Aalborg Universitet

The European Parliament and Gender Equality

An Analysis of Achievements Based on the Concept of Power

Ahrens, Petra; Meier, Petra; Rolandsen Agustín, Lise

[Link to publication from Aalborg University](#)

The European Parliament and Gender Equality: An Analysis of Achievements Based on the Concept of Power

PETRA AHRENS,[1] (iD) PETRA MEIER[2] (iD) and LISE ROLANDSEN AGUSTÍN[3] (iD)
[1]Faculty of Social Sciences, Tampere University, Tampere [2]Department of Political Science, University of Antwerp, Antwerp
[3]Department of Politics and Society, Aalborg University, Aalborg

Abstract

The European Parliament (EP) as one of the key institutions of the European Union has gained considerable powers over time and often presents itself as a constant gender equality promoter. Whilst gender equality in the EP tended to be analysed in terms of women's descriptive, substantive and symbolic representation, this article shifts the focus to the concept of power itself in assessing gender equality achievements in and through the EP. Applying Amy Allen's conceptualization of power as power to, power over and power with to a critical reading of recent literature, it explores who can exercise power over what in the EP and the consequences for gender equality. The article challenges the EP as a unified gender equality actor and highlights its highly gendered nature in which power over and power to are intertwined, with power to occurring without power over and power with unfolding through alliances and coalitions.

Keywords: European Parliament; gender equality; power; European integration

Introduction

Power relations are core to policy-making. Actually, we can conceive of 'the policy-making process as ultimate arena of power on all societies' (Richardson and Mazey, 2015, p. xiii). In parliaments, gender and power often unfold as the power women acquired over time. From analysing the descriptive representation of women as numerical power, interest extended to substantive representation as a power for the promotion of women's needs and interests, also expanding the focus to the gendered nature of power relations and beyond to include an intersectional approach (Celis and Childs, 2020), or how gender and power interplay in symbolic representation (Lombardo and Meier, 2016). Thus, in research, power is predominantly articulated regarding descriptive, substantive and symbolic representation (Pitkin, 1967).

This article shifts the focus from dimensions of representation to the concept of power itself, more precisely Amy Allen's (1998, 1999) conceptualization of *power to*, *power over* and *power with*. We focus on one arena of power, the European Parliament (EP). The EP is interesting as women's representation is relatively high and it is often acting as defender of fundamental rights (including gender equality); it gained decision-making powers over time; its supranational composition challenges national taken-for-granted convictions about the functioning of parliaments; and internal opposition to fundamental rights is growing.

Through a critical review of publications examining gender aspects of the EP, we explore what a comprehensive power perspective adds to determine achievements regarding gender equality and why the EP is – despite all obstacles – an important site to advance

gender equality. Thereby, we contribute to a better understanding of how power is circulating and impacting actors engaging with gender equality on the multiple levels of EP policy- and decision-making. Whilst not all reviewed publications focus on power, reinterpreting them from a power perspective helps to understand the power articulation of gender relations within the EP. Therein, we consider the micro-level of individual Members of Parliament (MEPs), the meso-level of core bodies such as political groups and committees and the macro-level of the EP as an organization and its inter-institutional relationships. Whilst relying on previous research, our analysis teases out cross-cutting aspects beyond single research projects.

Our contribution is threefold: First, we expand the potential of gender and power theory by applying Allen's conceptualization to the parliamentary setting. Using Allen's work in relation to women's representation, parliaments and party politics, we concur with Verge and de la Fuente (2014, p. 69) that 'fine-grained analysis of gendered institutions requires a clear systematisation of the various dimensions of gendered power'. We adapt Allen's dimensions of power to the empirical analysis of the EP, enhancing the understanding of power in the transnational parliamentary context. Second, we develop the literature on parliaments as gendered institutions by zooming in on power dynamics in this context. Feminist institutionalist analyses of parliaments have focused on how (in)formal rules in these institutions, the organizational culture of parliaments as workplaces, and political representation are gendered. This genderedness of institutional arrangements often reinforces gender inequality and is 'hidden and embedded in the everyday practices that are disguised as standard and taken-for-granted' (Chappell and Waylen, 2013, p. 605). Furthermore, gender-sensitive parliaments' literature emphasizes how 'the responsibility to achieve gender equality, both as a policy outcome and as a process, rests with the parliament as a whole—its male and female members and staff—and with the organizations that drive substantial policy development: political parties' (Palmieri, 2018, p. 23). Third, we highlight how Allen's three power dimensions work on the micro-, meso- and macro-levels in parliaments and argue that power on all three levels is necessary for gender equality to move forward within the institutions and policies. The analysis of power and parliaments from a gender perspective deepens the overall understanding of how parliamentary politics and political institutions work and which actors can exercise which forms of power within this setting.

In the next section, we discuss our understanding of Allen's concept of power and how we apply it. We then explain how we selected and analysed our material. In the subsequent sections, we address the issues of power over, power to and power with when it comes to gender within the EP. The conclusion summarizes the findings and reflects upon the analytical use of the concept of power and future research.

I. Power

Power is a key concept in understanding gender inequality in politics, but rarely explicitly defined and rather implicit in feminist writings (Allen, 1999). In political settings, we often think of power in the threefold dimension put forward by Lukes (2005). However, power is more than different degrees of domination, and Lukes' dimensions are not sufficient to capture the relation between gender and power. Power can be creative and constructive and thus not a zero-sum game. Drawing on Allen's work, Celis and

Lovenduski (2018, p. 153) distinguish between positional and active power where the former refers to numerical presence in political institutions and the latter to 'the ability to act' based on 'institutional power resources'. Thus, individual and systemic dimensions of power are combined, positional and active power are interlinked, the value of the former depends on the ability to achieve the latter, and vice versa. Erikson and Verge (2022, p. 3) state that '…, gender power relations go beyond the unequal distribution of opportunities, resources or recognition; fundamentally, they speak of the institutionalised and thus taken-for-granted processes that shape the capacity to define the conditions for action'. We argue that the gendered 'capacity to define the conditions for action' is articulated through different power dynamics. Thus, this article explores the concept of power as elaborated by Allen (1998, 1999).

Allen works with a threefold definition, combining the three conceptualizations of power mainly discussed in literature: power over, power to and power with. According to Allen (1999), power over is 'the ability of an actor or set of actors to constrain choices available to another actor or set of actors in a nontrivial way' (Allen, 1999, p. 123). In this 'way of exercising power' (Allen, 1999, p. 123), which is the most common reference to power in politics, it is seen as a relationship between subordinated and dominant actors, in which the latter can constrain the choices or behaviour of others against their will or preference. If we add to this 'in a way that works to the other's disadvantage' (Allen, 1999, p. 125), this corresponds to domination. Thus, for Allen, domination is not synonymous with power over but a specific form of it. From a feminist perspective, power as domination refers to the 'particular kinds of power that men are able to exercise *over* women' (Allen, 1999, p. 123; italics in original) to keep women in a subordinate position.

Power to is for Allen 'the ability of an individual actor to attain an end or series of ends' (Allen, 1999, p. 126). In this conceptualization – Lukes (2005, p. 34) argues – 'power indicates a "capacity," a "facility," an "ability," not a relationship' and certainly not a relationship between subordinated and dominant groups, as in the case of power over. From a feminist approach, power to comes closer to the concept of individual empowerment, as it is the power that 'members of subordinated groups' retain to act 'despite their subordination' and, from the perspective of women, it refers to 'our ability to attain certain ends in spite of the subordination of women' (Allen, 1999, p. 126). Celis and Lovenduski (2018, p. 154) argue that the difference between power over and power to is that 'the former is essentially relational, conflictual and exercised, whereas the latter is individual, not inherently conflictual and can remain a potentiality'. According to Allen, empowerment or power to is 'the power that women can wield to oppose male domination' or 'the power that women have *in spite* of the power that men exercise over us' (Allen, 1999, p. 122; italics in original). A 'particular way of exercising power to' is resistance, which includes individual actions 'that serve to challenge and/or subvert domination' (Allen, 1999, p. 126). Resistance, from a feminist perspective, then is 'the power that women exercise specifically *as a response* to such [male] domination' (Allen, 1999, p. 122; italics in original). The possibility to find opportunities of empowerment within contexts of domination, which characterizes Allen's concept of power applied to feminist thinking, is evident.

If power to addresses individual agency and empowerment, power with highlights the collective dimension of power or the 'ability of a group to act together for the attainment of an agreed-upon end or series of ends' (Allen, 1999, p. 127). Both conceptualizations,

but particularly power with, derive from Arendt's theorization of power. Arendt did not conceive of power as control over others, rather as something that 'springs up whenever people get together and act in concert' (Arendt, 1970, p. 52) to discuss and address matters of public-political concern. Power emanates from group actions. Arendt's idea of power inspires transformative notions of power that involve processes of collective empowerment in acting to achieve a common goal. Allen indeed applies Arendt's notion of power with to understand the collective power that feminists exercise when they 'build coalitions with other social movements, such as the racial equality movement, the gay rights movement, and/or new labor movements' (Allen, 1999, p. 123). Allen is interested in theorizing the concept of solidarity as the collective ability to act together with the aim of 'challenging, subverting, and, ultimately, overturning a system of domination' (Allen, 1999, p. 127). She sees in Arendt's concept of power as concerted action the basis for potential intersectional alliance and solidarity. Velvet triangles (Woodward, 2004) and political discourses articulating such alliances are examples of collective empowerment expressing power with.

Allen's comprehensive account includes also the three levels of manifestation of power by Lukes (2005), or Foucault's (1995, 1980) work about the normalization of power through everyday discourses and practices, and about resistance as inherent to power relations. All these scholars see power as a relationship, but they stress different aspects, be it the ways of exercising power, levels of manifestation or actions and practices. Allen brings these elements together and is helpful in capturing political relationships and interactions, yet her take is not specifically on parliaments or political institutions, as is the case of the analytical arguments brought forward here.

II. Selecting and Analysing Scholarship on Gender and the EP

Allen's framework allows us to unpack the interplay of power and gender at the level of the EP. With its extended powers after the Lisbon Treaty, the EP occupies a unique position to correct possible omissions of the European Commission and the Council of the EU, thereby ensuring that gender is mainstreamed in all EU policies. Women's descriptive representation has increased whilst the institution has simultaneously gained legislative powers; that is, women did not 'move out' as power 'moved in' (Abels, 2019), which makes it an interesting setting to study gender, parliamentary politics and power dynamics. Analysing Allen's power dimensions inside the EP illuminates who has power and how, who is empowered or restricted, and provides a general understanding of the achievements regarding gender equality in the EP, thus addressing structure, process and outcome. We propose a multi-level conceptualization of power that can also be used to explore gender and power in other parliaments, thereby potentially informing research on gender-sensitive parliaments by bringing in different power dimensions in fostering or hindering institutional change.

To that end, we collected all academic publications in English between 2014 and 2020 that address gender aspects in EP structures, policies and practices. Reviewing academic publications instead of using primary data allows teasing out cross-cutting aspects beyond single research projects. It also invites engaging simultaneously with all different levels of the EP, their connections or lack thereof, thereby capturing the dynamics inherent to parliamentary institutions and its actors. We were particularly interested in publications

investigating how actors address and use power within the institution and how power plays out via institutional (in)formal rules and routines.

Given that research on the internal policies and practices of the EP from a gender perspective is of recent nature, we included publications since 2014 – the last EP election cycle – thus covering 7 years. The selection criterion was that gender aspects – including LGBTQI rights and intersectional perspectives – were clearly mentioned as analytical focus in the research question. Consequently, we excluded research that, for instance, used the classification women/men in their data but did not examine it as a main issue. Publications were included if they analysed gender equality policy, gender equality actors or EP gender politics. We conducted a keyword research with 'gender' and 'European Parliament' in journals concerned with the following:

(a) EU integration (e.g., *European Journal of Political Research*, *European Union Politics*, *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, *Journal of European Integration*, *Journal of European Public Policy* and *West European Politics*);
(b) Parliaments and parties (e.g., *Government and Opposition*, *Journal of Elections*, *Parliamentary Affairs*, *Party Politics*, *Public Opinion* and *Parties*);
(c) Politics and gender (e.g., *European Journal of Politics and Gender*, *European Journal of Women's Studies*, *Journal of Women, Politics & Policy*, *Politics & Gender* and *Politics, Groups and Identities*).

We read the publications in depth to decide whether they address gender aspects that also speak to power questions on either a micro-level (individual), meso-level (EP bodies) or macro-level (EP as institution). Not all publications engaged straightforward with power, not least, because this was not their focus. Yet, all included publications speak to power and our classification comprises what could be considered typical of those forms of power.

Articles were classified as 'power over' if their analysis addressed how actors dominate certain spaces and thereby potentially constrain (or support) promoting gender equality. A typical example are national parties controlling electoral lists to the disadvantage of women despite quota regulations, thereby providing men with crucial leadership positions. Likewise, we categorized articles as 'power over' if male-dominated institutions, for instance, the Council, overruled on a macro-level progressive positions of the more gender equal EP. Measurable impact on gender equality (or the lack thereof) was decisive for allocating articles in this category.

As 'power to', we classified articles that engaged with how, on a micro-level, women or, on a meso-level, women-dominated bodies organized to break or oppose male dominance, including subverting institutional settings with the EP Women's Rights and Gender Equality Committee (FEMM) as the most prominent example. We also included articles that show failed resistance or emerging anti-gender actors such as populist and radical right actors reframing political agendas. Clear empirical accounts of opposition, resistance or counter-actions decided articles' inclusion.

Articles were classified as 'power with' when they covered collective actions in promoting or undermining gender equality on a meso- or macro-level. This also included articles analysing the loss or rise of women's networks and other gender equality or civil society actors inside the EP but also beyond, given EP actors were involved.

Our classification allows an in-depth discussion of different power dimensions in the EP, thereby nuancing and substantiating Allen's conceptualization with empirical findings. Moreover, the classification allows detecting previous research foci and remaining blind spots. Several articles speak to different power dimensions. Furthermore, the three dimensions are not mutually exclusive but sometimes overlap. Table 1 contains the classification.

We first engage with each power dimension separately and then discuss the relationship between the three dimensions and the implications for gender equality policy dynamics in the EP.

III. Power Over

Power over in parliaments means predominantly securing majorities, and thus, from a gender perspective, achieving parity is a main aspect with electoral systems and parties as main factors. Likewise, gender-focused parliamentary bodies are important meso-level actors in directing gender equality policy. The multi-national EP setting requires additional attention to country differences and the ensuing composition of political groups and committees.

Focusing first on the micro- and meso-levels, many publications analyse EP elections and address the gendered obstacles to gain and execute formal power over in the EP by becoming MEP. Fortin-Rittberger and Rittberger (2014, 2015) find that the EP's electoral rules only marginally drive women's descriptive representation. Discrimination by selectorates is an underestimated factor: (Male-dominated) national parties use their power over to constrain women's access to the EP. Moreover, national contexts, political cultures and institutional factors matter in who can exert power over within the EP, accompanied by individual aspects of how (potential) MEPs value the EP (Xydias, 2016).

Table 1: The EP, Gender Equality and Power Dimensions

Power dimension	Author(s) and publication date
Power over	Abels, 2019, 2020; Ahrens and van der Vleuten, 2019a; Aldrich, 2020; Chiva, 2014, 2019; Cullen, 2018, 2019; Fortin-Rittberger and Rittberger, 2014, 2015; Jacquot, 2015, 2017; Kantola and Rolandsen Agustín, 2016, 2019; Lühiste and Kenny, 2016; Mushaben, 2019; Nissen and Rolandsen Agustín, 2018; Roger, 2016; Shreeves et al., 2019; Stockemer and Sundström, 2019; van der Vleuten, 2019; Warasin et al., 2019; Xydias, 2016; Zimmermann, 2019.
Power to	Ahrens, 2016, 2018, 2019; Ahrens and van der Vleuten, 2019b; Berthet and Kantola, 2021; Cengiz, 2019; Debusscher and van der Vleuten, 2017; Jacquot, 2015, 2017; Kantola and Lombardo, 2021; Kantola and Miller, 2021; Kluger Dionigi, 2017; Krizsan and Siim, 2018; Mondo and Close, 2018; Mushaben, 2019; Nissen and Rolandsen Agustín, 2018; Nugent, 2019.
Power with	Abels, 2020; Ahrens, 2018, 2019; Ahrens and van der Vleuten, 2019a; Ahrens and Woodward, 2021; Crespy and Parks, 2019; Falkner and Plattner, 2018; Jacquot, 2015; Kantola and Lombardo, 2021; Kantola and Miller, 2021; Kristoffersson et al., 2016; Mondo and Close, 2018; Nissen and Rolandsen Agustín, 2018; Sanchez Salgado, 2014; Scaramuzzino and Scaramuzzino, 2015; Warasin et al., 2019.

For the Central and Eastern European member states, Chiva ([2014](#)) confirms that the electoral system or the left–right party divide only partly explains variations in women's power over. Instead, party positions on European integration are key, as 'political parties with a positive stance towards European integration are more likely to take the norms of equality they perceive as dominant in the EU into consideration when selecting their candidates' (Chiva, [2014](#), p. 461).

Aldrich ([2020](#)) examined parties' control in nominating women during the 2014 EP elections given the variety of gender quotas across member states. She demonstrates how the party organization interacts with electoral rules and party strategy: Centralized systems give parties control over the number of nominated women despite quotas. Whether parties use this control to promote gender equality depends on ideology – left-leaning and Green EP groups have a stronger women's representation than right-leaning and conservative ones, although with variations in member states (Abels, [2020](#); Lühiste and Kenny, [2016](#); Stockemer and Sundström, [2019](#)).

Power over gains not spread equally for women MEPs across national delegations and political groups. Chiva ([2019](#)), examining the post-Communist EP delegations, shows that male power over women from the same national delegation was cracked by electing more women MEPs than their proportion in national parliaments and socializing them into the gender equality norms of the EU institutions, especially the EP. For Irish women MEPs, Cullen ([2018](#), [2019](#)) illustrates how nationally prevailing conservative party positions prevented women from serving on the FEMM Committee. With the FEMM as main space of concerted feminist action, Irish women MEPs' national political context undermined developing their power to and their power with inside the EP.

Legislative and party quotas at national level have stepwise constrained parties' grip on women candidates, and thus, male dominance became undermined. Yet, macro-level attempts to include gender quotas in reforming the European Electoral Act were rejected by the male-dominated Council (Abels, [2020](#); Shreeves et al., [2019](#)). This suggests that struggles around power over cannot be solved in the EP alone.

Today's percentage of women in the EP (40.6%) is nonetheless way above the world average and has often been explained by its elections being second order. However, the more than doubled share of women since the first EP election was accompanied by increasing legislative powers, thereby granting women also increasing power over agenda-setting (Abels, [2019](#)). This simultaneously broadened the scope of gender equality policy from the labour market to areas such as education and gender-based violence and large majorities supported progressive gender equality proposals (van der Vleuten, [2019](#)).

The broadened scope sparked meso-level struggles between the FEMM Committee and others over who receives power over agenda-setting by getting the lead for directives related to gender equality and anti-discrimination (Ahrens, [2016](#); Nugent, [2019](#); Roger, [2016](#)). Within the committees then, the political groups of the EP have power over political decisions. Kantola and Rolandsen Agustín ([2016](#), [2019](#)) showed that during the last two legislatures, left and green groups promoted highly feminist definitions and solutions to gender equality problems whilst conservative and right-wing groups tended to oppose them. This also played out in the FEMM Committee, where a centre-left coalition had power over the position of the committee and shaped it more strongly than in the

plenary (Kantola and Rolandsen Agustín, 2016, 2019). Analysing inter-group coalitions and intra-group cohesion regarding gender equality policy issues and comparing voting patterns, Warasin et al. (2019) argue that gender equality became increasingly politicized and polarized thereby potentially limiting the FEMM Committee's power over as consensus is needed to get policies adopted in the EP.

Compared with other topics, there are not many high-level debates and initiatives regarding gender equality (Zimmermann, 2019), and it is considered to be a niche affair (van der Vleuten, 2019). Debates on equality tend to be women-only events, the vast majority of MEPs attending are women (Abels, 2019; Zimmermann, 2019). In this respect, women do have the power over the issue. However, it is not the dominance of women in these debates that is telling. It is the absence of men that reflects a certain power position, namely, according to Zimmermann (2019, p. 57), 'the power of retiring oneself from the discursive visibility'. Nugent (2019) confirms this complex relationship between power over and lacking power to. Scrutinizing the development of the place and role of the FEMM Committee within the EP, she finds a rather unchanged gendered division of labour in dealing with gender issues, showing 'how deeply embedded the gendered order of power is within the FEMM Committee, the Parliament, and politics' (Nugent, 2019, p. 124). Power over the debate, in terms of dominating it as Allen would say, reflects, in this case, lack of power to act as the vast majority required to act is absent. Moreover, the discourse is also distorted by the majority dictating the agenda: Next to a heteronormative discourse (Zimmermann, 2019), voices of migrants and minorities are silenced by consensus pressure (Nissen and Rolandsen Agustín, 2018).

Power over in the EP thus exceeds discussions around parity. Even in an almost gender-balanced EP, men-dominated conservative and centre-right political groups currently hold power over women. This power over is furthermore secured through consensus pressure in decision-making and a gendered division of labour.

IV. Power To

Many aspects of power over are intertwined with power to and the question of who can be empowered how. Important for this dimension are aspects like agenda-setting or also how to change gendered internal EP processes. One aspect of power to is the competences of gender-focused parliamentary bodies such as the FEMM committee for policies and internal institutional change.

Mushaben (2019) convincingly shows how women disposed of the power to act and posed numerous critical acts during the 1980s and 1990s, whilst not yet constituting a critical mass. So even when men easily dominated the debates and policies of the EP, and thus exerted power over women, the latter managed to secure power to act and partly broke men's power over. Their actions led the EU to produce a more gender equal frame than in subsequent periods and compared with what many member states accomplished in the same period (Debusscher and van der Vleuten, 2017; Jacquot, 2015; Mushaben, 2019). This shows there is no linear relation between power over and power to. Mushaben (2019) also underlines early women MEPs capacity to generate power with, through establishing impressive bonds and networks. The EP was still much under construction and, especially the absence of 'rigidly codified procedures' or hierarchical structures, left room for women to develop their power to and power with.

Nevertheless, despite the EP's self-image as a constant gender equality promoter (van der Vleuten, 2019), power to can also be conceptualized as challenging this dominant position on micro- and meso-levels. According to Kantola and Miller (2021), the increased numbers of right populists in the EP changed the climate for MEPs and political groups gaining power to openly oppose gender equality policy. Empowering for the gender equality opposition are parliamentary practices such as blue carding,[1] which provides (radical) right populists with space to voice opposition against women MEPs or gender equality issues (Kantola and Lombardo, 2021; Kantola and Miller, 2021). This is a clear sign of their aim to re-constitute power over on gender issues and subordinate women MEPs. Moreover, MEPs who find that EU gender and sexuality politics dominate their national politics challenge and contest EP positions by referring to the subsidiarity principle to limit EU competences (Ahrens and van der Vleuten, 2019b), claim religious freedom as justification for anti-gender positions (Mondo and Close, 2018) or reframe terms towards a more conservative understanding, for instance, around families (Krizsan and Siim, 2018).

The EP's power to legislate is furthermore hampered on a macro-level as it lacks the formal right to initiate legislation, does not dispose of legislative powers regarding all policy fields and lacks control over an executive as national parliaments formally do (Abels, 2019). The maternity leave directive that failed in 2015 illustrates that the EP has no power to legislate gender equality policy if the Council decides to block or simply not act on a Commission proposal (Kluger Dionigi, 2017). In the 1980s, the EP and particularly the FEMM Committee had power to shape the Commission proposals and the two institutions joined forces against the Council – admittedly without success throughout the 1990s and beginning of the 2000s as no hard law was adopted (Debusscher and van der Vleuten, 2017).

Inside the EP, power to act for the main EP gender equality actor, the FEMM Committee, is limited given the institutional design of the EP, although it has found innovative informal paths to defy this (Ahrens, 2016), such as in the implementation of gender mainstreaming in EP procedures. Throughout several election cycles, the FEMM Committee managed to institutionalize gender mainstreaming on the EP agenda, thereby also strengthening the FEMM Committee (Ahrens, 2019). Whilst not pointing at it explicitly, Ahrens (2019) underlines the importance of committed MEPs within the FEMM Committee as a hub for concerted feminist action to push power to and power with. Nevertheless, the power to act on behalf of women or gender issues rests upon the shoulders of women MEPs (Nugent, 2019). The feminist stronghold that used to characterize the FEMM Committee broke up towards the end of the 2000s, also deteriorating its power to advance gender equality issues (Ahrens, 2018; Debusscher and van der Vleuten, 2017; Jacquot, 2015).

Speaking also to internal power relations, Berthet and Kantola's (2021) analysis of the #MeTooEP campaign and related plenary debates shows how EP staff, predominantly women, can exercise power to as a response to gendered violence and sexual harassment. In March 2018, EP staff started the #MeTooEP campaign as response to an EP inactive on sexual harassment. Discourses show how '[s]exual harassment was constructed either as a *gendered abuse of power* deeply rooted in society; as a *private or a cultural issue*; as

---

[1]In plenary debates, MEPs can raise a blue card to comment on another MEP's speech, often invoking opposing views (Corbett et al., 2016, pp. 67, 232).

something only solvable through the EP as a *good institution*; or as an *harassed workers* discourse focusing on the power hierarchies at stake in the EP' (Berthet and Kantola, 2021, p. 163; italics in original). Whilst the campaigners were successful in changing some rules, their impact on new practices needs further analysis, as core EP actors like the European People's Party left the gendered structures unquestioned. Zimmermann (2019), too, highlights this fragile setting: Discursive gendering processes feed into power over whilst they undermine power to and prove the fraud nature of power over gender equality debates. Overall, women's empowerment (power to) in the EP was crucial to form the image of the institution as a strong gender equality actor. Women MEPs' resistance – as individuals and via the FEMM Committee – is illustrated by actions 'that serve to challenge and/or subvert domination' (Allen, 1999, p. 126). In retrospect, less formalized rules facilitated resistance and critical acts. With growing institutionalization, the FEMM Committee temporarily lost power to slowly regain it by institutionalizing gender mainstreaming and exploiting new topics (such as #MeTooEP).

V. Power With

Power with articulates both as relations within and beyond the EP, mainly through FEMM Committee practices. This comprises questions about to what extent can which actors collaborate within the EP (e.g., across committees, political groups, countries and policies) and beyond the EP with external actors (women's movements, civil society organizations and other EU institutions).

Within the EP, the FEMM committee is – contrary to other committees – only exceptionally assigned the role as 'competent committee' leading legislative processes; it has mainly a consultative role (Ahrens, 2016; Nugent, 2019; Warasin et al., 2019). The FEMM Committee would be a good forum for power with as understood by Allen, yet realizing power with depends on the political composition of the EP and its committees and the increase of the EP's power did not necessarily increase women's power with. Notwithstanding the lack of formal power, the FEMM Committee remains an important watchdog pointing EU institutions to shortcomings in living up to their commitments and an important space for the development of cross-party alliances. EP Intergroups, for instance, on LGBTQI rights, anti-racism or disability, provide another important informal cross-party arena for MEPs to create power with and to influence EU legislation by amending EP positions (Crespy and Parks, 2019). Political groups also showed signs of power with when co-operating to raise attention around gender balance-promoting measures (altering power over) such as quotas or attempts to pressure the EP to gender balance its executive level (Warasin et al., 2019). However, the internal and external alliances that are necessary for power with to result in feminist policy change do not materialize. Here, Cengiz (2019) highlights the unachieved role of the EP as a gender budgeting advocate. Even in the absence of proper revenue collecting powers, EP's spending policies affect citizens, and the EP could feature gender budgeting. However, this would require a strategy of power with through internal and external networks and alliances between the FEMM Committee, the Budget Committee, and (national) actors with power over national budgetary positions. In the current climate, such alliances lack the power to act: The EP is politically fragmented, MEPs would be tempted to follow the

national line in such matters and the EP has limited veto powers within the budgetary process.

van der Vleuten (2019) underlines patterns of opposition within the EP with the surge of right-wing nationalists, conservatives and Eurosceptic party groups, occasionally supported by some Christian democrats. Parallel to the rise of these parties, their anti-gender statements, often intermingled with anti-immigrant (mainly anti-Muslim) discourses, grew stronger (Mushaben, 2019; Nissen and Rolandsen Agustín, 2018; Zimmermann, 2019). Political groups on the right were – with variation between countries – almost equally opposed to anti-discrimination policies and pursued racist and nationalist positions (Krizsan and Siim, 2018). The growing politicization of gender equality and morality issues becomes visible in EP roll call votes where religion creates coalitions against gender equality, thereby impeding political group cohesion and thus their power with (Mondo and Close, 2018). Moreover, the conflictual intergroup relations made the climate harsher: in both the rhetoric and speeches in the plenaries (shouting men) and tactics against outspoken feminist MEPs (blue carding) (Kantola and Lombardo, 2021; Kantola and Miller, 2021).

Zimmermann (2019) underlines that gender is also quasi-exclusively referring to homogenous groups of heterosexual cis men and women. Intersectional perspectives or positions challenging gender binary are exceptional, making the gender discourse presented in the EP narrow. This also strongly reduces the power to act, as there is little space for other presentations, and for power with, as broader alliances allowing for the empowerment of larger groups of citizens are hampered and innovative analyses of gender identifications and relations impeded.

However, in the 2009–2014 and 2014–2019 legislatures, the FEMM Committee hosted a centre-left coalition that took a less reactionary position than the debates reflected in the EP plenary (Kantola and Rolandsen Agustín, 2016, 2019; Warasin et al., 2019). In the 2014–2019 term, the cohesion within the centre-right political groups was lower than in centre-left ones meaning that they were seldom concertedly pro-active. However, at the plenary level, intra-group cohesion was generally high, and the large political groups formed coalitions (Warasin et al., 2019).

Turning to power with through alliances with external actors, the EP as an institution has often been important for (supra)national civil society organizations, and women's, feminist and LGBTQI movements have benefited from supranational support (Kluger Dionigi, 2017; Sanchez Salgado, 2014). Without the EP joining forces with LGBTQI movements, the 2004 accession process would have probably lacked serious engagement with sexuality politics as part of the anti-discrimination articles of the Treaty of Amsterdam (Kristoffersson et al., 2016). Yet, using these EP coalitional powers has become more contested with the increase in conservative and populist radical right parties since enlargement and when the topics are more contentious between member states. Scaramuzzino and Scaramuzzino (2015) illustrate how different approaches to prostitution impede coalition-building across equality movements and EP actors. The European Citizen Initiative and EP public hearings are additional formalized tools of power with: For the latter, political groups can decide whom to invite and thus which ties to strengthen. Here, anti-gender mobilization by conservative, religious or nationalist actors becomes increasingly visible as they shower progressive MEPs with threatening mails, with likely negative effects for MEPs' power too. Some MEPs also threatened to

undermine the coalition-building with women's movements by challenging their invitation to public hearings of the FEMM Committee (Crespy and Parks, 2019). Because of this changing political environment, MEPs and civil society organizations promoting gender equality have moved towards more informal channels of participation, thereby avoiding polarization and conflict yet maintaining their power with (Ahrens and Woodward, 2021).

Power with, in sum, is a solidified and stable source of promoting gender equality in the EP, not least through the FEMM Committee as feminist stronghold. Power with nevertheless remains limited in a parliamentary setting favouring power over. Furthermore, anti-gender mobilization, lack of intersectional alliances and limited networks within the EP impede fully exploiting power with.

VI. Complex Connections

Exploring gender politics research on the EP with Allen's power dimensions teaches us important lessons: (i) Women (and their allies) steer gender equality as a policy field through exercising power to and power with; (ii) power over remains core to improve gender equality; (iii) power to is hampered without power over and increasingly challenged; and (iv) power with may help to circumvent a lack of power over but is also increasingly challenged.

Women steer gender equality as a policy field through exercising power to and power with: Utilizing EP formal rules and the prevailing consensus pressure, the women-dominated FEMM Committee managed to push through policies that challenged the status quo and also often preferences of conservative and radical right political groups. Through their strategic adoption of gender mainstreaming, feminist EP actors used their power with to gain ground beyond the FEMM Committee.

They nevertheless lack power over to effectively constrain choices of committees and political groups to continue with gender-blind policies, particularly in male-dominated committees. The lack of power over is mainly a result of the fact that the EP is a highly gendered institution. Its genderedness refers to the unbalanced presence of men and women MEPs and division of labour within the institution, and the discourses, including how they articulate ideas of heteronormativity and lack concern for intersectional demands. Looking at its genderedness through power lenses shows us then that in the EP, power over does not necessarily involve power to and that, precisely, its genderedness hampers power with through especially alliances and coalitions.

Despite power to, the FEMM Committee has no ultimate power over enacting institutional change, and this could even reinforce dynamics of subordination despite increasing salience and usage for political work. Indeed, gender equality policies and politics within the EP as an institution are characterized by lack of power over as men are absent in the debates. Women hold power over debates in the FEMM Committee but lack power to act broader due to general absence and lack of interest in gender equality by the whole EP. Power over still rests with men and allows to dominate women, be it by absenteeism from gender equality debates. Thus, power to or the ability to achieve an end does not necessarily result in power over or the ability to constrain the choices of others by generating a majority.

However, with only a selected number of individual and collective actors pushing a progressive gender equality agenda, conceptualizing power only in terms of domination – as postulated by many theories – would not explain why the EP is considered an important gender equality actor. Allen's conceptualization of power to and power with offers important inroads to explore which actors can exercise what power in the EP. Gender equality actors aware of how power over plays out (in)formally in the EP can resist and interrupt power over, although not fully break it. Power to may in some cases materialize without power over, thus confirming Allen's argument of resistance despite subordination, in numerical or structural terms. The literature also shows that – next to the FEMM Committee – cross-party alliances of centre-left groups (power with) became crucial in promoting gender equality and can become sufficient to execute power to and ultimately power over.

Nevertheless, power over is still disciplining and constituting actors engaging with gender equality in EP policy- and decision-making. This is partly contested because gender equality is an increasingly politicized area where (symbolic) stakes are getting higher, also in light of the rising radical right. We also find forms of power with being challenged, for instance, by right-wing groups and how they question gender equality and reconfigure power relations. The collective ability to achieve ends through alliances and coalitions is challenged in the EP. Whilst the FEMM Committee acts as the main space for developing power with through alliances of committed actors and holds an important role of initiator and watchdog, it also lacks recognition and, in some policy areas, alliances with other stakeholders needed for feminist policy change to materialize.

Thus, within the EP, there is engagement for power to, but not necessarily power over or sufficient power with. What is promoted as gender equality fluctuates, and the EP is not always effective in promoting it.

Conclusions

Applying Allen's theory of power to formal political institutions, more particularly the parliamentary realm, sheds light on the complex interrelations of power dynamics on the micro-, meso-, and macro-levels. As Allen would say, power in feminist analyses is never just domination or empowerment, but a mix. Grasping this interplay is relevant for feminist analyses of political institutions and processes. Using power lenses to read gender politics research on the EP allowed us to unravel the complex relations between gender and power within the EP next to the broader context of the EP as an institution lacking power compared to other legislatures or European institutions.

Whilst our review of core literature highlighted how the EP could be (and to some extent already was) a site to advance gender equality, we also found that power has not been achieved regarding the three dimensions. This finding is important for parliaments, because with conservative forces gaining ground across Europe more is at stake. The rise of actors opposing gender equality and the increasing politicization of gender equality impede executing all three dimensions of power, particularly at the meso-level: the institutional role of the FEMM Committee (power over), its ability to enact change towards gender equality (power to) and broader alliances beyond dominant understandings of gender (power over).

For researching gender-sensitive parliaments, applying Allen's concept of power invites to scrutinize more carefully where one can find opportunities of empowerment within contexts of domination. From the EP, we learn that even without full power over, gender equality actors can execute power to and, equally important, power with. This means even parliaments with low women's representation can function as a gender equality promoter if progressive forces use power to and power with effectively. Cross-party alliances at the meso-level can serve to promote gender equality on the agenda (power with) even if internal and external alliances are too weak to generate institutional change (power to). Also, gender-focused bodies can resist despite subordination especially in times of institutional change (power to), even if the genderedness of the parliament itself (power over) remains unchallenged. Hence, all three power dimensions are necessary to generate effective institutional change.

Future research can build on these insights. The micro-level needs more analysis of critical actors, such as individual MEPs in functions like (shadow) rapporteurs, committee chairs or co-ordinators and in leadership positions. For the meso-level, we need to investigate how political groups and the distribution of core positions affect gender equality policy. At the macro-level, the EP's internal organization and administration need to be investigated as they fulfil core functions in steering political processes.

Correspondence:
Petra Ahrens, Faculty of Social Sciences, Tampere University, Linna 5069, FI-33014 Tampere, Finland.
email: petra.ahrens@tuni.fi

References

Abels, G. (2019) 'The Powers of the European Parliament. Implications for Gender Equality Policy'. In Ahrens, P. and Rolandsen Agustín, L. (eds) *Gendering the European Parliament: Structures, Policies, and Practices* (London: Rowman & Littlefield International), pp. 19–34.

Abels, G. (2020) 'Gendering the 2019-2024 European Parliament'. In Kaeding, M., Müller, M. and Schmälter, J. (eds) *Die Europawahl 2019: Ringen um die Zukunft Europas* (Wiesbaden: Springer VS), pp. 407–421.

Ahrens, P. (2016) 'The Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality in the European Parliament: Taking Advantage of Institutional Power Play'. *Parliamentary Affairs*, Vol. 69, No. 4, pp. 778–793.

Ahrens, P. (2018) *Actors, Institutions and the Making of EU Gender Equality Programs* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan).

Ahrens, P. (2019) 'Working against the Tide? Institutionalizing Gender Mainstreaming in the European Parliament'. In Ahrens, P. and Rolandsen Agustín, L. (eds) *Gendering the European Parliament: Structures, Policies, and Practices* (London: Rowman & Littlefield International), pp. 85–101.

Ahrens, P. and van der Vleuten, A. (2019a) 'EU Gender Equality Policies and Politics – New Modes of Governance'. In Bauschke-Urban, C. and Jungwirth, I. (eds) *Gender and Diversity Studies in European Perspectives* (Wiesbaden: Barbara Budrich), pp. 31–54.

Ahrens, P. and van der Vleuten, A. (2019b) 'The Strategic Use of the Subsidiarity Argument in the European Parliament in Debates about Gender Equality'. Paper presented at the General Conference of the ECPR, Wroclaw 2019.

Ahrens, P. and Woodward, A.E. (2021) 'Adjusting Venues and Voice: Populist and Right-Wing Parties, the European Parliament and Civil Society Equality Organizations 2014–2019'. *European Politics and Society*, Vol. 22, No. 4, pp. 486–502.

Aldrich, A.S. (2020) 'Party Organization and Gender in European Elections'. *Party Politics*, Vol. 26, No. 5, pp. 675–688.

Allen, A. (1998) 'Rethinking Power'. *Hypatia*, Vol. 13, No. 1, pp. 21–40.

Allen, A. (1999) *The Power of Feminist Theory. Domination, Resistance, Solidarity* (New York: Westview).

Arendt, H. (1970) *On Violence* (New York: Harcourt).

Berthet, V. and Kantola, J. (2021) 'Gender, Violence and Political Institutions: Struggles over Sexual Harassment in the European Parliament'. *Social Politics*, Vol. 28, No. 1, pp. 143–167.

Celis, K. and Childs, S. (2020) *Feminist Democratic Representation* (New York: Oxford University Press).

Celis, K. and Lovenduski, J. (2018) 'Power Struggles: Gender Equality in Political Representation'. *European Journal of Politics and Gender*, Vol. 1, No. 1–2, pp. 149–166.

Cengiz, F. (2019) 'Gendering the EU Budget. Can European Parliament Play the Role of a Gender Budgeting Advocate?' In Ahrens, P. and Rolandsen Agustín, L. (eds) *Gendering the European Parliament: Structures, Policies, and Practices* (London: Rowman & Littlefield International), pp. 103–120.

Chappell, L. and Waylen, G. (2013) 'Gender and the Hidden Life of Institutions'. *Public Administration*, Vol. 91, No. 3, pp. 599–615.

Chiva, C. (2014) 'Gender, European Integration and Candidate Recruitment: The European Parliament Elections in the New EU Member States'. *Parliamentary Affairs*, Vol. 67, No. 2, pp. 458–494.

Chiva, C. (2019) 'Overcoming Male Dominance? The Representation of Women in the European Parliament Delegations of the Post-Communist EU Member States'. In Ahrens, P. and Rolandsen Agustín, L. (eds) *Gendering the European Parliament: Structures, Policies, and Practices* (London: Rowman & Littlefield International), pp. 177–197.

Corbett, R., Jacobs, F. and Neville, D. (2016) *The European Parliament* (London: John Harper Publishing).

Crespy, A. and Parks, L. (2019) 'The European Parliament and Civil Society'. In Costa, O. (ed.) *The European Parliament in times of EU crisis. Dynamics and transformations* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan), pp. 203–223.

Cullen, P. (2018) 'Irish Female Members of the European Parliament: Critical Actors for Women's Interests?' *Politics & Gender*, Vol. 14, No. 3, pp. 483–511.

Cullen, P. (2019) 'The European Parliament and Irish Female MEPs: Female Political Agency for Gender Equality'. In Ahrens, P. and Rolandsen Agustín, L. (eds) *Gendering the European Parliament: Structures, Policies, and Practices* (London: Rowman & Littlefield International), pp. 159–175.

Debusscher, P. and van der Vleuten, A. (2017) 'Equality Policies in the EU Through a Feminist Historical Institutionalist Lens'. In MacRae, H. and Weiner, E. (eds) *Towards Gendering Institutionalism Equality in Europe* (London: Rowman & Littlefield), pp. 3–24.

Erikson, J. and Verge, T. (2022) 'Gender, Power and Privilege in the Parliamentary Workplace'. *Parliamentary Affairs*, Vol. 75, No. 1, pp. 1–19.

Falkner, G. and Plattner, G. (2018) 'Populist Radical Right Parties and EU Policies: How coherent are their claims?' *EUI Working Papers RSCAS* 2018/38.

Fortin-Rittberger, J. and Rittberger, B. (2014) 'Do Electoral Rules Matter? Explaining National Differences in Women's Representation in the European Parliament'. *European Union Politics*, Vol. 15, No. 4, pp. 496–520.

Fortin-Rittberger, J. and Rittberger, B. (2015) 'Nominating Women for Europe: Exploring the Role of Political Parties' Recruitment Procedures for European Parliament Elections'. *European Journal of Political Research*, Vol. 54, No. 4, pp. 767–783.

Foucault, M. (1980) *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972–1977* (New York: Panteon Books).

Foucault, M. (1995) *Discipline and Punish. The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage).

Jacquot, S. (2015) *Transformations in EU Gender Equality. From Emergence to Dismantling* (London: Palgrave Macmillan).

Jacquot, S. (2017) 'A Policy in Crisis. The Dismantling of the EU Gender Equality Policy'. In Kantola, J. and Lombardo, E. (eds) *Gender and the Economic Crisis in Europe. Politics, Institutions and Intersectionality* (London: Palgrave Macmillan), pp. 27–48.

Kantola, J. and Lombardo, E. (2021) 'Strategies of Right Populists in Opposing Gender Equality in a Polarized European Parliament'. *International Political Science Review*, Vol. 42, No. 5, pp. 565–579.

Kantola, J. and Miller, C. (2021) 'Party Politics and Radical Right Populism in the European Parliament: Analyzing Political Groups as Democratic Actors'. *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol. 59, No. 4, pp. 782–801.

Kantola, J. and Rolandsen Agustín, L. (2016) 'Gendering Transnational Party Politics: The Case of European Union'. *Party Politics*, Vol. 22, No. 5, pp. 641–651.

Kantola, J. and Rolandsen Agustín, L. (2019) 'Gendering the Representative Work of the European Parliament: A Political Analysis of Women MEP's Perceptions of Gender Equality in Party Groups'. *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol. 57, No. 4, pp. 768–786.

Kluger Dionigi, M. (2017) *Lobbying in the European Parliament. The Battle for Influence* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan).

Kristoffersson, M., van Roozendahl, B. and Poghosyan, L. (2016) 'European Integration and LGBTI Activism: Partners in Realising Change?' In Slootmaeckers, K., Touquet, H. and Vermeersch, P. (eds) *The EU Enlargement and Gay Politics. The Impact of Eastern Enlargement on Rights, Activism and Prejudice* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan), pp. 45–67.

Krizsan, A. and Siim, B. (2018) 'Gender Equality and Family in Populist Radical Right Agendas: European Parliamentary Debates 2014'. In Knijn, T. and Naldini, M. (eds) *Gender and Generational Division in EU Citizenship* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar), pp. 39–59.

Lombardo, E. and Meier, P. (2016) *The Symbolic Representation of Gender: A Discursive Approach* (New York: Routledge).

Lühiste, M. and Kenny, M. (2016) 'Pathways to Power: Women's Representation in the 2014 European Parliament Elections'. *European Journal of Political Research*, Vol. 55, No. 3, pp. 626–641.

Lukes, S. (2005) *Power: A Radical View* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan).

Mondo, E. and Close, C. (2018) 'Morality Politics in the European Parliament. A Qualitative Insight into MEPs' Voting Behavior on Abortion and Human Embryonic Stem Cell Research'. *Journal of European Integration*, Vol. 40, No. 7, pp. 1001–1018.

Mushaben, J. (2019) 'Undermining Critical Mass. The Impact of Trilogues and Treaty Reforms on Gender-Sensitive Decision-Making in the European Parliament'. In Ahrens, P. and Rolandsen Agustín, L. (eds) *Gendering the European Parliament: Structures, Policies, and Practices* (London: Rowman & Littlefield International), pp. 69–83.

Nissen, A. and Rolandsen Agustín, L. (2018) 'Rights for Women, Migrants, and Minorities: Consensus and Silences in the European Parliament'. In Knijn, T. and Naldini, M. (eds) *Gender and Generational Division in EU Citizenship* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar), pp. 21–38.

Nugent, M. (2019) '"Feminist to Its Fingertips"? Gendered Divisions of Labour and the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality'. In Ahrens, P. and Rolandsen Agustín, L. (eds) *Gendering the European Parliament: Structures, Policies, and Practices* (London: Rowman & Littlefield International), pp. 123–140.

Palmieri, S. (2018) *Gender-Sensitive Parliaments* (Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics) (Oxford University Press).

Pitkin, H. (1967) *The Concept of Representation* (Berkeley/Los Angeles: University of California Press).

Richardson, J. and Mazey, S. (eds) (2015) *European Union: Power and Policy-Making* (London, New York: Routledge).

Roger, L. (2016) *Voice(s) in the European Parliament* (Baden-Baden: Nomos).

Sanchez Salgado, R. (2014) *Europeanizing Civil Society. How the EU Shapes Civil Society Organizations* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan).

Scaramuzzino, R. and Scaramuzzino, G. (2015) 'Sex Workers' Rights Movement and the EU: Challenging the New European Prostitution Policy Model'. In Johansson, H. and Kalm, S. (eds) *EU Civil Society. Patterns of Cooperation, Competition and Conflict* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan), pp. 137–154.

Shreeves, R., Prpic, M. and Claros, E. (2019). Briefing. Women in Politics in the EU. State of Play. European Parliamentary Research Service. Available at: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2019/635548/EPRS_BRI(2019)635548_EN.pdf

Stockemer, D. and Sundström, A. (2019) 'Do Young Female Candidates Face Double Barriers or an Outgroup Advantage? The Case of the European Parliament'. *European Journal of Political Research*, Vol. 58, No. 1, pp. 373–384.

van der Vleuten, A. (2019) 'The European Parliament as a Constant Promoter of Gender Equality. Another European Myth?' In Ahrens, P. and Rolandsen Agustín, L. (eds) *Gendering the European Parliament: Structures, Policies, and Practices* (London: Rowman & Littlefield International), pp. 35–49.

Verge, T. and de la Fuente, M. (2014) 'Playing with Different Cards: Party Politics, Gender Quotas and Women's Empowerment'. *International Political Science Review*, Vol. 35, No. 1, pp. 67–79.

Warasin, M., Rolandsen Agustín, L., Kantola, J. and Coughlan, C. (2019) 'Politicisation of Gender Equality in the European Parliament. Cohesion and Inter-Group Coalitions in Plenary and Committees'. In Ahrens, P. and Rolandsen Agustín, L. (eds) *Gendering the European Parliament: Structures, Policies, and Practices* (London: Rowman & Littlefield International), pp. 141–158.

Woodward, A.E. (2004) 'Building Velvet Triangles: Gender and Informal Governance'. In Christiansen, T. and Piattoni, S. (eds) *Informal Governance and the European Union* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar), pp. 76–93.

Xydias, C. (2016) 'Discrepancies in Women's Presence between European National Legislatures and the European Parliament: A Contextual Explanation'. *Political Research Quarterly*, Vol. 69, No. 4, pp. 800–812.

Zimmermann, J. (2019) 'Staging Power: Constructing Gender in the Debates of the European Parliament, 1999-2014'. In Ahrens, P. and Rolandsen Agustín, L. (eds) *Gendering the European Parliament: Structures, Policies, and Practices* (London: Rowman & Littlefield International), pp. 51–66.