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Barriers to Women Entering Parliament and Local Government

Sue Maguire

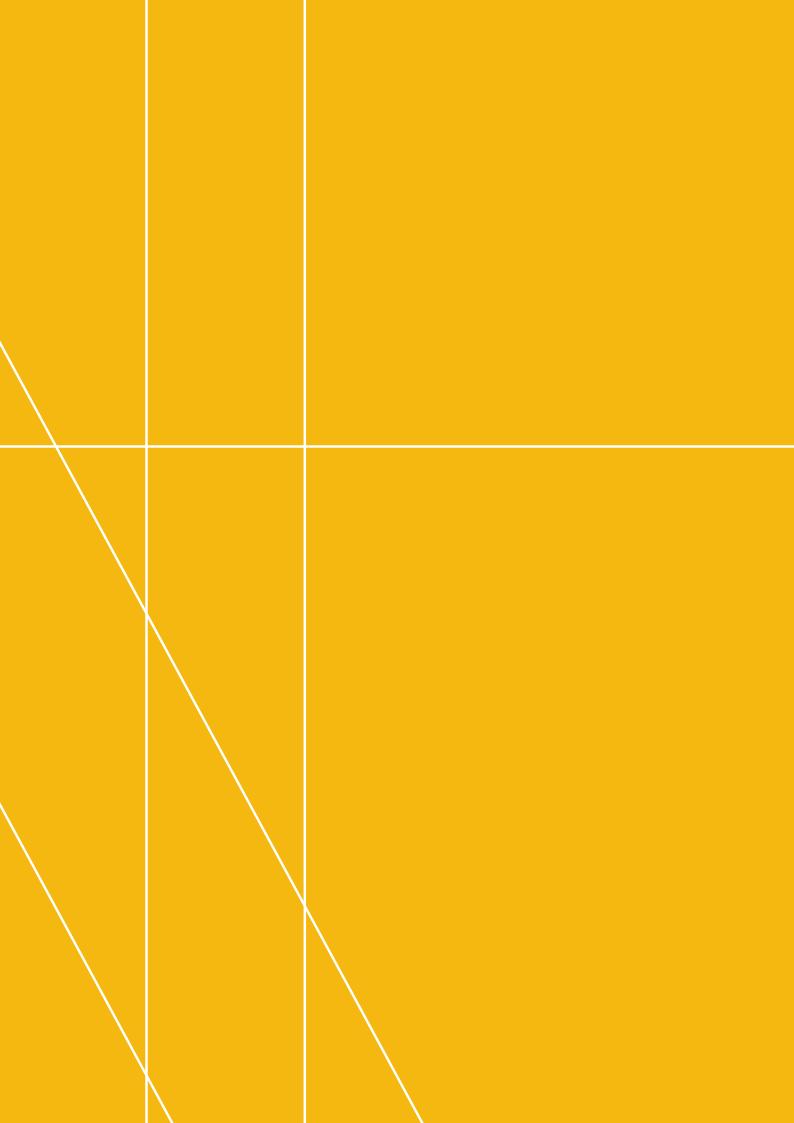IPR Honorary Professor, University of Bath

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Contents

Executive Summary

The two broad aims of this rapid evidence review were to identify:
a) barriers to women's participation in local and national government; and
b) evidence of policies and practices, sometimes referred to as Positive Action Mechanisms, which have increased their levels of participation.

The methodology comprised: an inception meeting to agree the parameters and key issues of the study; a scoping review to identify sources of data; a review of evidence and literature, through a search of the literature; analysis and synthesis to extract the key messages and provide a thematic analysis of barriers and positive action mechanisms; and reporting.

A wide literature search was undertaken, with special emphasis on key databases, relevant journals and policy and research outputs (see 'Reporting' on page 13). In searching the literature, the following combinations of key words were applied:

- 'women* quotas'
- 'women* political representation'
- 'women MPs'
- 'barriers women politics'
- 'women local council'
- 'gender* quotas'

- 'gender political representation'
- 'female MPs'
- 'gender MPs'
- 'gender local council'
- 'gender, barriers, politics'
- 'political* recruitment'

Determining whether a particular document or piece of data should be included was dependent on its: *focus* – issues relating to the barriers to women's participation in politics and evidence of measures which enhance levels of participation; *timing* – literature produced from 2000 onwards; *geographical coverage* – predominantly on data and reports from the UK; *type of study* – substantive, objective pieces of research, as well as evidence from so-called 'grey literature'; and *quality* – methodology, sample size and representativeness, the reliability of the findings, the objectivity and transparency of analysis, and the presentation of findings.

Context

Currently, 32% of Members of Parliament (MPs) are women – the largest ever proportion of women MPs

Currently, 32% of Members of Parliament (MPs) are women – the largest ever proportion of women MPs (Apostolova and Cracknell, 2017). Until 1997, when it rose to 18%, it had been in single figures. Since then it has increased considerably.

At around 50 years, the average age of MPs has remained unchanged since 1979 (Watson and Fawcett, 2018). Reflecting a major constraint

on women entering Parliament, women MPs are significantly more likely than their male counterparts, to have no children.

A long-term trend has been for the Labour Party to have much larger proportions of female MPs than the Conservatives. The current figures are 41% and 21% respectively (Apostolova and Cracknell, 2017). This is partly attributable to the Labour Party's policies of implementing all-women shortlists when selecting candidates, and replacing retiring MPs in 'winnable' seats with women candidates.

In local government, although women's representation as councillors is around the same as in Parliament, it has seen only gradual increases. There are variations in women's representation by region and by the type of council. The high rate of incumbency at elections (80%) means that there are fewer opportunities for women to be elected. The majority of incumbents are men and incumbents have a much greater propensity to to be re-elected to office (if they seek to do so), which limits the opportunities available to new entrants. Once women have become councillors, they are more likely to drop out after serving one term.

Internationally, in terms of women's share of seats in a country's lower/single house legislatures, the 32% in Parliament is slightly above the OECD average of 29% (OECD, 2017). At 43%, the proportion of UK women who are Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) is higher than the 32% in Parliament (European Parliament, 2017). Throughout Europe, left-wing political parties are found to elect greater numbers of women than is true of centrist and right-wing parties.

Barriers

An established way of examining the barriers that women face to widening their political representation is to explore supply and demand issues. For the purposes of this review, supply and demand barriers have been collapsed into a typology comprising three overall themes: social and cultural barriers; structural and institutional barriers; and knowledge and information barriers.

Social and Cultural Barriers

The white, middle class and male dominated environment of British politics (both national and local government) is a major barrier to widening participation among women and other under-represented groups. Women's continued role in assuming caring and household responsibilities poses another significant barrier, especially among younger women and those with young children. The gender pay gap, the propensity for greater numbers of women (often due to their caring responsibilities) to be engaged in part-time employment and their increased likelihood of being employed in lower paid sectors of employment collectively mean that many women also lack the financial resources needed to stand as a candidate in central and local government elections. Motivational factors such as ambition, self-confidence, self-belief and dedication are also well-evidenced

barriers, while there is a perceived lack of a sufficient representation of identifiable role models in Parliament and within local government who may help prospective candidates and new entrants overcome their apprehension about entering parliamentary life.

Structural and Institutional Barriers

Structural and institutional barriers include the role of political parties and their local organisations as gatekeepers to widening political representation and specifically:

- A 'disconnect' between national policies within political parties about attitudes to diversity and how they are interpreted and acted upon at local level;
- Selection that is too restricted in its scope and reach;
- Evidence of direct and indirect discrimination against women;
- Lack of openness and transparency in selection and recruitment procedures at national and local level, and
- Women having a greater propensity to be selected to stand for marginal seats.

Additional factors which have a detrimental impact on widening representation include: the difficulty of achieving an acceptable work-life balance, due to the demands of long and irregular working practices; the absence of statutory entitlement among MPs and local councillors to employment rights, e.g. maternity and parental leave/flexible working practices; living in the public eye; and the Parliamentary calendar. Evidence points to these factors having a negative effect on decision-making among women to both enter and remain in political life.

Knowledge and Information Barriers

There is evidence that many under-represented groups (including women) are less likely to have access to the networks, information sources and role models that are a fundamental requirement for candidates seeking political office at both national or local levels. The traditional male dominated environment of local parties, where informal networks, as well as established and sometimes opaque recruitment and selection practices remain highly influential, often work against the interests of under-represented groups. There is also a clear lack of information available within the public domain about the role of an MP and a councillor.

Intersectionality

The extent to which gender, age, disability, ethnicity, sexual orientation and social class may intersect to increase barriers to widening political representation are considered in the literature. However, within the UK,

there is an absence of comparative and longitudinal research which has explored the dynamics of intersectionality and how this impacts on individual choice or achieving greater diversity in recruitment and promotion practices. Intersectionality research is complex and data sources are often incomplete or inaccurate.

Positive Action Mechanisms

Much of the literature and research suggests that gender quotas are the most effective method for increasing *numbers* of women and quantitative analysis has pointed to their broader impact for political engagement as they encourage more women to stand for election, and incentivise political parties to target women's votes. However, although quotas increase the number of women elected, the evidence points to the fact that they do not necessarily ensure the success of women once elected, as quotas do not tackle the gendered practices of political institutions. The literature emphasises the need for quotas to be accompanied by a broader array of measures.

Other positive action mechanisms which seek to increase the representation of women in local and national government include:

- *Training and mentoring programmes* which focus on helping women attain the knowledge, skills and confidence to stand for election. Political parties are critical in providing women with the necessary networks and support to put themselves forward as candidates and successfully elected women have cited the impact of these schemes. However, studies have consistently identified resistance to changes at a local level, with local networks often remaining closed to women;
- Schemes run by *external organisations* which encourage women to consider running for elections. The Local Government Association's (LGA) 'Be a Councillor' scheme is an example. However, this programme is not designed specifically to encourage women and the evidence points to the need for this scheme to provide more events aimed at women in order to make it more effective.

To date, however, there has been little published evaluation which demonstrates the impact and/or effectiveness of these programmes.

Research on both national and local government has highlighted the need for continued support and training for women once elected, in order to increase their retention and enable them to acquire the necessary knowledge, skills and networks to take on leadership roles and progress in government.

Suggestions for addressing women's representation in the House of Commons include: expanding crèche facilities; revising sitting hours; trialling remote voting systems; and promoting female representation and leadership on select committees. A more radical proposition is for MPs to job share.

Similarly, for local government, enabling remote attendance at meetings, introducing maternity and paternity leave, covering childcare and caring costs, and consulting on meeting times have been proposed.

Conclusions

The weight of evidence points to substantial supply and demand barriers, which need to be addressed simultaneously. While there is a wealth of literature on the multiple barriers facing women, much of the research is qualitative in nature and draws almost exclusively from studies of female candidates and parliamentary/council members.

There is an abundance of literature which covers the social and cultural and the structural and institutional barriers. However, less substantive evidence is available about knowledge and information barriers – in particular, about individual decision-making (for both males and females) and how this translates into positive or negative outcomes.

In terms of what works, the literature is dominated by the use of quotas. As they can be measured in terms of expanding numerical representation, it is easier to prove, in numerical and statistical terms, that they 'work'. While quotas get women through the door, the weight of evidence is that they do not sufficiently address the cultural and working practices in Parliament and local government that remain significant barriers, nor do quotas assure the future progress of female representatives. Overall, the research points to the need for a 'quota-plus' strategy to increase women's representation.

Far less analysis and evaluation has been undertaken of other mechanisms, such as mentoring and training programmes. The extent to which support for female candidates via training and mentoring continues throughout their political career could also be the focus of further research, particularly in relation to how this not only enables and encourages women, but ensures their retention and success moving forward. Crucially, more in-depth research which examines the role of political parties, as the gatekeepers to broadening the representation of women, particularly in terms of their selection processes, is required.

A considerable weight of evidence relates to working practices and to the cultures in Parliament and within local government and the need for fundamental change. The culture in both Parliament and local government is perceived to be lacking in flexibility and in the ability to recognise members' caring needs and responsibilities, partly because of the traditional masculine networks and environments which persist. Suggestions for how these issues could be tackled are presented by Childs (2016) in *The Good Parliament*.

Ideas for future research include:

- Gender differences/sub-group research;
- Evaluation of mentoring and support programmes;
- A review of selection and recruitment practices; and
- An appraisal of equality and diversity measures.

While quotas get women through the door, the weight of evidence is that they do not sufficiently address the cultural and working practices in Parliament and local government that remain significant barriers

Introduction

Aims

In January 2018, the Government Equalities Office (GEO) commissioned this rapid evidence review, the two broad aims of which were to identify:

a. Barriers to women's participation in local and national government, and
b. Evidence of policies and practices, sometimes referred to as Positive Action Mechanisms, which have increased their levels of participation.

The objectives of the project were to critically review and synthesise evidence on:

*   The barriers to women's participation in national and local politics and their relative impact;
*   The appropriateness of the knowledge and information available to women when making decisions about becoming involved in politics;
*   The impact and degree of success of interventions targeted at encouraging greater participation;
*   The role of party membership; and
*   The impact of greater numbers of women becoming politically active on the proportions progressing to senior decision-making roles.

Methodology

The methodology comprised the following elements shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Summary of Approach

Inception	• Agree the parameters and key issues of the study • Agree the work programme and reporting arrangements • Discuss relevant background material and intelligence
Scoping review	• Identify sources of underpinning data and wider literature • Set out a detailed methodology for the evidence review • Establish a framework for analysis of all evidence
Review of evidence and literature	• Undertake a trawl of literature on barriers to women entering politics • Apply inclusion criteria in terms of focus, timing, geographical coverage and type and quality of study
Analysis and synthesis	• Conduct a systematic analysis to extract the key messages • Develop a pro forma for collecting key points emerging • Thematical analysis for a) barriers and b) positive action mechanisms
Reporting	• A final report comprising the following sections: a) Context, b) Barriers and c) Positive Action Mechanisms

Review of Data and Literature

Sources

Initially, this process involved an in-depth scrutiny of the literature which had already been identified and assessed during the Scoping Review. At the same time, the references to other sources contained within these documents were explored. Thereafter, wider literature searches were undertaken, with special emphasis on:

• Key databases, such as: *Web of Science; Women in Politics Bibliographic Database; Wiley Online; Applied Social Sciences Index and Abstracts;* and *Worldwide Political Sciences Abstracts;*

• Relevant journals, including: *Politics and Gender; British Politics; The Journal of Women, Politics and Policy; International Feminist Journal of Politics; The Political Quarterly; Local Government Studies; Local Government Quarterly Journal; British Journal of Politics and International Relations; European Journal of Political Research;*

• Policy and research outputs, for example from: *Fawcett Society, House of Commons, All Party Parliamentary Group: Women in Parliament, Centre for Women and Democracy, Equality and Human Rights Commission, European Parliament, OECD.*

Keywords

In these wider searches, the following combinations of key words were applied:

- 'women* quotas'[1]
- 'women* political representation'
- 'women MPs'
- 'barriers women politics'
- 'women local council'
- 'gender* quotas'

- 'gender political representation'
- 'female MPs'
- 'gender MPs'
- 'gender local council'
- 'gender, barriers, politics'
- 'political* recruitment'

Determining whether a particular document or piece of data should be included was dependent on the application of the following criteria:

- *Focus* – the prime focus of the search for literature and other evidence documents was issues relating to the barriers to women's participation in politics and evidence of measures which, when applied, have been successful in enhancing levels of participation. This included an analysis of data on the current representation of women in government at national and local levels, as well as longer-term trends. Crucially, it explored reports and data focusing on key topics, principally:
  a. the factors which were considered to constitute barriers to women becoming elected representatives, and
  b. initiatives which have been introduced in order to break down these barriers such as quotas, all-women shortlists, and 'fast track' equality measures;

- *Timing* – given the importance attached to the relatively rapid shifts in societal attitudes, as evidenced in campaigns for increasing diversity across a range of social contexts, as well as the policy environment, the emphasis was on reviewing published material which has been produced in recent years, in order to take account of the effects of:
  a. increases in the numbers of women in decision-making roles at government level;
  b. political parties' responses to the clamour for change. Only literature produced from 2000 onwards was included;

- *Geographical coverage* – initially, the research strategy focused predominantly on data and reports from the UK. Thereafter, however, relevant material from further afield, notably Europe and the USA, was also reviewed;

- *Type of study* – evidence derived from both quantitative and qualitative sources was included in the review. Furthermore, as well as reports based on substantive, objective pieces of research, consideration was given to the inclusion of evidence from so-called 'grey literature', e.g. policy statements and blogs;
- *Quality* – a principal concern in evaluating the appropriateness of sources was the quality of the data on which they were based. Here, factors such as the methods of obtaining data, sample size and representativeness, the reliability of the findings, the objectivity and transparency of the process of analysis, and the presentation of findings were key considerations.

Analysis and Synthesis

Systematic analyses of the material collected were undertaken to extract the key messages emerging. For the purposes of clarity and thoroughness, two stages were applied to synthesising the evidence collected. Firstly, a standard pro forma was developed for presenting the points emerging from key evidence. Secondly, a thematic analysis of the evidence was undertaken. The range of topics to be included was agreed on the basis of the scoping review, within the two overarching themes of:

- Barriers to women's selection/election to local and national government; and
- Mechanisms to enhance women's participation in politics.

Reporting

The final report comprises the following sections:

- Executive Summary
- Introduction
- Context
- Barriers
- Positive Action Mechanisms
- Conclusions

1

Context

This section provides contextual data on the current position, as well as recent trends, in the representation of women in Parliament and local government in the UK. This offers an underpinning of the subsequent consideration of the barriers which exist and how these may be addressed. Wherever possible, it goes beyond the bare statistics and breaks them down according to factors which can be deemed significant in relation to potential barriers to women's participation. Details are also given of women's representation in the devolved administrations (Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales) and as members of the European Parliament (MEPs). In addition, comparisons are made with other countries, primarily in Europe.

Parliament

Following the 2017 general election, 32% of the elected MPs were women (Apostolova and Cracknell, 2017). This was the largest ever proportion of women in the Commons. While this is higher than the proportion in the House of Lords (26%), whose members are not elected, and the Northern Ireland Assembly (30%), it is lower than those in the Scottish Parliament (35%) and the National Assembly for Wales (42%). Here, it is important to note that the elections for the devolved administrations are held at different times to a general election, with the most recent being in 2016. Thus, the figures are not directly comparable.

Historically, the proportions of women MPs effectively flatlined at around 4% for 50 years, until there was a slight increase in 1987, to 6%, and then to 9% in 1992. Women's representation doubled in 1997, with the incoming Blair government, and rose significantly four elections later, to 29% in 2015.

As far as progression to senior roles is concerned, a cohort study of Labour Party MPs elected in 1997 concluded that there were no statistically significant differences in the proportions of men and women attaining executive positions (Allen, 2016).

Age and Parenthood

A somewhat surprising statistic, given factors such as shifts in the longevity of working lives, and the upward trends in women's representation, greater diversity, in terms of ethnicity and disability, and MPs being drawn from a wider range of educational and occupational backgrounds, is the lack of movement in the average age (at election) of MPs. This has remained consistently around the 50 years mark since 1979 – in ten general elections, the range has been from 48.8 years to 51.2 years (Watson and Fawcett, 2018). Following the 2017 general election, the average age of SNP MPs was 46, which was the lowest of the main parties (Barton and Audickas, 2016).

Longer-term trends have seen increases in the proportions at both ends of the age spectrum, in the under-30s and over-70s. The Labour Party's MPs have a wider age distribution than is the case with the

Conservative Party (ibid). In 2017, while two thirds of Conservative MPs were in the 40–59 age band, this applied to just over half (52%) of Labour MPs.

A frequently cited major constraint for women entering Parliament is caring for young children (House of Commons, 2017a; McKay, 2011). A survey undertaken in 2013, accompanied by analysis of data from parliamentary records, found that, of the 647 MPs in the sample, 45% of female MPs had no children, while this applied to only 28% of the male MPs (Campbell and Childs, 2014). On average, male MPs had 1.9 children, whereas the average for female MPs was 1.2 children. Further analysis for this article was undertaken to provide a comparison with the position in 'other professions'. Office for National Statistics (ONS) data for 2012 showed that "among higher managerial and professional parents, women had on average 1.65 children, compared to 1.76 for men" (Campbell and Childs, 2014: 489). Thus, the disparity between men and women was markedly bigger among MPs. Furthermore, a comparison of the average age of an MP's oldest child when they entered Parliament was 12 years for men and 16 years for women, reinforcing the suggestion that caring for children mitigated against, or at least delayed their attempt to become an MP.

Education

In terms of educational background, the 2017 election saw a further reduction in the proportion of MPs who had been privately educated, although at just under a third (29%) this was still significantly higher than the figure for the population as a whole (7%) (Montacute, 2017). This trend has seen the figure come down from around a half in the last twenty years (Montacute and Carr, 2017). Currently, 32% of male MPs were privately educated, compared to 24% of female MPs. In assessing the significance of this disparity, the authors cite the Independent Schools Council's *Census and annual report 2017* and conclude that "it may be that private school attendance benefits men going into politics in a way that it does not equally benefit privately educated women, for example, through networks formed whilst at school" (ibid: 3).

Female MPs are far more likely than male MPs to have been educated at a comprehensive school (60%, compared to 49%). Overall, the increase in the proportion of MPs who were educated at a non-Oxbridge university has been the most significant shift since 1979 (Barton and Audickas, 2016).

Unsurprisingly, there is a significant difference between the main political parties in the educational background of their MPs. Since 1979, while the proportion of Conservative MPs who had been privately educated has fallen from 73% to 45%, the figure for Labour MPs remains much lower, having shifted only from 18% to 14% (Montacute and Carr, 2017). Over the same period, while the proportion of Conservative MPs who were Oxbridge educated fell from 51% to 30%, among Labour MPs it rose from 15% to 21%.

Currently, 32% of male MPs were privately educated, compared to 24% of female MPs

Occupation

Campbell and Childs (2014) wrote about the importance of women's representation in "the pipeline professions for politics" (page 487).

Trend data on the former occupations of MPs, from the 1979 election to the 2015 election (Barton and Audickas, 2016) show an increase over time in those who worked in Business (from 22.3% to 30.7%) and Miscellaneous (a category encompassing: white collar; politician/ political organiser; publisher/journalist; and farmer) (from 17.1% to 35.3%). Conversely, there were reductions in those from the Professions (from 44.9% to 31.0%) and Manual Workers (from 15.8% to 3.0%). Important distinctions can be identified within these broad labels. For example, within the Professions group, after peaking in the 1997 election, when a fifth of MPs elected had previously been teachers in schools, universities or colleges, by 2015 they accounted for only 5.2% of MPs. In contrast, within the Miscellaneous category, white collar workers increased from 1.5% to 11.3% and politicians/political organisers from 3.4% to 17.1%.

Shifts can be detected when there has been a change in the political party in power. For example, following the Labour victory in 1997, the proportion of MPs from business backgrounds fell from 24.2% to 18%. By 2005, it had increased by a small amount to 19.2%, but with the incoming Conservative government in 2010 it rose by 5.9 percentage points to 25.1%, and then again to 30.7% in 2015 (Barton and Audickas, 2016).

Following the 2017 general election, Williams (2017) analysed the previous jobs of MPs, through a combination of the *Who's Who* database, MPs websites and newspaper reports. As far as differences between political parties are concerned, he concluded that "Conservatives account for the overwhelming majority of MPs who previously worked in business and finance", while "Labour MPs … made up the majority of those who came from charities, councils, education and trade unions" (Channel 4 News website).

At the 2015 election, there was little difference in the proportions from the Professions between Conservative MPs (32%) and Labour MPs (28%), whereas wide differences existed in those with a Business background (Conservative 44%; Labour 11%), those from Miscellaneous occupations (Conservative 23%; Labour 54%), and those from Manual Occupations (Conservative 1%; Labour 7%). Moreover, a quarter of Labour MPs had previously been categorised as 'politician/political organiser', while only 12% of Conservative MPs were in this category. As will be discussed later, this route into Parliament is indicative of the disparity between the two main parties in the representation of women among their MPs.

Assessing attempts by the two main parties in the UK to address a perceived antipathy to the 'political class' among the electorate, Cairney et al (2016) suggest that, whereas the Labour Party has placed emphasis on increasing the representation of women, the Conservatives decided to focus on recruiting potential candidates who had previously been in 'proper jobs'. The result was that the increased number of female

Labour MPs tended to be from politically-related occupations, while the Conservatives' focus on candidates with business backgrounds stifled any rise in the proportion of women.

Cairney et al looked at data relating to 650 MPs, 129 Members of the Scottish Parliament, 60 Assembly Members and 73 MEPs, with a focus on the respective numbers of men and women, their educational background and what they termed their 'formative' occupations, as a proxy for their social class. Parliament was found to be distinct from the other legislatures in terms of the high representation of men. Overall, however, they concluded that "politicians have often similar kinds of education and employment background, and generally struggle to mirror the social background of their populations" (Carney et al, 2016: 144).

Political Party Differences

Government evidence given to the House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee in 2016 stated that "it is primarily for political parties to ensure more diverse representation (including that of women) in the House of Commons through their selection of candidates" (House of Commons, 2017a: 21). The differences between the main political parties, in terms of their propensity to have women MPs, was borne out in the report, which showed that, of the 455 women who had ever been elected to Parliament, 57% were representing the Labour party, while only 29% were Conservatives (ibid: 21). While there has, overall, been a trend for increasing representation of women, by the 2017 election 45% of Labour MPs were women, compared to 33% of Liberal Democrats, 34% of SNP MPs, and 21% of Conservatives (Apostolova and Cracknell, 2017). This was despite speculation that the 2017 election would see a 'breakthrough moment' for the Conservatives on women's representation, with 29% of their candidates being women (Childs et al, 2017).

As an example of the longevity of this gap between the two leading parties, in 1997, when there was a surge in women MPs, women constituted 8% of Conservative MPs, but 26% of Labour MPs. Going even further back, in the post-war 1945 election, the Labour Party had 21 women MPs, while the Conservative had just one (Apostolova & Cracknell, 2017).

What must be recognised when interpreting trends in women's representation is that a change of government at a general election can immediately effect a significant change in the gender make-up of Parliament. For example, at the 1997 election, the landslide victory for the Labour Party saw the proportion of women MPs double, so that after many years when the proportion of Labour MPs who were women was around twice that of Conservative MPs, the ratio became three to one (Talbot, 2017). This ratio was only reduced to two to one at the 2010 election. The next significant increase occurred in the 2015 general election, when the number of female Labour MPs remained around the level it had been since 1997, but the number of female MPs in the Conservative government represented a fivefold increase from 1997. At the same election, the reduction in the number of Liberal Democrat MPs resulted in them having no women MPs.

While all the major parties have made efforts to increase the numbers of women candidates and MPs, the Labour Party is recognised as having implemented the most substantial changes to their recruitment of candidates in order to enhance the representation of women (Cairney, 2011). As well as increasing the rhetoric about equality, specific measures were introduced, notably all-women shortlists (AWSs) during the 1990s, and a commitment to replacing retiring MPs in 'winnable' seats with women candidates. In elections for the Scottish Parliament, 'twinned constituencies', whereby one seat would be contested by a man and the other one by a woman, were introduced. Partly attributable to such policies, in four Scottish Parliament elections from 1999 to 2011, only once did the proportion of Labour MPs who were women dip below 50%. Over the same period, in elections for the Welsh Assembly, the proportion of women Labour MPs was always at or above 50% (ibid).

A study of a Labour Party dataset which tracked the gender and race of prospective parliamentary candidates prior to the 2015 general election found that AWSs had been relatively successful in increasing the representation of women (Krook and Nugent, 2016). The article raises a pertinent issue when posing the question of, instead of adopting a "zero-sum mentality" by focusing on why some groups are under-represented, why not query other groups' over-representation. That is, there is a suggestion that there is too much focus on studying 'under-representation', at the expense of considering issues in relation to 'over-representation' among some groups.

Incumbency

Given the short space of time between the 2015 and 2017 general elections, it is, perhaps, not surprising that only 31 MPs (5%) stood down prior to the election (House of Commons Library, 2017a) and, as a result, reduced the chances of a dramatic shift in the characteristics of MPs. This differed considerably from the 2015 election, when 90 incumbent MPs stood down (CFWD, 2015). However, as 85% of the MPs elected were incumbents, this bears out the fact that "in any election the vast majority (of incumbent MPs) stand for election again" (CFWD 2015: 10).

Candidates

As far as the proportion of female candidates being elected at a general election is concerned, 1997 was a watershed. At the previous election in 1992, 19% of all candidates were women, but only 9% of elected MPs were women. In contrast, in 1997, while the proportion of female candidates went down to 18%, the proportion of women MPs rose to 18%. By the time of the 2017 election, 29% of female candidates yielded 32% of MPs. Thus, while the total number of female candidates (973) was below the record number of the 2015 election (1,033), the number of female MPs rose from 191 to 208 (Apostolova and Cracknell, 2017). This may point to an increase in the likelihood of women being selected to contest winnable seats.

As could be expected, the trend for differences between the main parties has continued, with the Labour Party leading the way with 41% of its candidates being women, followed by the SNP (34%), and both the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats on 29% (ibid).

Local Government

In overall terms, as of 2017, women's representation in local government, as councillors, was around the same as in Parliament, at 33%. However, whereas the proportion of women in Parliament had risen by fourteen percentage points since 1997, there had only been a five percentage point increase in female councillors across England in that period (Bazeley et al, 2017: 5). It should be noted here that, due to the differences between the dates when elections are held for Parliament and local government, these figures are not directly comparable in terms of timing.

A persistent theme in women's representation in local government has been the variation between different regions of England. Ten years ago, Bochel and Bochel (2008) found that this ranged from 3% to 49%. More recently, analysis of the 2017 council elections, which were held in County and Unitary authorities, showed that women accounted for, at one extreme, 14% in East Sussex, to 44% in Oxfordshire (Fawcett Society, 2017a: 62). Through an analysis of the Local Government Association's *Census of Local Authority Councillors* for 2011, 2014 and 2016, women were found to have a greater propensity to be elected in the North East and least likely to be elected in the South East.

The proportion of women councillors also varies according to the type of council. Thus, in 2016, women constituted 38.5% of councillors in Metropolitan authorities, 37.2% in London Boroughs, 31.9% in Unitary authorities, 31.5% in Shire Counties, but only 26.8% in Counties (Bazeley et al, 2017: 18).

Councillors

The age profile of councillors differs from that of MPs, with over a third being aged from 65 to 74. Overall, councillors have been described as "disproportionately aged over 55 and ethnically white" (Fawcett Society, 2017a: 7). A survey of councillors across England and Wales carried out by the Local Government Information Unit (LGIU) in December 2016 and January 2017 elicited 2,304 responses (a response rate of 12%) (Bazeley et al, 2017). The age ratio of men to women was found to be lowest in the 35 to 44 age group and highest in the 75 or over age group. In the 65 to 74 age group, which accounts for 35% of all councillors, the ratio of men to women is 2:1. An important issue here is the length of service of male councillors.

As with MPs, caring responsibilities appear to impinge on female councillors to a greater extent than on their male counterparts. From the LGIU survey, half of women councillors between the ages of 18 and 44 had caring responsibilities, while only a third of male councillors did so. This may represent progress of a kind from a survey of councillors

over a decade earlier, on the basis of which it was concluded that "many women do not count themselves available for council service until such time as their children leave home" (Rao, 2005: 336).

Women councillors are more likely than their male counterparts to drop out after serving one term, and less likely than men to do so for the purpose of pursuing a political career (Allen, 2012).

Political Party Differences

As with parliamentary elections, there are significant differences between political parties in the representation of women. Whereas between 2008 and 2016 the proportion of Labour Party councillors who were women rose from 33% to 41%, the increase for Conservative councillors was only from 28% to 30%. Moreover, for Liberal Democrat councillors, the proportion fell from 37% to 33% (Bazeley et al, 2017: 6). For the authors of the report, this disparity between parties is attributed to positive action, notably quotas, introduced by the Labour Party. The aim of the quota system is to achieve a target of 50% of Labour councillors being women. It involves establishing a list of winnable wards, and if it is judged to be winnable and there are two or three seats, one seat has to be contested by a woman. Also, in councils where a third or half of seats are being contested and a Labour councillor is retiring, at least one of either the sitting councillors or the candidate must be a woman. Finally, additional winnable seats are selected for AWSs to be invoked (ibid).

Incumbency

The high rate of incumbency at elections is pertinent when attempting to explain the somewhat pedestrian rate of progress in the enhancement of women's representation in elected office in local government. From data relating to elections in 2016, Bazeley et al (2017) contend that "80% of councillors elected in any one year are incumbents" (page 5). Furthermore, "men were 1.6 times more likely to be long-term incumbent than women". Thus, there are limited opportunities for women to affect the current gender imbalance to any great degree.

This level of incumbency goes some way to explain the relative lack of progression of women councillors, with only 17% of 333 council leaders in England being women (Bazeley et al, 2017). It may also be a contributory factor to the high rate of drop-out after one term of office among women councillors.

In terms of routes to becoming a councillor, women are more likely than men to have been involved in a community organisation, religious institution or charity, while men are more likely to have been parish councillors.

International Comparisons

In assessing how the UK compares internationally in terms of women's representation in its national parliament, there are clearly caveats which have to be aired about the lack of direct comparability with many other countries, including differences in electoral systems, e.g. Proportional Representation (PR) with a regional closed list, the Single Transferable Vote (STV), which operates in Northern Ireland, and preferential voting. Nonetheless, it is worth considering some of the tables from various international organisations, if for no other reason than to avoid misconceptions about how the UK fares. For example, a recent table of the percentage of women in a nation's 'lower or single House' placed the UK at 39th out of 193 countries (IPU, 2018).

In the OECD's *Government at a Glance 2017* list of the share of women in lower/single house legislatures, Great Britain is slightly above the OECD average of 29% (OECD, 2017). A majority of OECD countries have introduced some kind of political quota for women, but only 17 OECD countries reached or exceeded a level of 30% representation. The UK also fares well, comparatively, in terms of women progressing to senior roles, with 31% occupying ministerial positions in 2017, a rise of nine percentage points from 2015.

- In the European Parliament, 43% of UK MEPs are women. This is a higher percentage than that of women overall in the Parliament (37.4%), which rose from 16.6% in 1979, and from 34.9% in 2010 (European Parliament, 2017). The UK, whose representation of women in the European Parliament is eleven percentage points higher than that in Westminster, is ranked 10th out of the 28 member states, in the representation of women, having been ranked 5th in 2014, when the gap was 20 percentage points. This is consistent with other EU countries, as a "clear 'gender gap' between the European Parliament and national parliaments" has been maintained since 1979 (Fortin-Rittberger and Rittberger, 2015). Currently, this is true of all but six of the member states.

- In seeking an explanation for this gender gap between national and European elections, Fortin-Rittberger and Rittberger (2015) discount notions of 'socioeconomic and cultural influences', electoral rules, such as the use of proportional representation (PR), or perceived disparities in the relevance attached to different electoral contests. Rather, they contend that the candidate recruitment procedures of political parties, as "the crucial gatekeepers when it comes to "the selection and nomination of candidates for political office", have a pervasive effect, notably due to the size of electoral districts for European Parliament elections differing considerably from those for national elections and in more social-democratic societies. Writing some years earlier, Dahlerup (2006) stated that "in studying the political parties as gatekeepers to 'the politics of presence', the

The UK also fares well, comparatively, in terms of women progressing to senior roles, with 31% occupying ministerial positions in 2017, a rise of nine percentage points from 2015

focus shifts from structural explanations of variations in women's representation to the active role of the political parties as agents of change" (p:16).

- Taking an international perspective, Campbell and Childs (2014) suggested that women's representation in parliaments is higher in countries characterised by "more extensive participation of women in the public sphere, especially in the pipeline professions for politics … and politically, systems of proportional electoral systems, left party dominance, higher levels of women inside political parties, more centralised party selection, the presence of sex quotas, and high saliency of the women's vote" (Campbell and Childs, 2014: 1).

- On the premise that the presence of a formal party member women's organisation within the structure of a political party would enhance the likelihood of women accessing leadership roles, a study of 106 parties across 17 countries found that 48 of the parties had such organisations (Childs and Kittilson, 2016). In only two of the countries, Italy and the UK, did all the major parties have such organisations. Although they were prevalent in traditional parties across the political ideology spectrum, they were less likely to be found in newer parties and in parties of the extreme right and extreme left, notably Communist parties. No direct relationship was found between the existence of such organisations and greater access for women to party leadership roles, although there was more likelihood of them having gender quotas for places on the "top party leadership body" (Childs and Kittilson, 2016: 12).

- Examples of women's networks and how they operate are discussed in the Positive Action Mechanisms section. In relation to local government, Bazeley et al (2017) found that the establishment of women's networks was identified by 44% of female respondents as a means of supporting more women to become councillors (page 38). It was felt that this would help to address women's exclusion from existing informal networks.

- Luhiste and Kenny (2016) conducted an analysis of a dataset of over 700 MEPs who were elected to the European Parliament (EP) in 2014. The aim of the study was to consider the backgrounds of the MEPs and their routes to election, in order to answer three central questions:
    1. Are the paths to the EP the same for women and men?
    2. Do different types of parties endorse similar candidates?
    3. Are there gender differences in terms of MEPs' political experience?

- In contrast to other evidence, a key finding was that the effectiveness of quota rules was 'limited'. Rather, "party ideology, the share of women in national legislature and MEPs' age account for most of the gender variance" (Luhiste and Kenny, 2016: 633). Their regression analysis demonstrated that women MEPs tended to be younger than

their male counterparts, which they attributed to greater numbers of women entering political life before assuming caring responsibilities. Moreover, "left wing parties are significantly more likely to have a female representative to Brussels than right wing parties". The routes taken by men and women were found to be similar and women were more likely than men to be incumbents – although this finding could be due to the relatively recent introduction of the European Parliament (European Parliamentary Research Service Blog, 2017).

- Further support for the argument that left-wing parties promote the representation of women to a greater extent than centrist or right-wing parties can be found in the proportions of women MEPs in the various groupings of the European Parliament. The highest level is in the European United Left-Nordics Green Left (GUE/NGL) group, where half of the 52 MEPs are women, followed by the 48% among the 189 MEPs of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D). In comparison, only 27% of the European Conservatives and Reformists' 74 MEPs and 30.9% of the European People's Party's 217 MEPs are female.

2

Barriers

This section explores women's barriers to participation in national and local politics. As well as addressing what the literature tells us about specific issues facing women, it examines how barriers have been grouped together in various ways to scrutinise women's under-representation. A typology has been developed for the purposes of this study, which highlights key barriers and how they impact on women's decision-making to enter and to remain in political life. The interrelationship between different types of barriers and how this may culminate in overlapping or multiple exclusion, i.e. intersectionality debates, is also presented. For example, what does the available evidence tell us about how gender intersects with social class and ethnicity to further disadvantage women's participation in politics? Finally, this section will investigate, where relevant, the extent to which barriers facing women in the UK are comparable or different to those evidenced within the international literature.

Typologies of Barriers

The study of the under-representation of women in politics is well-developed, both within the UK and internationally. An established way of examining the barriers facing women is to explore supply and demand issues (Lovenduski, 2005; Rao, 2005). Lovenduski has argued that this is a useful model which has been applied in numerous studies to examine women's representation at local and national level.

Some studies have focused on the issue of supply, i.e. who decides to put themselves forward for election and the associated challenges, notably: the costs of campaigning; the vexing issue for many women of combining political life with caring and domestic responsibilities; political connections; motivational factors (such as ambition, self-confidence, self-belief and dedication); and the male dominated world of national and local government.

Other studies have highlighted the demand side, through examining the role of political parties in choosing suitable candidates (Norris and Lovenduski, 2005). Kenny (2015) argues that, in Britain, the key issue is one of demand from political parties, with evidence of both direct and indirect discrimination against women. These range from judgements being made about potential candidates by party selectors on the basis of women's traditional roles to evidence of sexual harassment. Other studies on the 'demand' side have demonstrated the crucial and central role of individual constituency parties in candidate selection and the tension and power struggle which exists between the central party leadership to challenge the influence of local branches (Rush and Cromwell, 2000).

The two groupings of 'supply-side barriers' and 'demand-side barriers' were examined by the Speaker's Conference on Parliamentary Democracy (House of Commons, 2010). A similar model, developed by Durose et al (2011), broke down "what influences diversity of representation" into: *prevent factors*, including prejudice and discriminatory practices; *push*

factors, such as support mechanisms, including political engagement and personal ambition; and *pull factors,* such as the role of political parties and institutions.

Finally, the 'supply', 'selection' and 'retention' staged model was put forward by the All Party Parliamentary Group for Women in Parliament (APPG, 2014). It examined the under-representation of women in politics in three stages:

• Outreach to women from all backgrounds and changing the perception of MPs (supply);
• Analysing progress since the Speaker's Conference 2008–2010 (selection); and
• How working conditions in Parliament can be improved (retention) (APPG, 2014: 13).

Mackay (2004) argued that an examination of supply and demand factors has been achieved through research which has focused to a much greater extent on in-depth, qualitative, self-reported studies of female candidates and politicians. She highlights that, while qualitative research has successfully exposed the 'complex dynamics at play with interacting barriers' within the supply and demand model developed by Norris and Lovenduski, the inclusion of both the male perspective as a comparator and the widescale use of quantitative surveys to the evidence base are limited (Mackay 2004: 105).

For the purposes of this review, supply and demand barriers have been collapsed into a typology comprising three overall themes:

1. *Social and cultural barriers:* financial considerations; time pressures and locality; caring and household responsibilities, motivational factors, fear of online abuse towards themselves and their families;
2. *Structural and institutional barriers:* recruitment and selection procedures; working practices, the image of parliament; and
3. *Knowledge and information barriers:* open and equal access to information; decision-making strategies and promotion and development routes.

The typology has been developed in order to examine how barriers which confront female candidates and elected members both in local government and in Parliament could be addressed.

Social and Cultural Factors

Male-Dominated World

In Parliament and local government in England, men continue to outnumber women by two to one. There is a wealth of evidence within the literature about the social and cultural impact this has on women's experiences of seeking election, as well as their experiences, if elected as an MP or a local councillor.

The white, middle class and male dominated environment of British politics is a major barrier to widening participation among women and other under-represented groups (House of Commons, 2010; Durose et al, 2011; Mackay, 2004; Childs, 2004; Lovenduski, 2005). For example, in 2014, the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Women in Parliament conducted an online survey of all Members of the House of Commons, as well as 146 Peers who were former MPs. A response rate of 13.69% yielded 109 responses. In addition, a number of oral evidence sessions were conducted to examine women's experiences of parliamentary life. The negative impact of 'the perceived 'masculine' culture of parliament' on retention rates among women MPs was highlighted, alongside other factors, such as organisational issues e.g. 'an unpredictable Parliamentary calendar', incompatibility with family life and public perceptions about parliamentarians (APPG, 2014: 10). A recent report by the House of Commons Library (2017b), which examined barriers for women in standing for parliament stated that the House 'perpetuated a public-school boy ethos' (page 11) and that the culture was frequently raised as challenging to female MPs or MPs from minority backgrounds within their study of 23 members.

Evidence of masculine dominance within local government is also prevalent within the literature. A report by the Centre for Women and Democracy (CFWD), which examined leadership and diversity in local government in England highlighted that women politicians have complained over the years about the pressure to conform to masculine expectations in order to succeed (CFWD, 2011). McNeil et al (2017), in their study of local government, draw on research evidence to show that an 'old boys network' still exists and that women councillors are expected to fit into a masculine culture of operating in order to succeed or be recognised. The Fawcett Society (2017a) found a 'culture of sexism' within local government, which pointed to a dated style of personal and professional conduct. Their survey results showed that almost 4 in 10 women councillors have had sexist remarks directed at them by other councillors.

Allen (2012: 711) showed that women's unwillingness to enter local government, coupled with a lack of appetite among local parties to recruit them, perpetuates a 'male dominated culture' which is often resistant to female newcomers. He also reported that women councillors are more likely to drop out after one term of office, in comparison with their male counterparts, who are much likely to remain in local government and to use their local government experience as a stepping stone to Parliament. Women were more likely to cite time pressures relating to work (not childcare) as their reason for standing down. However, it should be borne in mind that the sample size was too small (n=64) to allow for significance testing.

A study of local government in Wales by Farrell and Titcombe (2016), which included interviewing a sample of 18 councillors (10 women and 8 men) between 2014 and 2016, reported a similar state of affairs to that which exists in England. Female councillors stated that cliques existed among male members and male officers at a senior level, leading them to describe councils as male dominated and sexist.

For many women, especially those with children, caring and household responsibilities are seen as their primary role

Caring and Time Demands

While masculine dominance looms large in terms of explaining why more women may be deterred from standing for political office and in shaping their experiences if they are appointed, women's continued role in assuming caring and household responsibilities also poses a significant barrier to widening their participation. For many women, especially those with children, caring and household responsibilities are seen as their primary role. Comparable findings can be identified in other western democracies, such as the US and Germany (Elder, 2004; McKay, 2011).

A study by McKay (2011) of the experiences of women MPs in Germany and the UK involved the analysis of 28 questionnaires which were returned from Members of Parliament, six from Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs) and the Welsh Government (AMs), 15 from Bundestag members and 18 from members of German Land parliaments. Semi-structured interviews were also undertaken with two Members of Parliament and seven Bundestag members. The experiences of women in both countries were common in that they were expected to adapt to a male-dominated culture. The linchpin of their parliamentary 'success' was their ability to secure a support network to assist with their caring responsibilities. Motherhood was also made more manageable if their home was within easy reach of parliament, which avoided the need for frequent long journeys and periods away from their home and children. While the practical problems of combining motherhood and parliamentary life were evident, the research also highlighted the psychological challenges that women faced, namely the dilemma of being a 'good' mother, as well as an effective and successful parliamentarian at the same time.

The evidence presented by McKay chimes with many other studies which have been conducted in England and across the UK. The time commitment needed to stand for office, the long and unsociable hours that MPs and councillors are expected to work, the time periods that MPs are expected to be away from home, the reliance on support networks (which are particularly difficult for single parent households), the age of their children and the need for councillors to combine paid work alongside council duties, stack the odds against many women with caring responsibilities who may also wish to pursue a career in politics (Allen, 2013b; Fawcett Society, 2017a; McNeil et al, 2017; Rao, 2000; CFWD, 2011; Campbell and Childs, 2014).

Interestingly, while time commitments are an acute barrier for many female candidates and sitting MPs and councillors who combine their role with outside work and/or caring responsibilities, a recent study of councillors demonstrated that female councillors are prepared to commit more time to their council work. From a dataset which contains evidence obtained from 2,089 separate councillors, Thrasher (2015) found that, while 31% of male councillors were proactive on a weekly basis, the figure for women rose to 42%. Women were also more likely to be contacted by voters, with 76% reporting weekly contacts, while 66% of men were contacted as frequently. Women councillors were reported to commit three hours more per week to council

duties, in comparison with their male counterparts. However, these figures relate to all women councillors not only to those with caring/domestic responsibilities.

Allen (2013a) reported that it takes time for councillors to embed themselves into council life and to navigate the established culture of operating within local government. This becomes more problematic for female councillors, who have much greater likelihood of dropping out after one term of office before 'learning the ropes' of their role (Allen, 2013a: 214). The absence of formalised job descriptions and working practices clearly is a significant factor.

Financial Considerations

Another supply side factor is the financial barrier facing many women. The gender pay gap, the propensity for greater numbers of women (often due to their caring responsibilities) to be engaged in part-time employment and their increased likelihood of being employed in lower paid sectors of employment, such as the caring, retail and hospitality sectors, collectively mean that many women do not have the financial resources needed to stand as a candidate in central government elections. Murray (2018) highlights that the most significant cost is due to a loss of earnings from the investment of time needed to be selected as a candidate and to undertake the necessary campaigning. She asserts that many candidates rely on private capital or debt to support them, which consequently penalises those without the means to do so. Furthermore, the lack of financial resources to support their selection and candidacy often sits alongside family commitments and, in many cases, a greater propensity to be fighting marginal seats. In effect, the risks involved in fighting parliamentary seats are often much greater for women than for men.

Insufficient resources as a result of societal inequalities experienced by women was evidenced by Evans in her study of 57 female Liberal Democrat candidates and MPs. She found that candidates needed to engage in campaigning on a full-time basis and required significant financial support to cover the costs of running a successful campaign, which made women less likely to be successful election candidates (Evans, 2008). An earlier study of women in electoral politics in Ireland reported similar evidence relating to financial barriers. Moreover, it was asserted that women were much less likely than men to have access to family finances (Knight el al, 2004).

Within local government, financial barriers exist due to the unpaid nature of sitting as a local councillor. The Fawcett Society (2017a) found that some councils either do not cover the costs of child care or dependent care or make only a limited amount available. The financial hardship caused to female councillors, in particular those with caring responsibilities, had, in some instances, forced their resignation from office.

Aspiration and Confidence

In research cited in the report emanating from the Speaker's Conference on Parliamentary Democracy in 2010, which examined reasons why women, members of the black and minority ethnic communities and disabled people are under-represented in the House of Commons, lack of confidence was a primary reason given by women who stated that they would not stand for office. This may be linked to personal attributes such as insufficient self-belief but also to perceptions about parliamentary life. The APPG Women in Parliament report (2014) highlighted that the language used in Parliament was confusing and led some people (not only women) to conclude that it was not a suitable place for them. Another consistent theme relating to barriers facing women was the sense that 'parliament was not for me', which may link to both perceived personal attribute requirements, as well as social class issues (APPG, 2014).

Within local government, the Fawcett Society (2017a) pointed to low self-confidence being more prevalent among female councillors. 44% compared with 24% of male councillors cited this issue as a barrier within their role. More women than men also stated that they felt that they had been held back by not receiving sufficient training and support (Fawcett Society, 2017a: 44).

Elder (2004) examined socialisation studies conducted in the USA in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. Here, it was argued that the 'political gender role socialisation hypothesis' represents a barrier, whereby women are not encouraged to consider running for political office in the same way as their male counterparts, because children are still led to believe that politics is a man's world. It was argued that more research is needed to examine the extent to which socialisation remains a prevalent barrier to women's under-representation in politics and it is certainly a gap in the available evidence in the UK.

Contacts and Connections

An established barrier to widening representation among women and other under-represented groups relates to the lack of identifiable role models within politics (see for example, House of Commons, 2010). However, Campbell et al (2018) pointed to the election of the UK's second female prime minister in 2016 as another key example of women unlocking access to political power. They highlight qualitative research undertaken by Childs and Webb in 2012, which has shown that current Conservative MPs viewed Margaret Thatcher as an inspirational role model figure, who influenced their decision to become involved in politics (Campbell et al, 2018). There is insufficient evidence to demonstrate that significant role models are having the same effect within local government.

A common finding in studies of national and local government is the perceived lack of support that female prospective candidates attract. McKay (2011) highlights that a significant number of studies, within both the UK and the United States have shown that women and other disadvantaged groups are less likely to receive the required support, whether it be from spouses/partners or from from party officials and

elected members to stand for office (see also Fox and Lawless, 2011; Murray, 2015). This evidence is strongly linked to discussions about traditional male dominance within politics and the challenges that many women face in terms of breaking into established networks and cultures. This includes the necessary time available, often due to childcare and domestic responsibilities, to attend informal gatherings and networking, which will often facilitate nomination and progression pathways.

Farrell and Titcombe (2016) point to the introduction by the Welsh Government of a 'Diversity in Democracy' project to widen the representation of individuals standing for elections. It is designed to encourage women and members of other under-represented groups to participate in activities such as mentoring and training to enable them to become candidates for the 2017 elections.

Structural and Institutional Factors

Recruitment Practices

The Speaker's Conference on Parliamentary Democracy report (2010) stated that, in recent years, demand side barriers were regarded as the greater problem to overcome. Political parties and especially their local selection and recruitment practices are the gatekeepers to widening political representation. That is, local parties hold a significant amount of power and influence in determining which candidates will be chosen to stand. This applies to both local and national government. There is a weight of evidence within the literature that has shown the following:

- A 'disconnect' between political parties' national policies about attitudes to diversity and how they are interpreted and acted upon at local level (Durose et al, 2011). The attitudes of local party selectors are perceived to constitute a significant barrier to candidates from under-represented groups, including women, being selected. Allied to this point is the view that local selectors are risk averse and therefore prone to choose a 'safe and conventional' candidate for selection;
- Incumbency perpetuates male dominance in local and national politics. Norris and Lovenduski (1995) concluded that it is the shortage of women incumbents and strong challengers, not voter discrimination, which accounts for the under-representation of women. There is an incumbency factor, where local parties have had the same MP for many years. Due to their retention, local parties often lack any ongoing training and/or experience of recruitment practice since it is not required until the MP steps down (House of Commons, 2010);
- Selection is restricted within local networks. Farrell and Titcombe (2016) and Evans (2008) assert that the recruitment networks used by political parties tend to be closed, which means they are confined to existing local political group members;
- Evidence of direct and indirect discrimination against women. Several studies have found evidence of widespread incidences, ranging from gendered assumptions regarding women's traditional

roles; in-depth questioning about caring responsibilities, to explicit sexual harassment (Lovenduski, 2005; Kenny 2015; McHarg, 2006; House of Commons, 2010);

- Lack of openness and transparency in selection and recruitment processes and procedures (Byrne and Theakston, 2016);
- Women have a greater propensity to be selected to stand for marginal seats and women MPs and councillors therefore have a greater likelihood of losing their seats, due to the marginal nature of the seats that they occupy (Ryan et al, 2010; CFWD, 2012: CFWD, 2015); and
- Where women are selected, they are often expected to comply with existing practices and models of behaviour and conformity (Durose et al, 2011; Childs and Cowley, 2011).

Working Practices and Rights

Achieving a work-life balance, particularly among female, but also among male councillors and MPs, when these roles demand irregular and long working hours, is cited as a significant barrier to choosing and sustaining a career in politics. This is particularly applicable to incumbents with families and dependents, as well as to prospective candidates (APPG, 2014; CFWD, 2011; CFWD, 2015; Linsley et al, 2006). McNeil et al (2017) assert that within local government women are more likely than men to be deterred by time pressures, which may be attributed to the demands of combining council work alongside caring roles, as well as employment commitments. Among MPs, there is the added burden and cost of co-location, which may be particularly problematic if their constituency base is a significant distance from Westminster (McKay, 2011; APPG, 2014). Childs and Evans (2012) found that new MPs complained about their heavy workload, which they cited as being approximately 60 hours each week, and the negative impact this had on their family time.

This all sits alongside an absence of statutory entitlement among MPs and local councillors to employment rights, such as maternity and parental leave, flexible working practices, including part-time working, and job share arrangements (Fawcett Society, 2017b; Campbell and Cowley, 2014). Also, local councillors have no entitlement to retirement pensions, which makes decision-making about long-term commitment to the role more difficult, in the absence of or shortfall of alternative arrangements (McNeil et al, 2017). Women are more likely to have reduced pension entitlements due to career breaks and pay differentials. The absence of pension entitlement may also make the role more accessible to those who are of a pensionable age and who do not have to consider this issue.

Image Issues

Living in the public eye, the negative public image of parliamentary life, including recent sexism and harassment claims, as well as the expenses scandal and the associated online and press intrusion and abuse which MPs attract, have a detrimental impact on widening female representation (Childs, 2004; CFWD, 2014; Charles, 2014; Farrell and Titcombe, 2016; Krook, 2018). Potential female candidates were found to be more anxious

than their male counterparts about the detrimental effect this may have on themselves and their wider family if they seek elected office (House of Commons, 2010). However, it should be borne in mind that these findings are now somewhat dated.

More recently it has been shown that female MPs of all parties are more likely to attract media scrutiny (APPG, 2014). An online survey of almost 500 respondents, comprising a diverse group of women and some men found that 'when standing as a councillor, there is a gender difference between councillors identifying 'fear of violence' (13% women; 8% men), or 'harassment or abuse from the electorate' (46% women; 35% of men) as barriers to engagement' (Fawcett Society, 2017a: 29). Findings from an evidence session and consultations sessions which formed part of this study endorsed the online findings. A number of women highlighted continued abuse on social media as a significant factor in deterring women running for selection or election. Abuse targeted at their family members was a particular focus for concern (Fawcett Society, 2017a).

Knowledge and Information Barriers

Open Access

There is evidence that many under-represented groups (including women) are less likely to have access to the networks, information sources and role models that are a fundamental requirement for candidates seeking political office, at either national or local level (see 'Aspiration and Confidence' and 'Contacts and Connections' on page 31). Traditionally, nomination and selection are tightly linked to length of party service and, more recently, to the ability to demonstrate 'professional' access through experience of working in government as a special adviser or within a political party or for an MP. Neither route lends itself to supporting individuals who do not have the appropriate time investment or professional links, due to competing demands from caring roles and/or non-professional employment.

The APPG report (2014) cited that there was a scarcity of evidence available within the public domain about the role of an MP and access rested to a large extent on personal contacts within political parties. It highlighted the shortcomings of political parties in engaging with the wider community, including women. Other findings have pointed to a lack of recognition among selectors of community-based experience, which is the route more likely to have been followed by women and other under-represented groups, with a much greater focus being given to a narrow choice of professional/party experience (CFWD, 2013; House of Commons, 2010; Farrell and Titcombe, 2016; Allen, 2012; Durose et al, 2011). Based on interviews with women who were considering running for election as local government councillors, the Fawcett Society (2015a) found that there was an information gap which, if filled, would inform their decision about whether to run. They described a dearth of information about the process for running as a councillor both within political parties and outside them, as well as a lack of clarity about the time

commitment required. The Fabian Society, the Conservative Women's Organisation and Women2Win were reported to be addressing these shortcomings (Fawcett Society, 2015a: 28).

Networking

Allen (2013b) has shown that male councillors are much more likely than their female counterparts to pursue the route from local to national politics and receive nominations to do so. This again points to differences in their respective network structures, as well as a greater willingness on the part of men to put themselves forward, while female councillors had a much greater propensity to drop out of political life altogether.

Networking requirements are not only linked to selection procedures (see 'Aspiration and Confidence' and 'Contacts and Connections' on page 31). Research has pointed to the need for both local councillors and MPs to be available for out-of-hours meetings (both formal and informal) and weekend working, which often collide with family and domestic commitments. For example, McKay's study of female politicians in both the UK and Germany found that:

> … *the biggest problem for nearly all the women involved in this research was not attending plenary sessions and daytime meetings but the out-of-hours commitments in the evening and at weekends which add a large number of hours to the working week. … However, not attending such events led to lost networking opportunities and an inability to demonstrate the amount of 'presence' that promotion required. Also, the masculine tradition of discussing matters in less formal situations, notably 'after hours', was and still is evident, even in parties that claim to be egalitarian.*
> (McKay, 2011: 723)

Intersectionality

The extent to which gender, age, disability, ethnicity, sexual orientation and social class may intersect to increase barriers to widening political representation are considered in the literature (House of Commons, 2010; Evans, 2016; Celis et al, 2015; Mugge and Erzell, 2016). However, there is an absence of comparative and longitudinal research which has explored the dynamics of intersectionality and how this impacts on individual choice or achieving greater diversity in recruitment and promotion practices. Moreover, there is a tendency to look at individual groups, i.e. women, disability, age, as separate entities rather than looking at the various sub-groups within them.

Celis et al (2015), in their study on Belgium and the Netherlands intersectional analysis of recruitment argue that it is fundamental to measuring the extent to which inclusion and exclusion exist. For example, intersectional analysis enables an assessment to be made about the extent to which different sub-groups, e.g. women with disabilities or women from ethnic minority backgrounds, may face multiple barriers. Interestingly, their research has shown that, although ethnic minority

women remain under-represented as candidates or sitting MPs, they are relatively better represented than ethnic minority men, thereby contradicting the "double barrier" hypothesis. Mugge and Erzeel (2016) highlight research from the USA to reinforce this point and argue that multiple social disadvantages do not always translate into multiple barriers. They present findings from Fraga et al (2008) which demonstrate that among politicians with Latino backgrounds women are more successful than men in securing elected office. As far as Parliament is concerned, the current distribution of ethnic minority MPs, at 26 men and 26 women, would seem to run counter to Celis et al's argument.

Evans (2016) compared the under-representation of women in the United States congress and the UK parliament. She argued that, while political research which explores intersectionality is complex and relatively under-developed in the UK, in comparison with the USA, the nettle should be grasped in order to achieve a greater understanding of differences within and between different social groups. She also felt that there has been little focus on exploring the interaction of gender and other characteristics.

For example, little is known about the political aspirations of women of colour in the UK, which demonstrates a lack of research and literature in this area. While social class has been shown to be a key factor in determining whether women will become political candidates due to, for example, the financial cost and access to support networks, there is an absence of reliable data available on the social class of candidates and elected members. Data on sexuality and disability identities are not reliably recorded and monitored in the UK, with identities often remaining hidden and unknown. Much more efficient data recording systems were reported to exist in the USA, where identity politics has a much greater profile.

3

Positive Action Mechanisms

This section considers the positive action mechanisms available to increase the representation of women in local and national government. It takes a journey approach, discussing, in turn, mechanisms designed to attract women, processes to enable them to be selected and elected and, finally, measures to ensure that women can progress and thrive once elected. Included are mechanisms which seek to improve the working culture of Parliament and local government not only by attracting more women but also by ensuring their retention.

Other work has taken a similar journey approach, highlighting particular initiatives at each stage of the election and selection process (McNeil et al, 2017; Krook and Norris, 2014; APPG, 2014). There is an emphasis on creating a 'pipeline', in which women are supported at each stage and there is a clear pathway for success that is available and attainable (APPG, 2014). While most studies focus on participation in either parliamentary or local government elections, this section of the report differs in that it offers an analysis of mechanisms for both national and local government.

Attracting Women

Training and Mentoring

Training and mentoring programmes focus on helping women attain the knowledge, skills and confidence to stand for election. This section will outline the programmes which have been initiated, looking in turn at educational programmes aimed at schoolchildren before turning to programmes delivered by organisations, political parties and the state to encourage women to run. Although there is a lot of information about these programmes on the websites of providers, there is comparatively little evaluation of these schemes. Therefore, it is difficult to assess the impact and performance of programmes until independent evaluation has been conducted and results are available.

Educational Outreach

Early interventions include programmes for school children. Mentoring schemes run by the Scottish Government to support girls and young women in schools and universities were judged to be useful, although reservations were expressed about whether they reached the girls who most need them (Davidson, 2016). The chief executive of YoungScot, Louise Macdonald cautioned that these schemes may not be accessed by young carers, those with mental health issues or those in the 'forgotten group in the middle of the classroom ... not the ones at the front with their hands up', who would benefit most from schemes aimed at raising confidence (ibid, 2016). The UK Youth Parliament, whose members, aged 11 to 18, are elected in annual elections throughout the UK, provides opportunities for young people to gain a better understanding of how Parliament works. The Parliamentary inquiry into improving representation also recommended that the Secretary of State for Education should encourage the development of debating societies

in schools, visits from MPs to schools and school visits to Westminster to increase understanding of Parliament and expand the potential pool of candidates in the future. There was no hard evidence provided about the demonstrable impact of these schemes at present (APPG, 2014).

In the United States, 'Running Start', a non-partisan organisation, seeks to "inspire and train the next generation of young women political leaders" (Running Start website). To achieve this it provides secondary school girls with training in public speaking and leadership skills to gain confidence to pursue political careers. The Girl Scouts also run the ToGetHerThere scheme, with a similar aim of developing confidence and leadership skills for young women (Krook and Norris, 2014).

External Organisations

In the UK, the 50:50 Parliament group campaigns for greater female representation and runs the 'Ask Her to Stand' scheme, which encourages women to consider running for elections. There are calls for this campaign to be adopted for local government (McNeil et al, 2017). Although it does not offer specific training programmes, 50:50 provides information and support networks for those seeking election. Women's organisations such as the Fawcett Society also aim to address some specific challenges faced by different groups of women during the political recruitment process. A criticism about such organisations has been that they focus primarily on increasing the number of women and this has come at the expense of increasing the diversity of female representation (Evans, 2016).

Organisations which seek to recruit and train women for political positions are particularly well developed in the USA (Krook and Norris, 2014). This includes Ready to Run, a 'national network of non-partisan training programs' typically delivered out of universities (website of the Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP) cawp.rutgers.edu). EMILY's List seeks to train pro-choice Democratic women to run, publicising these candidates so that they receive sufficient donations to conduct their campaign. They have also launched an online training programme that covers campaign management and fundraising.

Recent research on local government initiatives points to the lack of analysis or evaluation of successful methods to increase women's representation in local government. Using case studies from Scotland, Germany and Sweden, alongside an analysis of local government in Britain, McNeil et al (2017) argue that successful schemes were "typically non-politically affiliated and run as either national networks or networked local chapter" (page 7). YoungScot, which ran a competition that offered the winner the opportunity to be mentored by Nicola Sturgeon for a year, was cited as an example. Also, in Scotland, in Inverclyde, an example of a cross-party initiative, 'Women for Council', seeks to encourage women into local government and has been successful in increasing the number of women councillors. In Germany, the Helene Weber Kolleg Scheme provides cross-party networks of coaching, support and mentoring. The Social Democratic (SDP) Party's 'Women to Power' scheme focuses on women who are already involved

in politics locally. Successful applicants attend two 3-day seminars delivered by female facilitators. Critically, these German programmes, which are well-received by participants, are subject to formal evaluations, although details of their findings were not accessible.

In the UK, initiatives such as the Local Government Association's (LGA) 'Be a Councillor' scheme, draws participants, both men and women, from the main political parties, as well as independents, to assist and encourage individuals to stand for election to their local council. Based upon interviews with focus groups of women, the Fawcett Society emphasised that the 'Be a Councillor' scheme needed to provide more events aimed specifically at women as there remained an 'information gap' for potential candidates (Bazeley et al, 2017; McNeil et al, 2017).

Political Parties' Initiatives

As indicated earlier, political parties are critical in providing women with the necessary networks and support to put themselves forward as candidates (Krook and Norris, 2014). They are able to provide women's sections, recruitment initiatives, financial support and training programmes. All the main parties in the UK have initiatives to help women to stand for election. However, Campbell et al (2018) suggest that "these strategies address the supply of women seeking selection as a candidate, but do not target party demand for women candidates" Campbell et al (2018: 233). The Labour Party's use of AWSs is described as "a demand-side intervention, designed to override any prejudice among party selectorates" (ibid).

Conservatives
On the website of the Conservative Women's Organisation, it states that 56% of new Conservative women MPs elected in 2015 came through the organisation's 'development pipeline'. Initiatives here include the Women2Win programme and activities of the wider Conservative Women's Organisation that provide grassroots networks, workshops and training days. They also have young women's groups and 'be a councillor' days. Beyond specific programmes, female Conservative MPs have spoken of the role model effect of Margaret Thatcher's premiership (Child and Webb, 2012).

Labour
The Labour Women's Network runs several programmes to support and train women. Highlighted on the party's website are:
- Foundation Days, which are "ideal for women who may want to think about going into public life" and cover: policy-making and party structures; selection procedures and how they work; and political life planning and development;
- Aspiring Leaders and Candidates residential weekends, which prepare women for leadership roles in the party;
- Local Women's Leadership training, which is targeted at councillors and covers: developing a personal political strategy; developing and communicating your message; and teambuilding and networking.

All the main parties in the UK have initiatives to help women to stand for election

There is no available analysis of the schemes and the data on the website concerning the number of elected women who had participated in these programmes has not been updated since November 2013.

The Jo Cox Women's Leadership programme, which began in 2017, is a selective seven-month programme run by the Labour Women's Network and is intended as a high-level training experience. Successful applicants must demonstrate experience of organising campaigns, as well as knowledge of and commitment to the Labour Party. It is a free programme, which offers structured work with a pair of mentors and the party covers any travel and accommodation costs. As a relatively new programme, no evaluation evidence has yet been made available.

The role of trade unions in the Labour Party can be seen by the example of the Unite union's Future Candidates Programme, which offers training for Unite members who are considering running for electoral office. Aspects of this training include building confidence, developing skills and learning how to navigate the Labour Party selection process.

Liberal Democrats
The Liberal Democrats have run Campaigns for Gender Balance (CGB) and networks to support women in the party, as well as 'inspiration days'. In interviews with women involved with the CGB, Evans (2008) noted that there were mixed views on its effectiveness and criticism that events were overwhelmingly based in Westminster, which prevented widespread involvement. She also makes the point that such programmes do not overcome the difficulties facing women at the local level selection process and the sexism suffered by some.

Scottish National Party
In Scotland, the SNP introduced new rules in the 2017 local elections 'to ensure more women were put forward as candidates' (SNP website). At the election, the SNP's proportion of female candidates rose to 41.3%, from a previous level of 23.8%. The SNP's proportion of elected female representatives rose from 24.7% in 2012 to 39% in 2017 (Kenny et al, 2017). In February 2018, the Scottish First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon, announced the launch of a fund of £500,000 to support projects which boost female representation in politics and to celebrate the centenary of women's suffrage (Holyrood, 2018). This money came from the Chancellor using the Barnett Formula.

Government Schemes

The 'Diversity and Democracy' project, which was funded by the Welsh government and ran in Wales between April 2014 and March 2017, was an example of a programme which sought to increase the diversity of individuals standing for election to local government (Farrell and

Titcombe, 2016). In 2012, the UK government introduced the Access to Elected Office Fund for Disabled People. It was subsequently put on hold at the time of the 2015 general election, despite protests from some MPs. Thus, it does not appear to have benefited women with disabilities (Evans, 2016). A recommendation of the 'Good Parliament' report was the 'Introduction to being an MP programme' for women and other societal groups currently under-represented in Parliament (Childs, 2016). It has also been suggested that online resources be improved to clarify the role of an MP and the eligibility for the position (APPR, 2014).

Getting Women Elected (Selection and Election)

Most literature and research on increasing the selection and election of women focuses on the employment of gender quotas. Quotas designate a certain proportion of seats to be filled by women and constitute the most effective method for increasing numbers of women. They also lend themselves to quantitative analysis, which has prompted the welter of research on them. A 'second generation' of literature is emerging that looks at the impact of quotas 'beyond numbers' and considers the type of representation this mechanism offers (Krook and Letterberg, 2014).

While the focus here will be largely on quotas, due to their significance for increasing women's representation, findings relating to other mechanisms also require consideration. These include ways to make party selection processes more open and accountable and requiring parties to publish data about these aspects of the political process to elicit change.

Quotas

Various kinds of quotas have been proposed and implemented around the world to increase the representation of women and there is a wealth of research on their effectiveness. The three basic types of quota are: Constitutional; Electoral; and Party (Franceschet, Krook and Piscopo, 2012; CFWD, 2012). Most quota systems aim to ensure 30% female representation. Parity laws which were introduced in France sought to achieve 50% representation, although this target has not been met. In Belgium, instead of a specific target, the aim is for the percentage to increase incrementally over the years (Murray, 2012; Murray, 2014).

The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), an intergovernmental organisation, with headquarters in Sweden and regional offices in Costa Rica, Australia and Ethiopia, has a gender quotas database which provides details of how quotas are applied in countries throughout the world (IDEA, 2018). Here, the distinction is made between Political Party Quotas and Legislated Candidate Quotas, which includes both those enshrined in the Constitution and those which are applied by electoral law. It is evident from this source that there are considerable variations in the design and level of quota,

the rigour with which they are imposed, whether they are applied to candidate lists or parliamentary representation, and, crucially, the degree to which the quota targets have been achieved.

The following examples, derived from the IDEA data, provide an indication of the range of gender quotas:

Legislated candidate quotas
France (39% of parliamentary seats are held by women)
While the Constitution insists that men and women should have equal access to 'electoral mandates and electoral offices', responsibility for achieving this is placed on political parties. Electoral law stipulates that the number of candidates for each sex should not differ by more than 2%. Political parties which contravene these boundaries can be subject to financial penalties.

Spain (39% of parliamentary seats are held by women)
There is a legal requirement for candidate lists to be comprised of at least 40% of each sex.

Mexico (42% of parliamentary seats are held by women)
Under the constitution, political parties must ensure that there is gender parity in the make-up of candidates for political office. This is supported by legislation under which men and women must each comprise at least 40% of candidates. Somewhat contrarily, parties that "democratically elect their candidates" can be exempted from this requirement. Ultimately, however, a failure on the part of a political party to comply could result in their electoral lists being rejected.

Ireland (22% of parliamentary seats are held by women)
As indicated above, the level of women's representation in parliament falls well behind that of France, Spain and Mexico. This is despite legislation introduced in 2012 which stated that at least 30% of candidates should be women (rising to 40% by 2019). Failure to achieve this would be accompanied by a reduction of 50% of state funding.

Political party quotas
The overriding importance of political parties in efforts to enhance women's representation is apparent in the following international examples.

Australia (29% of parliamentary seats are held by women)
The Australian Labour Party applies a quota of 40% for each of the sexes for pre-selection for public office at both State and federal level.

Canada (28% of parliamentary seats are held by women)
Following a series of by-elections since the general election of 2015, 28% of Canadian MPs are female. There are stark differences between the leading political parties in the representation of women. In the ruling Liberal Party, which has had a target of women constituting 25% of its MPs since 1993, the figure now stands at 30%. Moreover,

there is a 50:50 gender split in the Cabinet. In contrast, women's representation among MPs in the second-placed Conservative Party has only reached 20%. In third place, the New Democratic Party, which, since 1985, has had a target of 50% of its candidates being women, has now reached 41%.

Sweden (44% of parliamentary seats are held by women)
In Sweden, the fact that the three parties in the current coalition government, the Social Democratic Party, the Left Party and the Green Party have had 50% minimum quotas for women on party candidate lists for over twenty years would seem to be reflected in the high proportion of female MPs. The main opposition party, the Moderate Party, introduced a gender quota system in 2009.

Germany (36% of parliamentary seats are held by women)
The Christian Democratic Union (CDU), which has the most number of parliamentary seats, has a party statute which states that at least a third of candidates and party officials should be women. If this is not the case, then internal elections have to be repeated. The second largest party, the Social Democratic Party (SDP) has, since 1996, imposed a higher requirement, with candidate list needing to have 40% of each gender.

South Africa (41% of parliamentary seats are held by women)
As far as local councils are concerned, electoral law stipulates that parties must seek to ensure that 50% of candidates on party lists are women. However, there are no legal sanctions for non-compliance. Since 2009, the ruling party, the African National Congress (ANC) has had a 50% gender quota for both local and national elections.

Well-designed and properly implemented quotas are considered to be the most effective way to address the under-representation of women in national and local government (Childs and Campbell, 2014; Allen and Cutts, 2018; Beauregard, 2017; Schwindt-Bayer, 2009). The majority of research has focused on the descriptive representation that quotas provide, essentially looking at the numbers of women being elected. Less tangible is the substantive representation they can offer – whether women can pursue their agenda once elected and progress to senior roles. This often relies on the policy-making processes of government, so that, whereas quotas can assure the presence of women in government, their ability to penetrate policy agendas and decision-making processes is less straightforward (Franceschet et al, 2012; Franceschet, 2011).

Murray (2012) suggests that there is no widespread support for introducing legislative quotas in the UK. This puts the impetus on political parties to implement quotas. It is well-documented that the use of all-women shortlists (AWS) increased the number of female parliamentary candidates and MPs for the Labour Party (Krook, 2016). Although concerns were raised that quotas would lead to the election of unqualified women and that women elected through this mechanism

would face other challenges (Childs and Krook, 2012), no significant difference has been found between the quality of quota women and that of their non-quota colleagues (Allen et al, 2016).

The Labour Party continues to lead on women's representation, although the SNP and Liberal Democrats have recently voted to enable their local and national bodies to use AWSs for the selection of parliamentary candidates. The SNP also used AWSs in the 2016 Scottish Parliament elections in seats where an MP was standing down (Davidson, 2016). Under the Equality Act 2010, the period in which all-women shortlists may be used has been extended until 2030.

Critically, for quotas to work, women also need to be selected as candidates for winnable seats. McKay and McAllister (2012) stress the need for sustained support for quotas in order to maintain levels of female representation, as, otherwise, their numbers are liable to stall or fall, if no other actions are taken.

As indicated in the Context section, the UK reflects the wider European context in which left-wing parties tend to elect more women than centrist or right-wing parties do (Luhiste and Kenny, 2016). According to Ashe et al (2010), party ideology, intra-party relations and local party autonomy are likely to be significant in determining the efforts made, and the likelihood of quotas and other measures being adopted to ensure that there are more female representatives.

A raft of research points to the broader impact of quotas for political engagement, with quotas not only encouraging more women to stand for election, but also incentivising political parties to target women's votes (Allen and Cutts, 2018; Campbell et al, 2018; Buckley, 2016). Murray (2012a) points out how quotas can help women overcome barriers to stand, whilst in interviews with Labour's 'quota women' Childs (2004a) reported that this group of women felt their presence encouraged other women to become politically involved and encouraged them to contact their political representatives more frequently. Thus, beyond improving female representation, quotas are seen to encourage a broader participation by women in the political process, because the presence of women legislators increases their perceived legitimacy to female citizens.

The calls for a 'second generation' of work on quotas focus on the need to look beyond the numbers and assess the impact of an increased number of female representatives on political outcomes (Krook and Messing-Mathie, 2013; Paxton and Hughs, 2015; Krook and Letterberg, 2014; Krook and Childs, 2008). Issues considered include legislative diversity, policy-maker behaviour, public opinion and mass mobilisation (Krook and Messing-Mathie, 2013). Research into these factors can be more difficult and problematic as they are less conducive to quantitative research, often relying on time-intensive case studies. A number of critiques have been raised in the literature:

- Gender quotas may not translate into the day-to-day practices of political recruitment, as evidenced by examples of them being subverted by putting women forward as candidates in unwinnable seats (Bjarngard and Kenny, 2015);

- Quotas do not subvert the informal sources of male power and, therefore, cannot change the daily enactment of informal gendered institutions that limits the capacity of women to enforce change and pushes women out (Verge and de la Fuente, 2014). This links to a body of work looking at the exit of female representatives. While quotas may be effective for getting women elected, there is not enough to keep them there. A comparative study of regional parliaments found that women do not always have adequate time to build a power base, or the expertise to bring about substantive impact on policy-making, leading to their early exit (Vanlangekker et al, 2013). This underlines the need for sustained support of quotas to prevent their effects stalling or declining;

- Reservations have also been expressed about whether quotas bring greater diversity beyond gender. They ensure more women are elected but these women are largely drawn from the same backgrounds as male representatives and are women who display party loyalty (Cairney et al, 2016; Cowley and Childs, 2003). To address this issue, it is suggested that more needs to be done to enable the selection and election of BAME and LGBT women, as well as those with disabilities. Beauregard (2017) maintains that quotas alone may not be enough to overcome the lower levels of socio-economic resources experienced by women, which continue to limit their political participation. This argument has also been applied to mothers (Campbell and Childs, 2014).

Crucially, these criticisms do not dismiss either the need for quotas, or their effectiveness. What the literature emphasises is the need for quotas to be accompanied by a broader array of measures throughout the 'pipeline'. Essentially, this means there needs to be a multi-pronged approach to increasing women's representation in politics.

Party Selection Processes

As stated earlier, a consistent finding in the research is that political parties are the gatekeepers for change. This extends not only to providing mentoring and training, but also to reviewing selection processes. Opening up selection processes and publishing data on selection are advocated as ways to increase the transparency and accountability of how parties select candidates. A critical factor in this process is ensuring that local party branches fully adopt and support the initiatives that party leaders impose. Studies have consistently identified resistance to changes at a local level and local networks which often remained closed to women (Lovenduski and Norris, 2003; Rallings et al, 2010; Crowder-Meyer, 2013).

Research on candidate selection found that closed postal primaries and closed meetings continue to be common methods for selecting candidates in the UK, "suggesting that members of most parties would prefer to keep the privilege of selecting candidates to themselves" (Bale et al, 2016). Studies of both national and local government recommended changes to local party recruitment practices to overcome reports of

sexism experienced by some women and the subversion of existing initiatives intended to recruit more women (McNeil et al, 2017; APPG, 2014; Shepherd-Robinson and Lovenduski, 2002; Bjarngard and Kenny, 2015). Positive action mechanisms included capping selection costs, committing parties to produce an action plan outlining new measures to take, and encouraging local parties to talent spot (APPG, 2014; CFWD, 2015). Several measures also focused on the practices of selection committees, calling for greater openness around conflict of interest, opening up branch meetings and training for candidate selection panels to ensure all people can participate fairly and are judged against clear criteria and a set of competencies (Durose et al, 2011).

Many reports also called for the greater collection and publication of data concerning party candidates (Childs, 2016). This could include asking candidates to complete equality monitoring forms and requiring parties to publish the results annually (CFWD, 2015). Research focusing on local government also recommended requiring parties and councils to publish data on female representation (McNeil et al, 2017). The aim here would be to incite political parties to select more women and to ensure that councils placed women in cabinets and in leadership roles.

Supporting Women (Recruitment, Retention and Progression)

Positive actions mechanisms in this category focus on measures to facilitate a working culture in politics that makes it more attractive to women. As such, it should be stressed that, not only would these measures support women once they had been elected, they would also attract women to these roles in the first instance. This section will examine suggestions for changing the working culture in Paliament and local government and go on to consider initiatives to help women progress once elected, thereby helping retention.

Parliament

Academic, policy and media discussions continue to highlight the need to change the working culture in Parliament to attract more women (Campbell and Childs, 2014; Childs and Evans, 2012). The argument is that it is not enough simply to elect more women to bring about change, as 'critical mass theory' would suggest, because this has not brought about a more feminised style of politics (Childs, 2004). *The Good Parliament Report* (Childs, 2016), which was informed by the 2008 Speaker's Conference on political representation (Speaker's Conference 2010; Lovenduski, 2010), made 43 recommendations to bring about better female representation at Westminster. These recommendations focused on three dimensions:

1. Equality of Participation in the House;
2. Parliamentary Infrastructure;
3. Commons Culture.

Suggestions for addressing these issues include: expanding crèche facilities; revising sitting hours; trialling remote voting systems and ensuring greater female representation and leadership on select committees; and commissioning a diversity and equality audit by the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority. Identifying a 'responsible actor' for each recommendation in the report would, it is hoped, ensure actors are accountable for implementing the recommendations (Campbell et al, 2018) Other studies have outlined strategies for greater legislative equality (Lovenduski, 2012). It should also be noted that the Women and Equalities Committee appointed at Westminster in 2015 was made permanent in 2017. It is argued that these measures would not only encourage more women but help increase the length of women's tenure as MPs, as women spend less time as MPs than their male counterparts (Byrne and Theakston, 2016).

There are also calls for leaders to commit to the appointment of 50/50 cabinets (CFWD, 2015). In Scotland, Nicola Sturgeon's appointment of a 50/50 cabinet and wider support for campaign group Women 50:50 bolstered women's representation. Although new legislatures are more representative than Westminster (Cairney et al, 2016), devolved parliaments have not ended the gender gap. Allen and Cutts (2018) point to the need for wider social change, in tandem with legislative measures, to combat the existing problems in political representation.

A more radical proposition is enabling the position of MP to be open to job sharing, which, it is argued, would prompt more women to consider running for Parliament. Campbell and Cowley (2014) tested public opinion about the possibility of job shares for MPs and found no strong support, but nor any strong objection. In a recent pamphlet, the Fawcett Society considered the 'legal and practical possibility of MPs job sharing' (Fawcett Society, 2017b). While acknowledging that there was no appetite for the government to support legislation in favour of job shares, they cited the increasing acceptance of job shares in civil society. The acceptance of job sharing in senior and management roles, including in the civil service, where 30 senior female civil servants have found job share partners, provides comparable positions in closely aligned sectors that have successfully implemented job shares. It is viewed as a way to close the 'motherhood gap' in the UK Parliament, as well as to encourage a wider pool of people to consider becoming an MP alongside another profession. It is also suggested that flexible working and part-time working could be considered for senior roles in local government (Bazeley et al, 2017).

Local Government

Constituting around 32% of councillors in the UK, women have consistently higher rates of dropout than men, citing time and work commitments as key factors in determining their departure (Rao, 2005; Allen, 2013). The fact that women do not appear to be dropping out of local government in order to run for Parliament raises concerns that traditional 'political apprenticeship' routes to Parliament work in gendered ways (Allen, 2013). For women, informal encouragement to run for office

is more important than holding a formal position (Allen 2013a). Structural changes which have been proposed to increase women's representation include making being a local councillor a paid part-time position and placing term limits on the position of councillors to foster diversity (Allen, 2012; Bazeley et al, 2017).

Further research has proposed changes to the working culture of local government to enable and encourage women to stand and be councillors. Many of the suggestion made by the Fawcett Society (Bazeley et al, 2017) are similar in nature to the measures suggested and, in some instances implemented, in Parliament, including legalising remote attendance at meetings, introducing maternity and paternity leave, covering childcare and caring costs, and consulting on meeting times. The report also highlighted the need for improving the diversity of councillors to encourage more disabled and BAME candidates. It suggested that, while there is a need for a reasonable adjustment policy for disabled councillors, plans for how to increase the number of BAME councillors are less concrete. Another suggestion is a requirement to have 50/50 cabinets and, in some instances, the creation of 'vice'-position so that the top two positions could be filled by a man and a woman (McNeil et al, 2017).

English devolution and the election of metropolitan mayors has been cited as a key opportunity to enact gender equality, although currently all metropolitan mayors are men. The Fawcett Society report (Bazeley et al, 2017), recommends the establishment of women and equalities committees in combined authorities and the use of equality impact assessments to inform decision-making.

Training and Support

Research on both national and local government has highlighted the need for continued support and training for women once elected. It is argued that this would increase the retention of women and enable them to acquire the necessary knowledge, skills and networks to take on leadership roles and progress in government (Vanlangekker et al, 2013). This includes training for new MPs (APPG, 2014; Childs, 2016). At a local level, proposed mechanisms include the active sponsorship of new councillors, establishing regional gender equality networks, and the creation of leadership roles and leadership programmes for women (Bazeley et al, 2017). Analysis of European countries highlighted such schemes. As mentioned in relation to external organisations, in Germany, the Helene Weber Kolleg award recognises outstanding female politicians, with winners receiving money to implement local initiatives and act as a role model for others. There is also a coaching programme for women in power, while local government initiatives in Sweden train men and women to understand the gender implications of their decision making (McNeil et al, 2017).

McNeil et al (2017) identify a number of initiatives to promote training for women and assess their applicability to the UK. These include:

- In Canada, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities introduced a 'Regional Champions' campaign to build a network of champions to work in communities to support and mentor women;

- Other schemes in Canada include: the 'Protégé Program' for women aged 18 to 28 to shadow elected official to gain skills and knowledge to run; 'Head Start for Young Women' aimed at developing leadership skills of young women and providing networking opportunities; 'Equal Voice', which targets political parties to be proactive in supporting women and has a national mentorship programme to help women learn about politics; Equal Voice also ran the 'Daughters of the Vote' initiative which invited a women aged 18–23 from every federal riding in Canada to attend Parliament to represent their community; 'Ask Her', a local organisation in Calgary is working to get more women to run;

- In the US, the 'She Should Run' campaign emphasises why public service matters and provides "an approachable starting place and network for women leaders considering a future run for office and for those who support them" (She Should Run website). It has been very successful and receives considerable media coverage. The VoteRunLead programme is similar and focuses on identifying the transferable skills women possess that could be adapted for political life;

- In Northern Ireland, DemocraShe was a six-week, cross-party intensive programme established in 2000 to provide training, and led to successor programmes, such as the Young Female Leaders Academy. The organisation Politics Plus is funded by the Northern Ireland Assembly and one of its strategic aims is to strengthen the role of women in political and public life. It also provides a 'Women in Politics Programme' which seeks to build the confidence of female candidates, helping them to develop Personal Action Plans, as well as delivering media training. The three-day programme is delivered through workshops, one-to-one sessions, study trips (including a study visit to Westminster) and stakeholder engagement events. No published programme evaluation evidence is available. The 2015 Fresh Start Agreement implemented a Women's Early Intervention Programme to increase the participation and influence of women in community development. This provided training and one to one support. The evaluation of the programme reported high recruitment rates (263 women against a target of 250) and a perceptible improvement in women's focus on wanting to make changes to their communities (Community Evaluation Northern Ireland, 2017);

- In Ireland, the adoption of substantial quotas "instilled a cultural change within political parties whereby political parties embraced gendered recruitment processes, encouraging and equipping

women to put themselves forward for election" (McNeil et al, 2017: 65). It should be noted, however, that, as identified earlier in 'Quotas' on page 42, the representation of women in parliament still languishes at 22%.

While the programmes and initiatives outlined above are featured on various websites to describe their content and reach, there is a notable absence of robust and longitudinal evaluation to test their impact in terms of increasing and retaining women's participation in national and local politics.

Discrimination Legislation

It is argued that stronger discrimination legislation and effective regulation would assist in creating a working culture conducive to the greater inclusion of women. As well as having strong anti-discrimination laws (McNeil et al, 2017), in Sweden there is also an emphasis on political parties issuing their own strategies to deal with discrimination, including codes of conduct and standard training, and ensuring the full force of the law is used to tackle discriminatory behaviour (Bazeley et al, 2017). Calls have also been made for bodies such as the Culture Media and Sport Select Committee and the Independent Press Standards Organisation to consider measures to tackle sexism in the media (APPG, 2014).

Electoral Systems

There has been discussion about whether reforming electoral systems would increase female representation. For example, scepticism about the Alternative Vote (AV) system has been raised on the basis of its potential to be unfavourable to women (Ashe et al, 2010). Proportional Representation (PR) systems have, on average been found to promote women's representation better than others, with the impact of electoral reform being greatest over the long term (Thames, 2017; McNeil et al, 2017). Although further research is needed to substantiate these assertions, there is not enough widespread support for electoral reform in the UK to suggest that PR systems will be adopted in the foreseeable future.

Conclusions

The purpose of the rapid evidence review was to briefly review the literature on the barriers to women's selection/election to local and national government. A key element of the specification was to provide a critical assessment of the evidence on what works to increase the representation of women.

The context section showed that, currently, circa 32% of elected MPs and local councillors are women. While there has been an expansion in female representation within local and national government in recent years, the pace of change has been greater in Parliament. Within both domains, councillors and MPs remain predominantly male, older, white and middle class. There are notable problems attached to high rates of incumbency, which serve to stifle the potential arrival of new blood and greater diversity. Moreover, the broadening of representation among younger women (and men) and those with young children are acute issues and are directly linked to the many barriers that exist when seeking and accessing political office in parliament and within local government.

What Have We Learnt About the Barriers?

There is a wealth of literature on the multiple barriers facing women, which has focused on supply and demand issues. On the supply side, barriers relate to who decides to put themselves forward for election and the associated challenges, for example: the costs of campaigning; the difficulties faced by many women of combining political life with primary caring, domestic responsibilities and, often, paid employment; motivational factors (such as ambition, self-confidence, self-belief and dedication); and the male-dominated world and culture of national and local government. On the demand side the focus is on the role of political parties in choosing suitable candidates, their selection procedures and the difficulties of changing established recruitment, selection and promotion protocols, which have traditionally been geared towards the male dominated world of politics. The weight of evidence suggests that there are substantial supply and demand barriers, which need to be addressed simultaneously.

With regard to the typology that was developed as part of this study, there is an abundance of literature which covers the social and cultural barriers and the structural and institutional barriers. However, less substantive evidence is available about knowledge and information barriers – in particular, individual decision making (for both males and females) and how this translates into positive or negative outcomes relating to either standing for office and any subsequent progression

within politics. Also, while the lack of transparency in recruitment practices, in particular at local party level, is well-documented, there is little evidence evidence of good practice to challenge this lack of transparency.

While a substantial and consistent evidence base exists, it is appropriate to ask questions about its rigour and coverage when assessing the arguments put forward. This includes:

- A great deal of the evidence on barriers is qualitative in nature and draws almost exclusively from studies of female candidates and parliamentary/council members. Comparing the experiences and differences between genders is noticeably absent, as are studies which broaden their scope to examine the role of the family and wider social networks in supporting candidates and sitting members. Studies of both males and females, in terms of their decision-making about whether or not to stand, their experiences of selection procedures and the trajectories they follow post-election and beyond would provide a valuable insight into gender (in)equalities;

- An appraisal of the relative importance of intersectional barriers relating to social class, age, disability and race would also enhance our understanding of these barriers. There is currently a significant gap in available evidence, in particular, sub-group analysis (intersectionality) and how this relates to gender;

- Quantitative evidence largely comprises secondary data analysis or, if it is original data, is cross-sectional, as opposed to longitudinal in nature;

- The depth of some of the research should be appraised. For example, survey-based data can be restricted to samples which may be:
    a. unrepresentative of the population as a whole, or
    b. unweighted so as to place undue emphasis on a skewed sample.

This is not to say that the factors identified in the literature, such as caring responsibilities and wariness about being situated in a male-dominated culture are incorrect, or that they are given undue prominence. Rather, it is to suggest that we should aim to enhance the evidence base to support the case. Three factors which should be taken into account are important here:

1. Clearly, a major constraint is a lack of resources to conduct research of sufficient depth, in terms of, for example, sample sizes and introducing a longitudinal element, to derive the data which would make arguments more compelling;

2. The timeliness of data is particularly important, given the rapidly shifting nature of attitudes. Does the *zeitgeist* make it more likely that women generally feel more 'empowered' to take on roles that would not have been as attractive to them a relatively short time ago? We need to be able to say something about the contemporary

situation. In some ways, the current proportion of women MPs in Parliament, at 32%, may not seem to reflect any great advance, as it is still well below the nominal figure of 50%. However, it may be more useful to say that recent years have seen a significant increase in women's representation;

3. Despite a series of what might be considered seminal texts about what should be done to bring about fundamental change (APPG, 2014; Childs, 2016), wholesale change is not easily achieved.

What Have We Learnt About 'What Works'?

In terms of what works, the literature is dominated by the use of quotas. They have been tried and tested in many different countries and since their success can be more easily measured in terms of expanding numerical representation, it is easier to prove, in numerical and statistical terms, that they "work". While quotas get women through the door, the weight of evidence is that they do not sufficiently address the cultural and working practices in Parliament and local government that remain significant barriers, nor do quotas assure the future progress of female representatives.

Overall, the research points to a 'quota-plus' strategy to increase women's representation (Campbell et al, 2018; Kenny, 2015; Krook and Norris 2014). The 'second generation' of work on quotas is seeking to look 'beyond the numbers' to examine the informal and institutional barriers to power that remain. This work is still forthcoming but there remains a lack of evidence at this point. Nonetheless, the consensus that quotas must be accompanied by more wide-ranging measures should invite the consideration of other substantial and structural changes. Some interesting ideas, such as job-shares and remote working have come about from looking at other professional fields and testing/arguing their applicability in the political sphere. Not only should this be continued, but the implementation of these suggestions should be taken seriously and accompanied by rigorous studies which have a particular focus on impact.

Despite Krook and Norris (2014) stressing the need for more research on the effectiveness and impact of measures that are not quotas, there remains far more work on quotas and far less analysis of other mechanisms such as mentoring and training programmes. This is undoubtedly because analysis of such mechanisms requires time-consuming and field-intensive methods, such as in-depth interviews and observational techniques (Bjarngard and Kenny, 2015).

Political parties are routinely pinpointed as the gatekeepers to broadening the representation of women and the crucial role of political parties in addressing gender inequalities is a key finding. Whilst the role of political parties is usually highlighted in relation to training and the adoption of quotas, the importance of the party selectorate must also be considered when seeking to tackle supply and demand issues. There is insufficient in-depth research about selection processes, which are often somewhat opaque in terms of their accountability, the make-up of selection panels, having clear criteria and transparent decision-making

processes. Moreover, given their important role, there is no substantial analysis of political party training and mentoring programmes and evidence of what works.

Training and mentoring are cited as recommended approaches in a number of different studies and policy documents: that is, they are perceived to be fundamentally "good ways" of offering support to widening inclusion. However, there is a shortage of robust evidence to support these claims. This may be attributable to a) the length of time needed to gather evidence and b) the tacit nature of the support offered, which makes it difficult to prove impact. The extent to which support for female candidates via training and mentoring continues throughout their political is also under-researched, particularly in relation to how this not only enables and encourages women, but ensures their retention and success moving forward. Indeed, it is stressed that when devising strategies to attract and support women, their departure should receive greater consideration (Vanlangekker et al, 2013).

While the implementation of quotas and support mechanisms are highlighted as potential remedies, there is a significant weight of evidence relating to the working practices and culture in Parliament and within local government which points to the need for fundamental change. The claim that Parliamentary culture lacks an 'ethics of care' (Campbell and Childs, 2014: 489) is borne out by the absence of flexibility and recognition of members' caring needs and responsibilities, which disproportionately impacts on women's lives. The same agenda was found to exist within local government. Moreover, the detrimental effects and perceptions about the traditional masculine networks and environments which persist within local and national politics continue to serve as significant barriers. The absence of statutory entitlement to maternity and paternity rights, as well as flexible working practices also act to preserve the status quo. The culmination of these issues and how they should be addressed is clearly presented by Childs (2016) in *The Good Parliament*, which sets out a comprehensive set of recommendations for tackling the working culture at Westminster.

Certainly, there is a need to focus on the substantive representation of women. Intersectionality and diversity are of immediate relevance to barriers and positive action mechanisms. There is important cross-over here with research concerned with social mobility (Cairney et al, 2016) and diversity (Durose et al, 2013) in politics. These academics often point to similar issues and solutions. Evans (2016) contends that intersectionality is vital in increasing and improving women's representation, not just increasing the net number of women.

However, while there is much discussion in the literature about intersectionality, evidence about how this should be or has been tackled successfully is less conspicuous. What is needed is further research which examines: the methodological challenges surrounding this agenda; the logistical issues of data collection and, crucially, how greater diversity across multiple barriers can be achieved within political life, including examples of effective practice.

Ideas for Future Research

- **Gender differences/sub-group research** – Conducting longitudinal qualitative and quantitative research which maps the journey from candidate selection to retirement within local/national politics – as well as capturing reasons for drop-out and progression, this should include studies of gender differences and intersectional analysis.

- **Mentoring and support programmes** – Capturing hard and soft outcomes (short, medium and long-term) from training and mentoring programmes by political parties that have been implemented across the UK and developing a good practice guide.

- **Selection and recruitment practices** – Political parties examining their current selection and recruitment practices at local party level, with a view to developing guidance which would make processes more open, transparent and accountable. This may include examining the viability of transferring effective HR practice, for example, standardised interview questions and the composition of selection panels, which ensure greater diversity of representation.

- **Equality and Diversity Measures** – Conducting an appraisal of practice from other professions, which have successfully broadened representation from women and under-represented groups through flexible working practices, technological innovation and other forms of positive action.

Appendix 1: Selected Annotated Bibliography

Full reference: Krook M L and Norris P (2014) 'Beyond Quotas: Strategies to Promote Gender Equality in Elected Office', *Political Studies,* **62(1): 2–20.**

Theme(s) addressed
- Increasing women's participation,
- Positive action mechanisms other than quotas,
- Political parties.

Source of data/information
'Synthesizes work on political recruitment and feminist research on the public/private divide to illuminate potential points of intervention.'

Methods for gathering and analysing data
- Case studies with a comparison of positive action mechanisms used in various countries with a particular focus the UK and USA.

Main findings
- Explores alternatives to quotas and reveals a range of under considered policy initiatives to increase women's political participation.

- Identifies and explore 4 types of actors:
    - Civil Society Actors,
    - Political Party Actors,
    - Parliamentary Actors,
    - State Actors.

- Provides strategies for three key transitional moments – from eligible to aspirant (requires women believing they have the qualifications and resources), from aspirant to candidate (compelling gatekeepers to revise biases) and from candidate to elected office (ensuring women have the resources to win).

Key messages
- There needs to be far more research on strategies to increase women's political participation that are not quotas.

- Suggests Political Party actors may be the most effective by getting to the heart of recruitment practices and facilitating connections and resources for women to become party candidates and elected officials
- The strength of this article lies in the breadth of examples it gives from a range of countries and the emphasis it places on a multifaceted approach to increase women's political participation.

Full reference: Allen P (2013), 'Last in, first out – Gendered patterns of local councillor dropout', *British Politics*, 8(2): 207–224.

Theme(s) addressed
- Local councillor dropout,
- Gendered routes to Parliament.

Source of data/information
Analyses the dropout patterns of councillors in London at the time of the 2010 local elections highlighting how these differ along the lines of sex.

Internet survey of local authority councillors in 32 London boroughs – response rate of 26%, with an *n* of 444.

Methods for gathering and analysing data
- Statistical analysis,
- Survey.

Main findings
- Dropout patterns among London councillors differ along lines of sex.
- Women more likely to drop out of local politics than men.
- Women more likely to drop out after a single term as are younger councillors of both sexes.
- Women aren't dropping out to run for Parliament which raises concerns that traditional 'political apprenticeship' routes to Westminster work in gendered ways.
- Dropping out of council duties often means the end of a career in elected politics for many women.
- Councillors who drop out usually do so after less than 2 terms.

Key messages
- Local councillorship acts as a gendered springboard into higher political office.
- Time is a key issue cited by women as a reason that they drop out as the time the position requires impacts on their family life and career.
- This evidence could support the use of gender quotas.

Full reference: Luhiste M and Kenny M (2016) 'Pathways to Power: Women's representation in the 2014 European Parliament Elections', *European Journal of Political Research,* 55(3): 626–641.

Theme(s) addressed
- European Parliament,
- Party selection of women,
- Election of female candidates.

Source of data/information
A dataset listing 700+ elected MEPs and their background, part and country is used to empirically examine who makes it and through which route.

Methods for gathering and analysing data
- Statistical analysis;
- Survey;
- Literature review, etc.

Main findings
- 2014 European Parliament elections produced record proportion of women – 37%.
- Analysis suggests no significant gender differences in pathways to the European Parliament but parties matter.
- More women are elected from left wing parties.
- Men are more likely than women to be promoted straight from party office to European Parliament, suggesting some pathways to the European Parliament are less open to women than others.
- Study confirms that the wider context (i.e. adoption of gender quotas) does matter for female politicians in European election.

Key messages
- Pointing to parties as key determinant in electing women.
- Women are better represented in the European Parliament that in most national Parliaments.
- More women MEPs are elected from countries with higher levels of women's representation of the national level. However, 'institutional factors including gender quotas and electoral ballot structure are not statistically significant in explaining the gender variation among MEPs'.
- Overall women's and men's paths to the European Parliament are more similar than different.

Full reference: Allen P, Cutts D and Campbell R (2016) 'Measuring the Quality of Politicians Elected by Gender Quotas: Are They Any Different?' *Political Studies,* 64(1): 143–163.

Theme(s) addressed
- Quota women,
- Career trajectory of quota women,
- Labour Party.

Source of data/information
Data source: 1997 general election constituency file data and career trajectory of quota women 1997–2010.

Methods for gathering and analysing data
- Statistical analysis and qualitative analysis.
- Comparing the quality of 'quota women' compared to non-quota colleagues from 1997 general election at three stages of political career: their electoral performance, their qualifications for office and their post-elections legislative trajectories between 1997–2010.

Main findings
- No significant difference is found in the quality or performance of quota women and non-quota women.
- Voters do not punish quotas women.
- Gender quotas provide women who 'fit' with men and women selected through traditional procedures, therefore it is less clear whether they help to elect a diversity of women.
- Due to contextual difference unable to compare quotas systems in other countries to Britain.

Key messages
- Strength lies in the length of time this study covers.
- Emphasise the need for further research on whether gender quotas transform substantive representation.
- Suggest this research raises questions about the aims of quota women: 'Is it about getting women of same educational and social background as men?'.
- Argues that the article should embolden people to use quotas.

Full reference: Krook M L and Letterberg P (2014), 'Electoral quotas and political representation: Comparative perspectives', *International Political Science Review*, 35:1 (2014), 3–11.

Theme(s) addressed
- Gender quotas,
- 'Second generation' literature,
- Substantive representation.

Source of data/information
This is a literature review concerning gender quotas in comparative perspectives which serves as an introduction to this special issue of the journal. It locates gaps in existing literature to place the articles in the issue within the filed.

Methods for gathering and analysing data
- Literature review.

Main findings
- 'Second generation' of literature on quotas has emerged looking 'beyond the numbers' to examine the impact of quotas on legislative diversity, policy-making behaviour, public opinion and mass mobilisation.
- Quotas are rarely implemented in a vacuum, they are commonly part of a broader 'web' of party rules affecting candidate selection decisions.
- The line of future research signalled by articles in this issue is the need to define 'impact' with regards to quotas.

Key messages
- We need to look at impact of quotas beyond the numbers, however it does not exactly give a clear methodology about how to do this.

Full Reference: Vanlangenakker I, Wauters B and Maddens B (2013) 'Pushed Toward the Exit? How Female MPs Leave Parliament', *Politics & Gender*, 9(1): 61–75.

Theme(s) addressed
- Why women leave,
- Limitations to women in politics,
- Shortcomings of quotas.

Source of data/information
Mail survey of former female MPs in regional Parliaments of Catalonia, Saxony, Scotland, Flanders and Wallonia (1999–2009). Response rate was 37.4% (168 persons).

Methods for gathering and analysing data
- Survey.

Main findings
- After retirement, party deselection is the second most important reason for leaving followed by voter deselection.
- Comparative approach reveals similar problems faced by women in politics in different regional Parliaments.

Key messages
- Need to provide mechanisms to ensure the retention of women in politics so they can build expertise and a power base that enables them to have an impact.
- This reinforces the findings of other literature that quotas must be accompanied by other measures to ensure the substantive representation of women in Parliament.
- When devising strategies to facilitate women's political representation more attention to needs to be paid to the factors that cause the departure of women.
- The party selectorate play a critical role in prompting the departures of women.

Full reference: Campbell R and Child S (2014) 'Parents in Parliament: Where's Mum?', *The Political Quarterly,* **84(4): 487–492.**

Theme(s) addressed
- Female MPs with children,
- Westminster working culture.

Source of data/information
2013 survey 'Parents in Parliament' of MPs. 32% response rate (210 surveys). This is topped with public sources e.g. parliamentary record website and personal webpages, which created a complete dataset of 647 MPs.
    ONS data is also used to enable comparisons with other professions.

Methods for gathering and analysing data
- Survey.

Main findings
- 45% of women MPs have no children compared to only 28% of men.
- Women are less likely to have children; when they do they have fewer; and women MPs first enter Parliament when their children are older.
- ONS data shows a clear difference in the number of female MPs who are mothers in comparison with other professions.

Key messages
- Changes need to be made to working culture of Parliament to enable and encourage women with children to become and remain MPs.
- The recommendations of the 2008–2010 Speakers conference need to be adopted to substantially change the working culture of Parliament.

Full reference: Bjarnegard E and Kenny M (2015) 'Revealing the 'Secret Garden': The Informal Dimensions of Political Recruitment', *Politics & Gender,* **11(4): 748–753.**

Theme(s) addressed
- Party recruitment processes,
- Limits of gender quotas.

Methods for gathering and analysing data
Literature review of scholarship on gender quotas.

Main findings
- Literature on gender quotas gives numerous examples of countries and parties failing to meet formal targets.
- Highlights that the effectiveness of gender quotas is reliant on the willingness of party elites to enforce them.
- Formal party recruitment processes as stated in the literature and constitutions of political parties reveal little about the actual recruitment processes on the ground.

- Changes in formal rules including the adoption of gender quotas may not translate into change in the day-to-day practices of political recruitment.
- More research is needed on the informal recruitment processes that take place at a local branch levels and the impact these have on the selection and election of women.
- There are examples of informal party practices of quota subversion, including putting women in 'no hope' seats, local patronage.

Key messages
- This provide a good literature review and suggestions of future directions for research in women's representation.
- Exploring informal party recruitment practices is critical to understand the underrepresentation of women. To understand whether formal rules and regulation really do structure behaviour in practice time consuming and field intensive research methods are needed including in-depth interviews and participant observation.
- A better understanding of both formal and informal arrangements in political parties is needed to overcome barriers to women's political representation.

Full Reference: Allen P and Cutts D (2018) 'An Analysis of Political Ambition in Britain', ***The Political Quarterly***, **89(1): 73–81.**

Theme(s) addressed
- Political ambition,
- Social stratification.

Source of data/information
Data drawn from an original online survey conducted by YouGov of just over 10,000 respondents in England, Scotland and Wales between March–April 2017.

Methods for gathering and analysing data
- Statistical analysis,
- Survey.

Main findings
- Political institutions are not representative of the population and therefore political parties need to adjust practices of candidate recruitment.
- There is a clear gender gap in political ambition. British men are twice as likely to have considered running as British women.
- Findings offer support for recent contention that the working classes are increasingly excluded from the British political life.
- Politically ambitious people in Britain are unlike their fellow citizens in many important and politically salient ways.

Key messages
- The strength of this articles lies in the sample size and its survey of a broad spectrum of the population.
- Places onus on political parties to encourage a wider range of individuals to consider running and notes that it is unclear the impact that organisations like Momentum are having in terms of recruitment.
- Policymakers whose efforts have generally focused on making political institutions more egalitarian and open to members of traditionally under-represented groups, however their initiatives do not seem to have had the desired impact. This suggests wider social change might be needed alongside valuable institutionally-focused efforts like those outlined by Sarah Childs' report to improve political representation.

Full reference: Rallings C, Thrasher M and Shears M (2010) 'Parties, recruitment and Modernisation: Evidence from Local Election Candidates', *Local Government Studies***, 36(3): 361–379.**

Theme(s) addressed
- Local government recruitment,
- Political parties' recruitment strategies.

Source of data/information
Pooled data from four separate nationwide surveys of local election candidates from 2006–2009. 4,646 respondents using random sampling.

Methods for gathering and analysing data
- Statistical analysis,
- Survey.

Main findings
- Data suggests that recruitment networks used by parties are relatively closed with many candidates reporting prior experience as local party office holders, working for charities, public bodies etc.
- Two thirds of candidates reported that their initial decision to stand followed a request by someone else and that this was often a fellow party member.
- Women are more likely to asked than men.
- Candidates are generally against affirmative action measures, which this presents a problem for party leaders who are anxious to recruit more women.
- Main three parties are broadly similar in their recruitment of women, although from all these main parties more candidates are men.
- Problem of uneven political representative is one of supply and demand.
- Candidates come from a rather narrowly defined segment of the total population.

Key messages
- A strength of this research is that it surveys those who got elected and those who did not. However, relying on this survey alone gives a rather skewed view of positive action mechanisms. For example, finding that most of those surveyed were against positive action mechanisms is not the same as finding that these mechanisms do not work. Therefore, there is a danger of relying solely on survey returns.
- It does suggest that local hostility to positive action mechanisms is presenting problems for parties.
- It also emphasises the networks at work in parties to get people elected and that these are closed network.
- There is need for more evidence about party membership and specifically the candidate recruitment process.

Full reference: Evans E (2016) 'Diversity Matters: Intersectionality and Women's Representation in the USA and UK', Parliamentary Affairs, 69(3): 569–585.

Theme(s) addressed
- Women's organisations,
- Intersectionality,
- Diversity.

Source of data/information
Data of female representatives using a paired comparative study. Interviews with eight national women's organisation in the US and UK.

Methods for gathering and analysing data
- Interviews and statistical analysis.

Main findings
- Women's organisations can help address some specific challenges faced by different groups of women during the political recruitment process.
- Women of colour underrepresented in UK and USA, although better represented in USA.
- Women with disabilities are under-represented in both counties, along with younger women in the USA and older women in the UK.
- Focus of organisations remains on increasing the number of women rather than diversity.
- UK government introduced an access to Elected Office fund for Disabled People this does not appear to have benefited women with disabilities.
- Owing to the differences in campaign finance regulations there are no direct UK equivalents to EMILY's list etc. Therefore, in the UK the impetus comes mainly from women's groups within political parties.
- These groups give a nod to diversity and usually only equate it to race over anything else.

Key messages
- Intersectionality is vital to increasing and improving women's representation. The failure to address diversity among women will undermine arguments for women's representation if positive action mechanisms only benefit some women.
- Interpretation of diversity within organisation was rather limited.
- There needs to be more research on intersectionality.
- Evans does not dispute the importance of these organisations but argues that they need to adapt to cater to a wider scope of women.

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