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## **Gender quotas and mainstreaming: sparring partners in gender equality policies?**

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### **Abstract**

Over the last 15 years a growing number of countries adopted statutory gender quotas in order to improve the gender balance in political decision-making. Since the fourth UN World conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 many countries also embraced the strategy of gender mainstreaming. In this paper we argue that gender quotas and gender mainstreaming reflect more than a double trajectory in gender equality policies, one focusing specifically on women and the other targeting a broader audience and a larger set of public policy fields. The two strategies are indeed sparring partners in the promotion of gender equality policies. We are particularly interested in bringing back a discussion on gender relations in politics and, to this aim, we want to (re)assess the quality of gender equality policies such as gender quotas in their capacity to promote a transformation of gender roles. To reinforce the synergy between gender quotas and gender mainstreaming, the former should be built upon a number of quality criteria that have been singled out for mainstreaming. We explore this relationship starting from a number of shifts gender mainstreaming is supposed to spark off in the public (policy making) sphere and analyze to what extent gender quotas have provoked these shifts.

### **Key words**

Gender equality in politics, gender quotas, gender mainstreaming, quality criteria, gender equality policies

### **Introduction**

Over the last 15 years a growing number of countries adopted statutory gender quotas in order to improve the gender balance in political decision-making (Dahlerup 2006; Krook 2009). Since the fourth UN World conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 many countries also embraced gender mainstreaming (Squires 2007; Walby 2009). At first sight these two strategies seem contradictory tools to improve gender equality. Gender quotas focus on women, gender mainstreaming on gender. Gender quotas target a descriptive representation of women in the political arena, gender mainstreaming focuses on the integration of a gender dimension in public policies. While the former want to bring women into the process of

political decision-making, the latter wants to bring gender relations into public policies. Yet, the two strategies might be complementary rather than contradictory. As Squires (2007) argues, both strategies share more in common than we think at first sight. By bringing women into the process of political decision-making it is hoped and sometimes assumed that this will also improve the substantive representation of women. The implementation of the strategy of gender mainstreaming is understood to also raise the number of women involved in processes of political decision-making and of policy-making. Squires underlines that notwithstanding conceptual tensions, such as on the concept of equality, there are substantial complementarities with respect to the final goal, allowing to consider gender quotas and gender mainstreaming as ‘potential partners’ (Squires 2007: 85-86).

In this contribution we argue that gender quotas and gender mainstreaming can be related to each other, that they can be potential partners, in that gender quotas can be a best practice of gender mainstreaming and not only another parallel but independent track of gender equality policies. We do so more particularly with a focus on bringing back in a discussion on gender relations in politics and want to (re)assess the quality of gender equality policies such as gender quotas in their capacity to promote a transformation of gender roles. In the 1990s there was ample debate – both political (see for instance the 1992 Declaration of Athens, the 1995 Beijing Platform of Action, the 1996 Charter of Rome) and academic (see for instance Arioli 1996, 1997; Degauquier 1994; Kittilson 2005; Lister 1997; Meier 2001; Philipps 1995; Sawyer 2000; Squires 1997; Voet 1998; Young 2000) – on the need for gender quotas and their pros and cons, the latter generally pointing at the stigmatisation of ‘quotas women’. More women in politics were needed and gender quotas were one of the tools to facilitate the access of women to political decision-making, but they were also considered to be a risky undertaking. Today we have to conclude that much of that political and academic debates of the 1990s have faded away. This might be due to the fact that the number of women in political decision-making has increased considerably over the last decade and a half and that gender quotas have become a common policy tool, given the number of countries and parties that adopted statutory respectively party gender quotas.<sup>1</sup>

Nowadays debates address – next to determinants for the adoption of gender quotas – the effectiveness of gender quotas in raising the number of women (see for instance Htun and Jones 2002; Jones 1998, 2004; Jones and Navia 1999; Schmidt and Saunders 2004; Tremblay 2008) and in improving their substantive representation (see for instance Childs 2008; Franceschet and Piscopo 2008; Mansbridge 2005). While these debates look at more political or technical aspects of gender quotas – under which conditions do they get adopted, how do they work –, the issue of substantive representation shifts the focus to the representation of citizens and their relation with representatives. Very differently, the debates of the 1990s focused, next to broader issues of democracy, justice, equality and representation, also on the gendered character of relations within politics. They refer to the presence or not of gendered thresholds in politics and to the fact that gender quotas would stigmatise women representatives, they focused on gendered relations within the sphere of political decision-making, and not (only) on gender issues in society at large.

In this paper we would like to bring the issue of gender relations in politics back in. Firstly, because the number of women has increased in politics, but this is no guarantee for gender relations to have improved. Secondly, because of the number of cases of gender quotas, there should be a debate on their transformative potential, not only their beneficial effects for society at large through a substantive representation of women, but also for gender relations in politics themselves. We had the debate on quotas women, but we would like to

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<sup>1</sup> According to Dahlerup (2006) around 40 countries have introduced legal quotas and more than 50 countries have introduced party quotas. Krook (2009) states that gender quotas have been adopted by national legislators and political parties in more than one hundred countries in the world.

broaden it and discuss gender relations in politics more broadly, and gender equality in politics beyond the numbers, returning, for instance, to gendered thresholds. Thirdly, because gender quotas are largely adopted and implemented and we think that they could play an important transformative role in bringing about gender equality in a broader sense than equal numbers in politics. The issue is how we can go beyond the debate on numbers in order to look for quality, the quality of gender equality policies (for instance gender quotas), in their capacity to promote transformation in gender roles (for instance in political decision-making). It is here that the issue of gender mainstreaming comes in, helping to define quality criteria for such policies. In this respect, the present contribution is a good illustration of the potential relation between gender quotas and gender mainstreaming.

To reinforce the synergy between gender quotas and gender mainstreaming, firstly, the latter should not be used against the former (see Stratigaki 2005), and, secondly, gender quotas should be built upon a number of quality criteria that have been singled out for mainstreaming. We explore this relationship starting from a number of shifts in the public policy making sphere gender mainstreaming is supposed to spark off (Lombardo 2005). We then analyze to what extent gender quotas have provoked these shifts. Did gender quotas broaden the concept of gender equality? Did they incorporate a gender perspective intersected with other inequalities in mainstream politics? Did they increase the number of women and lead to an equal political representation of men and women? Did they lead to an adjustment of structures, procedures, and tools or to a displacement of hierarchies and empowerment of subjects? This allows us to discuss quality criteria for formulating gender equality policies that adopt a broader approach to gender inequality in politics. We argue that such quality criteria could make gender quotas be a transformative tool, investigating how gender quotas relate to gender mainstreaming and, hence, how gender mainstreaming can contribute to the adoption of a more holistic approach to gender inequality in politics, and how the application of such an approach to gender quotas can strengthen them as an instrument to improve gender relations in politics. But first we contextualise the debates on gender quotas and the emergence of a sparring partnership between the former and gender mainstreaming.

## **1 Debates on gender quotas and the emergence of a sparring partnership**

During the late 1980s and especially the 1990s gender quotas were an important issue of debate. The discussion mainly focused on the need for adopting such measures, their benefits and disadvantages. On the whole, five arguments were developed in order to defend the claim of an increased presence of women in political representation and – amongst others – gender quotas to bring this about (Arioli 1996, 1997; Degauquier 1994; Kittilson 2005; Lister 1997; Meier 2001; Philipps 1995; Sawyer 2000; Squires 1997; Voet 1998; Young 2000). First, there is the issue of representing what is generally called the interests and needs or perspectives of women, either based on a gendered division of roles and tasks or on a more essentialist conceptualisation of the sexes. The argument goes that women have specific interests, needs, perspectives, and thus requests, partly because of biological characteristics, but especially because of the societal gendered division of roles and tasks. Women have a particular life experience. Sawyer (2000), for instance, regroups experiences, ideas, and values together with interests in one argument for more women in politics. Elaborated versions of this argument underline that the fact that women have specific needs and interests, does not involve that all women share the same needs and interests. It rather implies that needs and interests are not neutral but depend on living conditions, social roles and tasks, and that women often face similar living conditions, roles and tasks. The argument does not necessarily involve that only women can defend women's issues or that women need to defend women's issues. Rather, the

presence of an important number of women in politics increases the chance that their experiences get considered and that the gendered character of interests and needs gets respected, which brings us close to Phillips' (1995) 'politics of presence'.

Secondly, there is what the Anglophone literature calls the justice argument and what is known as the democracy argument in the Francophone literature. The argument is based on the principle of proportionality. Given our contemporary inclusive definition of democracy, it is unfair that women, making up half of the population, are structurally under-represented in spheres of decision-making. This argument in favour of measures to raise the number of women in politics presumes that there are no differences in men's and women's willingness to participate or their participation in politics that are intrinsically related to their sex. Opinions differ on whether the under-representation of women is due to badly functioning democratic institutions or to failing normative foundations of our modern (Western) democracies. In the French speaking literature this latter argument was mainly developed within the plea for parity democracy (Meier 2001). The argument further runs that women would since long participate in politics in greater numbers if no discriminating mechanisms would exist. Their absence in large numbers in politics points at the existence of gendered thresholds making the access to politics more difficult for women than for their male colleagues. In this respect, this argument for more women in politics directly appeals to measures meant to improve women's access to positions of political decision-making since there is no legitimate argument for political assemblies being dominated by men. If the foundations of democracy fail, they need to be corrected in a way or another.<sup>2</sup>

The third argument for an enhanced presence of women in political decision-making flows out of the former two. It runs that once more women will participate in politics this will lead to a qualitative change of politics and policies (Degauquier 1994; Lister 1997; Phillips 1995; Sawyer 2000; Squires 1997; Voet 1998). Processes of political decision-making, and hence public policies, will better reflect the diversity characterising society. This comes close to the argument of substantive representation, without calling it that way (Meier 2001). If public policies better take into account the diverse needs and interests present in society, this would improve the legitimacy of democratic institutions and of the polity. Finally, a better gender balance in politics would also diminish the masculine mode of functioning of politics, making women feel more comfortable and at ease in functions of political decision-making.

A fourth argument is of a more economic nature and underlines the spilling of human resources by excluding women from positions of political decision-making. The argument is connected to the first in that it highlights the gendered character of roles and tasks or the different nature of women, but instead of underlining the need for an adequate representation of all citizens it focuses on the effective use of human resources. Different citizens have different talents and society should take advantage of as many of these talents as possible. The argument was an attempt to frame normative issues of equality in a way that would be more appealing to policy actors. A fifth argument, finally, is a similar attempt to strategically frame the claim for more women in politics. It underlined the need for more women in politics as role models for other women.

The claims for more women in politics and more precisely for gender quotas as a tool to achieve this goal faced a couple of criticisms. A first consisted in turning the argument of equality around, arguing that gender quotas undermine the principle of equality since they favour women (see Bacchi 2006). The argument runs that the current institutions do not discriminate against women and that therefore no specific measures such as gender quotas are

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<sup>2</sup> It should be added that most advocates of parity democracy make a sharp distinction between gender quotas and the principle of parity democracy. The latter stand for full gender equality while the former are argued to contain benchmarking fallacies for women by turning a request for a minimum number of women into the maximum being admitted (Meier 2001) and for reducing the problem to one of numbers (Meier et al. 2005). However, concrete measures on how to achieve parity democracy in elected politics are a type of gender quotas.

required. The latter would but distort the functioning of democratic institutions. Also, gender quotas are a form of positive action, and the legal basis for such measures is largely contested.

A corollary issue is the question to what extent gender quotas go against the principle of free elections and its prerequisites. Gender quotas attain the liberty of political parties, of potential candidates and of the electorate. The argument goes that parties would lose part of their liberty to present the candidates of their choice because they would have to face a further criterion when putting candidates forward, namely that of their sex. Male candidates would also see their liberty to run for elections reduced. Their candidatures would get eliminated for the simple reason that they have the 'wrong' sex. When it comes to the electorate, certain types of gender quotas, such as double tickets, whereby parties present couples of men and women candidates, would imply that voters would have to vote for women.

A third set of counterarguments asks why gender quotas should be adopted for women and not for any other social group, which underlines the idea of a preferential treatment for women. Also, gender quotas would stigmatise women politicians, they would not be capable of getting elected on the grounds of their own merit. Gender quotas would also essentialise them in that they would be reduced to be representatives of women, which would put an uneven burden on their shoulders since men politicians do not face sort like challenges. Similarly, women citizens would become essentialised in that the representation of women citizens would be reduced to them being represented as women. The diversity of women would not be considered, much the same as the intersection between issues of sex and other discriminating grounds such as ethnicity. Also, women citizens might not necessarily want to be represented as women.

Finally, related to the emphasis on a descriptive representation of women because of gender quotas is the problem of accountability. It consists in the impossibility to base representatives' accountability on their membership of a given social group. Enhanced representativeness refers to descriptive representation, which stands for the idea that a political representation should mirror the composition of society. Representation is then based on the social and cultural features of which society is composed. It becomes 'standing for' as Pitkin (1967) calls it. This form of representation, she argues, misses the interpretation of what the activity of representation consists of as well as a legitimizing ground. Representatives are elected for whom they are and not for what they do. However, sharing a set of socio-demographic characteristics is not a sufficient reason to act on behalf of others. Representatives cannot be held accountable for whom they are, only for what they do and this aspect is lacking.

The interesting point about these debates for our argument is their focus on gender relations within politics. While the argument for gender equality in politics was meant to facilitate gender equality in society at large, both the argument for democracy or justice and the counterargument discuss the issue of gender related thresholds in politics. Similarly, the argument on better politics and policies touches upon masculine practices in politics. In all these cases the gender relations within politics were put forward, an issue that seems to have faded away in latter approaches to gender quotas, at least in a more direct form.

In the mid-1990s, following the 1995 UN Platform for Action in Beijing, gender mainstreaming became an important strategy in furthering gender equality. Gender mainstreaming and gender quotas were treated as 'partner strategies', even though they originated in different contexts and were developed by different academic streams (Krook and True 2009). While debates on gender quotas were spreading in many countries with discourses against and in favour of their adoption, the strategy of gender mainstreaming seemed to be an ally in preparing a political and institutional environment more open to women's entry in the political space. Gender quotas would help women to be represented but women politicians would find profoundly sexist institutions and policy practices to 'welcome'

them (Lovenduski 2005). Mainstreaming seemed to offer the key to this dilemma: why not changing the structures and processes of politics themselves from a gender perspective? Mainstreaming included at the beginning the possibility of ‘setting the agenda’ from a gender point of view (Jahan 1995) in order to transform all policy areas, actors, and processes (Rees 1998; Council of Europe 1998). Not only gender advocates but also European institutional actors claimed that mainstreaming complemented targeted actions to increase women’s political representation by pretending to modify those structures in which women are supposed to enter (Booth and Bennet 2002; European Commission 2006; Council of Europe 1998).

Gender mainstreaming appeared as an ally of gender quotas in keeping a broad focus on the problem of unequal gender relations in society and in gendering the political context. Gender quotas, in turn, appeared as an ally of mainstreaming in placing the attention on the need for a specific policy focus (specific actions, funds, and target groups). This could help overcome the weakness of the mainstreaming strategy that consisted precisely in the excessively open and undetermined nature of what the broadly defined ‘incorporation of a gender perspective into mainstream politics’ could mean in practice. Gender quotas could help to give more precision to what the ‘prioritisation of gender objectives’ in the political agenda could actually mean and how gender goals could be implemented. In sum, if mainstreaming could be a sparring partner of gender quotas in broadening the latter’s approach beyond the numbers, gender quotas could be a sparring partner of mainstreaming in specifying aspects related to the implementation of a gender perspective in the mainstream, cautious about the risks of making of gender mainstreaming an empty signifier that could be filled with a multitude of meanings (Council of Europe 1998). Both strategies, taken together, had the potential of improving the quality of gender equality policies. But what do we mean by quality? And to what extent are gender quotas and gender mainstreaming real sparring partners in promoting quality in gender equality policies?

## **2 Gender quotas and mainstreaming quality shifts**

In this paper we are interested in assessing the quality of gender equality policies such as gender quotas in their capacity to promote a transformation of gender roles. Our understanding of quality refers to the adoption of a broader approach to gender equality that takes into account the pervasive character of gender inequality as something that is present in all domains of reality and that intersects with other complex inequalities (see Walby 2009; Lombardo, Meier and Verloo 2009). It also considers the existence of structural obstacles to gender equality, the need to transform power relations between women and men and the empowerment of women (see Verloo 2005; Lombardo and Meier 2006). We refer here to the quality of policy formulation and implementation, as we consider both policy discourses on gender quotas and the effectiveness of gender quotas in increasing the number of women in politics and promoting wider debates on inequality.

To assess the extent to which gender quotas promote a broader approach to gender equality and in that reflect quality gender equality policies, we consider gender quotas in relation to a number of shifts that we have devised elsewhere with respect to gender mainstreaming (Lombardo 2005; Lombardo and Meier 2006). Assessing gender quotas and debates that emerged around them on the basis of these quality criteria will provide us with elements to reflect on whether gender quotas can improve the quality of gender equality. The five quality shifts towards a broader approach to gender equality that we have discussed in relation to mainstreaming are a shift towards a more comprehensive concept of gender equality, the incorporation of a gender perspective intersected with other inequalities in

mainstream politics, equal political representation, organisational changes in policymaking process, mechanisms and actors, and a shift towards transformation by displacement of hierarchies and empowerment of subjects (Lombardo 2005; Lombardo and Meier 2006).

The first is a shift in concepts underlying the policy-making process. Gender mainstreaming implies a shift towards a broader concept of gender equality that explicitly addresses the patriarchal system by tackling the multiple interconnected causes that create an unequal relation between the sexes in fields such as family, work, politics, sexuality, culture and male violence (Walby 1990). Recently Walby (2009) has refined her analysis of the systemic character of inequality by analytically distinguishing between institutional domains such as the economy (paid and unpaid labour), polity (states and EU), violence (gender and ethnic-based) and civil society, and regimes of inequality or sets of unequal social relations that include gender, class, ethnicity, and other inequalities. This 'enables the simultaneous theorisation of several different sets of social relations within each institutional domain', while at the same time not losing the ontological depth of each inequality in the four domains (Walby 2009: 58). Walby's theorisation, as well as other work on intersectionality (Crenshaw 1991; McCall 2005; Hancock 2007), help us to refine our idea of a shift towards a broader concept of gender equality as one that needs to take into account not only a focus on gender but also its intersections with other inequalities. A focus on gender calls for the inclusion of both men and women in the conceptualisation of a given policy problem and in the solutions to it, so that existing male privileges are challenged. A focus on intersectionality includes an articulation of how race, ethnicity, class or other inequalities may interact with gender and generate privileges and exclusions of different subjects. In relation to gender quotas, the question we wish to address is: to what extent did gender quotas broaden the concept of gender equality and its intersections within politics?

A second shift is the incorporation of a gender perspective, intersected with other inequalities, into the mainstream political agenda. There must be evidence that the mainstream political agenda has been reoriented by rethinking and rearticulating policy ends and means from a gender perspective and prioritizing gender equality over competing objectives (Jahan 1995). With respect to gender quotas, this generally calls into question the issue of substantive representation. To what extent did gender quotas place the goal of gender equality and its intersections centre stage and thereby improve the substantive representation of women? However, in this paper we want to focus on how (discussions on) gender quotas moved the question of gender equality centre stage within the political arena itself. To what extent and how did (debates on) gender quotas put the issue of gender equality centre stage, by relating it to central concepts underpinning the state order and by enshrining such principles in the constitution, in laws, etc?

A third shift recommends an equal political representation of women and men as a way to ensure that women will, at least numerically, be part of the mainstream. This shift most directly appeals to gender quotas in that the latter are seen as a tool to raise the numbers of women in politics and to achieve a gender balance. The shift directly challenges the unequal gender distribution of resources but does not necessarily go beyond a putting into question of other issues than the numerical imbalance and threaten men's political hierarchy. Such a power shift, would not only rely on an increase in numbers of women but also on the challenging of the existing male norm upon which criteria for the attribution of values are based and political priorities are set. This will be dealt with in the fourth shift. The third shift concerns specifically the descriptive representation of women: did gender quotas increase the number of women? This question is important in that gender quotas might tackle the input side of electoral policies, focusing on the number of women candidates, without necessarily changing anything at the output side, with respect to the proportion of women elected. In that case gender quotas would be mere cosmetic operations. Connected to the first shift is also the

question to what extent gender quotas did pay attention to intersections of gender with other inequalities in the increase of these numbers?

A fourth shift to incorporate a gender perspective into policymaking concerns the institutional and organizational cultures of political decision-making, and requires changes in the policy process, mechanisms and actors. This includes the acquisition of the necessary gender expertise, knowledge of the mechanism causing and reproducing gender inequality and of the means to solve it. This shift directly appeals to efforts going beyond the numbers and does so in two respects. Gender quotas tend to focus on the numbers and thereby neither tackle the causes of women's under-representation in politics (why they do not go into politics to the same extent as men) nor the consequences of the rules and practices of the political arena for women politicians once they get there (due to masculine rules and practices). The fourth shift tackles both such causes and consequences. Firstly, in order to go beyond the numbers gender quotas need to be articulated so as to tackle the weaknesses of electoral systems in stimulating practices to put forward women candidates and to getting them elected. This requires knowledge of the mechanisms within electoral systems causing and reproducing gender inequality and of their re-articulation so as to overcome them. The fourth shift can address these. Secondly, the fourth shift incites to go beyond the numbers by looking into policy processes and mechanisms inherent to the political arena and what they mean for women politicians as compared to men politicians. Did gender quotas also lead to an adjustment of structures, procedures, and tools within the political arena allowing for rules and practices that are necessarily advantageous for men?

A fifth shift towards a broader approach to gender equality requires from gender mainstreaming to be transformative by continuously displacing existing hierarchies and promoting diversity (Squires 2005) and empowering subjects through the creation of spaces where gender concepts and strategies can be continuously contested (Verloo 2005). The fifth shift involves a greater participation of civil society, which is related to the feminist demand of creating 'velvet triangles' of empowerment to link the formal with the informal aspect of political action (Lycklama à Nijeholt et al. 1998; Woodward 2004). To what extent did gender quotas lead to the creation of spaces for gender contestations and women's empowerment, and to the creation of 'velvet triangles' within the political arena?

We claim that meeting these five qualitative shifts would make gender quotas more transformative of gender inequalities that persist in politics, rather than only be a means to increase women's numbers. In this sense our normative aim is to give the discussion on gender quotas a broader scope that would include issues beyond the numerical argument. This would, in our view, bring the two strategies of gender mainstreaming and gender quotas together, rather than leaving them run parallel and separate, when not framed in opposition and tension with one another (Stratigaki 2005; Krook and True 2009).

### **3 Gender quotas: meeting quality shifts?**

To explore the extent to which gender quotas meet the aforementioned quality shifts, we will draw on the literature on gender quotas and gender inequality in politics and on examples from a number of case studies using both secondary sources from the literature on gender quotas and primary sources from a European research on policy frames on gender inequality in politics<sup>3</sup>.

*Shift 1 To what extent did gender quotas broaden the concept of gender equality and its intersections?*

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<sup>3</sup> See [www.mageeq.net](http://www.mageeq.net).

When gender quotas are considered from a broader perspective, beyond their capacity to ensure descriptive representation, there are concerns that they could be used as ‘a symbol of democratisation without actually improving the substantive representation of women or securing greater gender equality’ (Squires 2007: 57). The accusation is that gender quotas, due to their limited focus on increasing the number of women and not on achieving gender equality more generally, might be effective in including more women into existing institutional structures but not in producing ‘wider social transformation’ and attention to ‘broader gender equality issues’ (Squires 2007: 57). On this point there can be different perspectives. Dahlerup (2006, 2008) highlights the importance of considering gender quotas as a positive achievement per se, both considering the current global trend towards the adoption of such measures and the impact they have on women’s representation. In this view, expectations about gender quotas as a problem-solver for all inequalities in politics are ill-founded, since gender quotas should more realistically be treated as a necessary but not sufficient condition to bring about broader policy change on gender equality (Dahlerup 2008). Another perspective – exemplified by Sacchet (2008) – reflects on the broader impact of gender quotas ‘beyond numbers’ that policy debates can activate. In the case of Brazil, gender quotas acted as catalysts of women’s collective mobilisation and alliances and provoked contestations which let out issues of inequality in the distribution and use of gender power that might have broader consequences in the medium and long-term (Sacchet 2008).

The framing of policy debates on gender quotas can help to place gender quotas within a broader understanding of gender equality and other inequalities, or vice versa limit or even ‘twist’ the scope of the debate. Research on the EU and six of its member states (Austria, The Netherlands, Hungary, Slovenia, Greece and Spain) revealed that policy discourses on gender quotas (still) tend to focus predominantly on the quantitative representation of women, that is on the problem of women’s numerical under-representation and on how to increase women’s numbers (Lombardo et al. 2007; Meier et al. 2005). They centre on positions against or in favour of gender quotas, and tend to obscure minor frames that articulate broader questions of gender inequality such as male domination in politics, a traditional gender division of labour, patriarchal structures that oppose barriers to women’s representation, all in need for change. By not directly calling upon men’s involvement in the process of transformation and leaving most of the burden of change on women’s shoulders, policy discourses on gender inequality in politics, particularly in the cases of the EU, the Netherlands, and Spain, may offer little challenge to male political power (Meier and Lombardo 2008; Lombardo and Meier forthcoming).

However, it should be noted that adopting gender quotas led in many cases to a broadening of the concept of gender equality, moving from a formal interpretation of equality before the law to an understanding being more oriented to equal opportunities or even to equal outcome (Meier 1998). In the first case, gender quotas target recruitment and selection procedures and make sure that women get equal chances at the start, to be able to run for elections. In the second case, gender quotas go a step further and try to assure that a certain proportion of women gets elected. Such gender quotas can take the form of reserved seats, but they can also operate at the level of the selection of candidates, by ensuring women candidates get positioned on safe seats, seats that are likely to get elected. To frame the discussion within an even broader understanding of gender equality – Bacchi (2006: 34) argues – debates on gender quotas need to challenge the representation of positive actions as ‘special help’ or ‘preferential treatment’, which pictures social rules as fair, and discrimination as incidental or even dependent on discriminated people who lack certain merits, and rather place the focus on existing privileges and norms of dominant subjects. A framing of the issue that problematises the existing privileges of men in politics rather than

the disadvantage of women and the need for 'special' or 'preferential' measures can help overcome a representation of women as problem holders or paradoxically favoured subjects (and men as unjustly discriminated by gender quotas). In this alternative framing, gender quotas are understood as 'attempts to do justice' and 'redress entrenched privilege' (Bacchi 2006: 35). This understanding would place gender quotas within a broader gender equality and intersectional perspective as not only it potentially challenges male privileges, but it also scrutinizes the extent to which gender quotas promote the increased representation of elite women, in terms of class and ethnicity, and leave aside more excluded women.

To broaden the concept of gender equality and its intersections, feminist politics needs to consider how intersecting class, gender and race and ethnicity inequalities affect the 'politics of recognition' promoted by gender quotas. According to Rai (2008), recognition cannot be disentangled from Fraser's 'politics of redistribution' (Fraser 1995), which is why gender quotas need to be part of a broader strategy that also includes a redistribution of socio-economic resources. The development of gender quotas in three South Asian countries (Bangladesh, Pakistan and India) highlights the importance of specific context analyses for assessing the impact of gender quotas for gender equality (Rai 2008). Gender quotas need to be understood in context, being part of a complex picture where a multiplicity of political and socio-economic factors play a role in the promotion of women's effective empowerment. Thus, a broader approach to equality also invokes a deepening of attention on differences among women that emerge in specific contexts. We will further tackle this issue when discussing the second shift.

In sum, gender quotas did generate a shift from formal equality to a broader understanding of equal opportunities or equality of outcome, but they did not per se generate a shift towards a broader approach to gender and intersectionality. Yet, debates arising around gender quotas have a potential to activate wider discussions about issues of inequality and privileges, thus moving the discussion further. The framing of policy debates and the response of different policy actors to gender quotas debates within different contexts appears crucial to promote this broader conceptualisation.

### *Shift 2 To what extent did gender quotas place the goal of gender equality and its intersections centre stage?*

This shift on the extent to which gender and its intersections were placed centre stage tends to call into question the issue of substantive representation. This refers to the expectation that women in politics will represent women's interests as if there was a sort of shared gender awareness and common goals among women politicians (Galligan and Tremblay 2005). On this issue, there are some discussions, as that of Tremblay (2000: 341), who points out that it is 'feminist consciousness' rather than biological sex that affects female politicians' capacity to represent women. Others, as Phillips (1995), warn us that the notion of women representing (interests, needs of) women runs into danger of essentialism, and as Celis (2005), suggest to question the notion of women's interests, addressing the relevance of empirical research that respects the undefined character of women's interests.

While these concerns help us scholars to be reflexive about our own assumptions about a common gender awareness among women politicians, empirical studies that explore descriptive and substantive representation in the UK, Sweden, and other countries have provided evidence that the presence of women representatives makes a difference in politics in terms of both political priorities and outcomes, with a greater support for social policy issues and the placing of gender equality issues on the agenda (Norris 1996; Mateo Diaz 2005; Lovenduski 2005; Childs 2004; Wängnerud 2005, 2000; Celis 2005). Walby (2009) confirms these findings and refines the argument by showing that a higher presence of women

in politics is correlated with a 'public gender regime' with higher rates of employed women and welfare provided by the state, rather than with a 'domestic gender regime' with lower rates of employed women and in which welfare services are mainly provided by the unpaid labour of women. The increase in women's representation – greatly dependent on the presence of employed women – in turn has an impact on the adoption of equality policy measures particularly in the area of employment. Dahlerup (2006: 304) also corroborates the argument that 'equality issues are predominantly placed on the political agenda by women politicians'.

With respect to putting gender equality centre stage within the political arena itself, by relating discussions on gender quotas to central concepts underpinning the state order, the adoption of a number of gender quotas led to important preliminary debates on the concept of citizenship, representation, democracy and equality. The most known case is probably the French parity debate, putting into question the universal character of French citizenship, in order to replace it by the principle of parity as has been discussed in the first section (Fraisie 1989; Gaspard et al. 1992; Halimi 1997; Lépinard 2007; Scott 2005). These debates led to a constitutional amendment enshrining the principle of gender equality – reaching further than the former principle of non discrimination – so as to create a legal basis for adopting statutory gender quotas. However, such far going debates did not take place everywhere. The abovementioned research that analysed policy frames in gender inequality policy documents in Europe has revealed that discourses on this issue are gendered in the sense that the unequal roles of women and men in politics are made visible (Lombardo et al. 2007). However, texts tend to discuss sex, that is the physical presence of women in politics opposed to men, rather than gender, that is the socially constructed relation between women and men (that would imply a call for change in men's roles, too). Also, the adoption of gender quotas did not by definition lead to an explicit recognition of gender equality in constitutions or basic laws. In many cases gender quotas were simply added to legislation regulating the organisation of elections, as was for instance the case with the first Belgian gender quotas act from 1994. However, the subsequent 2002 gender quotas acts led to an amendment to the constitution, adding a parity clause. In this sense, gender quotas tend to put the concept of gender equality centre stage, within the political arena, but eventually allowing for more far-reaching initiatives on gender equality once such principles are constitutionally embedded.

From the perspective of the symbolic representation of women, gender quotas could indirectly promote an image of equality by presenting women politicians as role models for other women and by normalising the work of women as legitimate policy actors in the political arena rather than 'space invaders' of an area – that of politics – that has not been thought for them (Puwar 2004). It is unpredictable what long-term impact might have the presence of women in politics for promoting an image of equal sharing of power in people's imagination, and whether gender quotas will be used as a 'symbol of democratisation' but not promote power sharing between women and men. This issue would need to be explored empirically.

However, intersections of gender with other social inequalities such as ethnicity or class tend to be absent in policy documents on gender inequality in politics. Gender quotas do not tend to place intersectionality centre stage. This has primarily to do with the initial focus on the under-representation of women in politics and gender quotas as a tool requiring for the labelling of candidates by their sex. In the French parity debate, however, it also flows from the re-articulation of the universal citizen into one with both a male and a female face, based on the argument that men and women constitute the basic components of humanity. For the advocates of parity democracy this involves that other inequalities are taken into account, since they cut across the category of sex, but this leaves us far from an elaborated argument for intersectionality. It might even involve that a focus on other inequalities than those based

on sex get dropped altogether, leading to the criticism that the advocates of parity democracy reproduce the universal concept of citizenship they want to change (by turning the universal asexual citizen into a universal man and a universal woman). Nonetheless, the rethinking of the concept of citizenship might create openings for putting the concept of equality more centre stage because of the focus on the myth of universality. It might help to not only question the men women divide, but also broader issues such as the growingly multicultural character of many societies and what this trend involves for citizenship and the political rights attached to this status (such as the intrinsic link, in many cases, between political rights and nationality rather than place of residence and tax requirements). As Squires (2007) argues 'given the growing concerns about both intersectionality and multiple inequality strands, it may be time now for advocates of quota strategies to start thinking about whether, and how, these mechanisms might be reformulated to make them more sensitive to complex diversity, rather than simply sex difference' (Squires 2007: 110).

If we accept the argument that there is empirical evidence that more women in politics make a difference, and that policy documents on the issue are gendered in the sense of making women and men's roles visible, then we could also agree on the fact that gender quotas can contribute indirectly to place the goal of gender equality more centre stage. Another issue is to what extent gender quotas led to a revision of existing principles of equality or concepts such as citizenship and representation. There is little empirical evidence so far, but in many cases gender quotas seem to simply add rules to the processes of recruiting and selecting candidates. Neither do they contribute to diffuse an intersectional perspective, though again, these are questions that need to be answered empirically. It seems nonetheless that these issues are of importance if gender quotas want to put gender equality centre stage.

*Shift 3 Did gender quotas increase the number of women? And did they pay attention to intersections of gender with other inequalities in the increase of these numbers?*

This shift concerns specifically the descriptive representation of women: how effective have gender quotas been in increasing the number of women in politics? As Dahlerup (2006) makes clear in her collective study on gender quotas, 'the mere introduction of quotas has not resulted in uniform increases in the numbers of women parliamentarians worldwide' (Dahlerup 2006: 18). Other studies (see for instance Krook 2009; Marques-Pereira and Nolasco 2000) similarly report mixed results. Yet, electoral gender quotas have a 'potential to increase women's representation rapidly as the new high rankings of South Africa, Mozambique and Costa Rica bare out'<sup>4</sup> (Dahlerup 2006: 19). Another frequently cited example is the Argentinean 'ley de cupos', imposing that candidate lists contain at least one third of women, which translates into a Senate with one third of women Senators (Jones 1998). In the case of most gender quotas, with the exception of reserved seats, the proportion of women elected does not equal the proportion of women candidates.

The Argentinean example underlines the prerequisites for gender quotas to be more than cosmetic operations and to trigger off an increase in the proportion of women elected. A mayor prerequisite is the extent to which gender quotas do not only put forward women candidates but also interact with electoral systems. Gender quotas seem to have most of an effect when they are implemented in PR list systems using closed lists and placing women in eligible positions (Jones 1998; Jones and Navia 1999) with the help of placement mandates (Htun and Jones 2002; Jones 2004). High district or party magnitude is considered to be another critical success factor (Htun and Jones 2002). However, findings on this point are mixed. Schmidt and Saunders (2004) found for instance that greatest gains in the Peruvian

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<sup>4</sup> For instance, Costa Rica moved from 19 to 35 percent women in parliament in the first elections after the introduction of statutory gender quotas (Dahlerup 2006).

local elections were found in districts with a low magnitude. Of importance, rather, is the relative magnitude of the largest party. This is due to the specificities of the electoral system, awarding the winning parties half plus one seat. In combination with gender quotas and the fact that electoral lists are closed, the winning party tends to count at least one woman amongst its elected candidates. These women were placed in winnable positions even though the gender quotas legislation required no placement mandates. The Argentinean Senate also illustrates that PR list systems are no necessary condition for gender quotas to have an impact. Indeed, a determining factor is the extent to which gender quotas are tailored to the features of the electoral system (Tremblay 2008). In the Argentinean case, each constituency consists of three seats, two of which go to the winning party. Since parties have to rank a woman candidate on at least the second list position, winning parties send one man and one woman to the Senate (Meier 2004). In the end, successful gender quotas could be designed for (nearly) all types of electoral systems. Even in simple plurality systems, such as the British First Past The Post, seats could be twinned or double tickets could be introduced. Nonetheless, it remains valid that gender quotas are more easily added to some electoral systems rather than others. For instance, the majority systems of an Alternative Vote or of a Second Ballot do not facilitate the implementation of gender quotas. The main point, however, still is that gender quotas, in order to be successful need to take advantage of the possibilities an electoral system offers in order to get women candidates elected.

A second mayor prerequisite for gender quotas to be more than cosmetic operations and to trigger off an increase in the proportion of women elected is the extent to which they force parties to put women in eligible positions. Even statutory gender quotas do not necessarily guarantee a result, as is well illustrated by the French case. At the occasion of the first elections after the adoption of the gender quotas, the share of women elected to the National Assembly rose from 11% to 12%. The underlying reason is that parties could get around the gender quotas requirements by accepting a financial penalty. Parties would lose a minor share of their first slice of state subsidies by not respecting the gender quotas. Since the bulk of state subsidy depends on the electoral results booked, major parties were inclined to lose part of their first slice by hoping to win the elections with men incumbents figuring prominently on the lists. Winning seats would make up for the loss on the first slice of state subsidies. In the Argentinean case, on the contrary, parties could simply not get around the gender quotas stipulations. Rather than good faith compliance (Htun and Jones 2002), it is the compulsory nature of gender quotas that allow for such measures to have an impact on the proportion of women elected.

Concerning the issue of whether gender quotas paid attention to intersections of gender with other inequalities, gender quotas have been accused of not taking into account differences among women in their implementation, with the result of reproducing dynamics of domination and exclusion in women who are elected through such measures (see Rai 2008). However, in the Belgian case, for instance, gender quotas not only tend to bring more women into parliament, but on average these women are also younger than their male colleagues. The required focus on sex diversity in selection processes also made parties broaden their scope to age, ceasing the opportunity of bringing women in to focus on younger candidates. Similarly, parties broadened their scope to candidates of foreign origin. The latter criterion also spilled over into the selection of men candidates, but on the whole there is no thorough putting into question of the ideal of the white middle class candidate (Meier et al. 2006).

In conclusions, we can argue that gender quotas did in some but not all cases increase the descriptive representation of women, and that they did not pay much attention to intersections of gender with other inequalities in the increase of these numbers.

*Shift 4 Did gender quotas also lead to an adjustment of structures, procedures, and tools?*

Feminist literature on gender inequality in politics has discussed the obstacles to women's equal political representation that have to do with structural factors such as the nature of electoral systems (Leyenaar 2004) and political parties (Lovenduski and Norris 1995), and the 'deeply embedded culture of masculinity' of institutional structures (Lovenduski 2005: 48). Both the introduction of gender quotas and the debates around them have placed an emphasis on structural transformation such as the need to change electoral rules, for instance to introduce proportional electoral systems, to increase party magnitude or to modify the composition of candidate lists so that women candidates occupy more (gender quotas) and better (combined with placement mandates) positions on electoral lists. This has contributed to shift the discussion from a 'supply-oriented approach' (why do women (not) run for office?) to a 'demand-oriented approach' (why do parties (not) recruit women?), thus opening the room for questioning and reforming political structures and procedures to enable women's entry in political institutions (Lombardo et al 2007). So, to some extent gender quotas have led to an adjustment of structures and procedures, but they did not necessarily do so profoundly. For instance, the 2002 Belgian gender quotas acts imposed 50 per cent of women and men candidates to all electoral lists and a placement mandate for the two top positions of each list. However, the candidate heading the list is entitled to spend more money during the electoral campaign than the other candidates on the lists and gets specific financial support by the party to that end. While the placement mandate opens one of the two top positions to women, the regulations on campaign spending still create a difference between the top and the second position on the list. In order to change structures and procedures, such specific rules of the electoral system need to be tackled, too, when adopting gender quotas.

Also, the analysis of policy frames on gender inequality in politics in official policy documents in the EU, the Netherlands and Spain has revealed a limited capacity to challenge the deeply engrained sexism of existing institutional cultures (Meier et al 2005; Lombardo 2008; Lombardo and Meier forthcoming). Since the main framing of the problem of gender inequality in politics has to do with women's quantitative representation, frames that tackle some of the structural causes of the problem, such as the traditional gendered division of labour or the existence of patriarchal relations in all domains, tend to remain more in the shade. This limits the possibility of challenging existing gender bias present in political structures and procedures that are based on 'unspoken assumptions about a traditional gendered division of labour' and show hostility when women enter the 'male institutional territory' (Lovenduski 2005: 146-47). Other data confirm these findings, even in cases where gender quotas have been implemented. Again, in the Belgian case, years after gender quotas have been adopted, men politicians (still) do not see a problem in women's under-representation in politics. They see no discrimination and think that it is a matter of difference in individual choice between men and women. According to women politicians, the causes of women's under-representation are to a large extent to be found at a more structural level. This difference between men and women reflects a different attitude towards the consideration of gendered thresholds and dynamics in the processes of recruitment and selection (Meier 2008). Not tackling the broader structures and processes might lead to a backlash once gender quotas get dropped. In the Danish case, political parties recently abolished gender quotas for the regional elections and the proportion of women elected dropped in the subsequent elections. As long as gender quotas do not go hand in hand with changing the gender biases to be found in recruitment and selection structures and processes, they will not have a lasting effect.

In sum, we can conclude that debates on and the adoption of gender quotas put structures and processes into question, but that this exercise is often superficial. As long as recruitment and selection procedures as well as the functioning of political institutions are not

profoundly put into question from a gender perspective, there is little chance that gender quotas will have a lasting effect.

*Shift 5 To what extent did gender quotas lead to the creation of spaces for gender contestations and women's empowerment, and to the creation of 'velvet triangles'?*

There is some evidence that gender quotas led to the opening of spaces of contestation and the creation of alliances and empowering triangles. One is the case of Brazil that we mentioned before (Sacchet 2008), where debates on gender quotas were an occasion for contesting the inequality of political power and for nesting women's alliances. Another one is the French case where the debates on parity democracy led to a broad mobilisation of and alliances among women (Lépinard 2007). In policy documents on gender inequality in politics in the EU and six of its member states, discourses on the importance to create 'velvet triangles' between state feminists, party women and feminist activists are present in the frames voiced especially by gender experts and civil society actors. Such discourses address the role of women's policy agencies, politicians and their cooperation with civil society and the women's movement (Lombardo et al. 2005). The main ideas of these discourses relate to gender machinery and to cooperation with civil society. With respect to the former, they include ideas on the importance of establishing women's institutional bodies (ministries, councils, advisory boards, committees, equal opportunities offices) or of increasing the power and competencies of existing gender equality agencies. This discourse is more frequent in countries such as Hungary and Austria, though it is also present in Spain and Slovenia or at the level of the EU (Lombardo et al 2005). With respect to gender equality agencies, the discourse centres on the need of a stronger cooperation between public administrations and civil society organisations, and in particular it focuses on the strengthening of the women's movement and women in decision-making networks, with the aim of creating triangles of empowerment between women situated in both formal and informal politics. Despite their relevance, these discourses, as well as the actors voicing them, are quite rarely mentioned in official policy documents on gender inequality in politics. Yet, they are evidence that broader discussions on strategic political alliances among women take place in the political arena, and, if reinforced, they could promote more transformative gender equality policies as concerns the redistribution of gender roles and the challenging of privileges due to gender and its intersection with other inequalities.

Gender quotas have also indirectly involved gender researchers, for instance through funding from the European Union, to collect comparative data and monitor progress on the number of women in politics or to study gendered thresholds in politics (e.g. the Expert Network on 'Women in Decision-Making' or the 'European database on women in decision-making'). However, gender quotas have not been a priority issue for autonomous feminist movements in Western European countries. Moreover, the analysis of policy documents in the aforementioned in European, Spanish, and Dutch cases showed a limited inclusion of the voice of feminist activists and gender experts in official policy texts on gender inequality in politics. The consequences of this limited inclusion are connected to the infrequent appearance of frames that discuss some of the structural causes of the problem of gender inequality in politics, as feminist activists and experts are the actors who articulate frames that adopt a broader approach to the problem (Meier et al. 2005; Lombardo and Meier 2008)

## **Conclusions: sparring partners in a broader approach to gender equality in politics**

In this paper we have applied to gender quotas five quality shifts, previously devised for gender mainstreaming, that we think could move the debate on gender quotas towards a broader approach to gender equality in politics. These are a shift towards a more comprehensive concept of gender equality (shift 1), the incorporation of a gender perspective intersected with other inequalities in mainstream politics (shift 2), equal political representation (shift 3), organisational changes in processes and mechanisms of selection and recruitment as well as the functioning of politics (shift 4), and a shift towards transformation by displacement of hierarchies and empowerment of subjects (shift 5).

The analysis of gender quotas in relation to these quality criteria shows that quotas, under certain conditions, can be a good practice of gender mainstreaming, but it also shows some of their potential limitations. Gender quotas per se do not necessarily generate a shift towards a broader approach to gender and intersectionality (shift 1), but debates arising around quotas can generate wider discussions about inequality. Two conditions for fostering a broader conceptualisation of gender and intersectionality seem to be a framing of policy debates that places the emphasis on the challenging of gender, class, ethnicity or other privileges, and the specific response of movement and state policy actors to gender quotas debates in the different contexts in which gender quotas enter the agenda. These two call for a shift in the conceptualisation of gender quotas that places the emphasis on questioning existing privileges (related to gender and other inequalities) and a shift in the perception of gender quotas by women and men. Empirical evidence about the difference that more women in politics make and the fact that policy documents on the issue give visibility to women's and men's roles, support the idea that gender quotas can contribute indirectly to place the goal of gender equality more centre stage (shift 2). Within the political arena, gender quotas did not necessarily put the concept of gender equality centre stage by relating it to concepts as citizenship, democracy and representation, a condition for the second shift to take place and for gender quotas to be transformative. As concerns shift 3, gender quotas had some impact on increasing the number of women, but not necessarily on placing them in higher positions or on consolidating their positions. Also, they did not focus on intersectionality, though this is a limitation of mainstreaming too. Thus, the condition to favour this shift would be to ensure that gender quotas are outcome oriented and allow for considering diversity beyond sex in institutions of political decision-making.

Quotas have led to some adjustment of structures and procedures (shift 4) as they required the reorganisation and change of institutions and electoral rules. But they did not necessarily do so in detail or seem to have impacted much on changing existing sexist cultures. Therefore, organisational change would need to be linked with a more general debate about gender inequality and privileges in political institutions. This would require an analysis of gender biases in recruitment and selection processes, as well as in the functioning of the political arena. Regarding shift 5, as we found some evidence that gender quotas led to the opening of spaces of contestation and the creation of alliances and empowering triangles, gender quotas have to some extent involved feminist activists and experts through the creation of networks, but the voice of feminist activists and gender experts in official policy texts on gender inequality in politics is still limited. The role of velvet triangles of cooperation between women as state feminists, politicians, and activists is still limited and could be strengthened to increase the possibility of more transformative frames (in terms of gender roles). Channels for consultation and participation of feminist activists and gender experts would need to be created or reinforced for increasing the possibility for non institutional actors to make their voices heard.

This analysis provides us with insights to identify a number of minimum conditions under which gender quotas are a best practice of gender mainstreaming and not merely two parallel and independent strategies to promote gender equality. A preliminary condition is that the two strategies are not used against each others but rather built as complementary. While gender advocates defended gender mainstreaming and positive actions as a 'dual strategy' (Council of Europe 1998) to achieve gender equality, opponents of positive actions tried to seize the opportunity of gender mainstreaming to get rid of gender quotas. In the European Union, mainstreaming was in some occasions used against positive actions to dismantle the gender equality infrastructures and cut specific funds (Stratigaki 2005). For instance at the end of the 1990s and the beginning of 2000, the existence of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality of the European Parliament was under attack with the argument that since gender equality was now in mainstream policymaking there would be no further need for gender expert bodies. To promote the synergy between gender mainstreaming and gender quotas, so that they jointly improve the quality of gender equality policies, the prerequisite is that they are complementary. Other important conditions identified in our analysis are a shift to a perception of institutions and structures, such as the concepts of citizenship, of democracy and representation or the electoral system; a shift in gendered thresholds in recruitment and selection procedures as well as in the functioning of the political arena with a deeper questioning of the (gender, race, sexual orientation) biases existing in institutional cultures; a shift in the conceptualisation of gender quotas that places the emphasis on questioning existing privileges and that is outcome oriented.

The quality criteria have enabled us to assess not only the extent to which gender quotas can be a tool transforming gender relations in politics, but also investigating how gender quotas relate to gender mainstreaming. As concerns the latter, we find that synergy between these two key strategies for gender equality needs to be reinforced by establishing a stronger and more clear link between them, based on a shared goal of establishing gender equal relations and challenging inequalities and privileges in the sphere of politics. This will help to oppose dynamics of cooptation, lack of implementation and opposition to gender equality that are continuously emerging in different policy arenas, as it is currently the case in the EU, where the antidiscrimination approach is being used against both gender mainstreaming and gender quotas (Stratigaki 2008). More generally, we argue that the sparring partnership of gender mainstreaming and gender quotas, united by the mid-term goal of improving the quality of gender equality policies and the long-term goal of improving gender relations in politics, can contribute to the development and application of a broader approach to gender inequality in politics.

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