs the risk of creating an echo chamber of interviewees (Farquharson 2003; Tansey 2007). I feel satisfied with the sample ultimately garnered because first, most of the suggested MPs were already ones I had identified from their parliamentary activity; and second, MPs mostly offered names from both their own and other parties, suggesting they weren't narrowly focused on others with very similar interests and ideologies; finally, towards the end of my time interviewing I was no longer hearing new names mentioned. While of course in theory there could be an entirely untapped pool of people I was not made aware of, the range of MPs that I did speak with— from across the parties, cohorts, and ideological spectrum — leads me to think this is unlikely.

I contacted MPs via email initially, following up with a phone call in some cases. My response rate was ~35%, which compares favorably to other studies of elites, who are notoriously difficult to get access to (Goldstein 2002; Peabody et al. 1990; Tansey 2007). My relative success was helped by a number of initial contacts in parliament (through previous research projects, as well as having worked as a research in the House of

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distinct from other parliamentary organizations by their non-partisan nature, and the lack of any formal role in parliamentary decision making.

Commons in 2010) and these contacts were built upon and expanded during my time in parliament, with a number of MPs reaching out to their colleagues on my behalf.

The interviews were mostly (28/32) conducted on the Parliamentary estate - in a Parliamentary Tea Room, atriums, or Members' own offices. Three took place over telephone, and one in the home of the interviewee (a former MP). Interviews lasted between 10 and 75 minutes, with the mean interviewing lasting 33 minutes, and a total of just over eighteen hours of interviews. Most (30/32) were recorded and later transcribed in full.

The interviews were semi-structured and conversational (Leech 2002a, 2002b), with a set of questions structuring the conversation (see [appendix 2](#)). Additional questions were added for each MP pertaining specifically to the activity of the interviewee. MPs spoke 'on the record', though in many cases noted parts of the discussion where they did not wish to be individually attributed to their comments.

While clearly a small sample – amounting to a just under 5% of all MPs - it remains a useful data source. It includes a reasonable proportion of those MPs that identified as key actors for women, since it included 35% of those MPs I contacted. More importantly, it is not intended as a representative sample of MPs, but rather a focused qualitative set of interviews designed to generate hypotheses and theorize the

mechanisms underlying a to-date unstudied question. In this sense the relevant “N” is not the number of MPs, but the ideas revealed to me in interviews.

#### HOW DO MEN SEE THEIR ROLE?

When men were asked why they decided to get involved in the issue(s) related to women they had been active on, or asked how they saw the role of men in the advocacy of issues for women, their answers went in two main directions. One direction of answer would see the man attempt to minimize the woman-specific nature of the issue, or at least place the issue and the imperative to act within a broader commitment to equality and fairness. The second direction of answers saw issues related to women, and men’s role therein, as a unique mode of representation that they approached in a way that was unlike any other in their work as an MP.

Whilst these two directions or in tendencies have, at their core, assumptions and beliefs that are contradictory, most men engaged in answers that demonstrated both tendencies during the course of their interview. In other words, men held two (potentially somewhat incompatible) beliefs: that the issue in hand was one of human interest and important, and at the same time the issue “belonged” to women in some important way.

My interview subjects seemed to all be, at some level, grappling with a tension that plagues many who engage with issues of representation at a theoretical or a practical level: whose responsibility – or perhaps even duty – is it to represent a group interest,

especially a marginalized group that is underrepresented in formal politics? The section that follow expounds on these two tendencies – first the framing of women’s issues as an issue like all others, and second the framing of women’s issues and men’s role as unique and distinct.

#### PLACING IT IN A BROADER CONTEXT OF EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS

When asked why they chose to get involved on an issue(s) normally thought of a women’s issue, most men did some reframing of my description of their having sought to represent women, characterizing the work they had done as a broader issue of equality and fairness, with the fact that women are the group in question being almost coincidental. In doing so they were not seeking to deny that the issue in hand did disproportionately impact women, but a common first line of explanation was to minimize the group specific nature of the issue, emphasizing instead a broader principle. This was in contrast to the women I spoke to, who consistently described their activity on similar issues as working for women – a mandate effect echoed in the previous research about how women conceptualize their own SRW.

One male MP, on why he had got become very active with a group advocating for women in work, stated

*“...first of all because it's wrong, you know it's a moral issue, it's simply wrong that we're still in that situation. But also, from a practical economic perspective this is one of the greatest gaps now that we have in terms of utilizing our skills and expertise and*

*leveraging inclusive economic growth. So, it's a moral and practical reason for being involved in that.*"<sup>79</sup>

*"In terms of other, what are deemed to be women's issues, but I don't really think are women's issues - they're societal issues."*<sup>80</sup>

However, the majority of these framings that it being a women's issue doesn't matter usually became nuanced over the time, and in a number of cases seemingly contradicted entirely by the end. Most men ended up articulating a specific and distinct role for men in advocating for women, though at least some of their justification was about minimizing the women's-specific nature of an issue.

For example, when first talking about the issue of sexual harassment in parliament, a Labour male MP answered "...for me this isn't a 'women's issue'. This is an issue about decency. [...] Men absolutely have a role because it shouldn't be a women's issue." He reiterated this in a number of ways, talking about "common decency" and politeness. But when talking about the practical ways in which he has or would in the future get involved on the issue, he noted that he'd seek out a female colleague and listen to their perspective on the issue, stating that

*"...because I've never suffered from this [sexual harassment], you can't work on proposals if you've never suffered from it or you've never seen it, and frankly it would be*

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<sup>79</sup> Interview 9

<sup>80</sup> Interview 9

*stupid, let alone downright insulting, not to involve people who've actually suffered from the mis-attentions.*"<sup>81</sup>

Later in the interview, he returned somewhat to his frame of being gender-blind in his approach to both people and policies, when talking about women MPs in parliament and the need (or not) for more women's representation, he said "I don't look at somebody and think 'Oh they're a woman MP', it's not something that would necessarily occur to me." In a comment that revealed these two instincts, later in the interview the same MP stated:

*"I wish we were in a position where we could get over seeing people as women instead seeing them as MPs. Because I do. I don't understand - and I don't like, I don't see any reason if I had a female MP, she can't represent me. That said on this issue of harassment for example I suspect women, it's one of the few areas where women's experience would have been entirely different from mine"*

This quote also points to the understandably issue-contingent nature of men's view of their role on "women's issues", with their role being dependent on the nature of the issue in question. One woman MP alluded to this when pointing out that men's willingness to get involved in women's issues varied on the policy issue; she summed it up by saying "Yeah, men don't really want to talk about tampons very much."<sup>82</sup> While on the issue of sanitary products some of the discomfort may stem from general reticence to talk about periods, it is also the case that the examples of tampons is

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<sup>81</sup> Interview 12

<sup>82</sup> Interview 27

an issue where it is harder to rely on the more comfortable “universal” principles of fairness and equality. In other words, some issues are more strongly associated with uniquely female functions or issues and so are harder to fit neatly into a broader set of goals.

#### A DISTINCT ROLE FOR MEN

Though many men at least in part attempted to explain their work on women’s issues as an issue like any other - part of a broader set of ideological agenda and just another issues MPs can or cannot engage with - the much stronger theme was a recognition that men have a distinct role in relation to women’s issues. This articulation views men’s role on SRW as unlike their relationship to most other political issues, and unlike the role women have vis-à-vis women’s issues.

As this next section describes, I reach this conclusion from the persistent articulations of men as ancillary representatives; and as indicated in the above section, even men who set out to frame women’s issues as “just another” question of equality, embedded in their discussion was a recognition of their somewhat distinct role. Thus, the extent to which men see themselves as ancillary representative on women’s issues varies, but their situating of themselves as ancillary is consistent. There are few different ways men framed their ancillary position.

## **As a supporter and ally**

When asked how they saw their role on women's issues, and in particular if there was a distinct role for men, at first most men framed it as a part of a broader agenda or issue area. However, almost all men ended up concluding that they had a distinct and secondary role to that of women. For the most part this was conceived of as a supportive role to enable the work of women, with progressively inclined MPs (Labour) men using words to describe themselves as an 'ally' and as in solidarity.

One Conservative MP described a phrase he had recently heard at a conference that he felt encapsulated his view of the appropriate role for men: "women don't need men to speak for them, they need men to speak with them"<sup>83</sup> In practical terms, men illustrated this distinct role by giving examples of where they would take on a supportive rather than leadership role on an issue, whether it is in the chamber, as one Conservative MP noted - "...if there is a debate in the house and women are making the case then I just want to be there as well, saying I agree with her. Because frequently I will [agree with her]."<sup>84</sup> Another way of supporting women that some men described was by encouraging the women in their own party in their work in substantively representing women:

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<sup>83</sup> Interview 8

*"I am supporting the work that she's [woman MP in own party] doing, and she keeps on coming to me and saying, 'is this okay' and I say 'Crack on! Get on with it, go and do what you need to do because you're doing a fantastic job, and I'll be supportive of what you're doing.'"*<sup>85</sup>

*"So yeah, I don't think it's about me or any other man telling a woman how they should or shouldn't run a campaign, I think that's nonsense ... But I think there's nothing wrong with men saying, 'but we're supporting you and we're standing with you'"*<sup>86</sup>

*"There is hundreds of example of women creating change for women, but if you can have men working alongside - not propping them up, no nothing like that ... but if you can work alongside them, stand with them support them, you know, I don't mean encourage in a patronising way, but encourage them and say 'yeah I'm here standing with you.'"*<sup>87</sup>

*"the role [...] of myself as a male MP is to be supportive of my female colleagues who are blazing a trail on a particular campaign."*<sup>88</sup>

*"So, I'm very supportive of all my sisters in Parliament, and so I'm there to, you know, help women any way I can. But equally I'm not... seeking to ... bask in the glory of the issue. I'm going to be supportive and helpful"*<sup>89</sup>

At the same time, some men recognized the limits of this approach, and seemed genuinely conflicted about the degree of initiative and involvement they should be taking, recognizing the burden that taking sole responsibility for women's issues can place on women.

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<sup>84</sup> Interview 22

<sup>85</sup> Interview 9

<sup>86</sup> Interview II

<sup>87</sup> Interview II

<sup>88</sup> Interview 9

<sup>89</sup> Interview 15

*“So, I think our role is to be supportive in that sense, but we should also be trying to blaze a trail ourselves as well, it shouldn't always be left to the women to instigate those discussions.”<sup>90</sup>*

Another tension men articulated was the balancing of their involvement on a women's issue with that of a woman's MP, with many men expressing a concern that their involvement might take up space for women's voices. This was expressed as a particularly salient issue in the context of a Parliament of 650 MPs and limited time, especially for backbench MPs. The lack of time and desire for women to have the space to speak is coupled with an acknowledgement that men are in some ways less connected to the issue – without the experiences and awareness of women. Three women MPs (Scottish National Party, Lib Dem and Labour respectively) articulated this tension:

*“So, I think it's sort of going yes okay you're supportive and that's great, but don't kind of steal all the airwaves and steal all of the time. Because if there's one thing that's short in this place it's time.”<sup>91</sup>*

*“Men have an important role to play, but there's not enough of them really understanding the extent of the privilege that they have.”<sup>92</sup>*

*“It is important that [men] actually actively sort of seek a solution, rather than impose. I think it's important to listen to women and what women need and want, rather than impose their ideas, because that's kind of where misogyny comes from in this place led by that.”<sup>93</sup>*

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<sup>90</sup> Interview 9

<sup>91</sup> Interview 27

<sup>92</sup> Interview 26

<sup>93</sup> Interview 6

A part of the dilemma for men was a concern that their actions could actually be counterproductive, even if intended well, given the lack of direct connection with the experience of being a woman and the optics surrounding men speaking for women:

*“My first comment is I'm always very conscious of the fact that as a man it's not for me to be telling women what they need to do or what the answer is.”<sup>94</sup>*

*“What I absolutely don't want to be seen to be being in any way ever, is patronising. I don't want to ... somehow accidentally slip into the role that I am trying to talk other people out of. So that's a worry.”<sup>95</sup>*

*“And actually, one of the legitimate criticisms is that we hear too much from men and not enough from woman. For a man to go... It's a difficult one really, because you want men to contribute to the debate as well but certainly you don't want a sense that they're taking over and dominating it - it's quite a difficult balance.”<sup>96</sup>*

*“I mean men shouldn't decide, in the same way white people shouldn't decide on issues for black people, and gentiles shouldn't decide on issues for Jews. [...] So when we're making decisions we have a women's PLP [Parliamentary Labour Party], and the women's PLP should take the lead and have a line, and then male MPs ... we should probably act accordingly.”<sup>97</sup>*

But ultimately many men and women came back to the imperative of sharing of the burden and work of representing women. One Labour women MP described the need of having men involved in the SRW by saying “this place [Parliament] is full of thorns

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<sup>94</sup> Interview 29

<sup>95</sup> Interview 22

<sup>96</sup> Interview 17

<sup>97</sup> Interview 19

and we have to hack through them, and occasionally it's exhausting, and it's nice to have a bloke helping out every now and again.”<sup>98</sup>

One approach that male MPs grappling with this dilemma have taken is to approach debates and other actions related to women’s issues with more caution, and applying a higher standard of when it is appropriate to take up space and time than on other issues. One male MP talked about a Women & Work debate he was attending and considering speaking at later that day, and explained that in addition to an interest in women’s rights he was motivated by his experience and expertise during a previous career as an employment lawyer:

*“Because I think if I didn't have that [legal experience] I'd probably feel - particularly if it's a heavily subscribed debate - you could be putting down the time that a woman might be speaking who might actually have a real life experience. I have lots of experiences but they're vicarious because they're through my clients and people I've observed. [...] We do have a lot of very articulate women here who can probably perform better than I will.”<sup>99</sup>*

## **Offering a male perspective**

A key issue area where men saw themselves as having a distinct role was because that of domestic, and other forms of gender-based, violence.

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<sup>98</sup> Interview 7

<sup>99</sup> Interview 17

*“I think men absolutely not only have a role but an absolute obligation to talk about some of these issues, because it's men that are perpetrating a lot of the problems in the issues that we're discussing.”<sup>100</sup>*

*“I think it's helpful to have male allies involved because, if we're talking about DV it's men who are ultimately responsible, are in large part responsible for the behaviour that causes harm. And they have a responsibility to take some ownership of that and to hold other men to account. And sometimes that is best done by men holding men to account, not just by women having to hold men to account for their behaviour.”<sup>101</sup>*

*“And I've always taken the view, that if you take an extreme, Domestic Violence, until you get men saying that Domestic Violence is a bad thing, which it is, and that men should never hit women.”<sup>102</sup>*

*“I know what men are like, I've played Rugby for 17 years and been in that changing room - that "locker room" environment as Donald Trump might say ... perhaps that's why I've got a different insight and why I think this [normalization of male violence] all starts in school, and then a lot of men play sport, and it goes right through.”<sup>103</sup>*

Domestic violence was by far the most common example men raised to describe the distinct role for men in an issue, but other examples included highlighting the role men play in child development; one man explained:

*“But if you've got men that want to come and support on issues like breastfeeding for example, it might not seem necessarily a speech that they would soon be involved in, but it's really important actually that you get that in there because the figures suggest if you've got a male family member and a partner who's supportive of this women are far more likely to carry it on and be successful of that. So, the impacts that can be had from having a range of voices speaking out is useful.”<sup>104</sup>*

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<sup>100</sup> Interview 9

<sup>101</sup> Interview 8

<sup>102</sup> Interview 11

<sup>103</sup> Interview 13

<sup>104</sup> Interview 27

## **Lending legitimacy**

A final aspect of men's distinct role is the ability to bring legitimacy to an issue. This was described to me in interviews in at least two ways: by men using their position as men in a masculine institution to help elevate an issue; and second through the apparent incongruity of men engaged on women's issues, which can draw attention to an issue, offer credibility and mainstream the issue.

Both men and women (but especially women) described men's engagement in women's issues as a strategically useful tactic; given the political reality of male dominated politics engagement by the majority group of men has the potential to elevate the perceived importance of an issue (or at least, this was the view of many of the MPs I spoke with). This is especially true given that women's issues have traditionally been marginalized and often seen as the sole responsibility of women. Given this political reality, men engaging on women's issues can lend credibility, as well as generate extra attention and interest by virtue of the relative rarity of such a scenario. The confounding of expectations that men are able to do by engaging on women's issue gives men a comparative advantage when advocating.

A Conservative woman explained that, in her efforts to encourage the party to select more women candidates and prioritize women's representation, she likes to "use" supportive men to spread the message, saying "I think it comes better from a man."<sup>105</sup> The view that messages promoting women's issues are better received coming from men is certainly not universal, and seems to be in part a product of party ideology. The same Conservative woman also noted that she had recently written an op-ed advocating for more women in the Conservative party, but had then had it published under the name of a male MP to give the piece and the cause more credibility. In telling this anecdote, she recognized that it was an approach that worked in the Conservative party but would not necessarily work for all ideological settings. She explained:

*"If I talk like [prominent feminist Labour MP] Harriet Harman, you know I would be persona non grata in the party. So yeah, I suppose it's a strategy. But you've got to be pretty deeply embedded in my tribe to understand how it all works.... I think [using men as spokespeople] just sends a good signal to the other male MPs that this isn't just a kind of - you know, extreme feminist, politically correct claptrap as some of them might say. So we've always tried to involve them."*

In other instances, MPs framed men's role as harnessing the authority and legitimacy they and their fellow male MPs hold in the political space generally; one Labour MP put it this way: "I kind of think that if a man can add his weight then that's a

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<sup>105</sup> Interview 16

good thing ... [maternity leave] needs addressing in a way that will carry as many other MPs as possible, including men”<sup>106</sup>

Another male Labour MP described his experience of getting involved on the issue of domestic violence and the treatment of victims by the court system, and the ways in which he realized that as a man speaking on the topic he was able to have more of an impact in both the media and parliament than female colleagues who had been and were still saying similar things.

*“when I spoke up and did that speech [on the treatment of domestic violence victims in the court system] in the Commons it got a huge amount of coverage. And I don't think had a woman made the speech it would have got the same amount of coverage. And I say that simply because that same speech has been made several times by women in the past, and the law hadn't changed.”<sup>107</sup>*

One of the Conservative men I interviewed saw this incongruence and rarity as especially salient for Conservative, who engage on SRW at lower rates than men in other parties. He described himself as a “rare breed,” and noted “there's almost a trump card to be played with it that adds extra weight to it.”<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> Interview 10

<sup>107</sup> Interview 20

<sup>108</sup> Interview 22

While some of this additional legitimacy and attention was attributed to men's position as a member of the majority and traditionally dominant group, another part of the credibility comes from men as non-descriptive representatives. The (male Labour) MP who in the quote above talked the attention he received from his speech on the treatment of domestic violence victims, and saw the reaction as a product of the relative rarity of such a move, as well as product of sexism that favors his words over that of a women:

*“because people who speak against type, that's newsworthy. That's the definition of news because it's new. So, I've got no doubt that there is a mix of it being quite counterintuitive, it being quite new, newsy. But also, sexism and misogyny and all the rest of it as well, because why would they listen to a bloke and not a woman say it.”<sup>109</sup>*

The idea that the incongruity and even novelty of men representing women specifically was noted by others as another key way in which men are in a powerful position to advocate for women. One senior Conservative MP recognized that in the case of women's issues, he has the power to exert real influence of his colleague, noting “I think it's sometimes quite powerful when men who don't personally have anything to gain other than perhaps a good reputation from immersing themselves in some of these issues.” He went on to analogize this phenomenon to straight MPs supporting gay rights in the late 1990s; he explained that straight allies arguing in favor of gay rights

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<sup>109</sup> Interview 20

amendments were especially persuasive to him because they had nothing personally to gain. He described one fellow (straight) MP who had been influential in his changing positions on gay rights:

*“And did that influence me a bit when I heard him when he talked to me? It did a bit because I thought, he's got no dog in this fight, or this race. He's not himself gay, he is just approaching it on the basis of principle”<sup>110</sup>*

Finally, both men and women described men's involvement as valuable because of how it helped to mainstream issues of women's equality, and make the issue seem more broadly relevant. This is perhaps because, as the previous quote notes, when not being advocated for by a descriptive representative a position can seem more principled and less self-interested. This was articulated by both men who saw the role they could play in furthering women's issues, and women who were grateful for male support that they felt helped the cause. One woman described the issues she had seen when only women engage on women's issues, arguing that “unless men make a stand as well then [women's issues are] in danger of being marginalised and not getting the support that it needs.”<sup>111</sup>

## **Making the most of gendered leeway**

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<sup>110</sup> Interview 25

<sup>111</sup> Interview 15

Discussions with both men and women revealed a sense of a double standard in terms of perceived duty and praise, with men getting credit for even fairly minimal levels of engagement on women's issues that are treated as normal for women MPs. This dynamic speaks to the concept Bergqvist et al. (2016) present of the "gendered leeway" – women substantively representing women fulfills an expectation and as a result does not receive particular praise, but the absence of women's activity does get criticized; this is in contrast to men's role in women's substantive representation, where they are not expected to be active on women's issues (and thus are not punished if they are not), and get significant credit for even small levels of engagement.

We see this dynamic – per the view of both men and women – in discussions of the praise and political advantage for men in substantive representing women, as well as the relatively low costs involved for men in substantively representing women. Both male and female MP's recognized that some of their colleagues were motivated to talk about or act on women's issues by wanting to look good to the party and/or to voters. One Conservative MP who was heavily involved in the running of a women-related APPG discussed his critiques of men who had previously been a part of the group but hadn't done very much. He noted: "Because one of the challenges is that you get with issues like this [related to women] is some people like to be associated with it, but don't actually do anything." When I followed up to clarify that it was the gendered theme of the group that made people seek out the association, he answered "it's a good, positive thing to say that

you're doing."<sup>112</sup> Others spoke about how men especially were rewarded by their party leadership for engaging on women's issues; one Conservative male MP said "It's a good career move. Service to [Conservative party women's recruitment group] Women2Win has been seen as a good thing to do that will get you noticed by the leadership."<sup>113</sup>

In addition to a perception that men can stand to gain from even modest engagements in the substantive representation of women, there appear to be relatively few costs to men who chose to work on women's issues. When asked what the reaction had been to his work on recruiting women into the party, a Conservative male MP said "I can't think, during my 10 years in Parliament, of a single episode of even someone joking with me about it, funnily enough."<sup>114</sup> I asked the male MPs explicitly if they received criticism or backlash for talking about women's issues; the majority of answers were essentially "no", with a few citing relatively minor examples of criticism or a some loss of reputation. When asked specifically if a male MP felt there was a risk to his reputation, he answered: "Yes, I do. Think that that's a possibility. And clearly there's that risk where if you view - talk about a particular topic too much, that becomes the thing you're

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<sup>112</sup> Interview 14

<sup>113</sup> Interview 28

<sup>114</sup> Interview 24

associated with. Well, that's tough. But I value it enough.”<sup>115</sup> – though it is apparent that the risk or cost he sees as possible is just that he would be too strongly associated with women’s issues, in a way that may pigeon-hole him. One male Labour MP explained that he had been privately criticized by some male colleagues: “I'm sometimes told to keep my nose out those sorts of things because you're putting the rest of us to shame, which is a fairly recent comment that I've had from somebody - male colleagues”. He went on to clarify, though that this reaction was a “very, very small proportion. Very, very small.”<sup>116</sup>

This apparent immunity to significant criticism or backlash to men standing up for women’s issues is in contrast to many women MPs who received significant resistance for advocating for women’s substantive issues. This was a gendered dynamic that multiple women MPs observed – that men did not seem to get the abuse for their advocacy (within and outside of parties and political institutions). The extent of women’s vulnerability when speaking out, especially on feminist issues, was noted by multiple women I interviewed and is also well as documented in an emerging literature on violence against women in politics (Restrepo Sanín 2018; Krook and Restrepo Sanín 2016; Krook 2018; Biroli 2018; Krook 2015; Kuperberg 2018).

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<sup>115</sup> Interview 22

<sup>116</sup> Interview II

## DISCUSSION

This chapter has considered the ways that male and female MPs describe the role of male MPs. I first outlined two frames that most men engaged with at some point in their discussion – one presenting a view that SRW is a part of broader commitments to equality and fairness that doesn't require any particular or different mode of representation, and the second frame that starts from the assumption that men have a distinct role to play in the SRW – distinct both from women and from their role as a representative in other issue areas. This distinct role is a product of the existing gendered order of parliament. First because most men described their role as that of a supporting ally, and in particular a supporter that exists to empower and amplify the work and voice of women. Second, on some issues in particular, men offer a distinct vantage point, offering the male view of a gendered issue in ways that can help both debates and the advocacy on the issue question. Finally, the gendered order that men in Parliament exist in puts men in a position of relative authority – which allows them to be especially powerful supporters - and gives them the gendered leeway to engage with women's issues with relatively little cost.

Ultimately the ancillary role of men in Parliament is not innate or permanent, but rather a product of the institution in which they serve, and the experiences and relative status of both men and women in parliament.

## CHAPTER 5: WHAT ARE MEN'S MOTIVATIONS? THEORY OF GENDERED EXPERIENCES

This dissertation so far has considered when, and in what ways, men substantively represent women in Parliament. This chapter considers the “why”, looking to what men themselves say about their motivations for working on an issue related to women in particular. The chapter draws on theoretical insights from research on women substantively representing women and finds that – in line with existing theoretical accounts explaining women’s motivations to represent women – “gendered experiences” are a key motivations of men’s substantive representation of women (SRW). Rather than challenge the importance of descriptive representation, this chapter points to the importance of electing MPs from diverse background. I offer a typology of gendered experiences that men describe as formative to their SRW, illustrate the typology using quotes from the interviews, and consider how these findings interact with existing conclusions about women’s SRW. This chapter offers support for my theory of men as ancillary representatives, and in particular the nature of that ancillary role as including as a distinct perspective.

### UNDERLYING MOTIVATIONS? THEORY OF GENDERED EXPERIENCES

The logical starting point for understanding why men would or would not choose to engage in the substantive representation of women is to consider existing theories for when and how women engage in the substantive representation of women. This literature

was explored in chapter one, but two theoretical insights are especially useful at this juncture.

First, Tamerius's (1995) conceptualization of sex differences in political behavior posits that differences in life experiences lead to men and women bringing different resources and attitudes to their role as a legislator, which in turn leads to differences in legislative behavior – particularly when it comes to the substantive representation of women. Tamerius highlights important aspects of differences in life experiences, including the content of one's life that result from biological differences and society's sex divisions and limitations; the perspective that comes from that life experience; a sense of mutuality from the shared experience as a man or a woman in the world; and finally differences in associational affiliations resulting from the sex segregated nature of many aspects of life including at work and social .

These different experiences, according to Tamerius, result in a number of different aspects of sex difference in political behavior. The first is differences in support for issues, with life experience a key reason one might find a policy compelling or not. The second concerns differences in levels of commitment; even if men and women share the same position there might be differences in degree. The third is an awareness of the existence and extent of an issue or issues, with men and women asking different questions and looking at different types of implications of a policy issue. And the fourth

concerns differences in expertise as a result of the experiences and associational differences of men and women's lives.

As Tamerius makes clear, in many sense men and women have more in common than not, and factors such as party affiliation often win out in ultimately determining a politician's actions. But, insofar as there are individual level dynamics, conceptualising the underlying differences that lead to sex difference in behaviors nuance understandings of gender dynamics in legislative behavior. Tamerius's insights lead me to anticipate that the particulars of men's life experiences might also be important in determining the resources and attitudes they bring to their legislating, and as a result would shape their legislative leadership.

Further theoretical and empirical support for considering the importance of men's experiences comes from Nadia Brown's work in her book *Sisters in the Statehouse* (2014), where she elicits "feminist life histories" of African American women state legislators in Maryland. She argues that it is a combination of experience and identity, both of which are wholly intertwined by race and gender, that explains the legislative choices and priorities of the women. Brown terms this "Representational Identity Theory," arguing that it the interaction of both life experiences and a sense of identity that shapes how a legislator will seek to represent while in office.

These theoretical insights exemplify a broader assumption that is axiomatic for most feminist political scientists: it is not that women are inherently different from men, but it is their experience in a deeply gendered world that leads them to bring to politics different knowledge, perspectives, and approaches to men. And while existing theories focus on why women come to substantively represent women, this chapter shows that existing theorizing about women can be utilized in developing explanations of men's representation of women.

Drawing on my interview data, I find that men consistently described formative relationships and/or experiences as central motivators for their engagement in women's issues, and for the most part these were distinctly gendered experiences. Male MPs were asked "what motivated you to get involved with [women's issue MP has been active on]," - though often they would offer a motivation before this question prompting them. I analyzed both the interviews with 19 men, as well as the interviews with women - who were asked which men they would anticipate as reliable supporters of women's issues if they were looking for male allies, and why they think men were motivated to be engaged.

Analysis of the interview transcripts saw a few categories of answers emerging, and from this I established a typology for men's formative gendered experiences motivating SRW, categorizing them as 'Direct Experiences', 'Relational Experiences' and 'Resonant Experiences'. Table 4 offers examples of each of the types of gendered

experience. Each of these dimensions are best understood as “ideal types” per Weber’s methodology (1949). In their strictest sense the boundaries of the categories are fictional, but the construction of the typology speaks to an essence of a meaningful and coherent concept - and though there is significant overlap between categories, there is still benefit to making a distinct typology.

<b>Direct Experiences</b>	<b>Relational Experiences</b>	<b>Resonant experiences</b>
Domestic Violence	Mothers, sisters, daughters	Being LGBT
Parenting & Family structure	Wife	Homophobia/homophobic bullying
Struggles with work/life balance	Female friends	Racism/ anti-immigrant sentiment
	Female colleagues	Anti-Semitism

**TABLE 4:** Typology of formative gendered experiences for shaping approach to SRW

The advantage of in-depth interviews, as well as of a study that considers a range of legislative behaviour, is that it is possible to sketch out the nuances of legislative behaviour and motivations behind the actions of a representative. The following three

sections address each element of this typology of formative gendered experiences that men spoke of and illustrates the theory with quotes from interviewees.

### DIRECT EXPERIENCES

The first, but least common, category of formative gendered experiences were those men who had directly experienced what is largely seen as a “women’s issue”. The most striking set of direct experiences described to me in interviews was experiences of gendered violence: one male MP described formative experiences as a child witnessing violence against his mother, and another alluded to experience in an abusive relationship. The male MP who described his childhood experiences noted that it was this experience that “drives me on this particular issue,” and the male MP who mentioned intimate partner violence in his past (though resisted fully embracing the term), and explained that it helped him to “understand the issue.” A number of other interviewees noted that they believed some of the men who were active on issues of domestic violence had personal experiences with the issue (but I was not able to interview those MPs to confirm this suggestion).

In a less extreme example of experiences with gendered violence, one woman MP cited an example of a male politician who was helping to advocate for women in her party, and as a result became the subject of sexist abuse online. She noted that “... it is when men start to experience it themselves because they're advocating, so they'll

suddenly get the abuse, for example.”<sup>117</sup> She described her male colleague as being much more understanding and helpful on the issue of abuse and harassment towards women in politics after himself experiencing the resistance that women face.

Another type of direct experiences that MPs described as shaping men’s role in the SRW were struggles with work-life balance, and in particular experiences dealing with a household where both parents and subvert the idea of the “ideal worker” (McClintock-Comeaux 2013; Williams 2001) which assumes a stay-at-home-parent. Male MPs, especially those with young children, who had or were currently experiencing the gendered effect of maternity job discrimination and struggles of working hours that are not family friendly cited these experiences as highlighting for them the issues women face in the workplace and outside. Both women and men MPs noted this pattern, citing a crop of younger male MPs with young children and a partner who works. This generation of men was discussed as especially important on issues such as maternity leave.

In fact, in a debate on “Baby Leave” MPs (the parental leave policy for MPs that includes provisions for voting while at home with a new baby), longstanding MP and women’s rights activist Harriet Harman noted: “I never thought I would see the day when the sons of the women’s movement arrived in this House—but they are here. They want

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<sup>117</sup> Interview 26

and expect that they should play their part with a new baby.”<sup>118</sup> Another Labour woman MP of the same generation as Harman said, in an interview in 2014 when asked why Labour has changed, “I think there are more feminist men ... I think a lot of the younger men, who are themselves balancing their lives between small children and parliament, have a particular understanding of what it's been like for decades for women.”<sup>119</sup> This direct experience that Harman and Jowell saw as important to changing the party was mentioned by a number of male MPs I interviewed:

*“I think we come at it perhaps from a different angle, because generationally it is different. All of our spouses and partners will work, and they [the male partner] are not necessarily even the biggest earners. But also, inevitably when you're sort of back in the constituency at home the, it's far more of a partnership.”<sup>120</sup>*

*“[The men engaged on women's issues are often those] with families who are hands on Dads, because they start to experience some of the discrimination.”<sup>121</sup>*

*“I'm 31... I'm of a generation where, you know, our partners and wives have been in a workplace where their career has been more encouraged than it was in the past. And so we end up marrying ambitious women, quite rightly, who want to make sure that that balance is better at home because it's not just about one of you succeeding it's about both of you. So maybe it's a generational thing.”<sup>122</sup>*

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<sup>118</sup> <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2018-02-01/debates/7D778066-4A6F-4128-BDA8-69014CEA42C2/ProxyVotingForMpsParentalLeave>

<sup>119</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/theobserver/she-said/2014/apr/13/the-government-has-a-women-problem-and-its-down-to-the-feminist-men-to-fix-it>

<sup>120</sup> Interview 23

<sup>121</sup> Interview 26

<sup>122</sup> Interview 29

These direct gendered experiences of work-life balance were often discussed by outsiders (i.e. older men, or women MPs) as a part of broader observations about a newer generation of feminist men entering parliament - men whose social circle and values, as well as life experiences, gave them more exposure to issues that have traditionally seen as women's issues.

### RELATIONAL EXPERIENCES

13 of the 19 men I spoke with cited a relationship with a woman or women – most often a female family member - as motivating their engagement on women's issues. In a 1988 debate on women's health – which MPs at the time described as one of the firsts debates on women's health issues in the House of Commons<sup>123</sup> - the only man to speak in the debate, Liberal Democrat MP Ronnie Fearn, started by rebutting a female colleague who had accused the men present of being embarrassed by the discussion of the menopause by citing his familial relationships:

*“I am not in the least embarrassed about being here this morning. Male Members of Parliament have wives and daughters and we speak to one another about these matters. Our constituents occasionally talk to us about them. I am pleased, therefore, to have this opportunity to join in the debate on women's health.”*<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> <http://bit.ly/2vqPx7a> - Health Minister Edwina Currie opened the debate by saying: “This is, I believe, the first debate on women's health called in Government time for a long while, and I believe that it shows how far we have come on this important topic.”

<sup>124</sup> <http://bit.ly/2vqPx7a>

In this and in many debates on women's issues since, men have cited their female family members as a source of both inspiration and authority - as explored in Chapter 3. As with any self-reported accounts of motivation, especially amongst politicians with an interest to optimize their political image, determining whether relationships really are a motivating factor, and/or if they are used solely as a rhetorical tool, is a difficult task. It may be that drawing connections with female relations is a way for a man to increase his sense of perceived psychological standing – establishing a stake in the debate for himself, as well as improving his perceived legitimacy to speak. Even though my interviewees did not need to frame or justify motivations in the same way they may be in a debate, it may still be that making the rhetorical connection to women through relatives has become a key mode of explaining motivations to act on behalf of women. However, an interview setting is very different to a debate in the House of Commons. Debate audiences are much wider, and there is a high premium on speakers justifying their role in the debate – justifications that could serve to determine the impact of their contributions. Further, even if the relationships men describe are largely cited as a rhetorical tool, it is important to understand the way in which men connect and relate to issues of substantive representation of women, and access to such rhetorical tools may make men more likely to confidently engaged. The interviews identified three broad types of relational experiences: as fathers, as husbands, and as friends/colleagues.

***“As A Father of Daughters”***

The most common form relational experience that men pointed to as influential to their representing women was the experience of being a father of daughters – especially for those who were fathers of young daughters (though, this could also be that fathers with young daughters were themselves younger, and there was a generational difference playing out here). By way of example, the following two quotes were the first motivating factor cited by the interviewees when asked about working on women’s issues:

*“I’ve got 2 daughters, for a start, so that has a bearing on it.”<sup>125</sup>*

*“... part of the reason why I’m involved in some of these issues, is the fact that I’ve got a young daughter. She was born nine months before I was elected, so I think that has really shaped my approach. [...] Because I don’t want my daughter going through anything that women have had to go through previously. So, everything, almost everything that I do goes through that glaze, of looking back to check to see, is this something that my daughter should be accepting.”<sup>126</sup>*

A couple of male MPs who cited daughters as a motivating factor also noted the limits – or perhaps even the problematic nature - on this as a tool for men to connect to women’s issues. One MP explained that he worries about mentioning his daughters in this way in debates or on social media because of criticism – especially from the left – that men should not be only engaged because of women in their lives. Another man acknowledged that the sex of one’s children isn’t necessarily a noble motivation. After

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<sup>125</sup> Interview 23

<sup>126</sup> Interview 9

explaining how his young daughter was a key driver for his advocacy on women's issues, one male MP noted:

*"... at the same time it is quite selfish. I mean I do feel that, it is a selfish approach, and if we're really approaching it properly, I would be looking at these issues regardless of the fact that [my daughter] is here, but the fact is you look at things that are personally important to you and shape your opinions."*<sup>127</sup>

Women MPs also saw men's familial relationships as a way for men to connect with women's issues, viewing it as an effective motivator. A Conservative woman involved in the Women2Win initiative<sup>128</sup> described men with daughters as a key source of support, and explained this dynamic as the reason behind their campaign video "Daughters."<sup>129</sup> The campaign video first screened at the 2016 Conservative Party conference, made up of clips of men in the Conservative Party (mostly MPs) talking about how important equality is to them because of their daughters. For example:

*Lord Andrew Feldman "We have to have equality at all levels. It's very important to me that my daughter believes there's no door that's closed to her, there's no opportunity that she can't grasp"*

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<sup>127</sup> Interview 9

<sup>128</sup> Women2Win, founded in 2005, is a Conservative Party campaign to recruit and train more women to be Conservative party parliamentary candidates. (Jenkin 2018; R. Campbell and Childs 2018)

<sup>129</sup> <https://vimeo.com/182703832>

*Sir Oliver Heald MP “It’s important that as a father, that you feel that it should be equal for your children. We see a very good group of women coming through and succeeding. But even so, I’m not sure that there’s enough yet”*

*Ranil Jayawardena MP “I would be absolutely appalled to think that my daughter will have any less opportunity than any of my perhaps future sons”*

*Will Quince MP “The world my daughters live in at the moment isn’t an equal one”*

### ***Models of strong women***

The father-daughter relationship influences men’s motivation to SRW because of their affinity for women that results from a close relationship, and/or a desire to protect or provide opportunity for women after feeling the same about one’s own female relative.

Another form of relational experiences men cited were relationships with, and observations of, egalitarian or otherwise powerful women in a family. Many men, especially Labour men, cited having a strong maternal figure that shaped their interest in advocacy for women’s issues. One Labour woman MP saw this as a key determinant of supportive men, and explained experiences with strong mothers as a reason that – in their view – Labour men were more engaged on women’s issues:

*“I think generally you could say more on our side [the Labour Party benches] have had that working-class strong Mother... A woman who had to work - mothers, sisters, grandmothers who had to work. And I think their respect of women and seeing what women can and do achieve has probably informed their politics and made them realise how unequal things are... Therefore, it's more natural for them probably to understand why we're trying to raise equality and women's issues.”<sup>130</sup>*

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<sup>130</sup> Interview 6

Many of the men shared a similar sentiment, and cited strong mothers and sisters while growing up as a reason they saw women as strong and equal; for example:

*“I think that I have another, kind of motivating force, which is that I had, it's probably true that women in my family were more prominent than others, in many ways.”<sup>131</sup>*

*“I grew up in a Matriarchal household, my Mother was the main breadwinner, there was complete gender equality in our house.”<sup>132</sup>*

*“I've grown up - my Mum was, is, a very dominant figure in the house - my Dad's very laid back and chilled out so she's the one that takes a lot of the decisions. So just having a female role model who's quite a strong role model. You know, there was no inequality in the house [...] And so having those positive role models - a female positive role model - made it far easier to see the inequality and why there wasn't more equality in the world.”<sup>133</sup>*

*“Having 5 sisters, you know... living in a strong, matriarchal, female dominated environment, it does make you sensitive to these sorts of issues”*

Other men cited their wives or partners as an influence, though most men were keen to make clear that their wives had not changed their mind per se, but that, as one male MP put it “... it's not something she's inflicted on me or I've inflicted on her, but it [my relationship] is something that reinforces the point.”<sup>134</sup> Others recognized that their wives lead them to be exposed to ideas and issues they wouldn't have otherwise been exposed to, which made them more open to women's issues or otherwise more

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<sup>131</sup> Interview 10

<sup>132</sup> Interview 19

<sup>133</sup> Interview 15

<sup>134</sup> Interview 11

progressive on policies that impact on women. One Conservative male MP talked about his wife's work in the women's section of the Conservative party and in recruiting female candidates, and noted that as a result of being married to his wife, "I have probably thought about it far more than the vast majority of male Conservative MPs, simply because of that."<sup>135</sup>

Though a different context, five men discussed experiences with women in the workplace and expressed similar sentiments about the impact of having women as colleagues or bosses as demonstrating both the capacity of, and challenges for, women.

For example:

*"I've just always worked in professions where women are equal and part of the work that I've done - be that in elective office or just through work as an immigration case worker. [...] So, I've always been around and worked with women that are in leadership roles whether that's leading a family or leading an organisation - all these different situations. So, I've always tried to be supportive of those positions."*<sup>136</sup>

*"I ran a business for 20 years, and all of my staff were female."*<sup>137</sup>

*"Also, I'm unusual in that I have many female friends. So I was always very comfortable in the company of women, I've had women colleagues, I've had women bosses, and just hearing it from them, how they were treated, made a big impression on me as well."*<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> Interview 28

<sup>136</sup> Interview 11

<sup>137</sup> Interview 14

<sup>138</sup> Interview 15

Two men talked about the contrast of differently gender segregated settings as the precipitating event that served to highlight the importance of women's issues. One Conservative man described having grown up in a very male dominated environment – with brothers, at an all-male school, and then as an engineer in a company with very few women – and going from that to a new work environment:

*“And so, you can spend your entire life thinking, actually the world as I view it is equal ... women have the role that they choose to have and men have the role they choose to have and therefore the world functions perfectly well this is all really good. ... Then I moved to a new company and I find that women are running big bits of that company, and then you interact with them and you see well there's a very good reason for that - it's in lots of cases they are more able than the male who could be the person running it. And then once you start to look though, and you realise just how unequally women are treated.”<sup>139</sup>*

Another man described a reverse situation, of going from working in the financial industry where “about 1/3 of the business professionals in the room...tended to be women,”<sup>140</sup> to the Conservative party benches of the House of Commons which at the time were more than 90% male. He describes the stark difference in the environments as a mobilizing force that reminded him of the remaining challenges in society for women, and especially motivated him to help improve the status and number of women in the Conservative party.

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<sup>139</sup> Interview 22

### *Exposure to a particular women's issue*

Finally, as well as having a vested interest in the wellbeing of a female relative or learning lessons about women's equality from egalitarian models, another example of a relational experience cited was having witnessed a female relative or friend go through an experience specific to women, and as a result the gaining the resources and awareness that comes from sharing in that experience. One man described learning about the issue of domestic violence after hearing about the experience his Mother went through as a child, noting that "it may be because my Mum had a very rough upbringing [...] I think sort of living with that probably sensitized me to violence against women and things that happened to her."<sup>141</sup> Closeness to experiences women go through was cited by women as a key reason they could see for men's involvement in a women's issue, and many women described appreciating the support from men who had female relatives or friends who have experienced the issue, as they come to this issue with commitment as well as knowledge. Some women described examples they had witnessed:

*"Well the main mover and shaker on [endometriosis] here has been a man, and he's been tremendous. I think some members of his family had experienced the problem, so all credit there"*<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> Interview 24

<sup>141</sup> Interview 24

<sup>142</sup> BL 315

*“It’s always interesting when the men join in what are possibly intended to be women’s debates; like we had one recently on breast cancer and I remember somebody coming in whose wife was actually suffering from breast cancer, and he came in to talk about how traumatic it had all been, so that was, you know, that was good actually”<sup>143</sup>*

*“[Many men] have lost daughters, friends, sisters, through Domestic Violence and then they become more involved in it.”<sup>144</sup>*

### RESONANT EXPERIENCES

The final type of formative gendered experiences are those that, while not directly an issue of gender discrimination or something impacting women’s lives, men felt were somehow analogous to that of women in ways that enabled the men to empathize with women as a marginalized group.

I spoke with four male MPs who were either gay or identified themselves as from an ethnic minority, and when asked about their motivations to substantively represent women they all began their answers by noting their experience as a member of an underrepresented group. Two BAME male MPs described their perspective thus:

*“Because you know, from the outset you’re an outsider. So you’re experiencing as you grow up issues as an outside. And so you’re more conscious of other people who are in a weaker position. [...] Your radar’s more aware of it because you’ve experience. [It is a] heightened awareness about where there’s injustice. And if you’re a man who’s born in the UK, who doesn’t have those issues, you wouldn’t necessarily pick up the issue and see*

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<sup>143</sup> BL363

<sup>144</sup> Interview 8

*what the problem is, so you would be used to things being normal. It's like 'this is the way things are'. You wouldn't even see the problem''<sup>145</sup>*

*"I believe in intersectionality. So as a member of a minority I believe that we should work together to create that equal society across."<sup>146</sup>*

I spoke to two male MPs who were gay and extremely active supporters and advocates for women's issues. Both men started their answer to my question by noting the connection they felt to these issues:

*"As a gay man I've always been committed to equality."<sup>147</sup>*

*"So obviously me being gay, very early on I accepted the principle that there are other equalities issues out there than just the ones that affected me. And that if this is what my personal experience is of whether it be of homophobia or friends and other people, I know who have experienced it, then of course that's exactly the same feeling that other people in other minority groups... I think it's been more of kind of a rainbow coalition sense, than anything else."<sup>148</sup>*

While not himself gay, another MP described a similar sense of resonance that came from an experience facing severe homophobic bullying while in high school:

*"Because I have experiences of facing inequality for no apparent reason apart from, sort of being an eating sleeping breathing member of the human race, so therefore that does shape my view on why people are generally unpleasant and bullying and don't believe in equality."<sup>149</sup>*

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<sup>145</sup> Interview 15

<sup>146</sup> Interview 19

<sup>147</sup> Interview 20

<sup>148</sup> Interview 10

<sup>149</sup> Interview II

While this handful of interviewees provides only limited support for the idea of resonant gendered experiences as significant factors, when asked who they could rely on as allies, a majority of women MPs I spoke with named gay and BAME<sup>150</sup> male. One female MP when discussing gay male MP's support of women's issues said, "I know very few gay men that dispel the myth of that [gay men are supportive of women and women's issues]." Another female MP, who was a leader in her party for women's issues, explained that she felt that she had consistent support amongst the gay men in her party because, she said, "it's all about lived experience."<sup>151</sup> Another woman described the connection between gay men and women's issues this way:

*"I think a lot of gay men are interested in women's issues and I think it's because they see, having been a gay man in the early days of either coming out ... then they are quite understanding of the difficulties involved with being different to men, to being different to what is perceived as the normalisation of a man"*<sup>152</sup>

And this connection between being gay and supporting women finds some evidence in research on public opinion, that finds that LGBT voters are generally more liberal, especially on social issues (Schnabel 2018; Gates 2012).

## DISCUSSION

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<sup>150</sup> Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic – the term most often used in UK politics to describe non-white people.

<sup>151</sup> Interview 21

<sup>152</sup> Interview 4

At some level these findings speak to a more general, and perhaps obvious, fact about politics and political representatives - MPs will sometimes engage in an issue because of a personal experience or interest. This extends broadly and is true for both women and men; one woman MP stated, “I think it's really important to say that I cannot get involved in anything that I am not passionate, or deeply interested in.”<sup>153</sup> She went on to explain that there’s no use trying to engage her on Brexit because it “it bores me rigid”; though she recognized that Brexit was an extremely important issue, and she would vote ‘in the interests of her constituents’, it was not an issue that she was interested in and thus not something she would be advocating for in parliament.

Most interviewees noted that their motivation depends on the issue in question, and not all ‘women’s issues’ are motivated by a similar impetus. Many MPs, both men and women, singled out the Women Against State Pension Inequality (WASPI) campaign<sup>154</sup> as an example of something that was less personally motivated and more motivated by constituent concern, in the same way any other benefit or tax issue might be. Many said that the fact the policy affects women did not shape their willingness or not to engage in it. One MP noted, for example, that in many cases men in their

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<sup>153</sup> Interview 4

<sup>154</sup> WASPI is a campaign in response to a Government proposal to equalize the state pension age for men and women; the key contention is that the policy change was brought about with relatively little warning for women (who would now receive pensions at a later age), making it hard to adequately financially plan. The campaign is calling for a much slower phase in timeline. <https://www.waspi.co.uk/>

constituency are at least as vocal as women, in part due to the impact women's pensions have on household incomes. One woman explained the electoral dynamic with the WASPI campaign:

*"I think it depends on the issue. With WASPI there are a lot of men interested in the issue, that is because of the pressure from the constituents. [...] The WASPI, that was a big vote during the general election, and at the next election if it isn't resolved it will be. So a lot of Tories are coming over from the dark side because they know that if they have a very small majority, WASPI could tip it over the edge for them."*<sup>155</sup>

By contrast, most issues that impact a smaller group of people require a particular interest or motivation for an MP to get more actively involved. In a couple of cases, men cited a particularly compelling constituent case as the original source of their interest in a particular issue – but even where a constituent issue is the initial motivation, the men described gendered experiences in their own life that motivated them to work and commit to an issue.

### ***What does this mean for women in politics?***

The fact that men too have gendered experiences that shape their role as a representative does not diminish the argument regarding the importance of electing women into politics. First, while all men have gendered experiences, and many of the experiences that male MPs cited were common amongst men in general (such as having

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<sup>155</sup> Interview 4

daughters), it was often the more profound experiences that were the strongest motivators for the men. These experiences – such as experiencing domestic violence as a child, or experiences of homophobia or racism – are less common, and thus it seems unlikely that men’s gendered experiences will ever surpass women’s interest in these issues overall.

Second, men’s gendered experiences remain distinct from that of women, but cannot replace them. Male interviewees never claimed they ‘knew’ what it was like to be a woman, and often went to great pains to acknowledge that had a specific (male) vantage point that was limited. As such, the vast majority of MPs I spoke to did not see their role as that of a ‘leader’ on women’s issues, and instead saw their role as more of a supportive one – as explored in chapter 4.

In addition to these experiences being insufficient to overcome women’s absence, women’s presence remains important because of an essential second piece to this process of representation – women’s impact on the men while in office. As I go on to demonstrate in chapter 6, men’s gendered experiences are often not sufficient conditions to produce men placing high priority on women’s issues – but rather those experience combined with women raising an issue create a coalition that was able to act to substantively represent women. All the MPs I spoke with at some point expressed how busy life in Westminster was, and how there were hundreds of issues they could be working on. This was illustrated especially clearly when I asked them why they thought they were

unusually active – i.e. why their colleagues weren't more active – they most often answered saying that there was no particular reason for their colleague's inaction besides prioritizing other issues. One man said:

*“I think there are so many issues that we cover in this place that actually it would be hard to say people do or don't engage in women's issues debates for any particular reason. In the same way you might say lots of people of a certain group might not engage on debates on the military or might not engage on finance or something else.”<sup>156</sup>*

So if it is not a question of disagreeing, but prioritizing women's issues, men's experience appear to be important in pushing women's issues up an MP's priorities list, but as I argue in the next chapter, these nascent interests and experiences are much more likely to turn into significant activity when facilitated in a variety of ways by the presence of women.

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<sup>156</sup> Interview 22

## CHAPTER 6: WOMEN'S IMPACT ON MEN IN PARLIAMENT

This chapter explores the dynamics of women's impact on men's behavior related to women's substantive representation by analyzing the stated experiences and beliefs of legislators themselves. This is perhaps the hardest dynamic to uncover in this project – indirect impact by influencing colleague will often be something that neither women doing the influencing or the men being influenced are aware is taking place. This is in part because the relevant comparison to determine the extent of women's impact is an alternate universe that does not exist, of a political body that exists without the number of women present in the case in question but with all other factors held constant. Using qualitative evidence, however, offers the best chance at capturing these dynamics of impact. Through analysis of in-depth interviews – in this chapter, using both my own interviews and an archived collection – I identify three key ways that both men and women view women changing the institution and the behavior of the men inside of it. Through changing culture, galvanizing interest, and providing a resource, women facilitate men's substantive representation of women – not undermining but highlighting the importance of electing more women.

### HARMAN-SHEPHERD ARCHIVAL COLLECTION

In order to gain insights from a broader group of women MPs, and to get a perspective from another point in time, I compliment my own interviews with an archival

collection of interviews with (mostly) women MPs from the early 2000s. The Harman-Shepherd collection, housed at the British Library, includes transcripts of conversations with 83 MPs and former MPs (80 women and 3 men)<sup>157</sup> who were elected into parliament between 1997 and 2004 (including those first elected before 1997).<sup>158</sup> This represents a substantial portion of women MPs from that era – just over 60% of all women who were in the House of Commons during this period (1997-2004). In a partisan breakdown that reflects party differences in numbers of women elected during these years (as seen in [figure 1](#)), the women interviewed included 12 Conservatives, 58 Labour, 6 Liberal Democrats, and 1 Ulster Unionist.

Interviews were conducted by project instigator Boni Sones and a team of four other women journalists,<sup>159</sup> between May and October of 2004. Interviews lasted between 30 minutes and 3.5 hours in duration (averaging ~50 minutes) and were semi-structured in nature. Interviewers used a common set of 23 questions (see [appendix 3](#)) that asked MPs about their experiences upon entering parliament, how their impressions of parliament have changed, how they would go about bringing about a policy change, as well as how

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<sup>157</sup> The available archives that I use here include 77 women MPs and 3 male MPs.

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[http://cadensa.bl.uk/uhtbin/cgiirsi/x/o/o/5?searchdata1=CKEY7012165&library=ALL&\\_ga=2.7909748.7990057.1534342834-218097190.1534342834](http://cadensa.bl.uk/uhtbin/cgiirsi/x/o/o/5?searchdata1=CKEY7012165&library=ALL&_ga=2.7909748.7990057.1534342834-218097190.1534342834)

<sup>159</sup> Linda Fairbrother, Angela Lawrence, Deborah McGurran, Eva Simmons, and Boni Sones.

they see the role of women in politics (Sones 2005, 212). Not all questions were asked of each MP. While I analyzed answers to all questions, and draw in this paper on quotes that come from answers to a variety of questions, one question was of particular interest to my research question, that asked the women MPs: ‘Have you worked with men in your party (or in other parties) on an issue that you thought was of special concern to women?’

## WOMEN’S IMPACT

Overall, there was a strong sense from both the men and the women I interviewed that women MPs influenced (some) male MPs in important ways. All of the men I spoke with cited ways women MPs have facilitated their involvement on women’s issues, and the vast majority of offered up these examples without my asking specifically about women in parliament as a contributing factor that explains their involvement in women’s issues. I created an original typology in order to theorize this phenomena, which identifies three key forms of influence: changing culture, galvanizing interest, and providing a resource.

### **I. Changing culture**

The first manner through which MPs described the presence of women impacting upon men is indirectly, via broader institutional cultural changes. In other words, interviewees noted that the presence of women has shaped the culture and character of

parliament, which in turn shapes male behavior and attitudes. Of particular interest to my research question is the ways in which these institutional changes brought about by (or perhaps catalyzed by) the presence of women have made it possible for men to engage in gender equality advocacy. By changing the institutional character, through the disruption of male dominance and associated hegemonic masculinity permeating parliament, it has been made possible for male MPs to act in a wider variety of ways. This is not a sufficient condition for change on the part of men, but perhaps a necessary one. Existing work within the feminist institutionalist tradition has theorized these processes, looking at ways that the presence of women can ‘feminize’ parliaments (Lovenduski 2012; Mackay and Mcallister 2012; Crawford and Pini 2011; Annesley, Gains, and Rummery 2007). I add to that literature with these findings by providing new evidence of the same phenomena, but also by specifically attending to the impact of feminized institutions on men. A key way that feminized institutions impact men is by giving ‘permission’ and inspiring men to engage in a wider variety of areas and issues.

The vast majority of MPs I interviewed, and those interviewed for the Harman-Shephard collection, observed ways in which parliament had evolved to become more welcoming to women and less male dominated in culture. Many of these descriptions of changes described an intangible sense that parliament is ‘different’; to unpack those changes the remainder of this section outlines a number of dimensions of cultural change.

Most MPs who talked of institutional change spoke in some form about the (partial) break down of parliament as an ‘old boys club’,<sup>160</sup> and how the changing make up of parliament has impacted on the informal social networks that dictate life in parliament – and as a result power and influence within the House of Commons has shifted. The MPs I spoke with were without exception describing this change positively (though this is perhaps unsurprising given interviewees were selected for their support of women’s inclusion in politics and policy). While there was discussion of the formal rule changes that have come about in recent decades as more women have entered (such as changing hours and childcare facilities) much of the discussion in both my interviews and those from 2004 focused on the ways in which parliament *feels* different. This is illustrated in an example from a former conservative male Member of Parliament (who himself had been to a prestigious boys Public School), who summed it up by saying “there’s been a culture change [...] And it just feels less like a boys Public School or a men’s club.”<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> Though also used in a more general sense, ‘Old Boys’ is a phrase used in the UK to refer to alumni of all-boys ‘Public Schools’ (the most prestigious private schools in the UK). So, this phrase, though mostly just referring to the male dominated nature of an institution or network, also has class connotations, and evokes a social divide that is particularly exclusive and hard to break into.

<sup>161</sup> Interview 24

Two MPs articulated a change in the scent of parliament. As well as literally describing the issues of smell resulting in hundreds of men in the same place(!), these descriptions evoke the idea of men's presence permeating the place, and all of one's senses were assaulted with the reality of who was in power. Former Labour MP Mo Mowlam, in her 2004 interview, described her early days in parliament in the late 1980s by saying "you just smelt men all the time".<sup>162</sup> A male conservative MP in my 2018 interview quoted a female colleague when he was describing the ways in which parliament was and, is to somewhat of a lesser extent, "very male", by noting that it "smells of boys in here."<sup>163</sup>

Many MPs pointed to a similar sentiment of a change in the atmosphere, even if not articulated through one of the senses. One female MP, elected first in 2010, explained:

*"But I think the presence of, the increased number of women has changed, I don't know if it's just changed the behaviour of colleagues, but I think it has changed the wider culture in Westminster.[...] I feel the culture has changed. And I can't quite describe how, but it feels a different place to 2010."*<sup>164</sup>

### ***Decorum***

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<sup>162</sup> BL194

<sup>163</sup> Interview 28

<sup>164</sup> Interview 8

One more specific element of the cultural and emotional changes of the institution of parliament come down to the behavior of MPs, and in particular men. The changes over time are especially evident in the accounts of women who were elected to parliament in the early 1990s and before. For example, Conservative MP from 1987-2005, Gillian Shephard, described in her memoir a ‘prominent’ backbencher, Ivor Stanbrook, who “prided himself on not distinguishing between us. He always called me Betty, pointing out that he did not agree with women being in the House at all, so we might as well all have the same name” (Shephard 2000, 125). This environment, of significant hostility and marginalization, described women who served as early pioneers, is not the environment described by women MPs today. The Speaker of the House, John Bercow, described to me his perspective of this change over time (an MP since 1997, and Speaker since 2009):

*“[M]y feeling is at least to a degree the boorishness that men might traditionally have displayed more often in debate is less common now. I think there is a slightly more respectful culture now. The example of lots of women debating issues ferociously well but in a very reasonable way, has had a knock-on effect of men. [...] I think it's almost possibly to some degree sort of shamed men into doing better. I think I can say that, I can't prove it. But I think I've noticed that over the years.”<sup>165</sup>*

A male Conservative MP, in Parliament since the early 1990s, described the changes in the behavior of men (in his party in particular) during that time as “massive”.

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<sup>165</sup> Interview 25

He felt this was a result of the increase of women MPs, noting that “[the] very dramatic increase in the number of women colleagues in the Conservative Parliamentary party means that we are interacting with women much more than we were.” His experience was that men became more aware of their behavior – particularly their sexist or ‘boorish’ behaviors – in the presence of women, because “women tend not to tolerate certain forms of male behavior that amongst men alone are acceptable.”<sup>166</sup> Explanations such as this were common, and mirror the idea that the changes amount to a decline in the sense of parliament as an ‘old boys club’.

MPs described the sense of changed behavior not only in social settings, but also specifically in formal debate and parliamentary business. Here MPs describe the House of Commons Chamber and Whips office:

*“Once you started to get women in the chamber the mood softened, there was more laughter. Women would sort of kneel on the benches between the votes and just natter to each other and draw in their male colleagues. And so, the mood changed a bit.”<sup>167</sup>*

*“in the presence of more women, men are less likely to shout”<sup>168</sup>*

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<sup>166</sup> Interview 28

<sup>167</sup> Interview 30

<sup>168</sup> BL186

*“I think they change the tenor to some degree of it being a macho, male aggro place to being one where more people listen, where the wider spectrum of interests is understood and recognized, where even the Whips’ Office sees things differently.”<sup>169</sup>*

While identifying causal patterns is difficult here for the reasons already stated, the fact of the sharp increase in women during the 1997 election provided opportunity to better determine how the presence of women independently changed the culture of parliament. Many MPs – male and female - spoke of the particularly noticeable changes that came about in the aftermath of the 1997 election when the number of women MPs doubled. This was a theme throughout the Harman-Shepherd archive of MP interview, and the sharp change with the 1997 influx of women was noted by every MP I interviewed whose tenure predated this time. As one such MP described it, in a representative quote:

*“The big significant change, but the very big, significant change came with the election of the 121 women in 1997, and that was a turning point, it just meant that in sheer force of numbers there were more women to stand up for women. There were more women, always in the Chamber at any time, there were more woman on committees, and so it was less easy for men to express their sexist remarks”<sup>170</sup>*

### ***Acceptable topics for parliament***

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<sup>169</sup> BL466

<sup>170</sup> BL310

Another aspect of this broader change driven by women has been a new sense of what topics are important and worth discussing. One MP noted that when Harriet Harman (a Labour woman MP) first entered politics in the 1980s and brought up the importance of childcare in a House of Commons debate, she was ridiculed both for her position on the issue, as well as for suggesting this was an issue that was of any import to parliament.

Harriet Harman explains this herself in her recent memoir:

*'In the early 1980s when I spoke in the House of Commons calling for more nurseries and after-school clubs, I was jeered – by my own side as well as by the Tories. The overwhelmingly male parliament just could not see the point of even discussing it. Now we have a National Childcare Strategy to spread nurseries and a new Children's Minister to spearhead it. That would have been unthinkable in a House of Commons with only 3 percent women.'* (Harman 2004, 1)

This change that was described was not only about policy preferences, but a sense of a deeper shift in purpose and role for Parliament, with an expanded set of issue areas seen as relevant to the business of MPs. That MPs 'could not see the point of even discussing it' illustrates the way that MPs saw Parliament and its purpose and remit.

That it becomes an acceptable topic of discussion does not mean that women's issues or otherwise more 'feminine' issues will inevitably get support and policy traction – or even make such a scenario likely. But MP's described a shift in the mood and receptiveness of parliament such that it was *possible* to raise these issues. A male MP talked about the difference women made, in limiting "some of the sort of snide-y boys' public school stuff that meant that people could marginalize concerns because it wasn't,

you know, wasn't the sort of thing that us chaps do, that people would be ashamed to deal with those matters - in that off-hand way usually." In changing the strength of the idea and reality of "us chaps", the things parliament deals with also appears to change.

One Labour woman, first elected in the early 1990s, explained that a key way she and her female colleagues attempted to bring about such changes was to change the conversations amongst fellow MPs – but not just when talking about policy and politics. She said:

*"I do remember in the early days of parliament, I used to, especially after I had children and I went into work, and I'd always talk about the children if only to make the men think about it. I forced the men to talk about their children."*<sup>171</sup>

### ***"Controlling Shitheads"***

The final, and perhaps hardest to pin down, aspect of women changing culture comes from the deterrent effect that women's presence could have on the bad behaviour from men – both in terms of decorum and in terms of resisting the advancement of women's issues. Unsurprisingly, this was not a dynamic that men rarely described, in part perhaps because the men I was speaking with were not the ones that needing deterring into speaking against women's issues. The strategy is exemplified by a quote from a woman MP, who was describing the efforts she was a part of with women across parties

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<sup>171</sup> Interview 7

to bring about ‘Baby Leave’ – provisions for MPs who are pregnant or have small children: “what we are trying to do is build an alliance of women, and we embarrass men into supporting us.”<sup>172</sup> A woman MP who had served in Government during the Blair years said in her 2004 interview that, with the increased numbers of women, there was a sense that there was new power in the hands of women that allowed women to (implicitly) threaten to shame the government for not addressing women’s issues; she explained: “It [the influx of women] had a bigger impact on particularly Labour ministers, because they knew that there was a ground-swell of opinion, and they needed to respond to, they had their body of MPs that had to be assuaged on this.”<sup>173</sup>

A Labour woman MP who was in general pessimistic about the degree of male interest in actively pursuing women’s issues, acknowledged there was a minimal level of support men now ‘had to’ offer, arguing:

*“I think that we have reached a point where the men in here, while they might not give a shit about it or do any work towards it, wouldn’t want to be seen to be voting against it, whereas I think time was that wasn’t the case – and that is across the board”<sup>174</sup>.*

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<sup>172</sup> Interview 7

<sup>173</sup> BL153

<sup>174</sup> Interview 2

Put another way, as a Labour women MP talking about women across the parties said, one can see the role of women in politics as primarily to “control their [party’s] shitheads”.<sup>175</sup> This is a particularly ‘unseen’ form of influence, and an impact that almost certainly goes vastly undercounted. Accounting for the things men are *not* doing because they know women would call them out is incredibly hard to do, but women are certainly aware of this potential, and this dynamic also seems to be underlying much of the (already discussed) sense that parliament as an institution has changed and men have had to adapt.

## 2. Galvanizing interest

A second way in which women impact upon is a category of actions that I call “galvanizing interest” – which takes a general interest or supportiveness and converts it into active support or action to substantively represent women. As one Labour woman described it, this can take a number of different forms:

*“Yeah - and all sorts of methods we used to influence them! From the - you know, here's a serious piece of work that flags up that there are issues for women in this issue. To the sort of cajoling. And occasionally the shouting at by some MPs. But in the main, you know there were different ways of doing it and women took different routes to achieve*

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<sup>175</sup> Interview 5

*ends. But once we knew what our end was, we all used whatever we had at our disposal to make sure that some change would come.*<sup>176</sup>

The first sense in which men described being in some sense galvanized by women (or women having described leading men on women's issues) was through raising awareness on issues pertaining to women. As explored above, some of this was via broader institutions changes that made parliament an environment where an issue such as childcare, or domestic violence, could be raised and seen as a serious topic for discussion. But more specifically, a number of men talked about being made aware of an issue, or of the extent of an issue, from their female colleagues. A number of male MPs described this phenomenon:

*"[Women in parliament] are talking about issues that men have failed to talk about for a number of years, to our shame."*<sup>177</sup>

*"And equally a number of [the women MP] have had an issue that I wasn't aware of"*<sup>178</sup>

*"[Women MPs] make you think about things in a way which you hadn't or wouldn't have thought about. Because it wouldn't have come into your psyche or your thinking because something you've never thought about... There have been numerous times where I've noticed that that has happened - a woman has spoken and then people have been like 'Oh I hadn't thought of that' 'that's an angle I hadn't considered'."*<sup>179</sup>

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<sup>176</sup> Interview 30

<sup>177</sup> Interview 9

<sup>178</sup> Interview 15

<sup>179</sup> Interview 23

*“And I think having more female colleagues does change your outlook as well. You can see what they're going through on a day-to-day basis.”<sup>180</sup>*

Women recognize this as a role they sometimes play; two women who had served in Government during the Labour years spoke of this pattern amongst ministers, with women consistently raising or reminding men of the gendered impact of a policy. One woman, interviewed in 2004 while serving as a Government Minister, explained: “I will often write things on papers that say, ‘what about women?’ and there are other ministers in every department that do that.”<sup>181</sup> Another Labour woman MP reflected on her years in Government similarly:

*“When I was a Minister, one of the women Ministers in the Blair-Brown years, I have absolutely no doubt that our presence impacted on the way the men thought and behaved. And [an] example of that was when Gordon Brown brought in tax credits, he was going to put it in - we called it putting it in the wallet not the purse<sup>182</sup> - the money was going to go to the man. And we shifted, we made him think again. I don't think he quite ever got the childcare strategy and what it meant to women as Mothers. But he sort of got it, he sort of put money into it.”<sup>183</sup>*

Women MPs, both in 2004 and 2017/8, saw their presence as often serving to educate the men around them or to simply remind men of the impact on and interests of

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<sup>180</sup> Interview 15

<sup>181</sup> BL173

<sup>182</sup> In British English, “purse” refers to a wallet a woman would use to put her money in (as opposed to the American usage of “purse” as a type of handbag), and a “wallet” refers to a pocketbook – a small case that typically men keep their money in. So in making this distinction to indicate that money would be going to men rather than women..

<sup>183</sup> Interview 7

women. One woman explained, when asked if she thought her presence changed men's perspective:

*“Oh, certainly more knowledgeable, yes, sometimes to the extent that they come up afterwards in utter shock at what they've heard, not having been previously aware of the extent of the problems, for example, on child contact”.*<sup>184</sup>

A more direct way that some women galvanized interest in women's issues amongst men was in prompting already supportive men to act further. One extremely active women MP campaigning on women's issues (especially sexual harassment and domestic violence) talked of the support of male colleagues that she is able to rely upon to mobilize into action:

*“[T]here are still these 20 men who I've texted in the middle of the night and said 'can you tweet this because I am becoming the one headed beast' ... and they will do it. And lots of them have come up to me and asked for assistance: “just say the word and we'll do whatever you ask” sort of thing”*<sup>185</sup>

*“There are lots willing to join you in the fight. And actually, sometimes those lieutenants who will do as they're told, that's actually the best thing. So, there is nothing I couldn't say to [supportive male MP] where I'm just like 'I need you to say this, can you say it?' and he would do it”*<sup>186</sup>

This pattern was confirmed in interviews with male MPs - both about this particular MP's influence from comments by some of her 'lieutenants', and about women

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<sup>184</sup> BL243

<sup>185</sup> Interview 2

<sup>186</sup> Interview 2

MPs' impact more generally. Many male MPs, especially Labour MPs, explained that they found that most of their fellow men were in principle supportive, but not necessarily actively pursuing, women's issues. Those that had become more actively involved explained that it can be the prompting of women that converts the in principle support into action – whether that be showing up to an All-Party Group on an issue related to women, speaking in a debate, signing a petition, or talking to a minister about an issue. As one man described:

*“Where women colleagues influence me probably is in just in raising it, just saying ‘we’re doing this, can you prioritise it over all the other things’, and sometimes I think, let me have a look, and sometimes I will, sometimes it will shift my bias a little bit. It’s just a language of priorities thing. Every hour of the day I could be doing 7 different things.”<sup>187</sup>*

In this way, the effect of the women's galvanization can far outstrip the woman's individual efforts, with some men talking of having initially been prompted or introduced to an issue by a woman, but once involved developing an interest of their own. As male MP who became the chairman of a group for women in business explained, “I think they got me in - it was a very persuasive lady in the first place who got me in there which is always handy”<sup>188</sup>

### **3. Providing a resource**

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<sup>187</sup> Interview 19

The third form of impact women have is in serving as a ‘resource’ for men engaged in SRW. This was a theme that emerged in almost every interview I conducted with both men and women (the Harman-Shephard collection interviews rarely included questions that would touch on these dynamics). Most often, in the descriptions given to me by both men and women, this is in the form of men seeking out women colleagues (normally someone they are already friendly with), to ask how to frame an issue, what the appropriate word choice is, or to become more informed on an issue related to women that have some interest in working on. For example, one male Labour MP described becoming more interested and active on the issue of domestic violence since entering parliament, and spoke about how upon embarking on the issue would regularly consult and seek guidance from female colleagues already working on the issue:

*“And I have learnt - that's not an exaggerated, I've learnt an awful lot, not just about the specific issue but about the historical and cultural aspects which the people who are leading this debate about the role of women in society more broadly, the disempowerment of women when it comes to either abusive relationships or violent relationships. These are things I've listened and learnt a lot from, you've just got to act with a little bit of humility.”<sup>189</sup>*

Here the MP speaks not only of the experience expertise and knowledge gained from the talking and working with the women MPs, but the interactions gave him insight

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<sup>188</sup> Interview 14

<sup>189</sup> Interview 20

into the issue from the perspective of female experience, and a sense of understanding beyond that of facts or the appropriate words to use. While in some cases there was a sense of deep understanding gained by working and talking with women MPs, often men described the role of women as a resource they would check with before proceeding on an issue. The examples that follow come from a Labour man, a SNP man, and a Labour woman respectively:

*“[I]f I had an issue I'd go to them and I'd say [Labour woman MP], what do you think of this or whatever. And they've been really helpful.”<sup>190</sup>*

*“But I'd always check with my female colleagues ... before I say something I'd ask 'is this okay to do this' - I'd always want to check with them first. Because I wouldn't want to do anything that would set things back or be unhelpful. So, I always like to check those things”<sup>191</sup>*

*“[male MPs will] sometimes come and say if they've had a constituency case or if they're dealing with something in committee, they'll say 'this has come up, am I right in thinking that...', or 'I'm not sure this is acceptable but what do you think'. Or sometimes, because the world changes, and people want to be seen to be doing the right thing and seen to be saying the right thing, 'is this how you say things these days? Is this the right kind of language you'd use, are women happy with this?'.”<sup>192</sup>*

Some men highlighted specific types of issues where they would feel that their own perspective and experience was especially insufficient, and where they felt it

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<sup>190</sup> Interview 15

<sup>191</sup> Interview 15

<sup>192</sup> Interview 8

particularly important to seek out female MPs' advice – mostly on issues to do with violence and harassment towards women. With the 'Me Too' movement active globally and cases of sexual harassment in parliament being discussed in the media at the time of my interviews, sexual harassment was an example given a number of times. One male Labour MP, when asked how he'd approach participating in a debate on sexual harassment, explained he'd have to ask one of his female Labour MP friends:

*"[...] because I've never suffered from this, you can't work on proposals if you've never suffered from it or you've never seen it, and frankly it would be stupid, let alone downright insulting, not to involve people who've actually suffered from the mis-attentions."*<sup>193</sup>

The impact of women's presence in being able to serve as a resource is hard to measure, not least because MP's (like most public figures) rarely give public credit to those who have informed or helped their work or advocacy, especially if the help has come during informal conversations, as seems to be the case for many of these interactions with women advising men on issues of women's substantive representation. But based on my interviews, amongst those men who have been active on women's issues, all but one of them spoke of a significant role played by one or more female colleagues in providing information, advice or perspective. This has a number of implications for political representation, according to interviewees.

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<sup>193</sup> Interview 12

First, it makes men's substantive representation of women more viable. One way that both men and women described the effect of women being able to serve as a resource was through increasing men's confidence in their ability and/or own sense of legitimacy in working on an issue related to women. Many of the men spoke of their increased confidence after working with a woman MP on an issue; it is as if having a woman colleague agree with a chosen stance or language choice gives men 'permission' to speak on an issue (permission that men have perceived to be necessary), as well as reassurance that they would be well received.

Men spoke of initial hesitation to engage on women's issues, for fear of saying the wrong thing or offending people. Some men who had become very active on an issue or issues related to women often spoke about how they relied on women colleagues mostly when they were new to an issue, to point them in the right direction or simply to give reassurance. One Scottish National Party MP man described it this way:

*"I should say that early on, and occasionally I probably still do do it, but early on would quite often in talking about this and other issues, I would quite often turn to women, particularly [woman MP in his party] who I've got on with well, ask them "can I say this?" "can I say it like that"... So, I was always a bit unsure how to frame things, and obviously quite a few times I've been told "of course! get on with it" and whatever else. [...] I think that's why you find some men, may like to get involved but don't because they're scared of the reaction to it, and how to phrase things."*<sup>194</sup>

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<sup>194</sup> Interview 13

As in the above quote, both men and women speculated that this fear of misspeaking or being criticized as a man for speaking on the issues was a key reason there weren't more men engaging on women's issues. One Labour male MP said that through pre-political career experiences, and close relationships with several women MPs, he was comfortable working on issues related to women, but that many men did not feel comfortable, speculating that "I think they don't feel [...] knowledgeable".<sup>195</sup>

Second these resources women provide not only facilitate the act of SRW but improve the quality of representation. A key reason that theorists and activists posit that descriptive representation is important for substantive representation is that there are some insights that can only come via lived experience, and thus women are uniquely well placed to represent women (Dovi 2002; Mansbridge 1999). In sharing knowledge and experience women MPs are able to improve the quality of SRW that is carried out by the men; though not a full substitute for women representatives, plentiful availability of female colleagues – who have both the personal experience of being a woman, as well as the experience and knowledge that comes from being a woman in politics, and in some cases from working on women's issues – improves the quality of representation when men do chose to engage on issues of substantive importance to women.

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<sup>195</sup> Interview 15

## Discussion

The idea that women are having an impact on men by their presence is not a new one – and speaks to the body of work that has tried to consider “how many” women are needed before women can have an impact. Whereas early work on women in politics focused on there being a critical mass of women required before women could make a difference – with 30% often cited as the threshold required (Dahlerup 1988; Childs and Krook 2006, 2008a) - the limitations of a linear or consistent relationship between numbers and impact are well established (Beckwith and Cowell-Meyers 2007; Beckwith 2007; Grey 2002; Studlar and McAllister 2002). These of ‘critical mass’ theory in fully explaining when and how substantive representation of women happens led Childs & Krook (2009) to focus instead on how substantive representation of women occurs and by whom, looking to ‘critical actors’. The insights from this chapter, that theorize women having impacts on men through changing the culture, galvanizing interest, and providing a resource, offer support for both critical mass and critical actors as important. This was observed by many interviewees, and there was a general sense amongst MPs that greater numbers of women provide both more points of potential influence and pressure, and a mass of support from which to draw power. Two MPs described it thus:

*“I mean it’s clear that since we’ve had what you could call something approaching crucial mass, issues such as domestic violence, rape, childcare, many women’s issues across the board, have come onto the Government’s agenda in a way they never would have done before. Once they’ve been raised by a powerful group of articular people, who are on their side in every other way – the Government’s picked them up – and there are*

*men now who are as strong sisters on these issues as the women themselves. But it never would have occurred to them. You know, the issues about rape, for instance, issues about domestic violence, don't have that imminence in your psyche and your emotions if you're never going to be capable of experiencing them. They have to be told. And then, of course, they understand, and they run with you. Yeah numbers are important to make sure that happens."*<sup>196</sup>

*"I don't think it can be disputed actually that the agenda has been changed by the number of women. [...] Gordon Brown as the Chancellor has made a number of these agendas, you know, driven them through very powerfully, and absolutely all the credit to him. But I still think that they wouldn't be questioned, debated, raised constantly, that domestic violence would be raised as constantly, that homelessness as a need would be raised as constantly as they are, if you didn't have that critical mass of women doing it. So of course, men can contribute to that agenda, and do, but I think the critical mass has made a lot of different"*<sup>197</sup>

While dynamics of critical mass are evident, this does not diminish the import of the insights of critical actor theory – and this chapter shows how just a small number of women can impact upon men's advocacy (especially in terms of providing a resource, where a small handful of women were mentioned multiple times). There were about a dozen MPs – both men and women – who were mentioned by other MPs (from all parties) as the key actors on issues related to women. MPs recognized the significance of a small number of people in spearheading initiatives and moving things forward.

Theories of critical mass and critical actors co-exist as explanations in my theory of women's impact on men. While the key actors that will spearhead and shift attitudes are

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<sup>196</sup> BL287

<sup>197</sup> BL15

small in number, there are other important roles women can play when they have the power of numbers to change parliament more broadly.

***Seeing the Unseen: Broadening the scope for women's potential influence***

The limited nature of this study, and the necessarily limited insights available to an outsider asking questions, suggests that the 'impacts' expounded here are only a small component of the ways in which women are changing parliament. In part as an inevitable result of their minority status and longstanding marginalization in politics, it is entirely logical that some of the most effective tools available to women are those that are not visible to outsiders and require multiple subtle avenues to gain influence. As researchers, if we focus only on the publicly visible political behaviors or the policy outcomes, we will undoubtedly miss the actions of those with the least power, as Tamerius demonstrates in her study of women's influence on policy processes (1995). We must strive to see the unseen.

In addition to the potential undiscovered extent of this influence, conversations with MPs also lead me to conclude that the *potential* for women's influence on men in the future, or in other contexts, is considerable. A number of women noted that, especially on issues pertaining to women, other women MPs remain their primary network through which one would garner support. One MP talked about the Labour Women's WhatsApp group, and described how this extremely active conversation was a key place she and

other women in the PLP would share petitions they want support on or other issues.<sup>198</sup> She noted that it was largely out of habit that this was a primary network – the “sisterhood” had been an entirely necessary mechanism for support and advancement in a parliament (more) dominated by men, and this interviewee along with two other women I spoke with reflected on the fact that this habit may be to the detriment of women’s issues, and perhaps they should ‘reach out’ more to men. This suggests that any impact of women’s presence in terms of prompting men could be extended, and that there may well be ‘untapped’ potential – supportive men that, were they to be made aware and/or asked to advocate, would be willing allies. As one MP described, to explain how she had encouraged a male colleague to work on an issue related to women “it was like pressing at an open door, but it needed the pressing on the open door to make it happen”<sup>199</sup> – and in a context of consistently male-dominated parliament, there are potentially many ‘open doors’ to be pushed.

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<sup>198</sup> Interview 5

<sup>199</sup> BL428

## CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This dissertation builds on two claims implicit in scholarship on women and politics: that political power structures are gendered, and it is not only women that can and do substantively represent women. Taken together, and building on existing empirical and theoretical work on women's representation, this dissertation develops an understanding of the place of men in the substantive representation of women (SRW).

This project has made visible the distinct gendered patterns amongst men, with men's role amounting to much more than simply the absence of womanhood. Many men who are substantively representing women see their role in the process as distinct from women, in an essential supportive role – a role I term “ancillary representation”. A key feature of this role is that it is secondary to that of women – a supportive contributor, rather than a leader on issues. But that doesn't mean that men's role is only a weaker or less involved version of women's; there are actions and positions that men can take in ways that are helpful to the SRW that women are simply not able to take. Examples of this distinct position that men are in include their ability to draw on their authority and legitimacy both as a member of the dominant sex group in parliament, and as an advocate who is viewed as more “neutral” due to their non-membership of the group (i.e. not being a woman).

Illustrations of this ancillary representation men engage in is weaved throughout the dissertation: from the type of Women's Early Day Motions (EDMs) men proposed, to the diminished role of men partaking in the International Women's Day Debates (IWD) in the House of Commons. The qualitative analysis of the IWD debates illuminates the expressions of ancillarization made by men, where comments about men's novel place in the debate, and their occasional discomfort, reveals important contours of the gendered role of representatives and the space of parliament.

The ancillary role that visible in the patterns of Women's Early Day motion signing and in IWD debates is echoed in the ways that men themselves frame their role in the SRW. Male MPs articulated their awareness of a careful balance inherent in this role, with a desire to be both a supportive ally and a dear of taking away space and voice from women. As one interviewee put it, "women don't need men to speak for them, they need men to speak with them."<sup>200</sup> The final two substantive chapters, while still focused on men and their role, situate my theory of men as ancillary representation in the context of theory and practice around women's representation. This comes from connecting the existing theories of why descriptive representation in politics is important with the claimed motivations to act on the part of men. Just like as with women, it is often lived and gendered experiences that have shaped a desire to act for women. In particular, my

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<sup>200</sup> Interview 8

typology of men's gendered experiences includes direct, relational, and resonant experiences. This set of observations strengthens my theory of men as ancillary representatives, by demonstrating unique perspectives that men bring to women's issues that do are not more important than that of women

And finally, I connect the role of men with that of women even more directly, but demonstrating a multitude of ways in which men's SRW is facilitated by the presence of women. This ranges from the broad and almost intangible feeling that many MPs (men and women) had that women's presence changed the culture of parliament in a way that allowed men to be more engaged in women's issues, to the very specific and practical ways in which women MP's presence as a resource for men makes their engagement on women's issues possible – not only because women provide knowledge and experience they can share, but unlike other women men might be influenced by, fellow elected officials offer men the cover and confidence to speak on an issue related to women's interests.

The finding that women are able to facilitate men's SRW has important implications. First, in revealing work that women do to represent women's interests – via aiding and influencing their male colleagues – I expand the idea of what women's "impact" in politics looks like, broadening it beyond the actions of women themselves. And second, in showing the impact women can have while still distinctly in the majority,

I demonstrate a potential for broader change – as cited in the previous chapter, one MP described the act of encouraging and equipping her male colleague to substantively represent women like “pushing on an open door” – suggesting that women’s influence on men could be a key way in which political bodies transform and engage more in the representation on women’s issues.

### BROADER IMPLICATIONS

Though I developed the idea of ancillary representation here referring specifically to men representing women to help to understand the gendered contours of political representation. Many aspects of the theory as I have laid out don’t “travel” to other identities and groups, but the underlying principle, of the capacity of non-descriptive representatives to play an important and distinct role - engaging in a form of representation that a descriptive representative could not - could apply to many other underrepresented groups and identities. Including the representation of minority ethnic interests by members of the majority ethnic group, or the representation of LGBTQ interests by straight allies. The insights – of the secondary role, the distinct position and perspective brought, and the interconnectedness of the ancillary representatives with descriptive representatives – have application for a plethora of underrepresented groups.

To take just one example, that of the representation of Native Americans in the United States Congress, we can see important role that Native American representatives

play in influencing their non-Native colleagues, as well as the important role non-Native Members of Congress play in supporting and facilitating the work of Native Members. Republican Congressman and citizen of the Chickasaw Nation Tom Cole said of his role - at the time as one of just two Native American Members of Congress - "A lot of the role I end up playing is educating other members."<sup>201</sup> This is reminiscent of the role women played as resources for men, facilitating their own representation of women. One could imagine a similar dynamic with representatives from minority ethnic or LGBTQ groups, whereby their presence and the relationships they develop serve to inform and educate fellow members.

Further, the example of Native Americans in the United States Congress also shows the potential role of ancillary representatives (here, non-Native Members of Congress) can play in a supportive role. In the first ever Congressional hearing on the issue of missing and murdered Native women, Natural Resources committee member Congresswoman Deb Haaland – one of the first two Native women elected - spoke emotionally about the importance of the issue and the fact of the hearing. At the end of her allotted five minutes however, in a relatively unusual move, the chairman of the Subcommittee for Indigenous Peoples of the United States Congressman Gallego said "I

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<sup>201</sup> <https://www.newsweek.com/native-american-women-congress-history-midterms-1207991>

yield Representative Haaland as much time as she deserves”.<sup>202</sup> Later in the hearing another colleague (also male and non-Native) yielded his time to Congresswoman Haaland to continue her questioning. In both cases these supporting gestures were examples of ancillary representation: actions that give up power and facilitate the work of the descriptive representative, to life up the expertise and experience of the descriptive representative.

#### DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

A key area for future research then, would be to explore the relationships between descriptive and ancillary representatives for other underrepresented groups. For example, in the context of committee hearings where legislators have set time that they are able to transfer to other legislators, in what circumstances do they yield time to a colleague? And more generally, how do does the nature of an identity group shape the role that non-group members can make in their substantive representation. For example, does acting as an ancillary representative for a group that is defined by an immutable characteristic – such as sex or race – function differently to acting as an ancillary representative for a group defined by something that is more of a choice, such as religion? By comparing modes of

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<sup>202</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NjirNOgYVsg>

representation in this way, we would gain a greater understanding of the interactions between descriptive and substantive representations.

Another dimension on which this project lacks variation, and that is a potential avenue for future research, is institutional design and national context. Thus, research could look to the ways that institutional forms – such as powers of the legislative body, party structure and control - shape the possibilities for ancillary representation. For example, does a more individualized and less party-based legislative body (such as the US Congress) facilitate more or less ancillary representation? A comparison across different legislative institutions would allow for a fuller account of the ways that acts of representation interact with institutional forms.

Another limitation of this project, and thus an avenue for future research, is the focus on positive cases (i.e. men who do substantively represent women) – which in some senses amounts to selection on the dependent variable. This research design choice was appropriate and even necessary for this project - claims were not being made about all or even most men, and as this was a first foray into the representation of women by men much of the contribution is theory building, which is an area where many methodologists recognize that selecting on the dependent variable is acceptable and even helpful (Goertz 2005). However, there remains an avenue for potential research by considering those men who do not act as representatives for women's issues at all. In order to better understand

the causality (or not) of the factor identified by the male MPs as influential it would be helpful to look at null cases – such as men who share many of the characteristics identified in this project as being positively associated with being an ancillary representative for women– such as having a daughter, being gay, experience gendered violence – and yet do not engage at all in acts of ancillary representation for women. A comparison with some of these men (while matching other variables such as party and age as closely as possible) would be helpful in understanding what factor or combinations of factors are particularly important.

Processes of representation and representative government are best served by vibrant ancillary representation, and thus political science is well served by a conceptually and empirically rigorous understanding of their role. For many underrepresented groups, the progress on issues of substantive representation is dependent on action by elected officials that are not descriptive representatives but have the potential to serve as ancillary representatives.

Ultimately, the study of men as representatives does not take away from, but rather enhances, the standing and understanding of women as political representation in our accounts of politics. Gender is a relational concept, and legislative bodies function on the basis of relationships between members, and ignoring these two facts means ignoring an essential reality about political life.

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## APPENDIX

*Logit regression: Sex of WEDM proposer*

Independent Variable	Coefficient (standard error)	Z ratio (P value)
<i>Policy</i>	-0.218 (0.197)	-1.11 (0.27)
<i>Direction: Neutral</i>	0.617 (0.191)	3.21 (0.001)
<i>Labour Party</i>	-0.070 (0.176)	-0.39 (0.69)
(constant)	-0.026 (0.203)	-0.13 (0.9)
Dependent variable: Proposer male $\chi^2 = 12.67$ ( $p < 0.01$ ) Pseudo $R^2 = 0.0164$ N = 558		

*Interviewees*

	Men	Men in HoC	Women	Women in HoC	Total	MPs in HoC
Labour	9	143	9	119	18	262
Conservative	7	250	2	67	9	317
Liberal Democrat	0	8	1	4	1	12
Scottish National Party	2	23	1	12	3	35
Democratic Unionist Party	1	9	0	1	1	10
Total	19	442	13	208	32	650

*Questions from my interviews*

General:

- What motivated you to get involved in [women's issue(s)]
- What do you think your role is in representing women voters?
- What role do you think men play in the representation of women's issues?

- [If MP was also elected in previous parliaments] Do you think the role of men in representing women's interests has changed over time? If so how? Has the increased proportion of women had any discernible impact in this respect?
- What reaction did you receive from female colleagues? And male colleagues?
- Do any male MPs come to mind when you think of those engaged on women's issues?

For male MPs:

- Are there any women – in your party, your constituency, your personal life – who have motivated or otherwise directed you towards engaging in a women's issue in your political career?
- If you were to consider actively engaging on an issue specifically aimed towards women, would you consult any groups or people before proceeding (e.g. women's groups, women MPs)?

For female MPs:

- Can – and should - men ever be leaders on issues pertaining to women in particular?
- Are there types of male engagement that you think are unhelpful to your causes?
- How have men in parliament's attitudes and behaviors towards women's issues changed since you were first elected?
- MPs on/previously on W&E Committee:
- What is the sense of the role of men? Do you agree?
- Has it changed over time since the inception?
- Has it changed the perception of the role of W&E in parliament more broadly?

### ***Harman-Shepherd Collection interview Questions***

- How did you learn the ropes as a new MP and learn how the House of Commons works? How long did it take? Who helped you and who hindered?
- Did you feel welcome when you first went to the House of Commons? Were you welcomed by women, by men? In your party? In other parties?

- What were your first impressions of the House?
- What are your impressions now?
- What achievements as an MP are you most proud of and why? Have you personally changed policy on an issue?
- What would you still like to achieve in the future?
- Which aspects of the job of MP do you most enjoy? Why?
- What is the most effective way to influence your party when you disagree with something it wants to do?
- Have you ever tried to change your party's policy on an issue that you thought was of special concern to women?
- Have you worked with men in your party (or in other parties) on an issue that you thought was of special concern to women?
- How do you organize your work and family life during a typical week when Parliament is sitting?
- What reforms of Parliament have been most useful to you and why?
- What message should young women be given about Westminster?
- How could Parliament be improved to make it easier to be an MP? A woman MP?
- What do you think men need to learn about women's approach?
- Why do you think the media perceived women MPs badly; and if you are a Labour MP, what approach did you have to the cut in Lone Parent Benefit?
- How do you think you are perceived by the media and do you agree with that impression?
- What are your views of the reporting of Westminster?
- What do you think the suffragettes would have thought of you?
- Who do you most admire in Westminster today?
- Have you a story of Westminster that sticks in your mind?
- What is the worst thing that has happened since you have been an MP?
- Do you agree with positive selection criteria?