

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

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INTRODUCTION

The last two decades have brought dramatic changes in the sex balance of legislative institutions, with the proportion of women in parliaments globally more than doubling,¹ prompting a plethora of questions for political scientists regarding changing legislative behaviour. The bulk of scholars addressing this question have focused on women's behaviour, asking how women are distinct from men, and how women represent the interests and preferences of their female constituents. Rather than looking at women's behaviour, this paper looks at men, their representing of women's issues via explicitly feminist acts, and how the changing presence of women might shape their degree of feminist action.

In order to investigate these dynamics, this paper uses the case of the United Kingdom in the 1997-2001 parliamentary session, and the signing of 'Early Day Motions' to explore the patterns of feminist behaviour amongst male and female Members of Parliament (MPs). This context and time period represents a moment of heightened change following a historic increase in the number of women in parliament after the Labour Party's used a gender quota for the 1997 election. The paper asks two main questions: First, do the characteristics of 'Feminist Men' differ from the characteristics of 'Feminist Women'? And second, how do men and women change in their likelihood to sign FEDMs over the course of the parliament?

Initial findings suggest there are indeed distinct predictors for men's feminist acts, though overall patterns look similar to that of women). There is also evidence of change over time: by the end of the parliamentary session the gender gap in the signing of feminist Early Day Motions has virtually disappeared, with men converged to women's rate of signing of feminist Early Day

¹ <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif-arc.htm>

Motions. Though in need of significant further investigation, this paper offers tentative support to the claim that women make ‘make a difference’ in politics by changing their male colleagues, and further makes the case that research on the substantive representation of women needs to look beyond sex gaps when measuring the ‘impact’ of women in politics.

BACKGROUND & LITERATURE

SUBSTANTIVE REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN

A key aspect of the women and politics field concerns the ‘substantive representation of women’ (SRW). The concept comes from Pitkin’s (1967) theorizing on representation; per Pitkin’s definition, substantive representation concerns those actions of a representative, and the degree to which they are congruent with the interests of the represented. Scholars have paid significant attention to the link between the descriptive representation of women – that is, the presence of women in political bodies – and the substantive representation of women. Arguments made in both real world politics and academic literature suggest that it is important to have legislative bodies that ‘look like’ their populations, in order to get effective substantive representation for women (Phillips 1995; Mansbridge 1999). The ‘politics of presence’, as Phillips terms it, posits that when there is balanced descriptive representation the substantive outcomes will be more likely to reflect the interests and perspectives of the citizenry that the legislative body represents.

Empirical research has sought to test the strength of this connection between descriptive and substantive representation of women. Though the broad academic consensus suggests that female lawmakers are more similar than they are different to their male counterparts, research in a variety of national contexts suggest that women do sometimes deviate from the male norm of political behaviour, and are more likely to favor traditionally ‘female’ issues. 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 small but significant differences between male and female legislatures, with women being more likely to represent ‘women’s issues’. Similarly, sex 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. As Dodson (2006) argues, the link between descriptive and substantive representation is at best probabilistic, and not deterministic.

This work has offered important insights into the (potential) distinctness of women in politics, and disrupted ideas about ‘normal’ political behaviour. However, continuing to focus only on women when looking at effects of women’s presence – i.e. what, when and how women substantively represent women – we ignore the possibility of broader impacts of numerical sex balance. That is, in addition to the women entering politics and being able to themselves be actors of substantive representation, women’s presence may also prompt SRW by men.

In addition to the empirical question of who substantively represents women, the academic literature has long wrestled with the question of what exactly it means to ‘represent women’, given the diversity of women’ experiences. A number of approaches have been taken that have led to a range of definitions of ‘women’s issues’, as Krook & Childs (2008) note, including: ‘traditional’ women’s issues as largely that which concern the private sphere (Meyer 2003); policies that increase the autonomy and wellbeing of women (Bratton 2005); using gender gaps in public opinion

(Schwindt-Bayer 2006); and explicitly feminist policies, that bring about more autonomy and choice for women (Reingold 2000). While recognizing all of these versions of ‘women’s issues’ could be conceived as ways in which women are represented in politics, I focus in this project on feminist definitions of the substantive representation, arguing that though in some ways a narrow conception feminist policies and positions unambiguously seek to further the interests and opportunities of women. While not all women voters would view feminist policies as a representation of their views, in some very real sense all women are beneficiaries of feminism, and the intent on the part of the feminist is clearly to further the condition of women.

MEN IN POLITICS

A renewed focus on men when studying the substantive representation of women (SRW) is important for at least three key reasons. First and most straight forward, because men make up the majority of almost every legislative chamber in the world.² Men are 77.1% all parliamentarians in the world.³ Thus the progress – or lack thereof – in policy areas related to women depend, often primarily, on the engagement of men.

Second, as the numerical majority and long-standing norm, male legislators often serve implicitly or explicitly as a neutral ‘base’ against which women’s behavior is measured. The study of women in politics, and of the substantive representation of women, often focuses on the way in which women deviate from the male norm of political behavior. If we do not fully understand the gendered dynamics of this ‘norm’, the study of women in politics is significantly limited. By taking men as an unexamined neutral base, there could appear to be a diminishing in women’s distinctness in substantively representing women, that could in fact be a product of a change in *men’s* behaviour,

² Currently only Bolivia and Rwanda have lower chambers with female majority.

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

such that the substantive representation of women is no longer so unique to women MPs. This interrogation of the norm of male behavior also has important theoretical implications. Feminist scholarship should be committed to exposing the ‘false neutrality’ inherent in the study of politics, and as Carver reminds us in his book title, “Gender is not a synonym for women”(1996). A sole focus on women in politics has the potential to, as Murray states, “perpetuates the status of men as the norm and women as the ‘other’” (Murray 2014).

Third, by ignoring the possibility of women changing the attitudes and behaviors of their male colleagues, we run the risk of undercounting the ‘impact’ of women in politics. While women’s place in politics certainly should not be dependent on their ability to change their colleagues (or even to act as ‘good feminists’), understanding the full impact of women’s presence on the behaviour of men adds another important element to the story of how women have changed, and continue to change, political institutions.

The imperative to study men in politics from a gender perspective has begun to be addressed by several scholars in recent years. In her study of the gender imbalance in Thai politics, Elin Bjarnegård chose not to focus on women’s underrepresentation and limitations in political recruitment, but rather on the overrepresentation of men (Bjarnegård 2010; Bjarnegård 2015). Bjarnegård’s approach highlights the power of homosocial networks in Thailand’s political system, and by framing the question as one of men’s overrepresentation rather than women’s underrepresentation, a more complete account of the dynamics that preserve existing relations of power was possible. Rainbow Murray also calls for a shift in both theory and practice, to move towards considering gender quotas that can place a ceiling on men’s overrepresentation, rather than a floor on women’s representation (Murray 2014). Murray’s argument offers both a useful theoretical reframing of many discussions of gender and politics, and a strong normative case for the benefits to

representation that come with a focus on men's overrepresentation – the quality of representation is damaged when a group is overrepresented and underscrutinised.

A recent article represents an important shift towards theorizing men as critical actors – analysing men ‘as men’ in the study of gender equality policy. Bergqvist, Bjarnegård, and Zetterberg (2016) consider why are men less likely to be drivers of gender equality, and conclude that it can be explained by a concept they term the ‘gendered leeway’. They argue that in the case of advocating for gender equality, the male gender confers a political advantage: the power to choose not to advocate for gender equality. There is an unequal, and gendered, set of perceived mandates as to who needs to advocate for gender equality, such that “Female politicians are blamed if they do not pursue ‘women’s issues’ while male politicians get credit if they do.” (6). This gendered leeway to substantively represent women comes from differential ‘external mandates’, expectations from others (colleagues, voters) to support issues and groups, and from differential ‘internal mandates’, which are those expectations politicians place on themselves to particular issues and groups (which in part result from informal gendered rules, and external mandates imposed on individuals). In the case study that Bergqvist, Bjarnegård, and Zetterberg analyse to illustrate their theory – that of the Swedish Social Democratic Party and parental leave and gender equality - they find that male politicians “have the privilege of larger maneuvering room that enables them to speak within the gender-equality discourse without being delegitimized when they prioritize other issues”. This concept is also illustrated with examples outside of politics; Bekkengen’s (2002) study of Swedish couples and their use of parental leave concludes that while it is possible and even desirable for men to take primary responsible for child care, it is not expected. Thus when men do take on child care responsibilities, they are met with gratitude and reward where a woman would only be fulfilling that which is expected of her (cited in Bergqvist, Bjarnegård, and Zetterberg 2016, 6).

UK CASE

A central question in this paper is how the presence of women, and especially changes in the number of women present, might shape men's behaviour. The UK Parliament from 1997-2001 offers an ideal case, as this constituted the parliament following the 1997 election where the number of women doubled, from 60 to 120. This change came largely as a result of the introduction of a gender quota on the part of the Labour Party (coupled with their landslide victory). The party's 'All-Women Shortlist' policy designated winnable constituencies in which only women could be selected as the candidate for parliament, resulting in the party electing 101 women (up from 37 in the previous parliament).

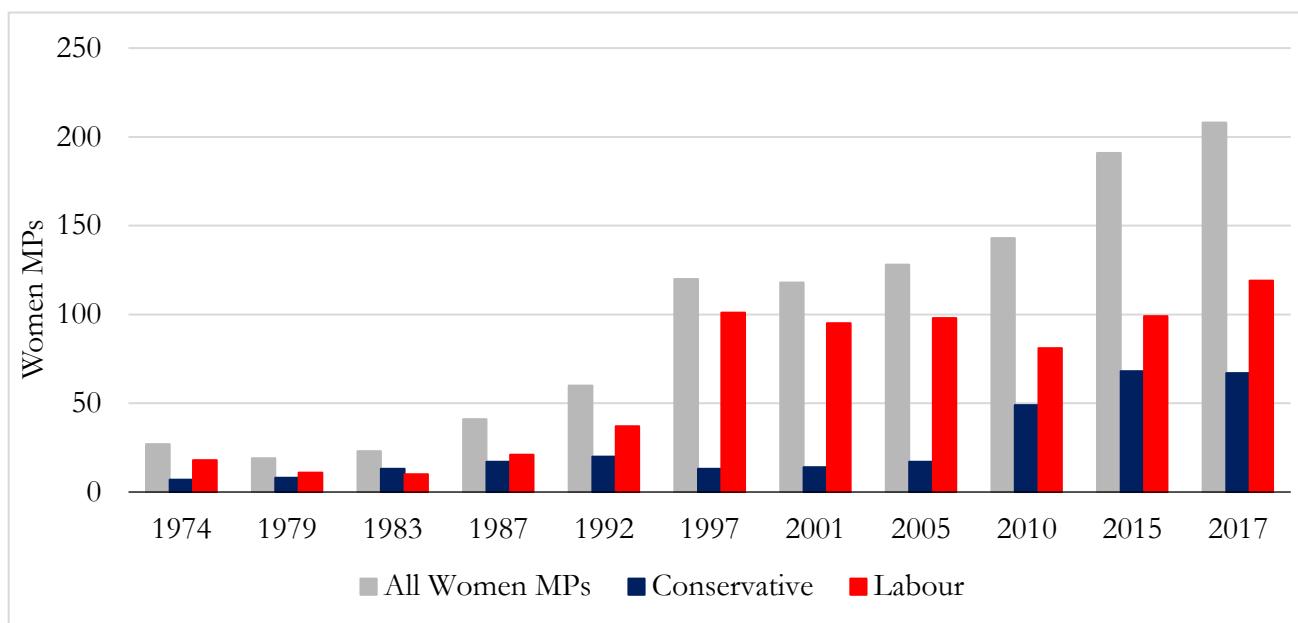


FIGURE 1

Evidence to date 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' (2004). 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; there has also been work considering the specific policies pursued by AWS women (Childs and Withey 2005), and the ‘style’ of women MPs following AWS (Childs 2004; Devlin and Elgie 2008). Other implications of the introduction of AWS have been studied, including: the electoral impact of AWS (Cutts, Childs, and Fieldhouse 2008; Nugent and Krook 2016; Cutts and Widdop 2013), the legal battle for all-women shortlists (Childs 2002), the career trajectories of MPs after the use of quotas (Allen, Cutts, and Campbell 2016; Allen 2013), and internal party dynamics around the use of quotas (Campbell and Childs 2015; Childs 2013; Ashe et al. 2010). However, despite this substantial research agenda around what is a pertinent issue in contemporary British politics, the relationship between the use of AWS and male substantive representation is to date unexamined.

EARLY DAY MOTIONS

Measuring behavior and outputs of MPs within a parliamentary system of government poses challenges. The measures used in the study of SRW in the USA - which forms the bulk of the empirical and theory building literature in this area – do not translate well to the UK. Voting patterns and bill sponsorship are relatively poor indicators in the parliamentary systems - strong party discipline and high degrees of control on the part of the government and governing party mean individual MPs have limited scope within which they can act at all independently. In the UK over half of all MPs are loyal to their party in at least 99% of the votes they

cast.^{http://www.publicwhip.org.uk/mps.php?sort=rebellions} This is a result of both political culture and the structural constraints of a parliamentary government system; those in government must resign if they want to vote against the party line, and those seeking career progression in either the government or an opposition party ‘shadow government’ structure must demonstrate their loyalty to the party. Further, individual MPs in the Parliamentary system are largely unable to themselves propose bills to parliament (Private Members Bills being the notable, but very rare, exception). This is not to say that

MPs have no political significance however – indeed, the parties and ministers outlined above who do hold power are themselves MPs, and it is from the pool of current back-benchers that future ministers and party leaders will be chosen. Further, even those not yet in positions of power have important roles to play in shaping the agenda and policy outcomes – but as Ross puts it, in parliamentary systems “...most real work is done outside the chamber.” (2002, 192). Thus, alternate measures are required; Early Day Motions are one such alternate measure. They serve both as an example of a representative act that is meaningful, but also – perhaps more importantly – as a proxy for how MPs might act in other situations in their political life where they might have influence.

Parliament’s website describes Early Day Motions (EDMs) as “[F]ormal 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.”⁴ They can be tabled by any MP, and must be a single sentence, consisting of no more than 250 words. EDMs appear in the printed ‘vote bundle’ of bills before parliament every day, are reprinted when MPs add their name, and are accessible online.⁵ There are a large quantity of EDMs tabled each parliamentary session - a yearly average of 2000 tabled EDMs and 90,000 signatures over the last decade.⁶ An Early Day Motion can be a way to raise an issue in parliament, appease an interest group, or express opinions in order to indicate members’ support. EDMs can also be an important way to demonstrate responsiveness to voters in an MP’s 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.⁷

⁴ Parliament Official Website’s EDM page: <http://www.parliament.uk/edm>

⁵ 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).

⁶ Calculated from the EDM database: <http://www.edms.org.uk/>

⁷ For example: EDM number 142 in the 2013-14 session, tabled on 21/05/2013, titled ‘Slyne-With-Hest St Luke’s Primary School’ reads: “That this House notes that Slyne-with-Hest St Luke’s Primary School, representing Morecambe Football Club, was crowned champions of the nPower League 2 Kids Cup at Wembley on 18 May 2013; believes that

One important feature of EDMs – and where they differ from simply a public statement – is that they are subject to parliamentary privilege, offering MPs more scope in the remit of discussion that 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’.

Though not the source of significant policy change, Early Day Motions are important in a few ways. First, as Rogers & Walters (2004) note, they can be “useful source of intelligence for the whips” (272). 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.”⁸ 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. As David Crosby MP said in a parliamentary committee on the topic, Early Day Motions are “frequently the birthplace of a good campaign and some good ideas.”⁹ EDMs are also significant because they are free of the party disciplining that constrains almost every other quantifiable and public parliamentary behavior. 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: 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.

This is, however, a limited measure. Early Day Motions have no actual policy implications, and are merely an expression of a viewpoint; some have described them as ‘parliamentary graffiti’ (Flynn 1999), making it hard to say whether EDMs are reflective of an MPs inclinations and

this is a significant achievement from an extremely gifted group of young people; and congratulates them on behalf of the whole community.” (<http://www.edms.org.uk/2013-14/142.htm#sthash.iht359z.dpuf>)

⁸ 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

⁹ Ibid., Ev. 2

preferences more broadly. Further EDMs are approached differently to other legislative activities by some MPs: in light of their ‘ineffectiveness’, and in opposition to the administrative cost involved, a handful number of MPs from the Conservative Party have refused to sign an Early Day Motions. Convention also dictates that Ministers do not sign EDMs, somewhat limiting the sample of MPs who might sign a given EDM.¹⁰

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 recent and notable exception was Kellerman’s (2012) model that used the singing 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 the Commons. Going further Kellerman (2013) also demonstrates that greater use of EDMs is an (effective) tool for MPs in bolstering their popularity electorally.

There is also precedent for the use of EDMs as a means for the SRW. EDMs were mentioned by a number of the Labour women MP’s Childs interviewed as a means by which they can raise and promote issues important to women (Childs 2002, 144), a phenomena systematically analysed by Childs & Withey (Childs and Withey 2004). They looked to sex differences in the signing of EDMs to see if Labour’s women MPs are ‘acting for Women’. Their work analyzed all the EDMs in the 1997 parliament (around 5000), and found that Labour’s women are more likely than Labour’s men to sign “women’s”, and especially feminist, EDMs.

¹⁰ Parliament Website, ‘What are Early day motions?’: <http://www.parliament.uk/about/how/business/edms/>

Childs also illustrates the potential for EDMs as a means of substantively representing women in 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 Labour MP Christine McCafferty, reflecting discussions by the women in the Parliamentary Labour party, tabled three different EDMs on the issue. The 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'. However, it is clear that EDMs were both an indicator of the feeling of Labour women, and at the very least a *part* of the process of substantively representing this feeling (Childs 2008, 137–38).

Finally, we can see evidence that EDMs are an act of representation in the observation that MPs behaviour in this 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 the graph).

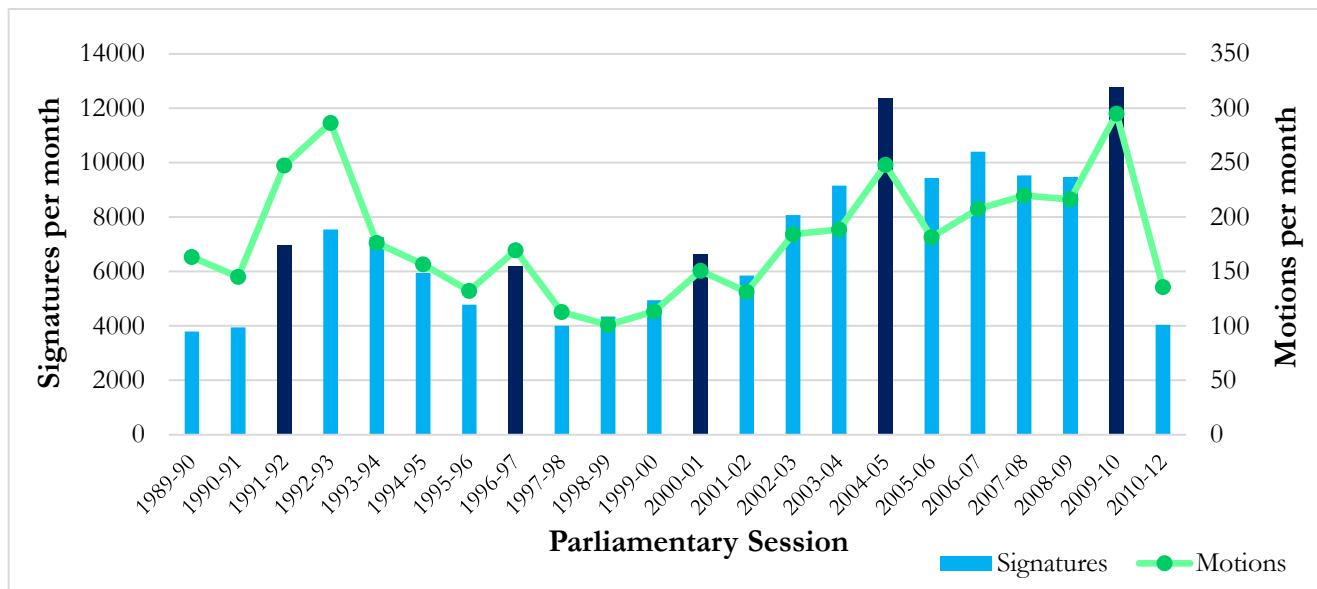


FIGURE 2

HYPOTHESES

H1: Male feminists will share similar characteristics to female feminists

In the absence of a significant body of literature on men substantively representing women, and drawing on work outside of politics, I predict that men's proclivity to act in a feminist manner – here measured by the signing of 'feminist' EDMs (FEDMs) will follow much the same pattern as that of women. In particular:

H1a: Younger men are more likely to sign FEDMs

Work outside of politics on the gender equality beliefs in public opinion would suggest that younger generations are more likely to hold more progressive attitudes towards gender equality. Bolzendahl and Myers (2004) looked at trends in men and women's attitudes to gender equality in the USA between 1974-1998,¹¹ and broadly speaking find that over time attitudes towards gender equality "liberalize and converge"¹² amongst both men and women. They find an increasingly clear consensus in favour of feminist attitudes over time, in part due to generational replacement effects. The Finnish Gender Equality Barometer¹³ offers another example of this trajectory in public opinion (Nieminen 2012). Nieminen finds that public opinion on gender equality liberalizes and converges. For example, the proportion of men who agree "men also benefit from an increase in gender equality" has increased over time, and has begun to converge with women's (higher) levels of support for this statement (10). Similarly, the number of men supporting the statement "women should play a more active role in politics to diversify the range of political expertise" has increased each year.

¹¹ Using data from the General Social Survey.

¹² Except on the issue of abortion.

¹³ The Gender Equality Barometer surveyed approximately 1,500 Finnish adults in each of 1998, 2001, 2004, 2008 and 2012.

H1b: Men from left-leaning parties are more likely to sign FEDMs

Research on substantive representation of women by women consistently finds party ideological and membership to be a key determinant of the likelihood of seeking to represent ‘women’s issues’ and to advocate for gender equality policy (Celis and Childs 2012; Wängnerud 2009; Celis 2006; M. C. Kittilson 2006; Swers 2002; Celis and Erzeel 2015) – and thus I seek to test whether this holds true for men also.

H2: Men will become more likely to sign FEDMs by the end of the parliament following a significant influx of women.

Work from sociology and psychology on the impact of a group and network level attitudes on individual attitudes, offers some support for this idea. ‘Social comparison theory’ suggests that one assesses the correctness of views by comparing to those views held by those around you (Festinger 1954; Suls, Martin, and Wheeler 2002; Visser and Mirabile 2004). By this logic, the increased presence of women should encourage men in parliament to show greater support for women and – given we know that women are more likely to support feminist positions – feminist causes.

For example, men in women-dominated industries were more likely to take paternity leave than those in male dominated environments, suggesting that the presence of women may shift institutional norms and the actions of men in those institutions (Bartel et al. 2015). Similarly, research on judiciaries finds connections between the presence of women on panels of judges and the outcome of the group. This work asks 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: deciding in favor of the party claiming discrimination decreases by about 10 percentage points when the judge is male (thus, 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.

Kokkonen and Wängnerud (2016) offer mixed results in support of what they term the ‘Spillover effect’: in their survey of Swedish local politicians, they find a positive correlation between the proportion of women and male politician’s commitment to gender equality as an ideal – though the effect is weak and doesn’t reach statistical significance. This offers tentative support that there is some – positive – impact in the outlook of men resulting from the presence of women.

H2a Men in will be especially likely to sign more FEDMs when the influx of women comes from MPs in their own party

Given the mechanisms discussed above, MPs are more exposed to other MPs from their own party, and are also likely to trust party colleagues due to their pre-existing ties and shared ideology. Previous work has demonstrated that political parties are key conduits through which women’s influence can ‘spread’: O’Brien (2012) and O’Brien and Greene (2016) demonstrate that it is not simply the presence of women in a legislative body that leads to wider influence on policy priorities, but the presence and influence of women within a parliamentary party group (especially women in leadership positions within parliamentary parties) that allows parties’ agendas and campaign platforms to be changed in favour of greater substantive representation of women. Similarly, Kittilson (2001) finds that the presence of women in positions of power within political parties to be one of the most significant predictors for the adoption of gender quotas. This work, along with the broader political science literature on the importance of parties, suggests that within

party dynamics may be a key mechanism through which men are influenced by the presence of women.

DATA & METHODS

Using parliamentary archives, online at <http://www.edms.org.uk/edms>, I identified the motions that could be classified as ‘feminist’; this was those motions where the advocating or celebrating of the autonomy and advancement of women’s rights was central to the motion. Table 1 shows the number of EDMs proposed and the total number of signatures for each session coded thus far. Once the feminist EDMs (FEDMs) were identified, the proposer, seconder(s)¹⁴ and signatories for each motion were compiled. Total FEDMs for each MP for each session were calculated, and this data was merged with biographical data on each MP which includes party affiliation, age, length of time in parliament, previous experience, and government positions. A variable for the total number of EDMs (feminist and not feminist) was also added to the dataset. This data was collected from the DODs Parliamentary Companion¹⁵ for each parliament, which includes profiles of every MP (as utilised in: Nugent and Krook 2016).¹⁶

While FEDMs for 6 sessions have been identified, the signatories and profiles were matched up for the first and last sessions of the 1997-2001 parliament – that is the session immediately following the 1997 election, and that immediately preceding the 2001 election.

RESULTS

Session	Session length (months)	# EDMs	Signatures	# Feminist	% Feminist
1997-8	18	2,029	72,108	33	1.6
2000-01	5.1	768	33,930	12	1.6

¹⁴ 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.

¹⁵ https://www.dodsshop.co.uk/store/products/dods-parliamentary-companion-2017_15.htm

¹⁶ This data was coded and collated as part of work with Mona Lena Krook, as utilized in Nugent and Krook 2016.

2001-02	16.6	2,179	97,081	11	0.5
2004-05	4.5	1,116	55,743	18	1.6
2005-06	17.6	3,194	166,153	37	1.2
2009-10	4.5	1,328	57,473	16	1.2

TABLE 1

Table 1 lists the number of EDMs in each session, as well as those identified as ‘feminist’. It shows that there are only a very small number of explicitly and predominantly feminist motions in each session, never going above 2% of all motions submitted. When looking just at overall rates of signing FEDM compared to other EDMs, women are significantly more likely to sign FEDMs: the mean percent of feminist EDMs (as a proportion of all EDMs they signed) was 5.8% for women, compared to 3.3% for men ($p < 0.001$). Further, 17% of women and 7% of men proposed or seconded a FEDM ($p < 0.001$). These sex differences are important – and indeed their precise nature is discussed in the rest of the results section. However, as the rest of this paper will demonstrate, this cannot be seen as a sufficient account of gender and substantive representation in parliament.

H1: Male feminists will share similar characteristics to female feminists

Investigation into the factors predicting signing of FEDMs found that similar factors for women and men covaried with the signing of FEDMs. In particular, Labour Party members were more likely, and Conservative MPs less likely, to have signed FEDMs. A look beyond signing alone offers more insight into this question: I created a dichotomous variable for a feminist EDM ‘critical actor’ in order to distinguish between casual signers and those MPs engaging more actively with feminist issues in their EDM activity. I set a relatively low threshold, and defined a FEDM ‘critical actor’ as any MP who proposed or seconded a FEDM, and/or signed more than 5 FEDMs through the two sessions. 56% of women and 32% of men met these criteria. Using a simple logit regression shown in Table 2, I then tested to see which other biographical features were predictors of an MP being a FEDM critical actor. The results show some differences in the significant predictors for men and women.

One difference between the groups is that age appears to be a more significant predictor for men than for women – in both cases being older makes an MP *more* likely to be a ‘critical actor’ for FEDMs – contrary to my hypothesis.¹⁷ The second and most significant difference is in the effect of the experience of having been in, or currently in, government or shadow government. This appears to be a much bigger factor for women than for men. However, the differences in statistically significant predictors may in part be due to the different sample sizes for the two groups and thus the greater challenge in finding statistically robust patterns amongst the much smaller group of women.

	MEN (n=517) Coefficient (SE)	WOMEN (n=119) Coefficient (SE)
Labour	0.45 (0.28)	0.35 (0.69)
Trade Union member	0.88** (0.02)	0.72 (0.59)
Years in Parliament	-0.04* (0.02)	-0.06 (0.05)
Age (years)	0.04** (0.02)	0.13*** (0.3)
Government or Shadow Govt	-0.62* (0.24)	-2.3*** (0.61)
(constant)	-3.00*** (0.71)	-5.32** (1.63)
X²	75.78***	38.49***
Pseudo R²	0.117	0.236

TABLE 2

H2: Men will become more likely to sign FEDMs by the end of the parliament following a significant influx of women.

The nature of this analysis is, of course, that it is observational only, and establishing the causal mechanism behind changes in legislative behaviour during this period is difficult. Thus, the testing of hypothesis two is by no means conclusive; rather the data presented in this paper can

¹⁷ This needs to be compared to overall EDM activity – it could be that older MPs are more likely to propose, second, and sign EDMs in general, and not just for FEDMs.

simply see if there is covariance that one would expect if women had indeed influence men through their increased presence in parliament following the 1997 election.

That being said, interesting patterns do indeed emerge in the data. There is a significant gender gap in both total number of FEDMs signed and FEDMs signed per month (to adjust for the fact that the 1997-8 session was significantly longer than the 2000-01 session) in the first session, but not by the end of the 4 years of the parliament.

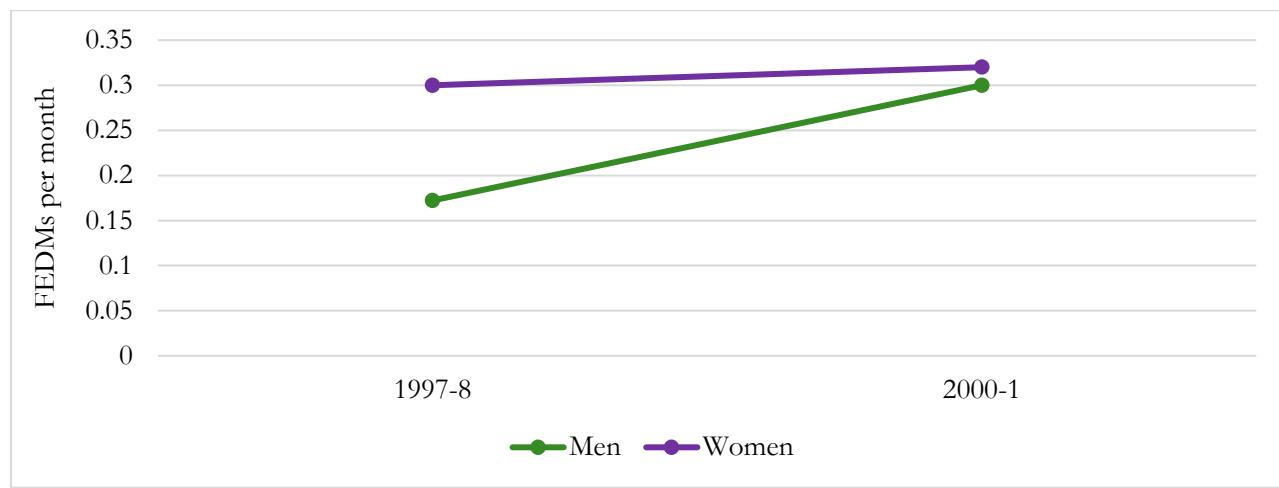


FIGURE 3

Further, the rate of FEDM signing for men converges on that of women by the 2000-01 session. This pattern demonstrates the limits of sex difference as a measure of women's 'impact'; by many measures of women substantively representing women, women were 'making a difference' in 1997-8, but not in 2000-01. However, if my hypothesis about women influencing men is true, the latter closing of the gap is a sign of increased, and not decreased, influence in parliament.

To further investigate the changes observed when looking at group averages, I looked at individual level predictors of change over time. The outcome variable in the OLS regression show in table 3 is change over time, with a positive outcome indicating an increase in total number of FEDMs signed by an MP, and a negative outcome indicating a decrease over time. The results show

first that men are indeed showing more change over time than women. Further, the most significant predictor tested was the number of years an MP has been in parliament. MPs who have been in parliament longer were more likely to increase their rate of FEDM signing during the course of the parliament; though again this is only correlation, it lends to support to the hypothesis that the influx of women changed the influences male MPs were being subjected to. It is those MPs with significant years of parliamentary experience that were most affected by the years of 1997-2000 – perhaps indicating they were most impacted by the change in environment.

	Coefficient (S.E.)	Beta
Male	1.4*** (0.34)	0.16
Labour	-1.3*** (0.28)	-0.18
Years in Parliament	0.10*** (0.02)	0.26
Age (years)	-0.05*** (0.02)	-0.15
(Constant)	-0.37 (0.89)	
F score	25.43***	
R ²	0.135	

TABLE 3 -- OLS Model; N=656; * p≤0.05; **p≤0.01; *** p≤0.001

The party effects in Table 3 offers evidence contrary to Hypothesis 2a; the largest change in this period not among Labour men (who gained the most female colleagues in their party during this period), but among Conservative men. Further time points

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSIONS

This paper represents a first exploration into an important area of study: determining the predictors for *male* support for feminist policy, and examining the impact that women's presence has on men. I argue that expanding the research agenda in these two ways is important for a more complete picture of the gendered contours of legislative behaviour and for a full account of changes that come with increasingly sex balanced parliaments. Initial results indicate there may indeed be shifts in feminist leanings of men following an influx of women.

To answer these questions more fully, more data are needed. In particular, data that incorporates more years of parliamentary behaviour to enable a more complete story of change over time. Further, the category of ‘feminist’ is in need of further nuance – are there particular *types* of feminist motions that men are more willing to support? And finally, there are a number of other characteristics of MPs that should be incorporated into this study. In particular, future iterations will include race and sexual orientation, to test whether being a member of another minority or otherwise under-represented group makes one more likely to support a feminist cause.¹⁸ The ability to answer those questions is limited in this particular iteration, since there were only 9 BAME¹⁹ MPs in the 1997-2001 parliament, accounting for less than 2% of all MPs (Audickas and Apostolova 2017). For this period at least, purely quantitative analysis is not going to be fruitful – but important dynamics amongst these groups should be explored, via qualitative means and also quantitative analysis of later parliaments where there are greater numbers BAME MPs.

¹⁸ Intersectionality theory tells us that there are commonalities among the experiences of minority and underrepresented groups that might make actors more attuned to the plight of other, underrepresented groups (Crenshaw 1991; Celis and Erzeel 2013; Puwar 2004). Per Bergqvist, Bjarnegård, and Zetterberg’s (2016) conceptualization of mandates, it is likely that the membership of a minority or other underrepresented group may confer on a person a more generalized ‘internal mandate’ to advocate for the underrepresented or oppressed. However, this hypothesis may be optimistic: Celis and Erzeel (2013) and others show that underrepresented or minority groups can sometimes become competitors rather than allies. Some evidence of this phenomena comes from minority mens’ behaviour in the US context; Barrett (2001) found that black men were much more likely than white men to support women-oriented policies in state government, with levels of support similar to that of white women. Minta & 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), concluding 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). 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. Such institutionalized coalition mechanisms might result in minority men having greater connections to women in legislatures and thus being more likely to advance the SRW.

¹⁹ Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic. The term most commonly used in the UK to describe people of non-white ethnic backgrounds.

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