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Veröffentlichungsversion / Published Version

Zeitschriftenartikel / journal article

Zur Verfügung gestellt in Kooperation mit / provided in cooperation with:

Verlag Barbara Budrich

Empfohlene Zitierung / Suggested Citation:

Magnusdottir, G. L., & Kronsell, A. (2016). The Double Democratic Deficit in Climate Policy-making by the EU Commission. *Femina Politica - Zeitschrift für feministische Politikwissenschaft*, 25(2), 64-77. <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-51212-0>

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The Double Democratic Deficit in Climate Policy-making by the EU Commission¹

GUNNHILDUR LILY MAGNUSDOTTIR, ANNICA KRONSELL

Early European Union (EU) gender research focused primarily on policy areas that were directly relevant to women, e.g., regarding their equal rights and employment (Kantola 2010, Hubert 2012, van der Vleuten 2007, Stratigaki 2012). Recently, studies have emerged in other policy domains, exemplified by gender perspectives on migration (Mushaben 2012), agricultural policy (Prügl 2012), development aid (Debuscher 2014) and security policy (Kronsell 2015), inter alia. These studies have confirmed a lack of gender inclusion and awareness in those policy areas. Abels and Mushaben (2012) edited volume demonstrated the democratic deficit in the EU regarding gender. Because women are both underrepresented within EU institutions and gender awareness is lacking in EU policy-making we called this a double democratic deficit. It excludes women and it excludes gender.

This article contributes to the existing scholarship with its specific focus on gender in the climate domain, significant for three reasons. First, there are documented gender differences in Europe when it comes to male and female views, behavior and adaptation to climate change (Carlsson-Kanyama et al. 2010, Magnúsdóttir/Kronsell 2015). Secondly, the EU plays an important role in constructing the international climate regime. Finally, having committed itself to gender mainstreaming since 1996, the EU has obliged itself to remedying the double democratic deficit by addressing the representation of women and men in the EU institutions and by integrating a gender perspective into all of its policies (EIGE 2016, Kantola 2010). Scholars have undertaken limited research to date on the gendering of EU climate policy, but earlier studies indicate that EU responses to climate change have been largely gender-blind (Allwood 2014, Alston 2013). Further exploration on the gendering of EU climate policy is long overdue. Our study seeks to contribute to that field by exploring if and in what ways the double democratic deficit plays out in EU climate policy and policy-making; with the help of feminist institutionalism we look for the *causes* for this neglect within the institutional structure of the Commission. We start by discussing our conceptual framework and the methods used. Next, we evaluate the levels of descriptive representation of women and men involved in EU's climate policy-making at the Commission. We then uncover indications of gender recognition by scrutinizing key policy documents from the Commission, coupled with the results of our interviews with Commission officials. Correspondingly, we investigate the institutional environment wherein EU's climate policy is drafted as well as policy outcomes in order to shed light on whether EU's climate policy suffers from a double democratic deficit and what its possible causes may be.

Norms, principles and representation within institutions

This article takes as its point, Abels and Mushaben's (2012, 11ff.) contentions regarding the democratic deficit afflicting the EU, which infers that low descriptive representation of women in decision-making results in a lack of gender recognition among policy-makers and thus across policy outcomes. Our focus rests primarily with the Commission, asking who is represented within the Commission, what needs are being recognized and what outputs does this produce. We employ feminist institutionalism, which argues that institutions organize power inequalities through formal as well as informal rules and practices; the construction of identities is intertwined in the daily life and logic of institutions. Gender relates to institutions in multiple ways; institutional practices contribute heavily to the gender segregation of work; institutions moreover serve as arenas in which gender symbols are (re)shaped; and individual gender identities can emerge as the products of institutions. Feminist institutionalism uses the analytical strengths and concepts of new institutionalism while seeking to overcome "the gender blindness of existing scholarship" (Mackay/Kenny/Chappel 2010, 574, Kenny/Mackay 2009; Krook/Mackay 2011).

Combining feminist scholarship with insights from historical institutionalism, such as path dependency and the "stickiness" of institutions, is also helpful. Path dependency and stickiness relate to long-standing institutional practices, which reproduce institutions as gendered, through patterns of action in a "gendered logic of appropriateness". Individuals follow established rules defining what is appropriate for their social and professional roles as well as for their personal identities (Gains/Lowndes 2014, 5). Furthermore, power inequalities in institutions "(...) can be reinforced over time and often come to be deeply embedded in organizations (...)" (Piereson 2004, 11). This explains why historical or traditional notions of gender are so resilient (Kronsell 2015). Path dependency thus provides a certain amount of stickiness insofar as opportunities for change are constrained by previous choices (Kenny 2007, 93, Kulawik 2009, 265). Particularly in institutions dominated by male bodies, masculinity is ostensibly reproduced as "normality", resulting in path dependency wherever gender differences are not present or recognized (Kronsell 2006, 108ff.). Path dependency is connected to daily practices of institutions because that is the way in which institutions are reproduced as gendered, through patterns of action in a "gendered logic of appropriateness".

Political representation, or the lack thereof of representation in politics, has been a crucial topic in gender studies (Lovenduski 2005, 1). It is also central to debates on democracy; if gender representation is imbalanced in democratic institutions, it becomes a sign of an ill-functioning democracy or democratic deficit. Anne Phillips (1995) maintains that to rely only on the representation of political ideas and views through political parties, for example, is not at all sufficient. Rejecting the notion that gender can be represented through ideas and views detached from a person embodying that group, she argues for a "politics of presence". Drawing on Phillips's

politics of presence as a starting point, scholars have developed two main categories, descriptive and substantive representation, for use in explorations of women's involvement in public service (Lovenduski 2005). Descriptive representation relates to the number of women and men who participate, that is, the relationship and balance between males and females in political institutions (Wängnerud 2009, 53). As other researchers have shown, when women are represented in greater numbers it is often the result of formal or informal quotas (Krook 2009, Dahlerup/Leyenaar 2013). Gender equity guidelines aim for a balance, falling within the 40 to 60% range (Lovenduski 2005). This approach qualifies descriptive representation with the argument that the presence of only a few women in politics will not make a "real difference", establishing a link between descriptive and substantive representation.

The critical mass argument suggests that a certain number of women must be present in order for their actions to produce substantial effects (Kanter 1977, Dahlerup 1988, 2006; Abels and Mushaben 2012). Concepts like critical mass and mechanisms involving gender quotas have helped to establish a growing female presence in politics, but they can be problematic if the focus is reduced to mere numbers. Rather than critical mass, critical acts are what leads to substantive representation and are linked to the question of whether women will make a difference or not, once they have been included in the polity (Dahlerup 2006, Mushaben 2012). Linked to the critical mass debate, gender mainstreaming rests on the idea that most activities have a gender dimension found in the underlying norms of institutions (Walby 2004, Woodward 2003). The strategy is to "mainstream" women's experiences and needs by incorporating gender perspectives into all policy areas, at all stages, at all levels (Kantola 2010, Liebert 2002). EU gender mainstreaming goals center on both descriptive and substantive forms of gender representation, the aim of which is to acknowledge that women's experiences and views usually *differ* from those of men (EIGE 2016, Christiansen/Raum 1999).

Regarding the climate change issue in particular, we are inspired by Joane Nagel (2012), who uses an intersectional perspective claiming there are specific male interests tied to the global climate agenda and suggests that "[T]he policies that shape local, national and international responses to climate change reflect the gendered power, privilege and preoccupations of mostly male policy-makers around the world" (Nagel 2012, 4). The idea that women have specific interests different from men's interests has been contested in the debate on women's representation (Jones/Jónasdóttir 2008, 9f). Weldon (2011, 442) claims that the problem is not "that women never share any interests" but that a focus on common interests of women lends privilege to certain women. As our case suggests there is a problem with a universal category of women's interests. Well-educated, female climate experts most likely have less in common with low-income working class women across Europe than with their male colleagues at the Commission and this applies to their climate impact as well as climate vulnerability (Kronsell 2016). A narrow focus on interests may obscure minority views and ideas by overriding the day-to-day differences

that exist between women in terms of social positions, experiences and livelihoods. Nevertheless, we may expect a “minimal common denominator” (Jónasdóttir 1988, 38) in a shared interest of acting toward increased democracy. Double democratic-deficit reasoning thus entails both a democratic and a justice based argument for equal representation, rather than a preoccupation with the link between critical mass and critical acts perspectives, asking what percentage of women might produce a gender balanced outcome. Policy-making is considered democratic when women and men enjoy equal representation in key institutions and when women are able to *influence* policy-making to the same degree as men. The critical mass argument retains its relevance to the extent that the possible existence of a double democratic deficit within EU climate policy structures can in fact be remedied by critical mass, leading to changes in policy-making institutions (Waylen 2014, 498).

Methods and material

In order to assess the extent of the deficit affecting EU climate policy, we offer a qualitative analysis of gender representation and the recognition of gender needs in relation to EU climate policy. Our focus on policy-making institutions complements other feminist institutional scholarship concentrating mainly on representation in political parties and parliamentary institutions. We focus primarily on the Directorate-General (DG) Climate Action, serving the Commission, which is the leading climate policy institution; we further analyse documents from three other climate-relevant DGs: DG Energy, DG Mobility and Transport, and DG Environment.

DG Climate Action is interesting not only because of its leading role. It is also relatively young, this unit having served under the jurisdiction of DG Environment until 2010. This means that it might have escaped path dependency and had an opportunity to develop its own institutional norms and practices in this emerging issue area. DG Climate Action is important, given the steps DG Climate Action has taken in the international arena to connect gender and climate change, e.g. at the United Nations Climate Change Conference, COP 17, in Durban in 2011. Here it sought to “(...) actively raise the issue of gender and climate change on the negotiating agenda” (Moustgaard 2012). Moreover, DG Climate Action’s first Commissioner, Connie Hedegaard, was previously Denmark’s environmental and climate minister, which might have heightened the expectations about DG Climate Action since the Scandinavian states are characterized by gender equality within its larger political bodies and its administrative climate policy units (Magnusdottir/Kronsell 2015).

Our analysis follows three interconnected steps. First, we mapped the representative presence of female and male experts in DG Climate Action. We also utilized relevant data from the European Institute of Gender Equality (EIGE) and from the Commission; for comparative purposes, we include information on the representation of male and female climate experts at three management levels within DG Energy, DG Mobility and Transport and DG Environment. Secondly, we undertook a content

analysis using selected climate documents from 2012-2015. We did not limit our text analysis to a search for explicit gender references; we also looked for references to words and sentences that we considered indicative of gender awareness in climate policy. In fact, we searched for any signs that the European public was not perceived as a homogeneous group in the documents analyzed. Thirteen key documents from the Commission were selected for the text analysis, primarily those linked to the second European Climate Change Programme (ECCP II).²

We deemed two types of documents especially important for our analysis: documents that outlined a policy agenda, and those that were informational in nature. The aim was to ensure that the documents selected targeted different aspects of climate change as well as different audiences. The outlining documents set the goals and future vision for EU climate policy, targeting primarily national decision-makers. The informational documents, by contrast, target European citizens. While most documents originate from DG Climate Action, we also selected at least one key document from each of the other DGs included in our study.

Thirdly, between the period 2012-2015, we interviewed Commission officials involved in climate policy-making. The interviews, which were gender-balanced, provided us with insights into how policy-makers perceived the connection between gender and climate issues in their work; we used them to determine, in what specific areas gender differences might be visible in their work, and whether or not they were aware of gender mainstreaming obligations with respect to climate issues. We conducted a total of 23 semi-structured interviews by telephone with experts in different climate units at the Commission.

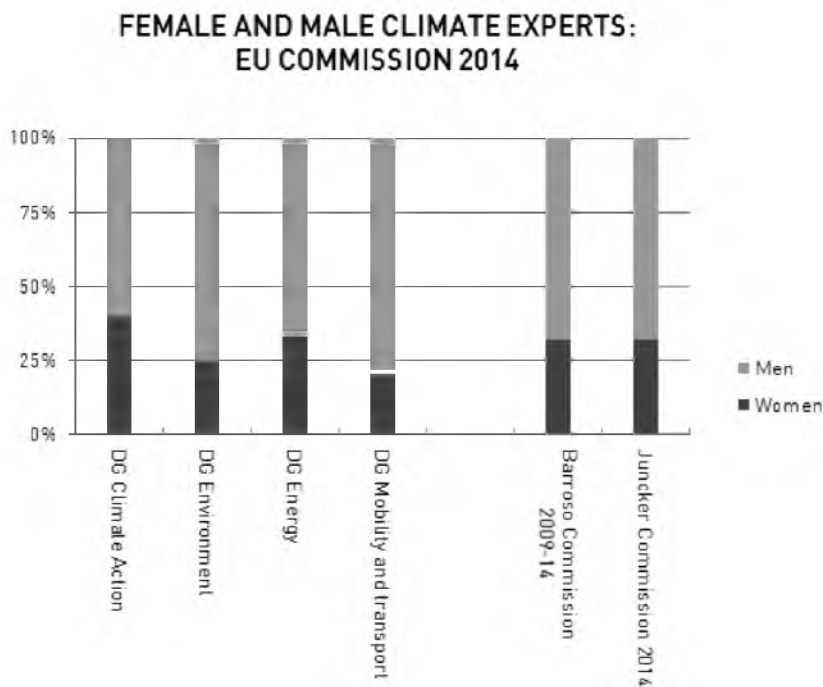
Gender balance in a masculine environment

Our findings reveal that DG Climate Action is not completely gender-balanced,³ but there is a critical female mass in DG Climate Action, where women account for 40 percent of the climate experts (see Figure 1)⁴. From 2010-2014 DG Climate Action was headed by a female Commissioner, Connie Hedegaard, the only female Commissioner among the four DGs. The Director General of DG Climate Action (management level 2) was male.⁵ The other three DGs showed little evidence of gender balancing (Figure 1). DG Energy occupies the second position with 33.3% women, not gender balanced in a parity sense but at least offering a critical mass of female experts, along with a male Director General and a male Commissioner.⁶ In DG Environment only 25 percent of the experts at the lower management level were women. DG Mobility and Transport comprised the most unbalanced unit, where only 12.5% of the experts were women. The extremely poor representation of women in DG Mobility and Transport parallels similar pattern in the transport sector across Europe: Women accounted for only 18.5% of the workers involved in various European transport sectors in 2010, located largely in the service areas; men were overrepresented in technical and operational positions. The transport sector thus appears

to be reproducing a stereotypically gendered division of labour at all levels (EIGE 2012, 41). Women had not attained critical mass in either DG Environment or DG Mobility and Transport; both DGs had male Commissioners as well as Directors General at the time we conducted our study. In 2014, Commission president Jean Claude Juncker did however appoint Violeta Bulc as the Commissioner overseeing DG Mobility and Transport.

It is clear that DG Climate Action stands out, offering the greatest degree of representation to women among the four DGs we investigated, offering a somewhat unique gender profile, particularly when measured against the other climate-related DGs. DG Climate Action was not only the unit closest to achieving gender balance but was also the only one that fell under the remit of a female Commissioner at the time of our interviews.

Figure 1: Descriptive representation of female and male climate experts working at the Commission in 2014



Liberal feminists might interpret the critical mass of female experts found in DG Climate Action as a positive sign that gender equality will soon be achieved and as an indication that newer institutions, like DG Climate Action, are moving in a more democratic direction. However, participation in politics cannot be limited to equality measured only in terms of descriptive representation; it should also relate

to the gender sensitive content of decisions. In fact, mainstreaming gender in EU climate change politics would have to integrate both actors and actions: “ (...) a gender perspective to the content of the different policies, and addressing the issue of representation of women and men in the given policy area” (EIGE 2016). Commensurate with this goal, our next step was to search for signs of gender recognition in the selected climate documents and to interview Commission experts involved in climate policy-making.

Path dependency in climate units

We scrutinized thirteen key climate policy documents issued by the Commission between 2012-2015, searching for any signs of gender recognition. We determined in brief, that none of the documents were gender mainstreamed. One exception involved a strategy document produced by DG Energy entitled “A sustainable future for transport”, which stated that “gender considerations should also be taken into account, to facilitate women’s access to transport jobs” (European Commission 2013d). The recognition that the transport sector rates needs to remedy the problem of its unequal gender representation (see EIGE 2012) speaks only of women, ignoring the underrepresentation of men in the service areas, for example. More surprising is the finding that documents stemming from DG Climate Action did not differ from those produced by the more male-dominated DGs. The lack of gender references and the absence of a more gender sensitive treatment of issues in the documents we examined confirm that the link between women’s descriptive and substantive representation is as weak with respect to the climate policy domain as has been observed in other studies (Dahlerup/Leyenaar 2013, 9, Magnusdottir/Kronsell 2015).

To probe this further we broadened our approach, looking for any signs that policy makers took the heterogeneity of the European public into consideration. We searched for implicit references to heterogeneity, based on such terms as “gender”, “male”, “female”, “woman”, “man”, “age”, “class”, “ethnicity”, “education”, “mother”, “father” and “child(ren)”. In general, we reached the striking conclusion that the documents completely excluded a wide array of climate-relevant social factors, although they did contain some vague references to two contributing factors, “age” and “class”. These terms appeared in the “Action Plan for Energy Efficiency”, a strategy document from DG Energy, as well as in “A sustainable future for transport”, a strategy document from DG Mobility and Transport. One informational document from DG Climate Action also mentioned the word “women” in a section about good practices in the member states, informing readers that a Danish clothing company produces, inter alia, “sustainable underwear and loungewear for women” (European Commission 2014b,165). The document includes a picture of a female lingerie model in her underwear, infused with sexual overtones: the woman is shown taking off her underpants. Not only does this document point to the lack of a gender perspective; it also suggests a problematic normative context in which DG Climate

Action promotes gender stereotypes (Miller Johnston/McTavish 2014, 533). Featuring women as sexual objects to induce climate sensitive consumption is hardly the goal of gender mainstreaming.

The documents we explored also had a strong focus on neoliberal economic and technical measures as their main strategies for addressing climate change issues, usually paying only limited attention to behavioral dimensions. This construction is problematic insofar as it “(...) excludes a people-centred approach, which could favour a gender sensitive policy” (Allwood 2014, 3). The invisibility of gender and the corresponding failure of EU officials to gender mainstream climate politics may also be an expression of specific male interests that prevail in relation to the climate agenda (see Nagel 2012). Guided by feminist institutionalism, we argue that the invisible nature of gender reflects the path-dependent nature of the institutional environment binding the DGs in question: when gender appears at all, it is interpreted to mean “women”.

We therefore interviewed Commission officials, our third step, in order to increase our understanding of this complete neglect of gender concerns in policy documents, to explore signs of the gendered logic of appropriateness. An overwhelming majority of the experts we interviewed associated the term “gender” solely with women; many emphasized behavioral differences between women and men when asked about the relation between gender and climate change. Typical answers ran as follows: “Female staff approach the climate policy-making with lateral thinking, men tend to want immediate problem-solving” (male interviewee A November 2013). Alternatively, “We (female officials) might be more cautious but also able to process more angles than men” (female interviewee A, March 2013). Commission officials with whom we spoke appeared to view gender mainly in terms of differences in orientation between men and women in decision-making.

We detected not only the tendency to equate “gender” with “women” but also a lack of insight regarding actual gendered differences linked to climate change. The majority of our interviewees were uncertain about what gender in climate change meant in *the European context*, and would give answers such as: “Substance does not change due to gender in my opinion, but gender is visible since females work part time and have to coordinate work and family to a greater extent” (Female interviewee B, November 2014). Several interviewees brought up the issue of part time work, claiming that female policy-makers needed to work part time due to limited day care facilities. This suggests not only that officials were ill-informed regarding more specific, differentiated effects of changing climate conditions on women and men that might be considered in policy making; they also lack a fundamental understanding of gender, e.g. by perceiving gender as something that only applies to women in relation to their working conditions within EU institutions.

The perception of women as primary caregivers rather than policy-makers was a recurring theme within the DGs we examined. Several female officials mentioned oppressive institutional practices that made the Commission a difficult place for

them to act: “It can be very difficult to be a female working in the EU. Both younger and older male officials have ‘mistaken’ me for a secretary, and this is sometimes an intentional strategy to set you off balance” (Female interviewee C November 2013). Several other female experts expressed similar views regarding negative organizational settings within the Commission; we rarely encountered any of these sentiments in our earlier study focusing on Scandinavian climate policy-making (Magnusdottir/Kronsell 2015). This might indicate that there is a different gender regime in the Commission, more traditional and gender-blind, reflecting a masculine institutional environment.

How can we explain the limited knowledge on gender and climate change that the interviews with the Commission experts revealed? The tendency to equate gender with women excludes any discussion or understanding of men and masculinity, thus there is no consideration of other gender factors in this policy domain. There are studies testifying to the relationship between specific masculinities and risk behavior, and between masculinity and power that are helpful in this context. Such studies have found that conservative, white, middle-class men are more likely to deny climate problems (McCright/Dunlap 2011) and opt to take more risks for example in financial decisions (Griffin 2013). Those who exercise power and benefit from the current socio-technological system will be more motivated to justify it and less willing to promote changes (Dietz/Dan/Shwom 2007).

Climate governance today focuses mainly on technical solutions and improvements in the energy and transport arenas (Hemmati/Röhr 2009, 20). These are male dominated sectors in which men largely control and benefit from the research and jobs available in these sectors. Here male power is material but it also becomes a disciplining force, based on the normative structures that have emerged in the fossil-fuel economy. One can argue that climate governance happens in a context in which masculinity is the accepted norm, although the latter remains unarticulated and invisible (Hearn/Husu 2011). Where masculinity has become the norm, climate strategies that lack a gender perspective are bound to simply re-produce the existing gender power order. This kind of path dependency limits the potential scope for change and the production of new gender-sensitive knowledge. Commission officials simply follow embedded rules, according to earlier definitions of what is appropriate, thereby reinforcing established gender norms and power inequalities in the climate domain (Gains/Lowndes 2014, 5).

Concluding discussion

Our findings confirm the persistence of a democratic deficit and lack of gender mainstreaming within the Commission with respect to climate policy-making. They also indicate that the connection between descriptive and substantive representation is far from straightforward, to the extent that a 40% level of descriptive female representation in DG Climate Action has not produced either a gender sensitive institutional

environment or gender mainstreamed policy documents. We noted a similar silence regarding gender in the documents explored from DG Climate Action and DG Energy, on one hand, and the two remaining DGs lacking a critical mass of female experts, on the other. Our previous study exploring questions of gender visibility in Scandinavian climate policy-making also demonstrated that a parity representation of female and male officials in Scandinavian climate units did not automatically result in growing gender awareness among policy-makers or in policy documents (Magnusdottir/Kronsell 2015).

We turn to feminist institutionalism to explain the absence of critical acts in the European climate policy domain. Focusing on path dependency within the Commission, which constrains the room for gender mainstreaming and development of gender sensitive institutional norms and practices, we argue that the Commission's masculine institutional environment should certainly be considered "sticky". Masculinity is constantly reproduced as normality, while gender is used to refer primarily to women. Opportunities for change on either count are inhibited by previous choices. The integrationist form of gender mainstreaming that the EU has adopted is moreover highly problematic, because it does little more than integrate women into the EU's existing masculine institutional environment (Kantola 2010, 132). This means that established power inequalities are being reproduced even in a new institutional setting like DG Climate Action.

We conclude that masculine norms and power are ostensibly so deeply institutionalized in the existing climate institutions that policy-makers, regardless of their sex, accept and adapt their views to the masculinized institutional environment in which EU climate policies are formulated. The tendency among masculinity driven institutions like the Commission is one of keeping gender invisible, in part, by relating gender only to women and/or treating their presence and concerns as cases deviating from the masculine norms. In order to successfully gender mainstream European climate policy, officials themselves need to develop a deeper understanding of a wide assortment of gender implications, as well as recognizing that climate policy cannot be gendered by just "adding women and stirring" them into existing policies.

Notes

- 1 The authors wish to thank Professor Joyce Marie Mushaben for her valuable comments and advice.
- 2 See all documents in appendix.
- 3 Equal 50/50 representation of women and men.
- 4 Information about gender division obtained directly from the HR of DG Climate Action in October 2014.
- 5 The management level is here divided into three levels in accordance with the division by EIGE and information from DG Justice (2014). Level 1 is the Commissioner, level 2 is the director general and level 3 are sector heads.
- 6 Information about gender division obtained directly from the HR of DG Energy in October 2014.

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„This Module is not only about Women and Gay People“ Gender Mainstreaming in der europäischen Asylpolitik: Von einem essentialisierenden zu einem intersektionalen Genderverständnis?

NATALIE WELFENS

Einleitung

Entgegen dem eigentlichen Anspruch des Gender Mainstreamings¹, Eingang in alle Politikbereiche zu finden, spielten Fragen rund um Geschlechtergerechtigkeit in der europäischen Asylpolitik lange Zeit lediglich eine marginale Rolle. Vereinzelt