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Women are more likely than men to blame structural factors for women's political under-representation: evidence from 27 countries

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Abstract

Over time, gender and politics research has made progress in identifying those factors that result in low numbers of women in political institutions and in making evidence-informed suggestions about how to ameliorate them. These factors include discrimination in party recruitment processes, male-dominated political culture, and broader gender inequalities in society. In contrast, we know little of public opinion regarding these drivers of women's political under-representation, especially whether to who or what women assign blame for the under-representation of women in politics differs from men. In this paper we provide the first discussion and analysis of blame assignment for women's numeric under-representation in politics. In doing so, we outline and operationalise a framework that distinguishes between meritocratic explanations of women's under-representation, whereby the blame for women not holding political office in greater numbers is assigned to women themselves, and structural explanations, whereby social forces external to women are seen to result in their numeric under-representation. We use cross-national data from 27 European countries to show that women are significantly more likely than men to assign blame for women's numeric under-representation to structural factors. Further, we exploit the hierarchical nature of our dataset using multilevel models and find significant differences in levels of structural blame assignment between countries as well as between-country variation in the probability of women assigning blame to structural explanations for women's under-representation. Finally, we disaggregate the category of structural explanations to assess their relative prominence and provide strong corroborative evidence that women predominantly assign blame for women's under-representation to political culture over other structural blame factors. We conclude by discussing the implications of our findings for policymakers contemplating the pursuit of gender equality policies aimed at increasing women's political representation and make suggestions for the direction of future research in this area.

The numeric under-representation of women in politics across the world has long concerned scholars.[1] Over time, research has made progress in identifying those factors that result in low numbers of women in political institutions and in making evidence-informed suggestions about how to ameliorate them.[2] In contrast, we know little of broader attitudes regarding the causes of women's political under-representation, especially whether who or what women blame for the under-representation of women in politics differs from men.[3] In other fields, patterns of blame assignment for social outcomes have been shown to relate closely to opinions regarding the desirability and nature of any kind of intervention designed to alter those outcomes.[4] As such, they have consequences for the incentives offered to political

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[1] For recent reviews see Lovenduski (2005) and Paxton, Kunovich, and Hughes (2007).

[2] In diagnosing the causes there have been studies of women's political ambition (Lawless and Fox 2005; 2010), candidate selection processes (Norris and Lovenduski 1995), political institutions (Curtin 2014), political parties (Sanbonmatsu 2002; Childs and Webb 2012) and voters (Dolan 2014). In terms of solutions, further studies of political parties and gender quotas have dominated the literature (Krook 2009; Dahlerup 2013; Kenny 2013; O'Brien 2015), as well as considerations of the role of societal women's movements (Paxton, Hughes, and Green 2006; Hughes, Krook, and Paxton 2015).

[3] There are some exceptions, such as Mari Teigen and Lena Wängnerud's study of how elites consider the question of women's under-representation in Norway and Sweden (2009). As far as we are aware, however, no study to date focuses exclusively on the domain of politics when exploring blame assignment for women's under-representation.

[4] This has been discussed extensively in the welfare policy literature. Alesina and La Ferrara (2005) find that individuals who believe in a meritocratic society are averse to policies increasing wealth redistribution For further examples of findings that similarly link a belief in meritocracy and the notion of putting in effort to get one's 'just deserts' with support for

actors when choosing whether to seek reform in a policy area and the likelihood of gender equality measures being pursued by actors will likely be at least partly reliant on dominant understandings of the causes of women's persistent numeric under-representation in politics.

In this paper we provide the first systematic discussion and analysis of blame assignment for the specific problem of women's numeric under-representation in politics. In doing so, we outline and operationalise a framework that distinguishes between meritocratic explanations of women's under-representation, whereby the blame for women not holding political office in greater numbers is assigned to women themselves, and structural explanations, whereby social forces external to women themselves are seen to drive their numeric under-representation.

We address three research questions: first, to what extent are women significantly more likely than men to endorse either structural or meritocratic explanations for women's under-representation? Second, do sex differences persist even after taking account of cross-national differences in political context, elite cues, and women's economic and political status? Third, is there between-country variation in the extent to which women assign blame to structural explanations for women's political under-representation?[5]

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generally less interventionist or redistributive economic policies see Gilens (1999), Fong (2001), McNamee and Miller (2004), Bénabou and Tirole (2006), Likki and Staerklé (2015), and Coté et al. (2015).

[5]Morgan and Buice (2013), in their study of attitudes towards women as political leaders in Latin American countries, find that contextual variation in elite cues and women's economic status had clear effects on how women's political ability was perceived by both men and women themselves.

Our analysis focuses on countries within the European Union (EU) using Eurobarometer data from 27 EU states. Addressing our first research question, we find that women are significantly more likely than men to blame structural factors for women's numeric under-representation. Turning to our two further research questions, we exploit the hierarchical nature of the Eurobarometer dataset and find significant differences in levels of structural blame assignment between countries as well as between-country variation in the probability of women assigning blame to structural explanations for women's under-representation. This established, we then disaggregate the category of structural explanations and provide strong corroborative evidence that women predominantly assign blame for women's under-representation to political culture over other structural explanations. Yet, statistically speaking, we find women are not significantly more likely to assign blame to political culture than to either political parties or society in general. We conclude by discussing the implications of our findings and make suggestions for the direction of future research in this area.

Scholarly explanations of women's numeric under-representation in politics

The growth of feminist political science brought about a proliferation of research into the question of women's numeric under-representation in politics (Paxton et al. 2007; Campbell and Childs eds. 2014). Over time, this research moved from describing how few women were in institutions to asking why this was the case, focusing on recruitment by political parties and the issue of whether women are generally less politically ambitious than men (Norris and Lovenduski 1995; Sanbonmatsu 2002; Lawless and Fox 2010). The core of many of these accounts is the model of supply and demand, expressing the idea that women's numeric under-representation might be either the result of low demand for women on the part of

political parties and institutions, or of a weakened supply of women putting themselves forward for political office (Norris and Lovenduski 1995). This distinction resembles one made in the social psychology literature when seeking to understand public opinion regarding social outcomes like occupational status and wider labour market success (Olson and Hafer 2001; Cech and Blair-Loy 2010). This literature distinguishes between meritocratic explanations for unequal social outcomes, which assume 'that those with the requisite training, experience, and personal motivation will succeed in a meritocratic society, while those who fall behind have only themselves to blame', and structural explanations which see social inequality as the 'result of structural factors such as discrimination, stereotyping, and exclusion from social networks' (Cech and Blair-Loy 2010, p.371; also see Alesina and La Ferrara 2005; Bénabou and Tirole 2006).[6] Here, we adapt this framework for use in the study of the numeric under-representation of women in politics, classifying six of the broad explanations put forward in the existing academic literature as either meritocratic or structural in nature (see Table 1 for summary).[7]

Meritocratic explanations for women's numeric under-representation

[6] It is also possible to see these varying explanations as rooted in different varieties of feminist thought. For example, we can see similarities to the differences that Teigen and Wängnerud (2009, p.29) highlight between 'radical' versus 'liberal' feminist explanations for women's under-representation, the former which emphasise the role of structural barriers facing women and the latter which focus on the individual choices of women themselves.

[7] Of course, social scientific evidence has shown the meritocratic arguments presented here are, at root, also often the result of structural barriers that prevent women from participating in politics at the same rate as men. However, our aim here is instead to understand exactly who *does* offer support for these explanations rather than to interrogate their accuracy.

The most notable meritocratic explanation for women's under-representation in politics is the belief that the low number of women in politics is a consequence of the choices of women themselves. On this view, women are simply not that interested in running, or in politics as a whole, are too lazy to put themselves forward, are unable to effectively undertake the tasks expected of a candidate, or are in some other way to blame for their own numeric under-representation (Lawless and Fox 2005). This is not a view generally expressed by those writing in the academic literature, but rather is one encountered by researchers when carrying out their work within political parties and institutions.[8] It also mirrors narratives of 'it's their choice' that researchers have found when exploring the tension between domestic and occupational duties found by women in high-intensity professional jobs (Beddoes and Pawley 2014). Such narratives effectively recuse dominant groups from having to consider the possibility that purportedly neutral working norms affect some employees more negatively than others by placing the blame for unequal outcomes on the voluntary choices of those who lose out (Blair-Loy 2003).

The meritocratic view that the blame for women's numeric under-representation can be laid at their own door has gained some succour from a body of research on the gender gap in political interest (Norris et al. 2004). For example, multiple studies have found women to be

[8] For example, Norris and Lovenduski report an incident whereby a woman candidate for the Conservative party at the 1992 British General Election was asked 'Where are your babies?' and 'Where is your husband?' (1995, p.128). They also report the testimony of women candidates who were told they were not selected because it would not be safe for them to campaign in the 'rougher' parts of the constituency (1995, p.128). For further examples see Lawless and Fox (2005, 2010) who recount the experiences of many women who have run for political office in the United States.

less politically knowledgeable than men, though it has equally been shown that these surveys themselves might be constructed in ways that undervalue the *kinds* of political knowledge women might have relative to those more commonly expressed by men (Burns et al. 2001; Stolle and Gidengil 2010). However, further studies have shown that women are less interested in formal electoral campaigns than men and are less likely to discuss politics with family and friends (Huckfeldt and Sprague 1995). Similarly, Coffé and Bolzendahl (2010) found evidence of gender gaps across various forms of participation. Although scholars generally do not simply take these findings as justifications for women's numeric under-representation, some might see them in that way and assume that if women are not as interested in formal institutional politics as men, it is their fault they are not there in equal numbers to them.

A second related but different meritocratic explanation, specifically for women's under-representation in national-level political bodies, is the idea that women might be more interested in local politics than national politics, and therefore that the low numbers of women in national legislatures is not a problem to be fixed, but a result of women's preferences (Coffé 2013).

Structural explanations of women's numeric under-representation in politics
The main focus of the existing academic literature has been on three structural factors – political institutions, political parties, and political culture.[9] The modal explanation for

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[9] Our aim here, and in the classification we utilise in our analysis, is to parsimoniously incorporate as much of the existing literature as possible into our exploration of blame assignment. Although such an effort is bound to exclude certain sections of the subfield, our

women's numeric under-representation in this literature is that political parties are not doing enough to get more women to be candidates for their party (Norris 1997; Kenny and Verge 2013). Variously, it has been shown that parties operate under both formal and informal rules that exclude women candidates to the benefit of men (Kenny 2013), that parties place great weight on apparently sex-neutral criteria that similarly act to the detriment of women candidates (Murray 2014), and that they resist feminization (Childs and Webb 2012).

Political institutions have had similar accusations laid at their feet by academic research. Many legislative environments are deemed archaic and thus off-putting to women (Puwar 2004; Rai 2010), have informal conventions that exclude women from certain influential spaces or rituals (Mackay et al. 2010), and are seen to be resistant to changing working practices that might make the job of being a politician more family-friendly, broadly defined (Allen et al. 2016).

Along these same lines, political culture as a whole has often been blamed for not including women in the same way it does men. The media, for example, have been accused on multiple occasions of treating women candidates differently to men, mostly in a more negative or tokenistic way (Hall and Donaghue 2013). Similarly, the dominant political culture in most advanced democracies has been identified as one that normalises the presence of men and treats women as 'other' (Murray 2014). Consequently, when women seek to disrupt existing male dominance, their quality or skills as a politician are judged according the most common characteristics of the primarily male politicians who went before them. As such, any unique or distinct skills, abilities, or behaviours that women might contribute at a greater frequency

preference was to focus on the wider themes of existing research and to direct readers to the source articles for more intensive consideration of the issues at hand.

than men are not valued on their own terms, but rather seen only as not being the same (and often not as desirable) as those predominant among men (Murray 2014).

Some scholars have identified society as a whole as a possible culprit when looking for an explanation for women's numeric under-representation. Research has extensively chronicled how the process of gendered socialization results in girls and women of seemingly all ages having less interest in running for political office that equivalently matched boys and men (Lawless and Fox 2005, 2010; Carroll and Sanbonmatsu 2013). Lawless and Fox describe traditional gender socialization as 'the greater complexities of women's lives, in terms of both how society perceives them and the manner in which they perceive themselves as eligible candidates' (2010, p.9). Similarly, a consistent finding across advanced democracies is that, despite women's advances in the economic sphere and some convergence in the amount of time both sexes spend on unpaid labour, women are still disproportionately likely to undertake the majority of domestic and caring duties within the home, leaving them less time than men for the social activities necessary to mount a successful political career (Kan et al. 2011).

Hypothesizing about beliefs regarding women's numeric under-representation

Given the range of explanations for women's under-representation that are available for individuals to endorse, we do not expect patterns of blame assignment to be uniform across the population. We utilise existing theories around public opinion on gender issues, structural critiques of gender roles, broader system justification, and personal lived experience in line with these theories to discuss how this might affect blame assignment. We begin by discussing our expectations at the individual-level before moving to discuss the possible influence of contextual factors.

Gender role change issues

Burns and Gallagher identify gender role change issues as those related to the place of women in society in a larger sense. Gelb and Palley (1982, p.6) note that 'role change issues appear to produce change in the dependent female role of wife, mother, and homemaker, holding out the potential of greater sexual freedom and independence in a variety of contexts'. Sanbonmatsu echoes these ideas, writing 'some gender issues are more inherently about gender roles . . . than others. I consider women's role in the economy, the workplace, and politics as debates that are primarily about gender roles' (2002, pp.12-13).

We expect individual's views regarding women's current numeric under-representation in political office to reflect their predispositions regarding women's overall place in society (Burns and Gallagher 2010). Traditional dispositions regarding gender roles are likely to be associated with traditional behaviours, most notably marriage (Kane and Whipkey 2009). As Kane and Whipkey (2009: p.239) note, 'gender scholars have documented [that] the family is a key site of gender inequality, a social structure that tethers women's interests to men's within households'. Predispositions regarding traditional gender roles may also lack variation along the lines of sex for this same reason; the fact that men and women live closely interrelated lives, with individual beliefs about women's societal role often being shared by couples and families (Risman 2004*)*. As such, it could be that married individuals of both sexes are more likely to eschew structural explanations for women's numeric under-representation in politics and instead express support for meritocratic explanations.

However, wider variation in this predisposition is likely a result of other core beliefs, such as political ideology or partisanship (Burns and Gallagher 2010, p.437). Consequently, we

might expect individuals on the right of the political spectrum, holding more conservative social views, to consider women's numeric-under-representation in political institutions as a logical consequence of women's proper societal role, leaving the public sphere largely to men (Sanbonmatsu 2002).

Structural critique

A further idea relevant to our study is that of structural critique, or 'the notion that inequality is socially created and sustained through systemic discrimination…an awareness that outcomes are a result of systematic, structural disadvantage' (Burns and Gallagher 2010, p.435). Burns and Gallagher discuss how the notion of structural critique calls members of a group to offer 'a critique of existing relations' and an account 'of one group's disadvantaged position such that the causal forces responsible for the disadvantage lie outside the group itself, in patterns of social discrimination or institutional bias' (2010, p.435). This offers a framework for thinking about initial variation in blame assignment for women's under-representation between the sexes. Scholars have discussed how, through daily lived experience, women are more likely than men to accumulate evidence in support of a critique focused on structural explanations for women's numeric political under-representation (Gurin 1985; Davis and Robinson 1991). For example, women are still more likely than men to be responsible for domestic, family and childcare tasks. And as emphasised above, there is growing evidence that such responsibilities have a detrimental effect on the political ambitions and recruitment of women to legislatures (Lawless, 2012).

This effect is likely to be especially pronounced among women who have had access to higher levels of education, existing research finding a link between the recognition of structural inequality and education (Kane 1995) as well as the 'rejection of victim-blaming

explanations for inequality' (Kane and Kyyrö 2001). Equally, we might expect that women who have sought out full-time employment, and thus are more likely to have encountered structural barriers to occupational progression, to favour structural explanations of women's numeric under-representation (Cech and Blair-Loy 2010). Structural critique is equally something available to men (Burns and Gallagher 2010). As such, men might well arrive at a structural critique along similar lines to those of women, but they are less likely to have done so through their own directly-lived experience. As Davis and Robinson note in their 'underdog thesis', those individuals who suffer from the structural inequality in question are more likely to notice it than those who are not directly implicated (1991). Based on findings that higher levels of education lead to lower levels of victim-blaming when explaining social inequality, it is more likely that men with higher levels of education would theorize in this way (Kane and Kyyrö 2001). This said, though, we still expect to see a broad sex difference whereby women are more likely to blame structural factors for women's numeric under-representation, while men will be more likely to focus on meritocratic explanations.

System justification

However, it seems equally plausible, based on existing evidence, that women who have achieved success in the workplace or in education may favour meritocratic explanations for social outcomes. In line with the expectations of system justification theory, individuals who have succeeded under the status quo are likely to see it as legitimate and 'good, fair natural desirable, and even inevitable' (Jost et al. 2004, p.887). As Jackman and Muha note, highly educated members of discriminated groups can act as 'state of the art apologists' for the system which has allowed them to succeed (1984, p.752).

For men, system justification is likely to be more of a default position than it is for women.

As Kane writes (1998, p.612), men have 'greater control over resources, over most social institutions, and over the construction of social meaning'. Men might be actively unwilling to cede this control but, given that this control results in the patterns of dependence at the heart of wider sex inequality, it may also 'tend to draw women toward men's interpretations of gender inequality' (Kane 1998, p.614). As such, even when there might not appear to be a gender gap in views on gender role issues, this might not necessarily be indicative of rising feminist consciousness.

The influence of elite cues

Existing scholarship suggests that elite cues can shape attitudes on issues relating to gender equality through their conduct and can play a vital role in a number of ways: proposing and/or implementing policies and programs; communicating to the public on issues of equality; and appointing individuals from traditionally under-represented groups in society to high-profile political roles (Kittilson 2010; O'Brien and Rickne 2016). As a consequence, the implementation of measures to ensure parity in descriptive representation – most commonly in the form of either voluntary or legally-mandated quotas - could be expected to have a positive effect on public attitudes towards women in politics either directly, by increasing the number of women, or indirectly through residual symbolic effects (Phillips 2012). Women in particular might see the implementation of quotas as a quasi-admission of guilt on the part of political elites that they previously had not done enough to get women into political office, likely related to an increased endorsement of broadly structural explanations for women's numeric under-representation. Existing research offers clear evidence that women and men may respond in different ways to such elite cues (Beaman et al, 2009; Morgan and Buice, 2013). However, it is also plausible that quotas might provoke a backlash among individuals who are not sympathetic to structural explanations, predominantly including men, with the

adoption of the quota instead causing them to double-down on their prior meritocratic leaning.

The presence of a quota may have a further influence if the quota is deemed to have proven ineffective in its objectives (Schwindt-Bayer 2009).[10] In such cases, we may expect that women, who are more likely to hold stronger prior opinions on gender equality based on their lived experiences, might interpret the failure of the quota measure as being the result of a lack of political will on the part of political elites, political parties, and the political system as a whole.

Status discontent theory

We might expect similar effects to become clear when variation in women's political and economic status is taken account of in our analysis. As Morgan and Buice note, 'status discontent theory would expect women's empowerment to undermine support for gender equity' (2013, p.646). Although our research focus differs to theirs, the principle stands – in countries where women have achieved higher than average levels of political presence and attained greater economic influence, we might expect both men and women in those countries to be more likely reject structural explanations of women's numeric under-representation. Instead, given the success of seemingly large numbers of women in both politics and economically, individuals might instead assume that women can get ahead themselves if they

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[10] This might a case where the quota has not resulted in the anticipated increase in the number of women in the legislature in question (Dahlerup 2006), or in some cases where women elected as a result of the quota have not been able to effect transformative substantive representation in the way that some advocates of the policy expected (Goetz and Hassim 2003).

wish to.

Additionally, as noted by Morgan and Buice, 'as women make gains, those who face the loss of status as a result, namely men, may react against this changing context and retrench to embrace more traditional gender norms' (2013, p.646). In our case, this might be reflected in men voicing the opinion that women's under-representation is the result of women's personal decisions. Critically, any evidence of this kind of backlash would reinforce Morgan and Buice's (2013) finding, and concern, that societal gains for women are not necessarily self-reinforcing. Based on all of the above, and reflecting our expectations regarding sex differences in patterns of blame assignment as well as the expected impact of individual and aggregate-level variables we generate our first hypothesis:

H_1 – *Women will be significantly more likely than men to assign blame to structural explanations for women's numeric under-representation after controlling for individual-level and country-level predictors of elite cues and women's political and economic status*

Country-level Variation in Women Assigning Blame to Structural Explanations

Our existing hypotheses focus on individual-level influences, primarily sex, on patterns of blame assignment for women's numeric under-representation in politics. Building on these, and reflecting the hierarchical structure of our cross-national dataset where individual responses are nested within countries, it is possible to address additional questions: whether blame assignment varies by country and the extent to which women assign blame to structural explanations for women's numeric under-representation varies across countries. To put it another way, variation in country-level indicators of women's political and economic

status in a country might be expected to affect the extent to which women endorse structural explanations of women's under-representation in politics. Numerous studies, although not exploring patterns of blame assignment for women's under-representation specifically, have established a link between the overall life circumstances of women and their propensity to adopt feminist views and attitudes (Banaszak and Plutzer 1993; Bolzendahl and Myers 2004). So, for example, we might expect that the increased inclusion of women in the political and economic sphere will result in gender egalitarian attitudes in a broader sense and affect the prominence of certain opinions relating to gender roles, structural critique, and status discontent discussed above. In the case of the present study, we would expect variation in the social and political status of women to manifest in variation in the overall levels of assignment of blame for women's political under-representation to structural rather than meritocratic factors even when individual-level variables are taken into account. As such, we generate our final two hypotheses:

H_2 – There will be significant between-country variation in blaming structural explanations for fewer women in politics even after the inclusion of individual-level and country-level predictors

H_3 – The probability that women will assign blame to structural explanations for women's numeric under-representation will vary across EU countries

Data

To explore variation in blame assignment for the numeric under-representation of women in politics we use Eurobarometer data collected across 27 European countries in February and March 2011 as part of Eurobarometer 75.1 (European Commission and European Parliament

2013), comprising 24,823 responses. At the time, this included all member states of the European Union (EU) (Croatia has since joined the EU in 2013 and the UK is scheduled to leave in 2019). The data is also weighted to ensure representativeness across the 27 European countries with full details available in the publicly available data files (European Commission and European Parliament 2013).

The survey includes a question with a range of response options that can be classified as constituting either meritocratic or structural explanations for women's numeric under-representation, detailed in Table 1. As with all large-scale surveys, the questions could arguably have been altered to more directly address our research question – for example, by including a wider range of meritocratic explanation response options. Despite this, the data is the only data of its kind currently available and, as such, presents a unique opportunity to explore the issue at hand. The question asked respondents to specify their top preference. After choosing their top preference, respondents were then asked the same question again and were able to choose a maximum of two other responses in addition to their top preference. These additional preferences were not ranked. For the purpose of this study, and to guarantee accuracy of interpretation, we focus on the top preference.[11]

Insert Table 1

Drawing on the existing academic literature discussed above, we condensed these variables into five categories of potential blame from the survey of respondents across 27 EU states.

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[11] For brevity and robustness purposes, we run additional modelling on all responses (these are signposted later in the paper) and include tables and figures detailing the results in the Appendix.

Table 1 indicates whether a response option is classified as a meritocratic (M) or structural (S) explanation of women's numeric under-representation. Across Europe, 79.2% blamed structural factors for the descriptive under-representation of women in politics with just over 20% blaming meritocratic factors. We use a cross-tabulation to assess whether sex (being a woman) is associated with, or independent from, blaming structural explanations. More women (52.9%) blame structural explanations than the overall female mean (52.0%). The Pearson chi-square statistic is 30.11 (p-value 0.000) and a Cramer's V of 0.04 (p-value 0.000), indicating a fairly strong association between the two variables.

The descriptive evidence by country is also revealing. Only six of the twenty-seven countries (France, Greece, Italy, Romania, Spain, and Sweden) record higher levels of blame assignment to structural explanations than the overall sample population mean (see Table A1). However, in the case of Italy, Spain, and Sweden, these are well in excess of 85 per cent of the sample population. Conversely, in four countries (Denmark, Estonia, Luxembourg and the Netherlands), around a third or more assign blame to meritocratic explanations, a notably greater figure than the sample population mean across all 27 countries. There is some limited evidence of particular trends across different European regions, although it is not fully clear. For instance, leaving aside Romania, where those sampled record a higher percentage blaming structural explanations than the overall sample population mean, the remaining countries sampled from Central and Eastern Europe are below the mean. Across Southern Europe - Greece, Italy and Spain - the reverse is true, although those sampled from Portugal invoke meritocratic explanations more than the sample population average.[12]

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[12] We find similar patterns to Portugal in Cyprus and Malta however the weighted sample size in both these cases is small.

The picture is clearer if we extend the analysis and compare by sex (see Table A2). As noted above, more women than men invoke structural explanations for women's descriptive under-representation in politics, but there are also obvious differences between countries. In nineteen of the twenty-seven countries, the percentage of women blaming structural explanations is higher than the overall sample population mean. Once again there are some regional patterns with women in Central and Eastern Europe (excluding Romania) and Southern Europe (excluding Italy) notably more likely to blame structural explanations. The story is mixed in Northern Europe with women in six (Denmark, Finland, France, Great Britain, Luxembourg and Netherlands) of the eleven countries less likely to blame structural explanations than the overall sample population mean. Overall, the descriptive evidence shows that there is significant between-country variation that needs to be taken into account when further analysing the data.

Do Women Assign Blame to Structural Factors? A Multilevel Approach

The descriptive evidence suggests that more women than men endorsed structural explanations for women's descriptive under-representation in politics and the significant association between these two variables, as shown by the previously-reported chi-square test, suggests that this relationship may exist across the EU as a whole. Does, however, this sex effect hold when other individual-level drivers of women's numeric under-representation are taken into account? Further, is there evidence that the assignment of blame to structural explanations varies between countries and, most importantly, that the extent to which women blame structural explanations than men also varies from country to country? Our analysis therefore needs to firstly take account of individual-level influences to assess the relative importance of sex and secondly, given the cross-country nature of our Eurobarometer data, include country-level control variables that we expect to affect broader perceptions of women

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in politics, as discussed above. The data itself is hierarchical in nature, with individual responses nested within countries.[13] Based on this we initially proceed in two stages. First, we test for evidence of a sex effect. Second, we seek to determine whether there is any variation across EU countries in the relationship between sex and assigning blame for women's under-representation to structural explanations.

We estimate a series of multilevel logistic models with a dichotomous dependent variable indicting the blaming of structural explanations for women's under-representation, safeguarding against any possible underestimation of the random effects or variance parameters and biases of the fixed effects (Browne et al. 2005). Before we address the key questions, we run a variance components (or null) model to determine whether there is any significant between-country variation in assigning blame to structural explanations (see Table 2). The results align with our earlier descriptive analysis and show significant between-country variation. Using the latent variable approach (Goldstein and Rasbash 1996), the intraclass country correlation is estimated to be $0.12/(012 + 3.29)$,[14] which suggests that

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[13]There are clear methodological reasons for taking account of this hierarchical structure. One of the major costs of failing to take such an approach is that the standard errors of regression coefficients will be underestimated, leading to an exaggeration of statistical significance. Also, while it may be possible to take account of group- or country-level effects in the earlier models, one of the inevitable consequences would be that any country-level predictor effect would be confounded with the effects of these group dummies. Hence, it would not be possible to separate out any effects due to observed and unobserved group characteristics. Substantively, it makes sense to examine whether sex differences hold when country-level predictors are added and to quantify the extent of grouping in individual outcomes.

[14] The standard variance for a logistic distribution is 3.29.

around 3.5% of all variation is at the country level, justifying the use of a hierarchical modelling procedure.

Insert Table 2

Of initial interest is whether sex differences hold when individual-level socio-political influences are controlled for. To address this question, we specify a series of multivariate models the results of which are shown in Table 3. Model 1 in Table 3 reports the intercept variance – between-country variation in blaming structural explanations for the under-representation of women – along with twelve individual-level socio-economic variables, including sex, and two political variables.[15] In Model 2 (Table 3), we then add a number of country-level controls that we might expect to affect perceptions of women in politics, and therefore assignation of blame regarding numeric under-representation, testing H_1. These country-level controls reflect variation in cues offered by political elites regarding women and politics in addition to women's broader political and economic status within a country. We measure these by including variables denoting the use of a gender quota in the country, the proportion of women in the national legislature, and women's level of participation in the workforce.[16] Here, we can also examine country-level variation in blame assignment to structural explanations, even after taking account of individual-level and country-level predictors, testing H_2. Model 3 in Table 3 goes one step further by adding two additional random parameters to the model: the slope variance and the covariance between the slope and the intercept. It is this model, after taking account of individual- and country-level predictors, that addresses whether there is any variability across EU countries in the relationship between

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[15] Full coding details for the 12 socio-economic variables and two political variables used are provided in the Appendix. See Table A3 for more details.

[16] Full details of all variables are available in the Appendix, Table A3.

sex and blaming structural explanations, testing H_3.[17] The inclusion of individual characteristics in all three models and country level predictors in Models 2 and 3 also allows the estimation of the level-2 (country) variances to be conditional on these covariates.

Insert Table 3

In all three models, sex remains consistently significant. Women are significantly more likely to assign blame to structural explanations than men even when both individual- and country-level predictors are taken into account, evidence that offers support for H_1. In addition, a number of other individual-level predictors are statistically significant and align with expectations generated in our earlier discussion: those who are married are less likely to assign blame to structural explanations, while individuals on the left of the political spectrum are significantly more likely to assign blame to structural explanations. When country-level predictors are added, countries with greater levels of female workforce participation are less likely to assign blame to structural factors. Outside of this, none of the other country-level predictors explain support for blaming structural reasons, with neither elite cues nor women's political status appearing to have any noteworthy effect on whether individuals within a

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[17] All the multilevel models are run in Stata 14 using the standard seven integration points. We tested higher integration points with little or no evidence of any changes to coefficients so we proceed with seven integration points. We specify the cov(unstructured) command for Model 3 in order to estimate the covariance between the random intercepts and random effects.

country are more or less likely to assign blame to structural explanations such as parties, elites and political culture.[18]

Across all three models, the estimate of country variance is small but non-zero and significant, justifying the decision to take account of clustering at the country level, and supporting H_2. Moreover, the likelihood ratio versus logistic regression test is significant across all three models reiterating that it would be a mistake to assume cases were uncorrelated within clusters. Using the Model 1 results from the random intercept model, we can estimate values based on these random intercepts (see Table A4). Our findings are consistent with the descriptive evidence presented earlier. We find positive random y-intercepts which increases the total effect for countries such as Italy, Spain and Sweden but negative y-intercepts for other countries – for example, Denmark and the Netherlands - which reduces the total effect. In real terms, this suggests a clear pattern of country-level differences in blaming structural explanations for the numeric under-representation of women, even after taking account of individual-level differences.[19]

Models 1 and 2 in Table 3 assume that the probability of blaming structural explanations depends on the country of residence as well as individual- and country-level characteristics. We achieved this by allowing the model intercept to vary randomly across countries and assumed that the effects of individual characteristics such as sex are the same or fixed in each

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[18] We also estimated cross-level interactions between these country-level variables and sex and found no significant effect.

[19] We find a similar pattern of country-level differences when both individual- and country-level variables are controlled for (estimated values from these random intercepts taken from Model 2).

country. However, it is equally important to consider whether women vary from country to country in blaming structural explanations for the under-representation of women, testing H_3. Model 3 in Table Four extends the random intercept model and tests the effect of adding two random parameters - the slope and intercept/slope covariance – to the model conditional on individual and country-level predictors. This represents our full model. At the individual level, women are 1.3 times more likely to assign blame to structural explanations for women's under-representation in politics. A clearer picture is provided by the average marginal effects (see Figure 1).[20] Being a woman increases the average probability of assigning blame to structural explanations for women's under-representation by four percentage points. Turning to random part of the model, we use a likelihood ratio test to determine whether the random slope model is an improvement over the model with a fixed slope. This is calculated as two times the difference in log likelihood values between Model 2 (without the random slope) and Model 3 (with a random slope for 'woman'). The chi-square test statistic is 33.10 on 2 d.f. (p=<0.001) which suggests that the probability of women assigning blame to structural reasons does vary across countries, offering support for H_4. Evidence of a sex effect across countries is reinforced by the significant slope effect which is more than twice its standard error. The intercept and slope have a negative correlation across countries, one that is not only insignificant but with a value close to zero. In summary, all hypotheses have been supported by our analysis. Across the 27 EU member states, women predominantly blame structural explanations for the numeric under-representation of women in political life. This also holds when country-level predictors are added (H_1). We also find variation in patterns of blame assignment between countries (H_2) and, crucially, the extent to

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[20] Here we report only the significant predictors. On average, being married reduces the probability by two percentage points. Those on the left of the political spectrum increase the probability of blaming structural explanations by 1.3 percentage points.

which women assign blame to structural explanations for women's under-representation varies significantly by country (H₃).[21]

Insert Figure 1

Comparing Blame Assignment across 27 European Countries

So far, we have established that women are significantly more likely to assign blame to

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[21] For brevity and as a robustness check, we run the equivalent Multilevel Models where the dependent variable is all structural factors (1) against where least one response is meritocratic (0) derived from all responses not just the top rank response. We include the same predictor variables in the models. In all three models, sex remains consistently significant. Women are significantly more likely to blame all structural explanations than men even when both individual- and country-level predictors are taken into account, which supports our hypotheses. From the equivalent Model 3 (individual-level), women are 1.2 times more likely to assign blame to structural explanations for women's under-representation in politics. Being a woman increases the average probability of assigning blame to structural explanations for women's under-representation by five percentage points. We have included the Tables and Figures from these models in the Appendix (see Table A5 and Figure A1 AMEs). We also run an alternative multinomial model where the three response categorical dependent variable compares all structural factors; most responses structural and most responses meritocratic using all responses not just the top rank. Again we find clear effects that support are current analysis. The probability of women assigning blame for women's under-representation to all structural factors was, on average, two percentage points higher than men. The probability of women assigning blame for women's under-representation to mostly meritocratic categories was, on average, three percentage points lower than men (full details in Table A6 and Figure A2 in the Appendix).

structural explanations for women's political under-representation than they are to meritocratic explanations. However, within this structural category, do women predominantly assign blame to elites, parties, political culture, or society at large? Figure Two shows the frequencies for each category of blame assignment across the whole sample population of 27 European countries. More respondents (38.9%) assigned blame to political culture (as their top ranked preference). Across Europe, 23.7% assigned blame to women themselves while more than a fifth assigned blame to society (stereotyping). In total, just 6% of respondents assigned blame to political parties for the lack of women in politics. Exploring possible sex differences, of those who assign blame to political culture, 55% were women, 3% higher than the overall average. More men assign blame to women and to elites than do women, while the sex split for those who assign blame to society and parties barely differs from the average.[22] We run cross-tabulations to assess the relationship between sex and the blame categories across the 27 EU countries. Given the descriptive associations noted above, our focus was again on whether being a woman is associated with, or independent from, blaming political culture. Here, the Pearson chi-square statistic is 58.53 (p-value of 0.000) and a Cramer's V of 0.05 (p-value 0.000) indicating a fairly strong association between the two variables. A significant negative association between being a woman and assigning blame to elites (chi-square 12.79, p-value 0.000; Cramer's V 0.02, p-value 0.000) was also evident.[23]

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[22] For the whole sample, the weighted split by male and female was 48% and 52% respectively. The percentage of women that made up each blame category was as follows: 52% blamed society; 49% blamed women; 51% blamed parties 51% and 49% blamed elites.

[23] Based on the whole sample, we found no association between being a woman and both blaming society (chi-square 0.545, p-value 0.460; Cramer's V 0.01, p-value 0.460) and blaming parties (chi-square 0.419, p-value 0.517; Cramer's V 0.00, p-value 0.517). Only those respondents who blamed structural explanations are included in the subsequent

Insert Figure 2

This descriptive evidence suggests that the relationship between sex and assigning blame for women's numeric under-representation to political culture may hold across the EU as a whole. Of interest is whether a sex effect remains once other drivers are controlled for. To test this, we use a binomial logistic regression to compare those who assign blame to political culture with those who assign blame to the other structural categories. As such, our sample only contains those respondents who blamed structural explanations for fewer women in political life. We use the same individual-level variables as in the previous statistical analysis (full model results are provided in Appendix Table A7). Without additional controls, women are 1.19 times more likely to blame political culture than men. Even when other individual-level influences are accounted for, there is still significant evidence of a sex effect with women 1.14 times more likely than men to blame political culture. Aside from sex, those working at home (including carers, stay-at-home parents, and others involved in intensive domestic labour), lower-class manual workers, the unemployed, as well as individuals who are retired are all significantly more likely blame political culture. For ease of interpretation we convert these logit coefficients (in Table A7 Model 2) into probabilities. We find that the average person (where all the independent variables are held at their empirical mean) in our

modelling. Similar cross-tabulations on this reduced sample yield: positive association between being a woman and blaming political culture (chi-square 34.89, p-value 0.00; Cramer's V 0.04, p-value 0.00). For blaming elites and blaming society we find a weak negative association and no association between being a woman and blaming parties (as with the full sample).

sample has a 51.3% chance of blaming political culture for women's under-representation in politics. Figure 4 presents the average marginal effect (AME) – of a one-unit change in terms of probability changes for each predictor – for those predictors that are significant at the 5 per cent level of confidence. On average, being a manual worker or unemployed increased the probability of assigning blame to political culture by six and eight percentage points, respectively, when compared to their base categories. For those who were retired it was seven percentage points while those who worked at home had a nine percentage point increase in the probability of assigning blame to political culture. The AME for women is three per cent: on average, the probability of women assigning blame for women's under-representation to political culture was three percentage points higher than for men.

Insert Figure 3

Do women predominantly blame political culture (as our evidence above suggests) or do they assign blame for women's under-representation to other structural explanations? To test whether this was the case we first examine the bivariate impact of sex on the three other blame categories (elites, parties and society) when they are compared against political culture in a multinomial regression. We then run an additional multinomial regression to assess whether these findings hold when other predictors are added to the model. A clear pattern emerges. Apart from assigning blame to political parties, which has a negative coefficient but is insignificant, women were significantly less likely to assign blame to society and elites in comparison to political culture (see Table A8). This finding holds for blaming elites when all other predictors are added to the model but the effect of the sex variable on blame parties and society are below the 95% confidence level although both are negative in direction. As shown by the AMEs, the probability of women assigning blame for women's under-representation to

political culture was, on average, three percentage points higher than men (see Figure 4), while the probability of assigning blame to elites is around two percentage points lower for women than men. Put simply, there is strong corroborative evidence that women across the 27 EU member states predominantly assign blame for women's numeric under-representation to a male-dominated political culture. However, statistically speaking, women are not significantly more likely to assign blame to political culture than to society or to political parties.

Insert Figure 4

Conclusion

This paper offers the first systematic assessment of blame assignment for women's numeric under-representation in politics. We find evidence of a sex difference in blame assignation. Most notably, we find that women are significantly more likely than men to assign blame to structural explanations for women's under-representation. Across 27 EU countries, we find that this difference is robust to the inclusion of other individual-level socio-political variables. Exploring the role of contextual variation in elite cues and women's economic and political status, we similarly find that the sex difference is not altered by these factors. Moreover, not only do we find that levels of blame assignment to structural factors varies between countries, but that the extent to which women assign blame to structural factors also varies significantly by country. Disaggregating the structural blame category, we find corroborative evidence that women predominantly assign blame to political culture rather than to political parties or society at large.

The fact that women predominantly assign blame to political culture can be seen to align with the general thrust of the recent and growing literature on feminist institutionalist theory: that the political status quo, broadly conceived, is biased against women and acts as a barrier to their increased political participation (Mackay et al. 2010). In the same vein, existing cross-national studies of the extent of feminist consciousness and support for gender equality across European countries have also found patterns of country-level variation comparable to our own (Banaszak and Plutzer 1993; Teigen and Wängnerud 2009; Alexander and Welzel 2010).

We can offer tentative suggestions for the wider implications of our findings. One such possible implication regards the likely source of campaigns that seek to bring about the implementation of policies designed to increase the numbers of women in politics, such as gender quotas. Based on the fact women assign blame to structural factors that they see as resulting in women's under-representation, it seems likely that such interventionist campaigns are more likely to be instigated by women than men, perhaps as a result of campaigning by the international women's movement (Paxton et al. 2006). This interpretation is in keeping with existing findings from research into attitudes towards welfare policies (Alesina and La Ferrara 2005; McNamee and Miller 2004; Likki and Staerklé 2015).

It also raises the question of whether the sex difference in attitudes that we find in the general population hold for political elites. A further extension might return attention to the general public, but instead ask them what they consider to be the likely most effective solution for rectifying women's numeric under-representation. In doing so, scholars could examine whether the gender egalitarian attitudes many individuals hold in principle hold when the question of implementation arises (Kane and Whipkey 2009). In summary, the more that

scholars know about how the public think about these issues, the better the recommendations they can provide to policymakers seeking to alleviate gender inequality in the political domain.

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Tables

Table 1: Eurobarometer Survey Items on Women's Political Under-representation

Question: Which of the following do you think are the reasons why women are under-represented in politics?	**Label**
The existence of persistent stereotypes	Blame Society (S)
The political world is dominated by men who do not value the skills of women enough The media pay less attention to women than to men during election campaigns	Blame Political Culture (S)
Women are too often placed in disadvantageous positions on electoral lists	Blame Parties (S)
Women have little interest in this type of career \ do not give priority to this type of career Women get more interested in local public life than national and European public life	Blame Women (M)
The measures to encourage parity between women and men in politics are ineffective	Blame Elites (S)

Key: S = Structural; M = Meritocratic

Table 2: Variance Components Model (includes ICC): Blaming Structural Explanations

Variables	Model 1	
	β	SE
Constant	1.24*	0.07
Random Effects		
Country: Intercept Variance (var_cons)	0.12*	0.04
Country: ICC	0.03*	0.01
Model Fit		
Wald Chi-Square <0.05	-	
Log Likelihood	-12123.55	
N	24823	

Table 3: Multilevel Binary Logistic Models of Structural Explanations for the Under-representation of Women (27 EU States)

Variables	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	β	SE	β	SE	β	SE
Constant	1.54*	0.15	2.85*	0.73	2.83*	0.76
Female	0.19*	0.08	0.19*	0.08	0.25*	0.06
Level 1 Controls						
Married	-0.12*	0.05	-0.12*	0.05	-0.12*	0.05
Young Age 18-29	0.11	0.07	0.11	0.07	0.11	0.07
Middle/Older Age 45-59	0.02	0.06	0.02	0.06	0.02	0.06
Old Age 65 plus	-0.11	0.08	-0.11	0.08	-0.12	0.08
Education	-0.35	0.19	-0.35	0.19	-0.38	0.20
White Collar	-0.04	0.07	-0.05	0.07	-0.05	0.07
Manual	-0.01	0.08	-0.01	0.08	-0.01	0.08
Work in Home	-0.08	0.09	-0.08	0.09	-0.09	0.08
Unemployed	0.00	0.13	0.00	0.13	0.01	0.13
Retired	-0.06	0.10	-0.06	0.10	-0.05	0.10
Political Interest	0.12	0.07	0.12	0.07	0.13	0.07
Left-Right	-0.08*	0.01	-0.08*	0.01	-0.08*	0.01
Level 2 Variables						
% Women in Parliament	-		0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01
Quota	-		0.18	0.13	0.18	0.12
% Female Labour Force	-		-0.03*	0.01	-0.03*	0.01
GDP	-		-0.06	0.07	-0.05	0.06
Random Effects						
Intercept Variance (var_cons)	0.12*	0.04	0.08*	0.03	0.09*	0.02
Slope Variance (var_Female)	-		-		0.05*	0.01
Intercept/Slope Covariance	-		-		-0.01	0.02
Model Fit						
Wald Chi-Square <0.05	460.62*		525.76*		436.67*	
Log Likelihood	-12034.23		-12030.43		-12013.88	
LR test vs Logistic Regression	376.68*		196.35*		229.47*	
N	24823		24823		24823	

*= Significant p= <0.05; (var_cons) = variance of the distribution of the country level u-intercepts. var(Female) = variance of the distribution of the country level slopes of the log-odds structural vs female relationship. For the Likelihood ratio test * is Prob>chi2 =0.00.

Figures

Figure 1: Average Marginal Effects: Blaming Structural Factors
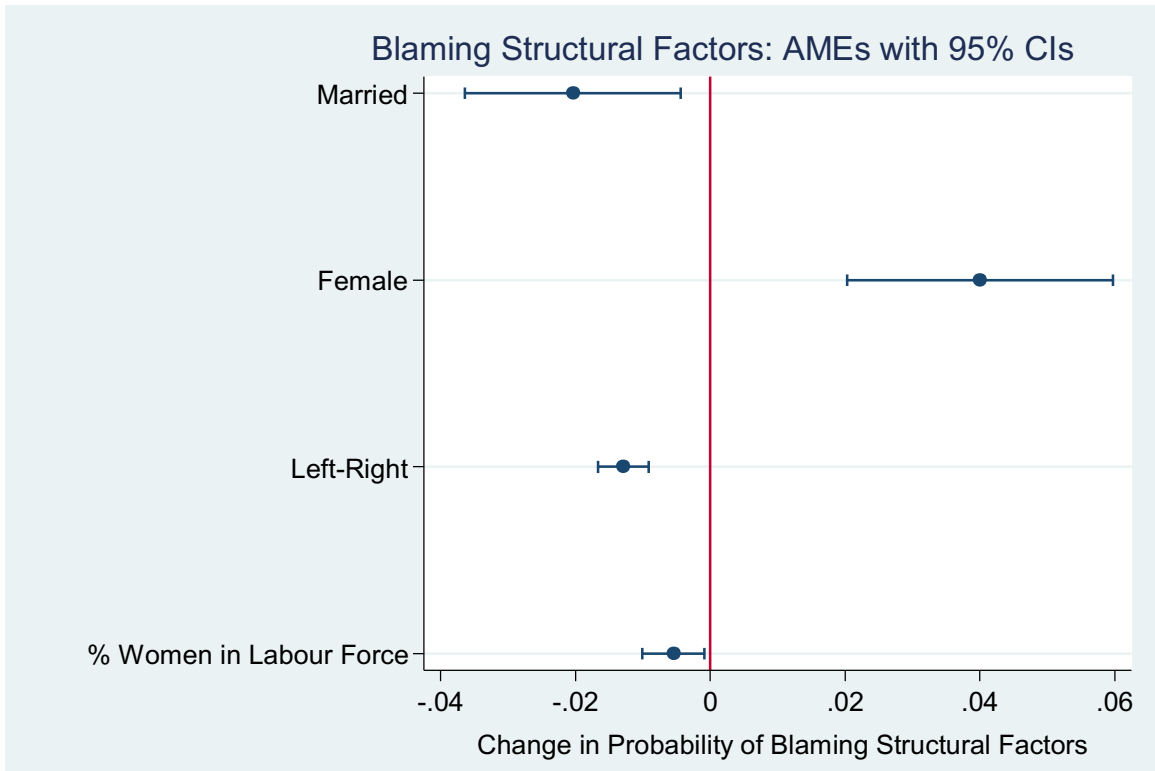
Figure 2: Descriptive Breakdown of Endorsement of Blame Assignment Categories across 27 EU countries (%)

Blame Assignment in Combined EU27 Countries (%)
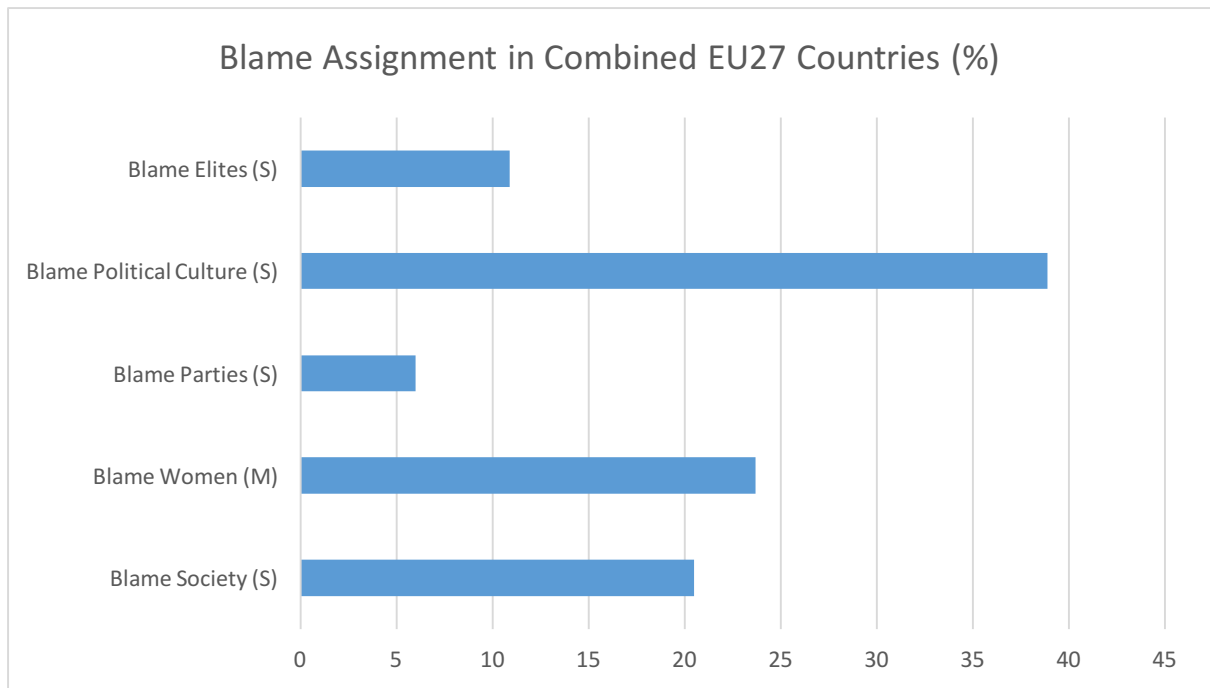
Figure 3: Average Marginal Effects: Blaming Political Culture
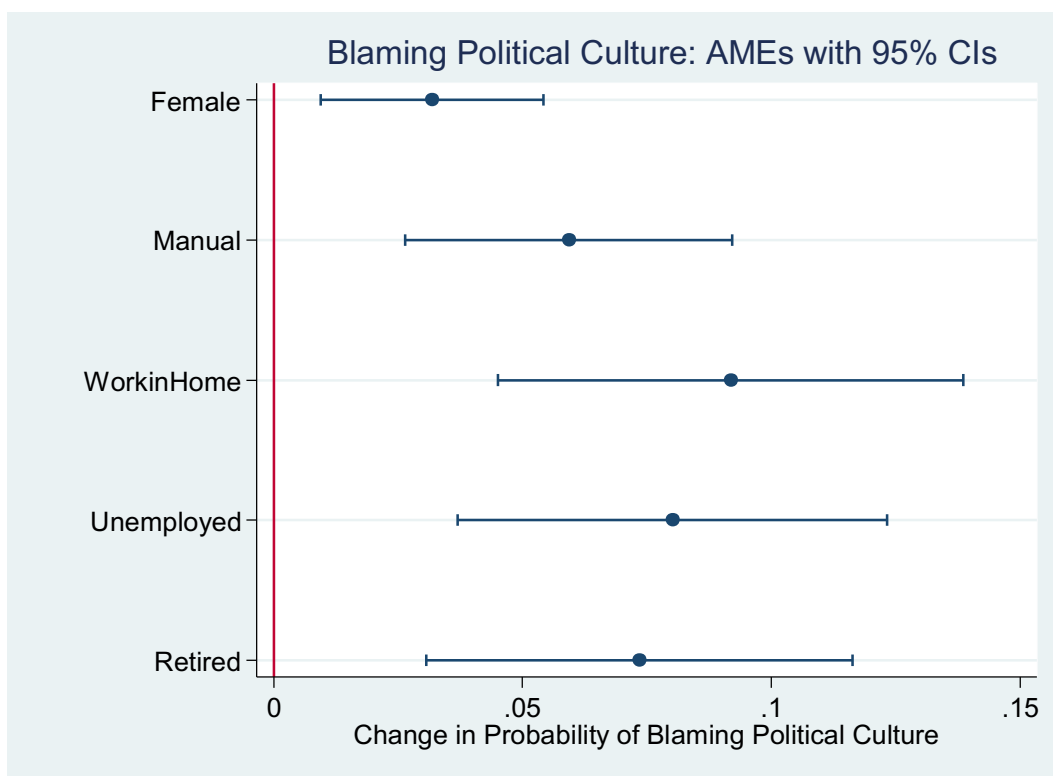
Figure 4: Average Marginal Effects: Sex Effect Across Blame Categories
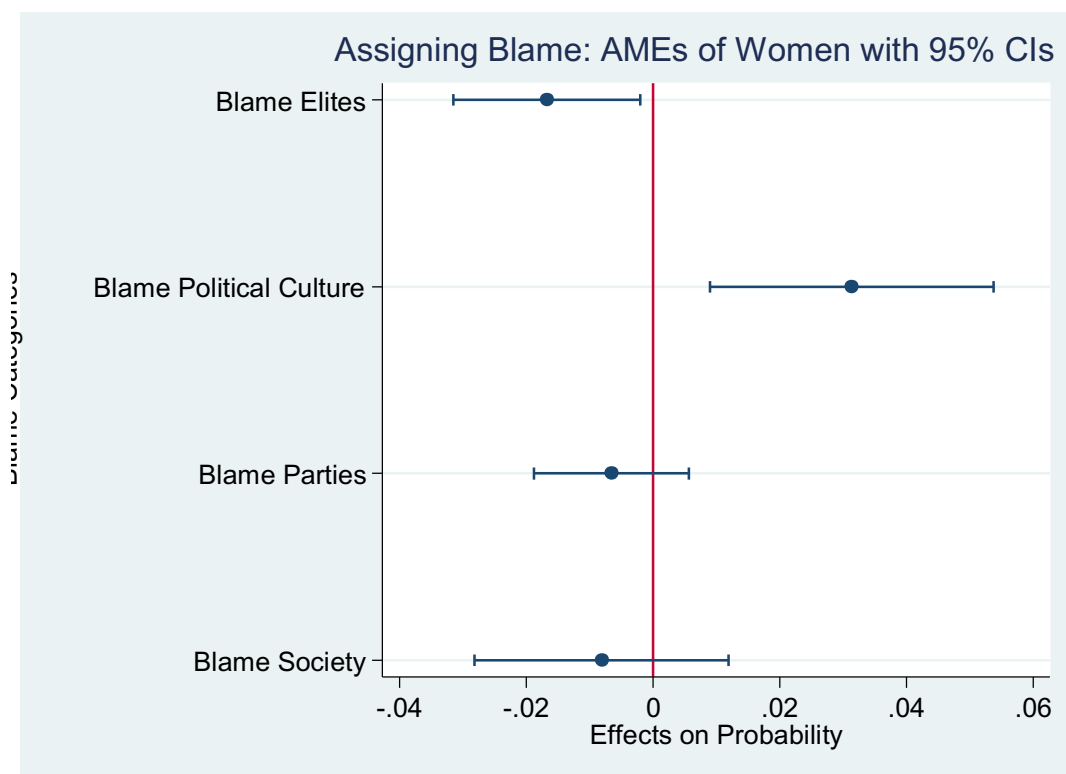
Online Appendix

Table A1: Descriptive Statistics: Structural versus Meritocratic by Country

Country	Structural (79.8%)	Meritocratic (20.2%)
France	80.2	19.8
Belgium	75.0	25.0
Netherlands	66.5	33.5
Germany	76.3	23.7
Italy	87.1	12.9
Luxembourg	66.7	33.3
Denmark	62.9	37.1
Ireland	76.7	23.3
Great Britain	78.4	21.6
Greece	81.3	18.7
Spain	88.3	11.7
Portugal	78.8	21.2
Finland	74.1	25.9
Sweden	87.2	12.8
Austria	77.8	22.2
Cyprus	70.7	29.3
Czech Republic	72.1	27.9
Estonia	67.3	32.7
Hungary	78.9	21.1
Latvia	78.1	29.9
Lithuania	77.2	22.8
Malta	70.0	30.0
Poland	78.7	21.3
Slovakia	73.6	26.4
Slovenia	78.9	21.1
Bulgaria	79.0	21.0
Romania	80.7	19.3

*All data is weighted

Table A2: Blaming Structural Explanations: Country by Sex

Country	Male (47.1%)	Female (52.9%)
France	49.2	50.8
Belgium	45.9	54.1
Netherlands	49.3	50.7
Germany	45.4	54.6
Italy	48.2	51.8
Luxembourg	50.0	50.0
Denmark	48.5	51.5
Ireland	46.5	53.5
Great Britain	49.0	51.0
Greece	45.6	54.4
Spain	46.2	53.8
Portugal	45.8	54.2
Finland	48.5	51.5
Sweden	46.9	53.1
Austria	44.8	55.2
Cyprus	44.8	55.2
Czech Republic	45.5	54.5
Estonia	43.2	56.8
Hungary	44.9	55.1
Latvia	43.9	56.1
Lithuania	41.1	58.9
Malta	42.9	57.1
Poland	46.3	53.7
Slovakia	45.1	54.9
Slovenia	45.3	54.7
Bulgaria	44.7	55.3
Romania	47.5	52.5

*All data is weighted. The weighted sex frequency for the whole sample is: Female (52.0%); Male (48.0%). The figures for Female and Male (column heading) are the breakdown for blaming structural explanations.

Table A3: Variable Description and Measurement

Variables	Description	Measurement
Individual Level		
Female	Respondents Sex	1 = Female; 0 = Male
Married	Respondents asked about marital status	1 = Married; 0 = All other categories
Young Age 18-29	Respondents Age - Young	1 = Young 18-29; 0 = All other age categories
Middle Age 30-44	Respondents Age - Middle	1 = Middle 30-44; 0 = All other age categories
Middle/Older Age 45-59	Respondents Age – Middle/Older	1 = Middle/Older 45-59; 0 = All other age categories
Old Age 65 plus	Respondents Age – Old Age 65 plus	1 = Old Age 65 plus; 0 = All other age categories
Education	Respondents asked whether they were still in Education	1 = Yes; 0 = No
White Collar	Occupation/Employment: Respondents in White collar occupations	1 = White Collar; 0 = All other categories
Manual	Occupation/Employment: Respondents in White collar occupations (skilled + unskilled manual worker)	1 = Manual; 0 = All other categories
Work in Home	Occupation/Employment Status: Respondent asked whether they worked at home	1 = Worked at home; 0 All other categories
Unemployed	Occupation/Employment Status: Respondent asked whether they are unemployed	1 = Unemployed; 0 All other categories
Retired	Occupation/Employment Status: Respondent asked whether they are retired	1 = Retired; 0 All other categories
Political Interest	Respondent asked whether they were interested in politics	1 = Yes; 0 = No
Left-Right	Respondents self-placement on Left-Right scale	11 point scale: 1 = Hard Left; 11 = Hard Right (DK take the distribution mean).
Country level		
Women in Parliament	Women in Parliament	% of women in the lower house/primary legislature
Female Labour Force	% of women in Labour Force (by country)	% women in Labour Force
Quota	Quota	Ordinal – 0 = None; 1 = Voluntary; 2 = Legally Mandated
GDP	GDP per capita	GDP – variable Standardized

The quota variable is coded as an ordinal measure which indicates the type of quota, coded 0 for no quota, 1 for a voluntary party quota, and 2 for a legally mandated quota, either through electoral or constitutional law. This data is sourced from either Krook (2009) or The Quota Project website, www.quotaproject.org. The percentage of women in the lower house/primary legislature was taken from ipu.org. This figure is for the month in which the fieldwork took place. GDP per capita is from the World Bank and is reported for the year prior to that in which the first fieldwork for the survey was undertaken in each specific country. http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD?page=1. Female Employment Rate in Service industries is from the World Bank wherever available - Labour force participation rate, female (% of female population ages 15+) (modeled ILO estimate) http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.TLF.CACT.FE.ZS/countries?page=1. Labour force participation rate is the proportion of the population ages 15 and older that is economically active: all people who supply labour for the production of goods and services during a specified period - for the year prior to that in which the survey was carried out.

Table A4: Mean Random Effects by Country (from Model 1 – Intercepts Model with Individual-level Variables Only)

Country	Mean (RE Country)
France	.168
Belgium	-.114
Netherlands	-.532
Germany	-.070
Italy	.685
Luxembourg	-.164
Denmark	-.644
Ireland	-.035
Great Britain	.021
Greece	.222
Spain	.758
Portugal	.070
Finland	-.139
Sweden	.584
Austria	.011
Cyprus	-.166
Czech Republic	-.248
Estonia	-.299
Hungary	.115
Latvia	-.353
Lithuania	-.015
Malta	-.117
Poland	.091
Slovakia	-.189
Slovenia	.086
Bulgaria	.070
Romania	.205

*All data is weighted. Mean (RE Country) = Mean Random Effects for Country

Table A5: Multilevel Binary Logistic Model of Blame Assignment - All Structural Explanations for the Under-representation of Women (27 EU States)

Variables	Model 1 β	Model 1 SE	Model 2 β	Model 2 SE	Model 3 β	Model 3 SE
Constant	0.39*	0.16	1.15	0.69	1.23	0.71
Female	0.12*	0.06	0.12*	0.06	0.20*	0.06
Level 1 Controls						
Married	-0.07*	0.03	-0.07*	0.03	-0.07*	0.03
Young Age 18-29	0.05	0.06	0.05	0.06	0.05	0.06
Middle/Older Age 45-59	0.02	0.06	0.02	0.06	0.02	0.06
Old Age 65 plus	-0.21*	0.09	-0.21*	0.09	-0.22*	0.09
Education	-0.04	0.16	-0.04	0.16	-0.06	0.16
White Collar	-0.11*	0.05	-0.11*	0.05	-0.12*	0.05
Manual	-0.10	0.07	-0.10	0.07	-0.11	0.07
Work in Home	-0.01	0.07	-0.01	0.07	-0.03	0.06
Unemployed	-0.03	0.06	-0.03	0.06	-0.02	0.06
Retired	0.01	0.05	0.01	0.05	0.02	0.05
Political Interest	0.15*	0.06	0.16*	0.06	0.16*	0.06
Left-Right	-0.06*	0.01	-0.06*	0.01	-0.06*	0.01
Level 2 Variables						
% Women in Parliament	-		0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01
Quota	-		0.12	0.09	0.11	0.09
% Female Labour Force	-		-0.02	0.01	-0.02	0.01
GDP	-		-0.06	0.05	-0.07	0.04
Random Effects						
Intercept Variance (var_cons)	0.10*	0.03	0.08*	0.02	0.10*	0.02
Slope Variance (var_Female)	-		-		0.04*	0.01
Intercept/Slope Covariance	-		-		-0.03	0.02
Model Fit						
Wald Chi-Square <0.05	1346.22*		4297.43*		3274.74*	
Log Likelihood	-16270.24		-16267.51		-16249.84	
N	24823		24823		24823	

Figure A1: Average Marginal Effects: Blaming All Structural Factors (ML Logit: From Model 3 – Fixed Effects Only)

Blaming All Structural Factors: AMEs with 95% CIs

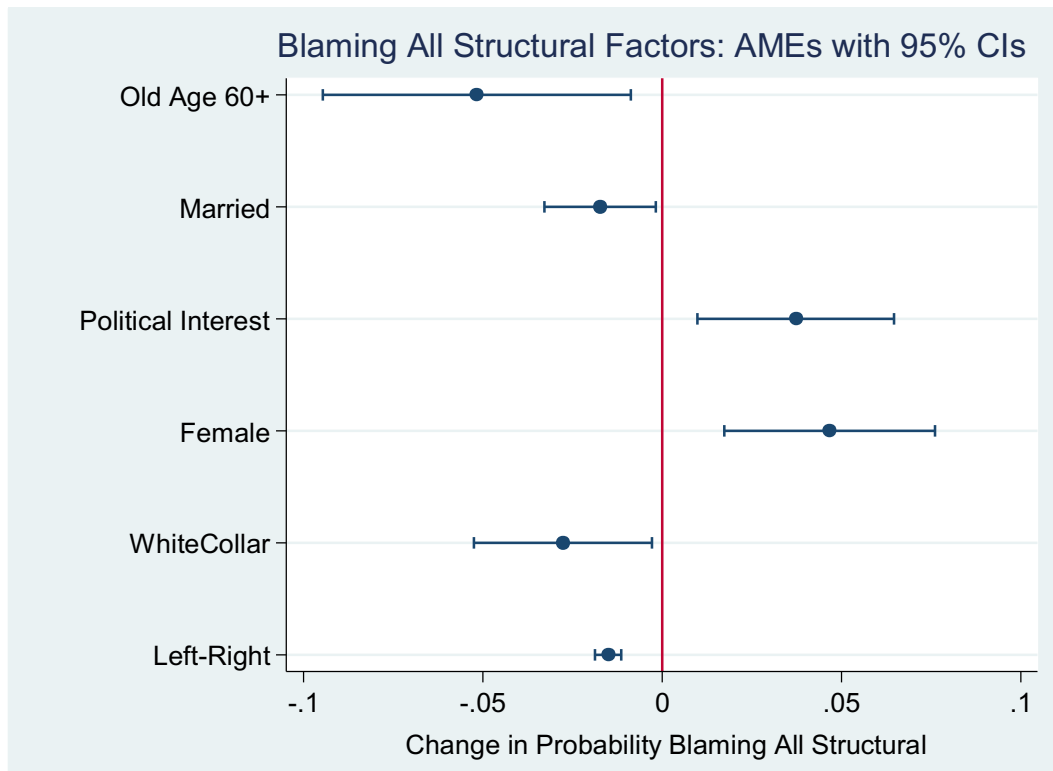Change in Probability Blaming All Structural

Table A6: Multinomial Logistic Models of Blame Assignment for the Under-representation of Women Across 27 EU Countries: Most Responses Structural; Most Responses Meritocratic (Base = All Responses Structural)

Variables	Model A1: Mostly Structural β SE	Model A1: Mostly Meritocratic β SE
Bivariate Model		
Constant	-0.94* 0.04	-0.96* 0.04
Sex		
Female	-0.04 0.05	-0.19* 0.05
Model Fit		
LR Chi-Square	13.91*	13.91*
Log Likelihood	-23804.13	-23804.13
AIC	47616.26	47616.26
Variables	Model A2: Mostly Structural β SE	Model A2: Mostly Meritocratic β SE
Full Model		
Constant	-1.17* 0.12	-1.46* 0.13
Sex		
Female	-0.02 0.05	-0.17* 0.05
Model Fit		
LR Chi-Square	115.79*	115.79*
Log Likelihood	-23692.66	-23692.66
AIC	47441.33	47441.33
N	24823	24823

*Significant at the <0.05 level. All Structural N = 13144; Most Responses Structural N = 5784; Most Responses Meritocratic N = 5895

Figure A2: Average Marginal Effects: Sex Effect Across Blame Categories (All Responses – Categories Include All Structural; Mostly Structural and Mostly Meritocratic)
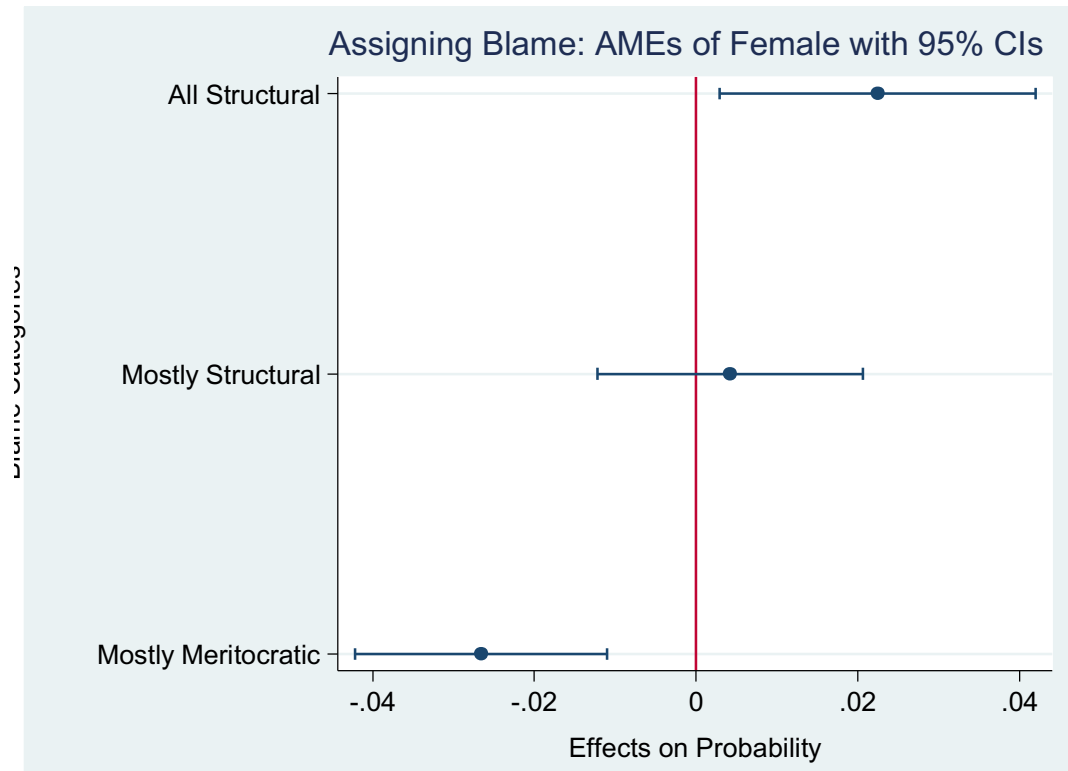
Table A7: Binary Logistic Regression Model of Blaming Political Culture for the Under-representation of Women (27 EU states)

Variables	Model 1			Model 2		
	β	SE	AMEs	β	SE	AMEs
Constant	-0.04	0.03	-	-0.25*	0.11	-
Female	0.17*	0.04	0.04	0.13*	0.05	0.03
Level 1 Controls						
Married		-		0.02	0.05	
Young Age 18-29		-		-0.00	0.07	
Middle/Older Age 45-59		-		0.09	0.06	
Old Age 65 plus		-		0.11	0.09	
Education		-		-0.39	0.30	
White Collar		-		0.13	0.08	
Manual		-		0.24*	0.07	0.06
Work in Home		-		0.37*	0.10	0.09
Unemployed		-		0.32*	0.09	0.08
Retired		-		0.30*	0.09	0.07
Political Interest		-		-0.01	0.07	
Left-Right		-		-0.00	0.01	
Model Fit						
Wald Chi-Square <0.05	14.43*			63.20*		
Log Likelihood	-13525.93			-13464.94		
AIC	27055.85			26957.88		
N	18928			18928		

*Significant <0.05.

Table A8: Multinomial Logistic Models of Attitudes Towards the Under-representation of Women Across 27 EU Countries: Structural Factors - Blame Parties; Society; Elites (Base = Political Culture)

Variables	Model A1 Parties		Model A1 Society		Model A1 Elites	
	β	SE	β	SE	β	SE
Bivariate Model						
Constant	-1.78*	0.06	-0.55*	0.04	-1.23*	0.05
Sex						
Female	-0.15	0.08	-0.14*	0.05	-0.25*	0.07
Model Fit						
LR Chi-Square	17.30*		17.30*		17.30*	
Log Likelihood	-22772.55		-22772.55		-22772.55	
AIC	45557.10		45557.10		45557.10	
Variables	Model A2 Parties		Model A2 Society		Model A2 Elites	
	β	SE	β	SE	β	SE
Full Model						
Constant	-1.88*	0.23	-0.08	0.13	-1.42*	0.17
Sex						
Female	-0.14	0.09	-0.09	0.05	-0.19*	0.07
Model Fit						
LR Chi-Square	172.32*		172.32*		172.32*	
Log Likelihood	-22592.05		-22592.05		-22592.05	
AIC	45268.09		45268.09		45268.09	
N	18928		18928		18928	

*Significant <0.05. *Note: 'Blame Political Culture' is the base category for Models A1 and A2. Models A1 = Bivariate impact of sex only; Models A2 = Full model including all individual level variables. Weighted EU 27 countries weight; Full model contains all predictors. Key: Women placed low on the lists = Blame Parties (1479); Stereotype (Women not suited to politics) = Blame Society (5089) Men do not value women skills + Media play less attention to women = Blame Political Culture (9651); Measures to encourage parity are ineffective = Blame Elites (2709).

Table A9: Multinomial logistic models of attitudes towards the under-representation of women across 27 EU countries: Structural Factors - Blame Parties; Society; Elites; Meritocratic Factors – Blame Women (Base = Political Culture)

Variables	Model A1 Parties		Model A1 Society		Model A1 Elites		Model A1 Women	
	β	SE	β	SE	β	SE	β	SE
Bivariate Model								
Constant	-1.78*	0.06	-0.55*	0.04	-1.23*	0.05	-0.58*	0.04
Sex								
Female	-0.15	0.08	-0.14*	0.05	-0.25*	0.07	-0.26*	0.05
Model Fit								
LR Chi-Square	30.30*		30.30*		30.30*		30.30*	
Log Likelihood	-35068.33		-35068.33		-35068.33		-35068.33	
AIC	70152.66		70152.66		70152.66		70152.66	
Variables	Model A2 Parties		Model A2 Society		Model A2 Elites		Model A2 Women	
	β	SE	β	SE	β	SE	β	SE
Full Model								
Constant	-1.87*	0.23	-0.08	0.13	-1.43*	0.17	-0.90*	0.13
Sex								
Female	-0.15	0.09	-0.09	0.05	-0.19*	0.07	-0.23*	0.05
Model Fit								
LR Chi-Square	248.95*		248.95*		248.95*		248.95*	
Log Likelihood	-34814.74		-34814.74		-34814.74		-34814.74	
AIC	69741.49		69741.49		69741.49		69741.49	
N	24823		24823		24823		24823	

*Significant <0.05. *Note: For the purposes of brevity, we include a multinomial logistic regression with both structural and meritocratic factors included on the whole sample/full dataset. There are little or no substantial differences in the findings with the previous analyses that contained structural factors only.

Figure A3: Average Marginal Effects: Sex Effect Across Blame Categories (All Responses – Includes Structural and Meritocratic Categories)