

# A Voice for Civil Society? “What difference do Women Parliamentarians make to Political debate & Policy-Making?”



2015 CALRE Gender Equality Working Group

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# Equal representation

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- Democracy
- Legitimacy
- Moral/ social justice argument
  
- ... responsiveness?

# “Substantive Representation”

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‘the opportunities for the concerns and interests of women to be heard and taken into account in the policy-making process’ (Mackay et al, 2003)

# Critical actors versus critical mass

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- ‘Will just any woman do’? (Dovi, 2002)
- ‘Critical actors’ -those who ‘change the position of the minority and lead to further changes’.
- Critical actors: might include feminist champions (female and male) in parliaments, government...working as **norm or policy ‘entrepreneurs’** in the sense of promoting particular ideas and values that enhance SRW’

# Critical Actors

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- Who initiates policy proposals on 'women's issues' or gendered policy concerns?
- Do they act individually or as part of a larger group?
- How do they set out to achieve policy change?

## WESTMINSTER

Chaney, P. (2015) 'Organized out of Politics'? Parliamentary Scrutiny of the Substantive Representation of Women in UK Governments' Legislative Programmes 1945-2012, Women's Studies International Forum, Volume 50, Pages 57–67,  
<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0277539515000345>



- ❑ Institutional sexism: 1945-2012 just 26 legislative proposals concerned with SRW in 22 “King/ Queen’s Speeches”.
- ❑ <1 % of all post-war legislative programme proposals
- ❑ “How did parliamentarians respond to this”?
- ❑ Analysis of transcripts of all parliamentary scrutiny debates responding to all government legislative programmes since 1945
- ❑ Having a “critical mass” of women MPs mattered to achieving scrutiny
- ❑ Data also show importance of interventions of critical actors.
- ❑ Key feminist individual MPs – had a disproportionate impact in calling government to account.
- ❑ <20% women MPs accounted for 68% of debating interventions on the substantive representation of women.

## WESTMINSTER (2)

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- ❑ Party dynamics, Left-of-centre political parties dominate interventions to advance the SRW in parliamentary scrutiny
- ❑ There was also a qualitative shift in the data.
- ❑ Length of debating interventions to promote the SRW becomes greater over time
- ❑ Changing nature/ substance of parliamentary interventions.
- ❑ This can be seen as part of a shift in attitudes or culture.
- ❑ There is a shift away from the early post-war years of making the basic case for SRW (whether it is necessary/ desirable) - to the detailed means – how it should be achieved.

## NATIONAL ASSEMBLY FOR WALES

Chaney P, (2006) Critical Mass, Deliberation and the Substantive Representation of Women: Evidence from the UK's Devolution Programme, *Political Studies*, 54, 4.

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1467-9248.2006.00633.x/abstract>



- ❑ Critical mass of women AMs shaped and reprioritized the political agenda
- ❑ Analysis of all (327) plenary debates of the Assembly's first term (1999-03)
- ❑ Clear evidence of link between women's presence as elected politicians and the promotion of women's interests
- ❑ Examination of incidence of key gender equality terms such as childcare, domestic violence – disaggregated by sex of speaker
- ❑ Probabilistically women are far more likely than men to advance the substantive representation of women
- ❑ Contribution of such 'critical actors' highlights importance both of critical mass and key individuals in substantive representation of women



**Table 1: The Incidence of Key Terms Featuring in Political Debate Recorded in the Official Record of the First Term of the National Assembly for Wales 1999–2003**

<i>Debating term</i>	<i>Female All references to topic (%)</i>	<i>Male All references to topic (%)</i>
Childcare	64.7	35.3
Domestic violence	70.2	29.8
Equal pay	68.0	32.0
'Women's issues'	77.8	22.2
Equality	52.2	47.8
All	59.8	40.2
N	532	358

**Table 2: Ministerial Interventions in Debate on Key Topics recorded in the Official Record of the First Term of the National Assembly for Wales 1999–2003**

<i>Debating term</i>	<i>Female All ministerial interventions on topic (%)</i>	<i>Male All ministerial interventions on topic (%)</i>
Childcare	67.0	33.0
Domestic violence	76.5	23.5
Equal pay	77.3	22.7
'Women's issues'	77.4	22.6
Equality	60.5	39.5
All	66.2	33.8
N	198	101

**Table 3: Gender Split among Those Initiating Political Debate on Key Terms Recorded in the Official Record of the Plenary Sessions of the First Term of the National Assembly for Wales 1999–2003**

<i>Debating term</i>	<i>Female Total each topic (%)</i>	<i>Male Total each topic (%)</i>
Childcare	61.8	38.2
Domestic violence	74.2	25.8
Equal pay	65.4	34.6
'Women's issues'	77.8	22.2
Equality	51.1	48.9
All	59.5	40.5
N	308	210

**Table 5: Equality Champions? Percentage of Total Debating Interventions on Key Topics Made by the Three Most Prolific Debaters on Each Topic**

<i>Debating term</i>	<i>Female</i>	
	<i>All female contributions (%)</i>	<i>All contributions (%)</i>
Childcare	40.7	26.3
Domestic violence	45.0	31.6
Equal pay	53.0	36.0
'Women's issues'	31.2	24.2
Equality	40.3	21.0
All	40.2	24.0
N	532	890

## NATIONAL ASSEMBLY FOR WALES

Chaney, P. (2008) Devolved Governance and the Substantive Representation of Women: The Second Term of the National Assembly for Wales, 2003-07, *Parliamentary Affairs*, Oxford University Press/ Hansard Society, Volume 61, 2, pp. 272-290 doi:10.1093/pa/gsm063 <http://pa.oxfordjournals.org/content/61/2.toc>



- New levels of women's descriptive representation at the devolved level in Wales combines with 'instruments of state feminism' to promote the substantive representation of women
- Analysis of sex-disaggregated incidence of gender equality terms in transcripts of cross-party Equality Committee 2003-7
- Women (both AMs and advisors to the Committee) probabilistically more likely than men to refer to these terms (statistically significant,  $P = <0.001$ ) 78% of such incidences

1. The incidence of key terms in the Equality Committee transcripts during the second Assembly 2003–2007 (percentages)

Key debating term	Female			Male		
	AMs	Advisor	(All)	AMs	Advisor	(All)
Domestic abuse	1.4	0.6	(2.1)	0	0.1	(0.2)
Equal pay	5.7	6.7	(12.4)	0.5	0.4	(0.8)
Childcare	8.3	0.7	(9)	0.5	1.1	(1.7)
Public appointments	1.3	5	(6.4)	0	0	(0)
Gender	8	6.6	(14.7)	2.3	3	(5.3)
Women	10.4	10.6	(20.9)	3.7	7.3	(11)
Girls	0.4	0.4	(0.8)	0.1	0.6	(0.7)
Gender budgeting	0.9	0.7	(1.6)	0.3	0	(0.3)
Mainstreaming	7.1	2.4	(9.6)	1	1.3	(2.4)
All	43.7	34		8.4	14	
N	422	328	(750)	81	135	(216)



## NATIONAL ASSEMBLY FOR WALES (2)

Chaney, P. (2008) Devolved Governance and the Substantive Representation of Women: The Second Term of the National Assembly for Wales, 2003-07, Parliamentary Affairs, Oxford University Press/ Hansard Society, Volume 61, 2, pp. 272-290 doi:10.1093/pa/gsm063 <http://pa.oxfordjournals.org/content/61/2.toc>

- Analysis of 2,467 written and 2,409 oral parliamentary questions to Welsh ministers 2003-7
- Women predominated in asking gender equality-related questions
- 3% written questions referred to 'equality'/ 'equal opportunities'. Women AMs asked majority (53%) - when coded whether feminist in orientation, women asked almost two-thirds (62.5%) ( $P = <0.001$ )

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Chaney, P. (2008) *Devolved Governance and the Substantive Representation of Women: The Second Term of the National Assembly for Wales, 2003-07*, *Parliamentary Affairs*, Oxford University Press/ Hansard Society, Volume 61, 2, pp. 272-290 doi:10.1093/pa/gsm063 <http://pa.oxfordjournals.org/content/61/2.toc>



Page 8 of 19

## *Parliamentary Affairs*

### 2. The gender split between female and male AMs asking WAQs to Ministers on selected 'women's issues' during the second Assembly 2003–2007

Topic	Women (%)	Men (%)
Equal pay	62.5	37.5
Domestic abuse	57	43
Women's health	73	27
Childcare	72	28
Gender equality	80	20
(N)	(115)	(40)
All	74	26



## NATIONAL ASSEMBLY FOR WALES (2)

Chaney, P. (2008) Devolved Governance and the Substantive Representation of Women: The Second Term of the National Assembly for Wales, 2003-07, *Parliamentary Affairs*, Oxford University Press/ Hansard Society, Volume 61, 2, pp. 272-290 doi:10.1093/pa/gsm063 <http://pa.oxfordjournals.org/content/61/2.toc>



### 3. The gender split between female and male AMs asking OAQs to Ministers on selected 'women's issues' during the Second Assembly 2003–2007

Topic	Women (%)	Men (%)
Equal pay	81.8	18.2
Domestic abuse	92.9	7.1
Women's health	75	25
Childcare	90	10
Gender equality	84.6	15.4
(N)	(56)	(11)
All	86	14

## NATIONAL ASSEMBLY FOR WALES (2)

Chaney, P. (2008) Devolved Governance and the Substantive Representation of Women: The Second Term of the National Assembly for Wales, 2003-07, *Parliamentary Affairs*, Oxford University Press/ Hansard Society, Volume 61, 2, pp. 272-290 doi:10.1093/pa/gsm063 <http://pa.oxfordjournals.org/content/61/2.toc>



### 4. Percentage of WAQs and OAQs on women's issues/gender equality asked by the four most Prolific Women AM 'Equality Champions'

Topic	Percentage of all women AMs' questions on respective topics	Percentage of all AMs' questions on respective topics
Equal pay	31.2	23.8
Domestic abuse	6.2	4.8
Women's health	33.3	23.9
Childcare	55.2	42.1
Gender equality	51	37.3
All	40.9	30

Chaney, P. (2012), Critical Actors vs. Critical Mass: The Substantive Representation of Women in the Scottish Parliament. The British Journal of Politics & International Relations, 14: 441–457  
<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1467-856X.2011.00467.x/abstract>



- ❑ Analysed the substantive representation of women in 3 types of parliamentary proceedings
- ❑ It identifies a key issue in SRW as how the critical actors interact with a critical mass.
- ❑ Findings confirm that female critical actors are shown to have disproportionate policy-making influence.
- ❑ Reveals SRW shaped by institutional mechanisms (the type of parliamentary activity being conducted)
- ❑ Also details how SRW shaped by party dynamics – i.e. how critical actors and critical mass in the respective parties come together in promoting the substantive representation of women.

Chaney, P. (2012), Critical Actors vs. Critical Mass: The Substantive Representation of Women in the Scottish Parliament. The British Journal of Politics & International Relations, 14: 441–457  
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**Table 4: Parliamentary Motions Promoting the SRW by Subject (Disaggregated by the Sex of the MSP Proposing the Motion)**

Subject	Female	Male
	Percentage of all motions on subject (1999–2010)	
Congratulating/remembering women for achievements/promoting equality	73	27
Domestic abuse	80	20
Equality in labour market/equal pay	78	12
Women's health	50	50
Women's rights/equal representation	70	30
Miscellaneous	75	25
<i>All</i>	74	26
<i>N</i>	94	33

# Conclusions

- ❑ Complex link between descriptive + substantive representation.
- ❑ When 'critical mass' achieved, substantive representation = 'probabilistic' not 'deterministic'
- ❑ Shaped by range of factors, inc: the institutional context + gender dynamics of debate, party dynamics + actions of individual 'critical actors'.

## Conclusions (2).

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- ❑ Women greater propensity to advance gender equality in debate, – and through mechanisms such as debating proposals – and the asking of parliamentary questions
- ❑ Overall, empirical evidence that women's political presence is important because of the substantive difference they can make to policy and politics

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Diolch yn Fawr

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