Gender Equality in Scotland: Policy Coherence and Systems Mapping

Report for the First Minister's National Advisory Council on Women and Girls

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Summary of findings

This report was commissioned by the First Minister's National Advisory Council on Women and Girls (NACWG) to explore the different ways that policy is made in Scotland, and to develop a systems map to identify where policy coherence on gender equality is being pursued.

The aims of the report are to:

- understand how policy is made in theory;
- identify the main opportunities and barriers to policy coherence in complex systems, and to develop tools and concepts to understand these;
- elaborate how policy is made across multiple levels, in a multi-level system;
- understand how policy is made in practice in Scotland, and to examine the extent to which policy coherence on gender equality has been achieved;
- identify the main barriers to, and enablers of, policy coherence in Scotland.

This programme of work identified a number of tensions within the policy-making system in Scotland in relation to progressing gender equality policy coherence:

- Political leadership / stakeholder agenda setting
- Political expediency / long-term decision making
- Organisational capacity / resources

- Gender equality as a part of policy roles / gender equalities seen as an add on
- Formal / informal communication and influencing channels (external)
- Formal / informal communication and influencing channels (internal)
- Local policy making/ national policy-making

From this study and accompanying system-mapping exercise, several issues were identified as key barriers within the multi-level policy system to achieving policy coherence around gender:

- Lack of capacity and resources
- Bounded rationality - civil servants have competing policy priorities, and some have been more committed than others to gender equality
- Culture of working in policy silos and not collaborating across boundaries enough
- Gender equality is spread across different ministerial portfolios and directorates in the Scottish Government - need stronger lines of accountability/integration
- Lacking gender equality coordination structures across Scottish Government departments
- Need leadership commitment to gender equality across all levels of Scottish Government
- Lack of sex-disaggregated data and statistics
- Lack of training and genuine commitment to Equality Impact Assessments
- Lacking formal forums and networks to engage stakeholders and experts and to explore gender equality policy

learning with other countries
- Lacking independent oversight mechanisms to measure Scottish Government gender equality outcomes
- Lack of a single key policy document on gender equality
- Cross-party support exists, but need to push gender equality up the agenda
- Lack of national-local-state cohesion and coordination on gender equality
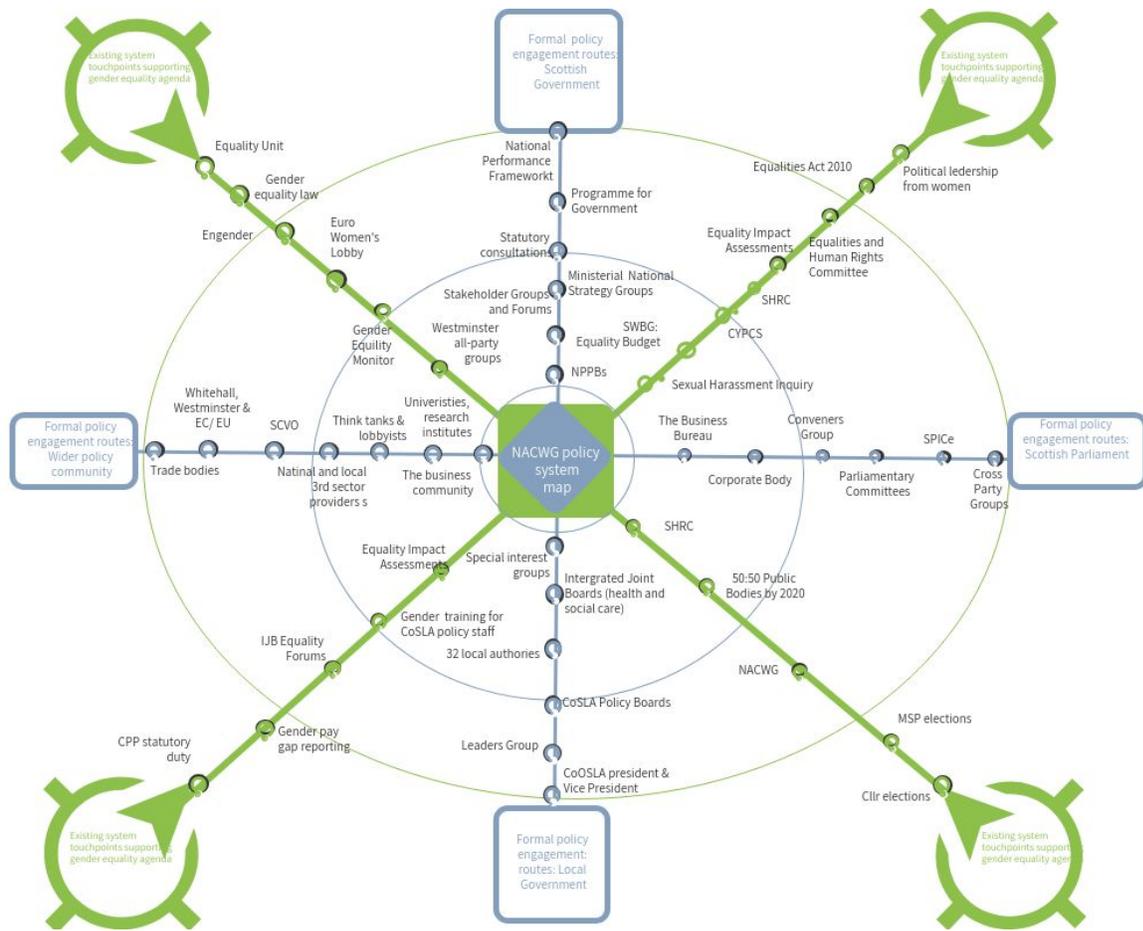- Some indications of complacency around gender mainstreaming

Certain enabling factors were identified as being important when working in this complex policy system to achieve gender equality coherence:

- Relationships - the need to develop positive, trusted, open and sustained relationships across system boundaries; both externally and internally to government
- Scottish Government policy makers have 'convening power' and can bring stakeholders together quickly to gain insights, develop shared agendas and facilitate action
- Women and equalities activists amplify each other's voices within all manner of public fora
- Political and civic leaders can mobilise and energise efforts towards gender equality by offering trust and permission for staff and volunteers to act
- Action is often undertaken when policy actors within the system cede power to enable others to act to support gender equality
- Capacity can be improved by increasing the number of people supporting and coordinating policy efforts through a gender lens
- Policy makers are required to work across system boundaries, share and connect with others who are working towards gender equality
- Policy makers who take up the role of 'host' can facilitate others and bring together people who may not normally have their voices heard around the impact of policy on their lives
- Policy makers have a role in holding themselves and other policy actors to account for their actions and inaction around gender equality
- Policy makers have success in progressing gender issues when they understand the organisational norms, culture and power dynamics within the organisation and use that knowledge and understanding to progress a gender equality agenda.

A number of formal and informal interactions currently exist between policy actors, including some that are focussed around progressing gender equality. Whilst not exhaustive, these can be located within a system map.

The figure shows the "NACWG policy system map" with labels including: Formal policy engagement routes: Scottish Government; Existing system touchpoints supporting gender equality agenda; National Performance Frameworkt; Programme for Government; Statutory consultations; Ministerial National Strategy Groups; Stakeholder Groups and Forums; Westminster all-party groups; SWBG: Equality Budget; NPPBs; Equality Unit; Gender equality law; Engender; Euro Women's Lobby; Gender Equality Monitor; Whitehall, Westminster & EC/ EU; SCVO; Think tanks & lobbyists; Univerities, research institutes; Trade bodies; Natinal and local 3rd sector providers s; The business community; NACWG policy system map; Equalities Act 2010; Political ledership from women; Equality Impact Assessments; Equalities and Human Rights Committee; SHRC; CYPCS; Sexual Harassment Inquiry; The Business Bureau; Conveners Group; SPICe; Corporate Body; Parliamentary Committees; Cross Party Groups; Formal policy engagement routes: Scottish Parliament; Formal policy engagement routes: Wider policy community; Equality Impact Assessments; Special interest groups; Intergrated Joint Boards (health and social care); Gender training for CoSLA policy staff; 32 local authories; IJB Equality Forums; CoSLA Policy Boards; Leaders Group; CoOSLA president & Vice President; CPP statutory duty; Gender pay gap reporting; SHRC; 50:50 Public Bodies by 2020; NACWG; MSP elections; Cllr elections; Formal policy engagement: routes: Local Government; Existing system touchpoints supporting gender equality agenda

This study has shown that, while many policy actors in Scotland feel a sense of interconnectedness in how they work together to ensure policy coherence and are strongly committed to advancing gender equality, there remains work to be done to improve policy coherence on gender equality. In particular, there are cultural barriers to achieving policy coherence on gender – such as bounded rationality and the view that gender equality is an 'add on' to roles – as well as structural barriers, such as working in policy silos, the need for greater coordination of gender equality policy, and the lack of training and gendered data.

The report also identifies further challenges to ensuring policy coherence on gender equality in the future, including the impacts of Brexit, austerity and discrimination on women and gender equality, as well as citizen disillusionment with politics. It is hoped that this report – in particular, the systems mapping exercise – will help provide an evidence base for future work that seeks to take forward measures to create change in the policy system to improve gender sensitivity.

Introduction & Methodology

How to approach this report

The Advisory Council commissioned this rapid system-mapping exercise to help inform the Advisory Council's deliberations and annual reporting, identifying areas where it might be effective to intervene within the policy landscape to ensure that the complex issues around gender inequality are given more prominence in the development of public policy.

It is important to keep in mind that this mapping exercise is by no means exhaustive and should be seen as a snapshot, written for the express purpose described above.

The report has been written in a way to support the Advisory Council and wider stakeholders to understand the different means by which public policy is formulated, both in theory and in practice. The specific focus has been the Scottish Government and to a lesser extent local government. The role of the third sector and the business sector as policy actors fell outwith the remit of this report.

The aims of this report are to:

- outline the ways in which policy is developed in theory, describing the uses and limitations of concepts such as the policy cycle, agenda setting, framing, bounded rationality, policy communities and interest representation/lobbying
- identify the aims and challenges of 'policy coherence' in complex policy systems

- explore how policy-making is understood in a multi-level system, focussing on key actors, processes, institutions, access points and approaches to gender equality at the local government, Scottish (national), UK and European Union levels
- explore how policy is formulated in practice in Scotland, drawing on interviews with key policy officials in the Scottish Government, Scottish Parliament and Local Government
- Through system mapping, assess the extent to which policy coherence and gender sensitivity have been embedded or achieved
- evaluate the main barriers to policy coherence and tensions within the system;
- develop a visual map of how policy is made in Scotland, identifying key areas (system touchpoints) which enable access to/influence over policy development.

The NACWG commissioned 3rd Horizons to conduct this research. The research supports the Council's 2019 workstream on Policy Coherence[1], which identifies a lack of policy coherence as a barrier to achieving gender equality. The research undertaken for this report was based on qualitative methods, including semi-structured interviews with key policy-makers, research observations, case studies, systems mapping, and an analysis of academic literature and policy reports. The research took place during June-November 2019.

Policy Context

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[1] https://onescotland.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/ACWG-_-Meetings-_-28-March-2019-_-Summary-Meeting-Notes-_-Summary-Final_42582-1.pdf

The National Advisory Council for Women and Girls (NACWG) was established by the First Minister of Scotland Nicola Sturgeon in 2017 to drive forward action to tackle gender inequality in Scotland.[2] The NACWG plays a key role in raising awareness of gender inequality, championing positive changes to embed gender equality in society, and catalysing change directly, through policy recommendations to the Scottish Government. In its first year of operation, the NACWG focussed on the topic of 'Attitudes and Culture Change' in public life, employment and education. In its first annual report (2018), the NACWG made 11 recommendations to embed gender equality through initiatives that fostered greater leadership, accountability, and the creation of conditions to mainstream gender equality.[3] In June 2019 the Scottish Government published its response to the NACWG report, accepting in full or in principle all of the recommendations for positive gender change.[4]

In 2019, the annual topic of the NACWG is 'Policy Coherence - how policy is made and do policies work against each other'. The NACWG's aim is to explore how policy incoherence may have created barriers to achieving gender equality in Scotland, and the Council is keen to understand how policies are made and how sectors feed into policy-making processes in Scotland. The NACWG held two Circle events on the topic

Policy Coherence - in March and June 2019 - to explore the views of members. In March, the NACWG invited key policymakers in Scotland - including the Scottish Government's Director-General for Organisational Development and Operations Sarah Davidson and COSLA's Head of Policy Jane O'Donnell - to outline their understanding of policy coherence and its challenges. In June, the NACWG invited key experts on gendered data collection - including the author Caroline Criado Perez and the Scottish Government's Chief Design Officer Cat Macaulay - to explore the importance of data collection to the policy-process, and the consequences of gender insensitive (or non-sex disaggregated) data on policy outcomes.

Our Approach

We believe that policy development is not a single mechanical process. Not only is it complicated; it is also complex, messy and based upon many interactions between numerous actors. There are many people with different, and equally legitimate, perspectives on how to make things better, with different value bases, assumptions, objectives, experiences and levels of expertise. There are also influencing factors around party politics, organisational politics, organisational capacity and resources, gender politics and a range of other power dynamics.

As such, we view policy-making through a systems lens; understanding that policy decisions are the result of multiple influences, interactions, relationships, opinions and behaviours. Policy decisions therefore cannot be understood in isolation or as the outcomes of a linear, rational, contained, discrete process. Instead, it is

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[2]
https://onescotland.org/equality-themes/advisory-council-women-girls/who-we-are-and-what-we-do/
[3]
https://onescotland.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/2018-Report.pdf
[4]https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-governments-response-national-advisory-council-women-girls/pages/1/

more useful to understand policy as the intersection of multiple interrelated systems, whereby a system embodies

"a set of elements connected together which form a whole, this showing properties which are properties of the whole, rather than properties of its component parts."[5]

As with all complex human systems, policy development can be better understood by using a living/social systems frame of thinking rather than a mechanistic frame. In this context there will be multiple, perhaps contradictory perspectives in relation to how policy is constructed. It is possible to map out those relations and explore the values, assumptions and other factors at play as policy is developed, providing a whole-system perspective. Using that whole-system perspective, it is then becomes possible, through a systems analysis, to identify important touchpoints in the system where interventions could be made to support change in the system, for example, in promoting a gender equality perspective.

Research Design & Methodology

We have adopted a qualitative research design for this piece of work, which enables us to interpret, map, and begin to understand the complex world of policy-making from the viewpoint of multiple stakeholders, including academics and policy-makers.

Our principle research questions are as follows:

- How is policy made in theory and in practice in Scotland, and who are the main actors involved in agenda-setting and framing different policy areas?
- What steps do policymakers follow in developing, changing, reviewing, implementing, evaluating and refreshing policies in their areas?
- To what extent is policy coherence embedded in the processes, cultures and systems of policy-making in Scotland?
- What are the barriers to policy coherence on gender equality and what tensions lie within the policy-making system?
- How do organisations and individuals from outside of government (interest groups, pressure participants) seek to access, influence and represent their interests?
- How is gender equality built into policy-making in Scotland?
- Is there a gap between narratives on gender equality (i.e. promotion of gender mainstreaming) and implementation/operational practice?

We have employed a mix of qualitative research methods and whole systems mapping to conduct this programme of work.

Stage 1 - Desk based review of the evidence base
We conducted a literature review of policy processes and a rapid review of the existing evidence on policy-making in Scotland, including the existence of policy communities at the local, national, UK and EU levels. This involved the identification and analysis of primary and secondary literature through a search of academic articles and papers, and policy and legislative

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[5] Checkland, P. (1998), *Systems Thinking, Systems Practice*, John Wiley and Sons, Chichester.

documents. Our focus was on how policy is made at different levels, what the points of access were for different actors to engage in policy-making, and the extent to which policy-making at different levels incorporated a gender equality dimension. In addition to providing an overview of the range of ways through which policy is developed in theory, we then went on to map policy-making in a number of sub-systems: (i) the Scottish Government and Parliament (ii) local government (iii) UK Government and Parliament; and (iv) the European Union.

Stage 2 - Case studies
At the start of the project, we identified a number of specific policy areas to explore in more depth to better understand the policy journey and the influencing factors at play, in practice. We interviewed policy actors across various policy areas to inform our analysis.

Stage 3 – Interviews and Participant Observation
We interviewed 10 people responsible for different policy areas (at different levels of government and parliament) to enable us to build on our understanding of how, in practice, policy is developed - setting out some of the complexity and helping us build our systems map. We also attended the Advisory Council's Circle event in June 2019, to better understand the views of Circle members on policy coherence.

Stage 4 – Content Analysis
We have visually mapped out how policy is made and through a set systems analysis, we have identified key areas (system touchpoints) which may be useful for the Advisory Council to consider where to put energy in terms of influencing, communicating and developing actions.

Stage 5 – Synthesis
Lastly, we have sought to draw this work together and present it in a way that is useful to the Advisory Council for their deliberations.

Chapter one - Understanding policy

Before we begin our analysis of policy-making in Scotland, it is helpful to begin by taking a broader view of what policies are, and how they are made in theory. This chapter offers a whistle-stop tour of what policy-making entails, including an overview of the 'Policy Cycle' and an exploration of key concepts such as agenda-setting, framing, bounded rationality, policy communities, interest representation and lobbying, policy coherence, systems theory and policy approaches to gender equality and gender mainstreaming. Once we have these concepts in place, we will build on them to analyse policy-making systems in Scotland in theory and practice, and opportunities for systems change by embedding gender equality in policy processes and cultures.

What is Policy?

'Policy' is a notoriously slippery concept, which is seen to mean different things to different people. For instance, at the Circle event that we attended in June 2019, participants at our table viewed policy as a piece of legislation. In several policy documents we've read, policy has been presented as the underlying 'principle' behind delivery, or alternatively a specific action intended to meet a specific outcome. However, none of these definitions capture the broad, interrelated nature of what policy encompasses. Instead, we suggest that:

"A policy is the total sum of ideas, decisions and plans of action adopted by diverse actors or institutions to guide decisions and achieve particular outcomes."

Policies are never the product of a single decision made by a government official. Instead, they emerge from the ongoing interaction and linked decisions between numerous actors within a policy community or network, which often cuts across organisational, sectoral and jurisdictional boundaries. In this sense, we can understand policy as a never-ending stream (as they are continuously tweaked, evaluated and refreshed by multiple actors) within larger complex systems of interrelated actors, behaviours and influences.

Understanding policy requires understanding the whole of the system - and the relationships between different parts. This means that policies cannot be viewed as discrete, independent interventions; instead, policies are interdependent, with complicated connections between different areas. This requires policy actors to understand and anticipate the way in which certain policies influence other policy areas, to avoid negative unintended consequences. Finally, we can also understand policy as the *absence* of action on certain issues. As Paul Cairney argues,

"*policy is about power, which is often exercised to keep important issues off the public, media and government agenda.*" In this understanding, *inaction* can sometimes be more significant than action.[6]

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[6] Cairney, P. (2011) *Understanding Public Policy: Theories and Issues*, Red Globe Press. See also, for easily digestible summaries on policy and policymaking, Paul Cairney's blog, especially on 'What is Policy', available at https://paulcairney.wordpress.com/2016/03/04/what-is-policy-3/

Is there a 'policy cycle'?

Policy-making can therefore be understood as *a complex process involving multiple participants and interests over a period of time that follow several courses of action to achieve certain outcomes*. In order to help us simplify the messiness of the policy process, political scientists have developed a heuristic tool called the 'policy cycle'. This framework assumes that there is a clear sequence of stages through which public policies proceed. Although we know in reality that the idea of a linear, rational and bounded 'cycle' does not exist, the 'policy cycle' helps us disaggregate the complex world of policy formulation into manageable steps and stages; examining what happens in each stage and which actors are potentially involved.[7]

As Figure 1 below suggests, the Policy Cycle is seen to begin with the identification of issues that require action and agenda-setting (analysed below), and then shows policy proceeding through a logical sequence of stages: analysis and the definition of the structure of the policy, agreement on options and policy formulation; decision-making and seeking appropriate approval for a policy to be adopted, for instance through legislation (where the policy is approved by Parliament); implementation and the delivery of the policy; followed by evaluation to assess the success/failure of the policy, which feeds back into the consideration of new policies.

Figure 1: The Policy Cycle[8]
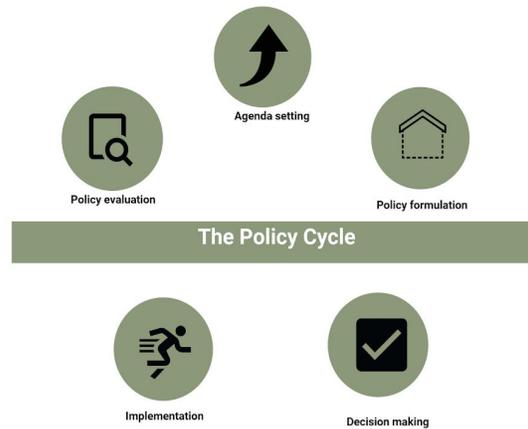
This model reflects the idea that there is a sequence of clear-cut and ordered stages, with a beginning, middle and end, before starting the process again. However, in reality, policy-making is a lot messier than this, with policy actors stepping in at different stages, and jumping from one part of the 'cycle' to another (and back again). Furthermore, this model assumes that policies are made by rational actors making choices in a logical way based on the best evidence available, which omits the role of human psychology and bounded rationality in policy-making (see below). Finally, the Policy Cycle model is unable to account for the role of politics in the policy-making process, and the fact that policy tends to result from the negotiation of political interests and power between actors.[9] Despite this, the model is a useful heuristic

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[7] Bridgman P. and G. Davis (2003) 'What Use is a Policy Cycle? Plenty, if the Aim is Clear', *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, 62(3):98–102. Available online at: http://www.egovernment.tas.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/121130/11_What_use_is_the_policy_life_cycle.PDF

[8] Policy Cycle diagram provided by Howlett, M. and Ramesh, M. (1995) *Studying Public Policy: Policy Cycles and Policy Subsystems*, Canada: Oxford University Press.
[9] Everett, S. (2003) 'The Policy Cycle: Democratic Process or Rational Paradigm Revisited', *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, 62(2): 65-70.

device for highlighting key elements in the policy-making process.

Agenda Setting

Perhaps the most crucial stage in the policy-making process is the agenda-setting phase, where policy 'begins'. Agenda-setting is the act of controlling a policy agenda so as to maximise the probability of getting a favourable outcome. Before a policy can be formulated, it must first command attention. But a multitude of perceived problems demand recognition at any given time. Some will get official consideration, but most will be ignored or abandoned after cursory treatment. So we can't take agenda-setting lightly: getting an item *onto* the agenda is a form of *power*. Keeping an item *off* the agenda can also demonstrate power. This is called a 'non-decision', whereby decision-makers decide not to engage with a particular policy proposal as they anticipate opposition to it. The media play a key role in agenda-setting, as media coverage can heavily affect the context in which policy is discussed, and therefore influence public policy and interest representation on different policy issues.

Policy Framing

During the agenda-setting phase, policy-makers also engage in 'policy framing', to promote a particular perspective or image of the solutions proposed to solve a policy problem. Policy framing is the "process by which actors seek to understand and act on complex situations."[10] Framing allows policy actors to *define* a given problem, using language selectively to

portray policy problems in a certain light. Policy framing is an important step for legitimising certain policies (and for choosing to address this problem rather than another). While 'class' was once the dominant frame for defining policy problems, new perspectives have gained in importance, including the environment, ethnicity, Europe and gender.

Bounded Rationality

While so far the discussion has focussed on processes by which policymakers identify policy problems and issues, define and frame solutions, and pursue policymaking in a clear, coherent set of stages, it's important to also acknowledge the obstacles to this 'comprehensive rational' approach to policy-making.[11]

The primary constraint is human behaviour and cognition. Despite their best efforts, human beings - even those working in the world of policy - do not always make fully rational decisions. Instead, our rationality can be limited or 'bounded' by the cognitive limitations of the mind (memory, emotions, attention spans, ability to only pay attention to a small number of issues), biases towards certain sources of information, and the limited time available to make decisions. Herbert Simon calls this 'bounded rationality' and argues that these limitations lead decision-makers to take short-cuts to gather as much information as possible under time pressures, and to 'satisfice' (making choices that are 'good enough'

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[10] Zito, A. (2011) 'Policy Framing', in B. Badie, D. Berg-Schlosser and L. Morlino (eds) *International Encyclopedia of Political Science*, Sage.

[11] Jones, B. (2003) 'Bounded rationality and political science: lessons from public administration and public policy', *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory,* 13(4): 395-412. Available at: https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/8320/f36781569fb9eadeae744700bd48a39ef357.pdf

rather than the best).[12]

It could be argued that bounded rationality also has a gender dimension - whereby throughout the twentieth century, (predominantly male) policy-makers were 'bounded' by restrictions in their perceptions of policy problems (lacking gender sensitivity), data available (no sex-disaggregated data) and perceived policy solutions (lacking equality assessments).

Policy Communities

One of the most famous definitions of policy is that it is "whatever governments choose to do or not to do".[13] However, this understanding of policy neglects the fact that government officials are not the only actors involved in the policy-making process. Rather, policies are framed, shaped, formulated and evaluated by a whole range of policy actors and interest groups - ranging from third-sector organisations to trades unions to private corporations - who compete for influence and have vested interests in certain outcomes. The representation of policy interests is an important aspect of democratic systems, to enable non-government organisations to represent 'civil society' and private interests as a counterweight to state interests.

A range of terms have been coined to describe these constellations of policy actors or 'interest groups' and their relationships with government, including: issue networks, action areas, policy networks, advocacy coalitions, policy eco systems and policy whirlpools. We prefer the term policy

communities which are "composed of specialists in a given policy area [...] scattered both through and outside of government".[14] Such specialists - which comprise academics, civil society representatives, trades unions, professional associations and businesses - seek to engage with government on shared policy concerns to shape agendas and propose policy alternatives.

They may do so through a variety of communications channels, which may be open or closed, visible or hidden, restricted or unrestricted, and stable or unstable. Policy engagement activities could include: formal or informal bilateral or multilateral meetings (i.e. going for lunch or hosting a conference), high-level roundtables, presenting evidence to parliament, publishing blogs or briefings, consultation responses and publishing reports with policy recommendations. Each participant in a policy community seeks to represent their interests (for instance, with regard to gender equality or environmental sustainability), influence the policy agenda, and more widely, rebalance the distribution of power in society. Policy communities that organise on a territorial basis, for instance in Scotland only rather than UK-wide, have been described as territorial policy communities, which are "territorially-bounded constellations of actors within and across policy sectors, emerging in response to the rescaling of government" such as devolution.[15]

[12] Simon, H.A. (1957), *Administrative behavior* (2nd edition), New York: Free Press.
[13] Dye, T. (2010) *Understanding Public Policy*, 3th edn, New York: Longman Press.

[14] Kingdon, J.W. (1984) *Agendas, alternatives, and public policies,* Boston: Little, Brown.
[15] Keating, Michael, Paul Cairney and Eve Hepburn (2009) 'Territorial Policy Communities and Devolution in the United Kingdom', *Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy and Society*, vol. 2(1), pp. 51-66.

Interest Representation & Lobbying

The representation of private and public interests in policy-making - through participation in policy communities - differs across jurisdictions and sectors. Scholars have developed two main theoretical lenses for helping us understand how interest representation works[16]:

1. Corporatism - where society is organised into major interest groups (known as corporations), which seek to negotiate agreed outcomes with government. This form of interest representation was prevalent in the UK following the second world war, with trades unions and business groups being the major players.
2. Pluralism - where the organisation of multiple competing social interests creates 'checks and balances' against state power, with no single interest ever able to monopolise or 'capture' the policy agenda, and where policy-making is a continuous process of bargaining between competing groups who can 'veto' policy options. This concept of interest representation was prevalent in the USA in the 1960s, and is closest to interest group representation in the UK today.

One problem with pluralism, however, is that perfect equality in interest representation is impossible to achieve. There are always groups who have more capacity, resources and influence over policy-making than others. As Hix argues,

"private interests, such as individual firms and industrial lobbies, are more able to organize than 'diffuse interests', like labour unions, consumer groups, environmentalists or civil rights movements… The result is unequal access to political power, the capture of state officials by groups with the most resources, and outputs that benefit special interests at the expense of society."

In order to reign in the 'unequal access to power' that private corporations often hold over policy-making, several governments throughout the world have introduced legislation to regulate interest representation - otherwise known as 'lobbying' - and to ensure that any lobbying is done in a fair, transparent and professional manner. While lobbying has acquired negative connotations in the public eye - often, for instance, being associated with corruption and paid influence behind closed doors - in truth lobbying is a form of interest representation, and as such, a key part of democracy. If done transparently and fairly, lobbying enables policy actors and interest groups - including charities, universities and trades unions as well as businesses and professional associations - to present their interests to policymakers, who benefit from the insights and feedback of different groups. If left unregulated and invisible, however, lobbying may be exploited as a means for some organisations to accrue unfair advantage and influence over policy.[17]

Policy Coherence

Within a single jurisdiction, such as Scotland, which is responsible for dozens of different policy areas (that each contain multiple policies), we need to imagine not *one* policy

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[16] Hix S. (1999) 'Interest Representation', in: *The Political System of the European Union*. The European Union Series. Palgrave, London.

[17] Hepburn. E. (2017) *The Scottish Lobbying Register. Engaging with Stakeholders*, Scottish Parliament.

cycle with which policy actors engage, but rather, hundreds of policy cycles all being played out at different stages, involving potentially thousands of policy actors.[18] We also need to remember that all of these policies impinge on each other - so that, for instance, a policy on transport can affect a policy on rural development, which can affect policies on agriculture and tourism, with implications for employability and women's access to the labour market. If the development of one policy has an unintended effect on another policy area, as we explored above, this would undermine efforts at policy framing (legitimising policy) and create potentially negative outcomes. It is therefore important for policy-makers to be mindful of other policy areas that their interventions could potentially affect, to ensure that there is cohesion across policies.

The term for this is policy coherence, which is defined by the OECD as

"the systematic promotion of mutually reinforcing policy actions across government departments and agencies creating synergies towards achieving the agreed objectives."[19]

Policy coherence has increasingly been viewed as a key approach for developing policies that work together to achieve positive intended outcomes, while reducing the negative effects of unintended outcomes. While this may sound simple in theory, it is a highly complex and time-consuming, albeit necessary, process in practice. Indeed, the UN acknowledges that policy coherence "requires *capacity* to analyse policy synergies

and trade-offs among different policy options to develop coherent policies" [our emphasis].[20] And it is limited capacity and resources, rather than will, that is often the main barrier for achieving policy coherence, in an era of public sector cuts and a shrinking state.

Yet there are other potential obstacles to policy coherence, which we explore in the remainder of this report. Given the challenges of bounded rationality, competing interest representation, limited resources, the need to gather information quickly, external pressures, and complexity and messiness in the policy process, how can policymakers achieve coherence in the policies they are responsible for (and coherence with other policy areas that they are not)? This will be the focus of much of the rest of this report, as we explore policy coherence and gender equality.

Gender Equality & Gender Mainstreaming

Feminist social science scholarship, which emerged in the 1960s, began to describe how policy-making was not only rife with unintended outcomes (negative effects on women's place in the labour market, home and society), and a biased policy frame (which focussed overwhelmingly on men as policy beneficiaries) but also how some specific policy advances for women's rights and gender equality (such as equal pay legislation) did not have the intended outcomes they had hoped for. Gender inequality and discrimination were embedded so deeply in societal cultures and norms that specific pieces of legislation had

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[18] As suggested by the SG senior civil servant Sarah Davidson in her presentation to the Circle in March 2019. See https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCLaPe0wqm5pRCtqVQlx-4jA/videos
[19] https://globalnaps.org/issue/policy-coherence/

[20] https://www.un.org/development/desa/capacity-development/what-we-do/areas-of-work/policy-coherence/

little impact. To address this issue, feminist scholars began arguing for gender mainstreaming across all policy areas - which is a framework for policy coherence that adopts a gender lens.

Gender mainstreaming is a policy approach that takes into account both women's and men's interests and concerns, rather than (up to this point in history) men's concerns only. It has been defined by the Council of Europe as

"the (re) organisation, improvement, development and evaluation of policy processes, so that a gender equality perspective is incorporated in all policies at all levels and at all stages, but the actors normally involved in policy-making."[21]

Gender mainstreaming has policy coherence at its heart: it is about ensuring that gender sensitivity is built into policy-making at all stages and across all policy areas, to ensure that policies work together to ensure equality, and in particular, that policies in one area do not have a detrimental impact on gender equality in another.

Systems Approach to Policy

Advocates of gender mainstreaming have highlighted the importance of making systemic changes across policy-making processes, cultures and norms in order to achieve gender equality. This focus on systems is important, as feminists have argued that specific, targeted policies that focus on gender equality are necessary but insufficient to create lasting change. Instead,

a more systemic and policy coherent approach is necessary to achieve gender equality across the policy-making process and through policy outcomes. And to achieve policy success, it is important to understand and tackle the systems of "economic, social, cultural and political structures that sustain and reproduce distinctive gender roles and the attributes of women and men."[22]

Summary

For the remainder of this report, we adopt a systems approach to policy-making and gender equality. We will seek to describe and map the interconnecting parts of the policy system and explore the relationships of influence and power amongst actors within policy communities. With a focus on Scotland, we will highlight which actors are involved at different policy stages, how policies are formulated and implemented, and the extent to which policy systems have embedded a gender perspective to achieve policy coherence. We will also adopt a multi-level approach to this analysis, examining how sub-systems operate at different levels - local, national (Scottish), state (UK) and European, as well as the main policy actors and linkages between them. Our aim is to provide a systems map of policymaking in Scotland, pinpointing where and how a gender equality perspective is (and could be more) integrated into policymaking.

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[21] Council of Europe (2019) 'What is gender mainstreaming', available at: https://www.coe.int/en/web/genderequality/gender-mainstreaming

[22] https://eige.europa.eu/thesaurus/terms/1225

Chapter two - *Policy Development in a Multi-level System*

In this chapter, we will explore the theory of how policies are made in Scotland, the UK and EU by describing and mapping the formal mechanisms, relationships and channels that exist between policy actors. This is because there is no one centre of power when it comes to Scottish policy-making - instead, Scottish policy-making is influenced by several jurisdictions, including the local government level, UK (statewide/reserved) policies, European Union (EU) legislation and directives, and of course policies developed within the main institutions of devolution - the Scottish Government and Scottish Parliament. We call this a 'multi-level system', which is

"characterised by clusters of political institutions that exist at multiple levels, each with its own policy domain and representational focus… but are at the same time interconnected through governmental, policy and party machinery."[23]

Of particular importance, Scottish devolution has created a (relatively) new system of policy-making focused on the Scottish level. The creation of a Scottish Parliament and Scottish Executive (renamed Scottish Government) in 1999 was the result of decades of campaigning by political parties, civic groupings and community organisations who wanted to create policies that reflected Scottish values, needs and

concerns. The Scotland Act of 1998 laid down a clear division of powers between Edinburgh and London, by listing the powers reserved to Westminster (the Crown, constitutional affairs, foreign affairs, defence, social security and macroeconomic policy) and leaving everything else to the devolved sphere (i.e. health, education, local government, economic development, criminal law and prisons, agriculture, fisheries, environment, sport, the arts). In the Scotland Act 2016, these powers were extended to include income tax, some social security powers, employment services and additional powers over equal opportunities.

The devolution of powers to Scotland has led to a significant policy shift in the UK, as policy actors and interest groups have shifted their gaze from London to Edinburgh. However, the nature of devolution means that some Scottish policy areas - such as agriculture or social security - are affected by UK or EU decision-making, requiring intergovernmental cooperation between levels/systems. In the following analysis, we therefore focus on the local, national (Scottish), state (UK) and EU levels, looking at: (1) how policy is made, and the key actors involved in policy-making, processes and policy styles; (2) access points and forms of interest representation; and (3) approaches to gender equality at each level of the policy system.

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[23] Hepburn, Eve (2010) *Using Europe: Territorial Party Strategies in a Multi-level System*, Manchester University Press.

The Scottish Government

"I want the Government that I lead and the public services that you lead to be known for the quality of our relationship with Scotland's communities, geographical communities and communities of interest." (Nicola Sturgeon, First Minister)

The Scottish Government's National Performance Framework (NPF) seek to achieve coherence across all policy areas, by focussing all government decisions and activity on achieving the following 11 National Outcomes for people[24]:

- grow up loved, safe and respected so that they realise their full potential
- live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe
- are creative and their vibrant and diverse cultures are expressed and enjoyed widely
- have a globally competitive, entrepreneurial, inclusive and sustainable economy
- are well educated, skilled and able to contribute to society
- value, enjoy, protect and enhance their environment
- have thriving and innovative businesses, with quality jobs and fair work for everyone
- are healthy and active
- respect, protect and fulfil human rights and live free from discrimination
- are open, connected and make a positive contribution internationally

- tackle poverty by sharing opportunities, wealth and power more equally

How is policy made?

The Scottish Government is based on a Cabinet model, with a First Minister (FM) elected by the Scottish Parliament, who appoints cabinet secretaries and ministers (all of whom are MSPs[25]) to be responsible for key policy areas. The FM is 'ultimately responsible for all policy decisions and actions' while the Cabinet is 'the main decision-making body of the Scottish Government'.[26] There are currently 12 cabinet secretaries in the Scottish Government (SG), who are supported by 16 other ministers.[27] The FM and her Cabinet - which also includes the Permanent Secretary of the Civil Service in Scotland - make up the core executive of the SG and can be seen as the 'engine' of policy direction and coordination, by highlighting key policy priorities and frames and setting budgets into motion.

However, the hands-on development and implementation of policy tends to occur at much lower levels: 'power is effectively spread across government because the more specialised sub-sectors are less subject to top-down control. Ministers and senior civil

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[24] https://nationalperformance.gov.scot/index.php/what-it

[25] MSP is a Member of the Scottish Parliament.
[26] https://www.gov.scot/about/who-runs-government/cabinet-and-ministers/
[27] There are Cabinet Secretaries for Education & Skills; Justice; Health and Sport; Finance, Economy and Fair Work; Environment; Climate Change and Land Reform; Rural Economy; Constitutional Relations; Communities and Local Government; Culture, Tourism and External Affairs; Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity; and Social Security and Older People.

servants devolve the bulk of decision-making to less senior officials who share power with interest groups when they exchange access for resources such as expertise."[28] Civil servants at all levels, then, are involved in policy-making and they are obliged to be politically neutral in the exercise of their duties.

The civil service in Scotland - which is part of the UK Civil Service - support Scottish Ministers in developing, implementing and communicating policies. There are currently over 5000 civil servants in the Scottish Government, which is headed by a Permanent Secretary. The SG is structured into 30 directorates, which are managed by six directors-general.[29] In addition, there are several non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs)[30] that are staffed by civil servants - such as the Scottish Prisons Service and Transport Scotland - which play an important role in the delivery of public services. The SG also seeks to promote the National Performance Framework through the work of the Scottish regulatory bodies - such as Accountant in Bankruptcy and the Scottish Housing Regulator - to achieve its national outcomes.[31]

The Scottish Government's policy-making ethos and values are underpinned by a National Performance Framework (NPF), which is an outcomes-based approach to implementing policies. Every policy actor within the Scottish Government - from ministers through to NDPB staff - is committed to the delivery of the NPF, which aims to improve the wellbeing of Scotland's citizens, supported by a successful inclusive economy and sustainable environment.

The National Outcomes provide an important framework for policy-making in Scotland, as it seeks to ensure that individual policy decisions are all linked into the overall aims and outcomes of the Government. In particular, the NPF (which was created in 2007 when the SNP took power and refreshed in 2017/18) has a strong focus on equalities and human rights. The Scottish Government also seeks to achieve policy coherence through the publication of an annual Programme for Government (PfG), which the SG presents to Parliament. The PfG sets out its legislative programme for the year ahead (including new policy plans for achieving these National Outcomes), as well as announcing spending priorities.

The Scottish Government is also responsible for a range of policy areas which may not necessarily require regular legislative change. Often, such policies are set out in published 'Strategies'. Government Strategies are usually developed on the basis of evidence and research, and in partnership with local government, delivery partners and the wider community. Strategies will naturally have a shelf life or a 'life cycle', as referred to by policy makers, and relevant Divisions within the SG will routinely monitor progress, horizons-scan for external factors which may impact on their policy area, assess the impact of the Strategy over time against its stated aims, evaluate and monitor outcomes, listen to/consult with

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[28] Cairney, P. (2011) 'The New British Policy Style: From a British to a Scottish Political Tradition?' *Political Studies Review,* 208-220, p211.

[29] There are Directors-General for: Organisational Development and Operations; the Economy; Scottish Exchequer; Health & Social Care; Communities and Justice; and the Constitution and External Affairs.

[30] https://www.gov.scot/policies/public-bodies/

[31]

https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-regulators-strategic-code-of-practice/

practitioners and partners involved in the delivery of the strategy and make recommendations to Ministers, setting out any evidence for making further changes. In recent years, the SG has also sought to go beyond statutory consultations when developing policy and has sought to include those most affected by the issues to co-design and co-produce policy responses (such as the creation of the new Scottish Social Security system).

Access points

The Scottish Government has a reputation for opening up its policy process to external policy actors through its commitment to openness, cooperation, transparency and consultation. Scholars and political commentators have talked about the 'Scottish approach' to policy-making or a 'Scottish policy style', in which there are multiple points of access for voluntary groups, professional associations, unions, think tanks and others to influence policy formulation.[32] The term 'Scottish approach' has also used by the SG itself to describe the particular model of policy-making that it espouses, which involves stakeholder engagement in all stages of the policy process, especially in the crucial early stages of agenda-setting and planning, before opinions harden.[33]

From a policy perspective, it can be reasonably argued that since the introduction of devolution, successive Scottish administrations have become more open and accessible to the people they serve. Part of this has to do with the commitment to 'new politics' and engagement with civil society. Yet another reason has to do with policy capacity. Several scholars have argued that, due to the limited resources the SG has been able to dedicate to policy (in comparison to the UK Government), it has relied more on policy input from external stakeholders and experts.

Scottish government engagement with the wider policy community has involved an 'exchange' of resources with interest groups (i.e. charities, unions, business groups, academics), which have provided information, advice, policy ideas and expertise to SG civil servants in return for access to government.[34] This policy style has fostered good working relations with Scotland's 'big five' business groups that have sought to coordinate their efforts[35], the main agricultural, fishing and food and drink bodies[36], the main professional associations[37]

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[32] See Michael Keating (2005) *The Government of Scotland,* Edinburgh University Press.
[33] See P. Cairney, S. Russell and E. St Denny (2015) 'The "Scottish approach" to policy and policymaking: what issues are territorial and what are universal?', *Policy & Politics, available at:*
https://www.ingentaconnect.com/contentone/tpp/pap/2016/00000044/00000003/art00001

[34] Woodward, A. (2004) 'Building Velvet Triangles: Gender and Informal Governance', in T. Christiansen & S. Piattoni (eds) *Informal Governance in the European Union*, Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.
[35] The big five are the: Confederation of British Industry (CBI Scotland), the Institute of Directors (IoD Scotland), Scottish Financial Enterprise, Scottish Chambers of Commerce and Scottish Council for Development and Industry. The Scottish Federation of Small Business (SFSB), another key player, tends to stand slightly apart from the big five.
[36] The National Farmers' Union of Scotland, the Crofting Foundation and the Scottish Rural Property and Business Association represent agriculture; the Scottish Fisherman's Federation is the main fisheries body; the Scottish Whisky Association is the main whisky body; and various bodies represent food and drink.
[37] Professional associations include the British Medical Association, Universities Scotland, the Royal Colleges, chartered institutes and the Faculty of Advocates.

, trades unions[38], and third sector[39]. As a result of the high level of interest group engagement in the policy-making process in Scotland - owing to the SG's commitment to cooperation and partnership, as well as the strategic exchange of resources - Scottish policy-making has been seen as more 'consensual' than that of the UK Government (see below), implying a willingness to negotiate with groups and stakeholders.

There is also evidence of extensive 'knowledge transfer' between academics, interest groups and policy-makers in Scotland, as well as 'policy learning' from other countries. These processes have broadened the range of actors involved within the Scottish 'policy community', as well as opened up the sources of inspiration for policy design beyond Scotland to include other devolved nations and similar countries (i.e. the Nordic states, other multi-level countries). There are close links in particular between the SG and the Scottish higher education (HE) sector, which has been viewed by the SG as playing an important role in its ability to 'influence and shape national policy while it is being formulated'.[40]

The opportunities for Scottish interest group engagement with the Scottish Government include:
formal and informal meetings with civil servants, ministers and cabinet secretaries to give advice or discuss policy choices; formal

concordats establishing regular consultation; engaging in public consultation exercises on different topics; sending policy-makers (and highlighting in the media) reports outlining policy recommendations; and launching public campaigns on specific issues in an effort to set the agenda (through media dissemination). 'Insider groups' will be consulted more regularly in advance of policy formulation, to gauge the potential impact on their members/sector. For instance, the main economic interest groups and professions have close links to SG departments and are consulted on a regular basis to ensure support for policies promoting growth.

There are seen to be several other factors conducive to the high level of engagement between interest groups/policy actors and the Scottish Government, including the small size of the Scottish policy community, with the 'usual story of everybody knowing everyone else'[41] and the short lines of communication between policy actors (who were less likely to have to travel great distances, i.e. to London) in order to meet. Hence, there are seen to be geographical advantages of scale to the policy community in Scotland, which enable the flourishing of personal relationships and the ability to 'get everyone in a room'. However, this increased pluralism on a small-scale has also led some interest groups to complain of consultation fatigue (not having the capacity to respond to every policy issue and request for feedback) and a problem with "excessive expectations, as not everyone who is

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[38] Trades unions include the Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC) (which signed a concordat with the Scottish Government in 2002 providing for regular consultation) and the Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS).
[39] The third sector is represented by the umbrella organisation Scottish Council of Voluntary Organisations (SCVO).
[40] Scottish Government official, cited in Jenny Ozga 2007: 70.

[41] Keating, M., P. Cairney and E. Hepburn (2009) 'Territorial policy communities and Devolution in the United Kingdom', *Journal of Regions, Economy and Society* 2(1); 51-66.

consulted is going to get their way."[42]

Gender equality

One of the benefits of devolution is the ability to innovate and experiment on policy matters, which has resulted in policy divergence from the UK on a range of policy issues[43] as well as innovating in the ways in which policies are designed, made and implemented. One of these areas is gender equality, where the First Minister has made gender equality a goal of the government and has pledged to make concrete commitments to advance gender equality around the world as a UN Women Global Advocate[44], and Scotland has been described as the best country in the UK for gender equality (according to the Women in Work Index[45]).

The Scottish Government currently has the most gender-balanced cabinet and senior civil service structure since devolution was introduced. Fifty per cent (6 out of 12) of the Cabinet are women; 44% (7 out of 16) of ministers are women; and 57% (4 out of 7) of top senior civil servants (Permanent Secretary and directors-general) are women.

[46] Furthermore, women hold many of the top roles in government, including the First Minister, Permanent Secretary and Solicitor General.

The Scottish Government has introduced several initiatives to embed gender equality across government activities and policy processes. This includes the creation of an Equality Unit when the Scottish Executive was created in 1999, a commitment to go above and beyond the public sector equality duty introduced with the Equality Act (2010), the introduction of an Equality Evidence Finder (to track progress on equality outcomes) and Equality Impact Assessments, an equality budget process, a commitment to gender mainstreaming[47], and the creation of an Equality Budget Advisory Group[48], a Women and Work Strategic Group[49], and the First Minister's National Advisory Council on Women and Girls.

The Scottish Government has also introduced a number of specific, targeted policies that seek to improve gender equality. These include: strategies to prevent Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) such as Equally Safe: Scotland's strategy for prevent and eradicating VAWG and a Female Gender Mutilation National Action Plan[50], strategies for improving gender equality in

[42] Keating, M. (2005) *The Government of Scotland. Public Policy Making after Devolution*, Edinburgh Uni Press.
[43] Notable examples include scrapping tuition fees for Scottish students, free personal care for the elderly, mental health legislative reforms, the pursuit of renewal energy initiatives, and the introduction of a minimum unit price on alcohol.
[44] https://www.gov.scot/news/supporting-gender-equality/
[45] According to the Women in Work Index. See https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/women-in-work-index-scotland-best-country-in-uk-for-gender-equality-dzqb09wjg

[46] https://www.gov.scot/about/who-runs-government/
[47] https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-governments-equality-duties/
[48] https://www.gov.scot/groups/equality-budget-advisory-group/
[49] https://www.gov.scot/groups/strategic-group-on-women-and-work/
[50] https://www.gov.scot/policies/violence-against-women-and-girls/

the workplace, increasing childcare provision and providing funding to gender equality organisations.

Some scholars have referred to the 'feminisation' of politics and policy-making in Scotland, as a means of closing a perceived gap between evidence and policy[51]. This has involved the creation of a 'velvet triangle' - a policy network comprising Scottish Government policy-makers, academics and interest groups - who are "committed to use evidence to pursue gender equality in areas such as childcare and long-term care." Organised voices in the women's movement have sought to capitalise on the openness of the SG to policy engagement and the exchange of resources, by seeking to influence policies on gender equality. Such organisations include Engender, Equate Scotland, Women 50:50, Rape Crisis Scotland, Women's Aid, Zero Tolerance, the Young Women's Movement Scotland, Girlguiding Scotland, Close the Gap, Glasgow Womens' Library and many more.

However, scholars have noted that, broadly speaking, access to government amongst women's groups (as with any interest groups) can be uneven and "only some participants have the resources to invest in engagement."[52] This is where the role of individual 'femocrats' - that is, those "advocates of women's rights working within bureaucracies" such as the Scottish Government can act as a bridge between

grassroots feminist groups and government policy-making by advocating less-heard voices and perspectives from, for instance, local community women's groups. National women's groups also play a role in raising the voices of smaller feminist organisations that represent a local geographical area, and those that specialise in different policy areas (such as mental health or domestic abuse) or which are intersectional (migrant women's groups, BAME groups, disabled women's groups, LGBTQIA groups).

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[51] Cairney, P. and K. Rummery (2018) 'Feminising Politics to Close the Evidence-Policy Gap: The Case of Social Policy in Scotland', *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, 77(4): 542-553.

[52] Cairney, P. and K. Rummery (2018) 'Feminising Politics to Close the Evidence-Policy Gap: The Case of Social Policy in Scotland', *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, 77(4): 542-553.

Local Government

'Local government is the sphere of government that is closest to people and their communities'.

How is policy made?

The key actors in policy making at the local level are Scotland's 32 unitary Local Authorities (LAs). Local authorities in Scotland are governed by councils made up of directly elected councillors (standing for political parties or as independents). LAs vary in size and population, but each has responsibility for public service provision to communities in their area, in key policy sectors including education, social care, housing and waste management. In each council, there is an Administration formed by a group of councillors with majority support which undertakes the running of the council, and a Leader chosen by the elected members who heads the council. There are currently 1227 elected councillors in Scotland, who work part-time and are normally elected every four years.[53]

Councils operate independently of the Scottish Government, and they are accountable to their electorates. Some policy decisions of LAs, such as the setting of the annual rate of council tax, can only be made by full council meetings comprised of every elected councillor. Beyond this, councils have the discretion to decide what specific decision-making and scrutiny structures they adopt, meaning that policy development processes vary in some ways from local

authority to local authority.[54] In general, however, most local authority decision-making takes place through the various committees and subcommittees to which responsibilities regarding particular policy areas are delegated. For example, Glasgow City Council's Education, Skills and Early Years Policy Committee has the responsibility to "*fulfil the functions of policy development (including consideration of equalities issues) as they relate to Council policies and services for education, skills and early years*", with the exception of those which are delegated to the Glasgow City Joint Integration Board.[55]

Local authorities also develop policy in partnership with other organisations. Local authorities have a range of statutory duties relating to Community Planning, in accordance with which they must work in partnership with other public bodies (such as the police and health boards) to deliver local public services in an integrated and effective way. As a result of the Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014, local authorities are required to work together with NHS boards in Health and Social Care Partnerships to deliver an integrated approach to health and social care. Local authorities also seek to influence and input into Scottish Government policy-making, most notably through the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA), which represents the views of LAs to the SG.

Access points

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[53] https://www.gov.scot/policies/local-government/councillors-roles-conduct-pay/

[54] Scottish Parliament Information Centre (2013) *How Do Local Authorities Make Decisions?* Available at <http://www.parliament.scot/ResearchBriefingsAndFactsheets/S4/SB_13-85.pdf>

[55] Glasgow City Council (2019) *Committee Terms of Reference.* Available at <https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=4535&p=0>

There are several ways in which organisations can represent their interests at the local level in Scotland. Firstly, local authorities play a key role in Community Planning arrangements, which provide opportunities for a range of public and third sector organisations to exert an influence on local policy-making. As a result of the 2015 Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act, Community Planning Partnerships now include an expanded number of public and third sector bodies, each of which is expected to play a shared leadership role in the development of CPPs' strategic visions and in the delivery of CPPs' priorities in practice. This gives a voice to a wide array of groups, ranging from police and fire services to employability and environmental organisations, in the development of local policy priorities in different parts of Scotland.

There are various other mechanisms in the structures of local government which give external stakeholders and interest groups the chance to make their influence felt. Local authorities or CPPs may launch consultations over particular issues with the specific intention of giving relevant stakeholders the opportunity to represent their interests at this level of government. In recent years, some of the Scottish Government's policy initiatives have created opportunities for different organisations to gain an influence in local decision-making. Participatory budgeting is one such example: in 2017-18, a budget of £1.5 million was split half and half between local authorities and community organisations, with a total of 57,721 people voting to decide the projects to which this funding would be allocated.[56] Participatory budgeting processes have given local people

and groups the chance to be directly involved in decisions regarding funding, with many of the beneficiaries also local community organisations.

Interest groups and stakeholders can also represent their interests at the local level through their involvement in local democracy. For instance, council committees and subcommittees may appoint as members relevant specialists from the local community, often in order to provide expertise and knowledge to other committee members. Through this process, members of organisations such as schools, churches and businesses are able to gain some influence over local policy development and decision-making. Furthermore, individual councillors may be influenced by the things they see in the world around them. Organisations may be able to gain influence, then, through messages which are transmitted through the media, or perhaps through appeals to the political parties of which councillors are a part.

Gender equality

When looking at the extent to which gender equality is built into policy-making at this level, it is important to consider the issue of gender representation in local councils. Women make up only 29% of local councillors in Scotland, meaning that town halls in Scotland have a greater gender imbalance than the Parliaments at either Holyrood or Westminster. This suggests that the structural barriers which make it harder for women to participate in decisions around policy may be greater at the local level than at the national one. In addition, this level of under-representation arguably implies a lower likelihood that the policies which are developed at this level of government are

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[56] Scottish Government (2018). *Community Choices Fund: 2017-18 Report*.

done so in such a way as incorporates gendered perspectives and promotes gender equality.

Generally speaking, gender equality is built into local level policy-making in Scotland in only a limited way and national-level initiatives have helped bring about a greater focus on gender equality at the local level. In each LA area, for example, there are now Violence Against Women Partnerships (VAWPs) in place to help deliver upon the aims of the SG and COSLA's *Equally Safe* strategy for eradicating violence against women. However, looking at local level policy-making processes across the board in Scotland, gender equality cannot be said to be 'built in' in a consistent, substantive way. For instance, while CPPs now have a statutory duty to address inequalities, CPP's Local Outcomes Improvement Plans generally place a much greater emphasis on the tackling of economic inequalities, often with not much evidence that this is looked at through a gendered lens. In addition, there is little evidence of a high level of integration and alignment between VAWPs and CPPs, which would be necessary to achieve genuine policy coherence regarding VAWG.

Finally, there exists something of a disjunct between the positive aspirations set out at the Scottish level with regards to gender, and the implications that austerity and restricted budgets have on the ground for local level policy and decision-making processes. For instance, gender equality as a UN Sustainable Development Goal is identified as an underpinning factor behind every one of the eleven National Outcomes set out in the Scottish Government's NPF.[57] However,

until such a time as LAs either operate in a less constrained funding context or are mandated to prioritise gender equality over other considerations, even local services that make a clear positive contribution towards the achievement of gender equality in Scotland will face the risk of having their funding cut.

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[57] Scottish Government (2019) *Scotland's National Performance Framework.* Available at

<https://nationalperformance.gov.scot/sites/default/files/documents/NPF_A4_Booklet.pdf>

The Scottish Parliament

Three particular mechanisms of the devolved Scottish Parliament have shaped its commitment to an open, consensual and participatory policy process:

(1) There was a commitment to fair representation of women and ethnic minorities in the new Scottish Parliament, who were placed high on party lists in the early days of devolution, with women often being 'twinned' with men.

(2) The Scottish Parliament was designed to have a powerful committee system, which was intended to foster links between the Parliament and civil society in Scotland. The committees were intended to have wide-ranging powers to initiate, scrutinise and investigate legislation.

(3) In its commitment to accessibility and participation, the Scottish Parliament encourages citizens to submit petitions to its permanent Petitions Committee.

How is policy made?

The Scottish Parliament is the law-making body in Scotland, made up of 129 elected Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSP). Its role is to consider, scrutinise and vote on legislation, and to hold the Scottish Government to account (whereby the SG formulates policy and implements the legislation passed by the Parliament). When the Scottish Parliament was created in 1999, its structures and functions were designed to foster an open, consensual and participatory democracy in Scotland. The Consultative

Steering Group (CSG), which developed the rules of procedure and working methods for the Scottish Parliament, argued that devolution should be based on four principles: accountability, openness and participation, equal opportunities and the sharing of power. The latter in particular has influenced how policy has been made whereby it was intended that: "the Scottish parliament should embody and reflect the sharing of power between the people of Scotland, the legislators and the Scottish Executive". This included an enhanced role for organisations within civil society through public consultation and committee engagement, the opportunity for members of the public to influence debate through lodging petitions to the Parliament, and a commitment to equality, human rights and representation.

The Scottish Parliament itself has many mechanisms and channels to directly connect citizens with decision makers, which routinely influences how policy is scrutinised. The parliamentary committees are probably the most innovative aspect of the Scottish Parliament, and what makes the devolved administration most unlike Westminster. Scottish parliamentary committees have powerful functions including pre- and post-legislative scrutiny of the Scottish Government's plans, the ability to bring forward Committee Bills for consideration, and they also undertake inquiries to better understand how people and organisations might be affected by government policies. Membership of committees is based on the composition of the Parliament, so they're cross-party groupings, often chaired by an opposition MSP. However, despite the grand pre-devolution intentions to empower parliamentary committees to develop policy as well as scrutinise it, in practice the

Scottish Parliament remains a weak policy actor. Parliamentary bills tend to be generated by the Government of the day (through Executive Bills), while generally speaking, limited use has been made of the ability of MSPs to bring forward Members' Bills.

The principles and structures of the devolved Scottish Parliament were intended to better represent the views and interests of the Scottish people (especially important in light of the 'democratic deficit' - whereby Scottish citizens were regularly voting against the government that took office in London, which helped to spur demands for devolution), and to be able to adapt policy to local needs and concerns. Power was intended to be more dispersed across devolved institutions, creating more opportunities for civil society and interest groups to contribute to policy. This is reflected in the Scottish Parliament's legislative process, which seeks to ensure that "the people of Scotland from all walks of life, pressure groups, and regions should participate and share power."[58] The Parliament seeks to embed these principles throughout the law-making process, which includes a Pre-Legislation Consultation stage (before a bill is sent to a committee for consideration), which focuses on participation by enabling individuals and groups to be consulted about proposed legislation before it becomes a bill and "prevents the government from being selective about which pressure groups have an opportunity to be consulted before policy is devised."[59]

Access points

The Scottish Parliament's powerful committee system was intended to foster links between the Parliament and civil society in Scotland, especially through its 'roving' nature outside Edinburgh[60]; through the parliament's emphasis on accessibility and participation, which encourages citizens to submit public petitions to its permanent Petitions Committee; through cross-party groups which enable MSPs to engage with external stakeholders on particular issues; and a strong commitment to consultation, through committee inquiries and evidence sessions. These structures were designed to foster an open, consensual and participatory democracy in which there are multiple points of access for civil society and other interest group actors to participate in the legislative/policy scrutiny process.

Opportunities for Scottish interest group engagement with the Scottish Parliament's policy-making/legislative scrutiny process includes: lobbying MSPs and their staff by email, in person or by telephone (in particular parliamentary committee members), submitting written or oral evidence to committee inquiries, setting up and engaging in Cross-Party Groups[61], informal meetings with committee clerks, writing guest blogs for the Scottish Parliament Information Centre (SPICe), engagement with the Scottish Parliament Future's Forum, submitting public petitions, and undertaking short-term fellowships/internships with SPICe. In

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[58]
https://www.parliament.scot/visitandlearn/Education/18641.aspx
[59]
https://www.parliament.scot/visitandlearn/Education/18641.aspx

[60] Arter, D. (2006) 'From 'spectator democracy' to 'inclusive democracy'? The peripatetic Scottish committees as linkage', Regional & Federal Studies, 16:3, 239-262
[61] http://www.parliament.scot/msps/102152.aspx

particular, the Scottish Parliament has initiated a programme of Academic Engagement, which includes Breakfast Briefings, Academic Fellowships and Blogs, to encourage knowledge exchange between the Scottish Parliament, academics and universities. Scholars have noted how the Scottish Parliament has increased the access of the voluntary sector to policy-making in Scotland[62], which had few institutional channels of engagement prior to devolution (and which does not have the same 'insider group' status as business groups and professional associations in relation to the Scottish Government - see above).

The Scottish Parliament introduced a Lobbying Register in 2018, following the passage of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. This legislation aims to increase transparency around lobbying in Scotland and increasing the legitimacy of interest group participation in the policy-making process, by requiring any organisation or individual who engages in 'regulated lobbying' in Scotland (including lobbying MSPs, members of the Scottish Government, Scottish ministers and SPaDs) to record the details of their activities on the Scottish Parliament's lobbying register.[63] The Register is designed to foster a culture of transparency and integrity around lobbying and interest group representation, in line with international best practice.[64]

Gender equality

The Scottish Parliament in its structures,

operation and appointments recognises the need to promote equal opportunities for all. To meet the objective of equal opportunities, a permanent Equalities and Human Rights Committee was established, whose role is to consider and report upon matters relating to equal opportunities, human rights and the prevention or elimination of discrimination related to equalities characteristics.[65] Cross-Party Groups in Parliament have also been set up to tackle the issues of Women's Health, Women's Justice and Women in Enterprise. Furthermore, the Parliament's budgetary processes have been influenced by the work and recommendations of the Scottish Women's Budget Group (SWBG), which draws together feminist economists and academics to scrutinise the parliament's budgetary decisions. The SWBG has a "close and enduring working relationship with parliamentarians."[66]

The creation of a Scottish Parliament created a new democratic forum for the representation of women in politics. Initially, when the devolved Parliament was first created, women gained twice as many seats in Edinburgh than they had in London (in the 1999 Scottish parliamentary election, women won 37% of the 129 seats, compared with 18% of the 650 seats in the UK Parliament following the 1997 general election). Since then, women have secured 40% of seats in the Scottish Parliament in 2003, 33% in 2007, 35% in 2011 and 35% in 2016. In contrast, women won 32% of seats in the UK Parliament in the last general election in 2017. It appears, then, that women's

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[62] Keating, M. (2005) *The Government of Scotland. Public Policy Making after Devolution,* Edinburgh University Press.

[63] https://www.lobbying.scot/

[64] See E. Hepburn (2017) *The Scottish Lobbying Register. Engaging with Stakeholders*, Edinburgh: Scottish Parliament.

[65] https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/Equalities-Committee.aspx

[66] Cairney, P. and K. Rummery (2018) 'Feminising Politics to Close the Evidence-Policy Gap: The Case of Social Policy in Scotland', *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, 77(4): 542-553.

representation in the Scottish Parliament is becoming broadly similar to that of the UK Parliament, while hopes for gender parity in the devolved parliament remain just that.[67] However, various mechanisms have been introduced to encourage women's engagement in electoral politics, including the use of gender quotas, 'twinning' and 'zipping', while organisations have emerged to encourage women to stand for election, such as Women 50:50, Scotland's Women Stand, Citizen Girl, and the leadership programme Young Women Lead.[68]

Some scholars have argued that the increase in women's political representation in Scotland "does not lead per se to an increased policy focus on women's issues [although] women Scottish politicians see themselves as 'feminising politics'".[69] However, there have been landmark pieces of legislation that promote gender equality, spearheaded by women Scottish politicians.[70]

Furthermore, the Scottish Parliament has a public sector equality duty, resulting from the Equalities Act (2010), and it has also voluntarily decided to work towards meeting the specific duties of the Gender Equality Duty (2006). This includes a general duty "to eliminate discrimination and harassment and to promote equality" and specific duties "to prepare and publish a Gender Equality Scheme"[71] which the Parliament has created to review objectives to embed gender equality for SCPB staff.[72]

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[67] For a good, concise analysis, see M. Kenny, F. Mackay and C. Murtagh (2016) 'The representation of women in the Scottish Parliament', *Holyrood Magazine*, 13 May. Available at: https://www.holyrood.com/articles/inside-politics/analysis-representation-women-scottish-parliament

[68] https://www.parliament.scot/gettinginvolved/110670.aspx

[69] Cairney, P. and K. Rummery (2018) 'Feminising Politics to Close the Evidence-Policy Gap: The Case of Social Policy in Scotland', *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, 77(4): 542-553.

[70] For instance, the Forced Marriage etc (Protection and Jurisdiction) (Scotland) Bill (2011), the Abusive Behaviour and Sexual Harm (Scotland) Bill (2016), Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Bill (2018), the Gender Representation on Public Boards (Scotland) Bill (2018), the Female Genital Mutilation (Protection and Guidance) (Scotland) Bill (currently under consideration), and the Period Products (Free Provision) (Scotland) Bill (under consideration).

[71] http://www.parliament.scot/abouttheparliament/22391.aspx

[72] http://www.parliament.scot/Corporateandlegalresources/2008Plan.pdf

UK Government and Parliament

Policy-making in the UK may appear to be concentrated in the hands of the Prime Minister, but in reality a large number of people are involved in policy-making at the UK level, ranging from unelected officials in the civil service to think tanks, third-sector organisations, business groups, academics and other layers of government. As we might expect, though, the core Executive dominates the UK policy-making agenda. The UK Parliament actually has little direct participation in policy-making: its role is to scrutinise and approve policy, not make it. This distinction is crucial, and one that is often overlooked by political commentators. Let us examine the roles of the UK Government and the UK Parliament in policy-making below.

UK Government

How is policy made?

The Prime Minister and the Cabinet are collectively described as the nerve-centre of government that sets government policy, who are supported by the high-powered network of Cabinet committees, the Cabinet Office, the Number 10 Policy Unit, and a number of whips who help coordinate parliamentary business. There are currently 22 Cabinet Ministers and 93 other ministers in the UK Government, totalling 126 ministers (including the PM).[73] This is significantly larger than the Scottish Government, which has 29 ministers and cabinet secretaries in total. It is important to stress that no Prime Minister's 'policy style' has ever been the same – for instance, whilst

Margaret Thatcher, Tony Blair, Theresa May (and thus far, Boris Johnson) were in power, the office of the PM took on a very strong policy-making role, which included bypassing the Cabinet (and at times, relying on Special Advisors, or SPaDs, for policy input and coordination); others, like John Major and Gordon Brown, were happier to delegate powers and listen to voices around the Cabinet table. Ministers have an important role in the policy process, either by proposing new policy ideas or, more usually in the incrementalist style, proposing improvements and adjustments to existing policies in their day-to-day running of the country. Ministers are unable to function without their advisers, comprising senior civil servants and SPaDs.

As in Scotland, civil servants in the rest of the UK play a crucial role in conceptualising and refining policy – and this includes not only senior officials, but also middle-ranking and junior officials. In the UK Government, civil servants work across 25 ministerial departments (such as the Ministry of Defence), 20 non-ministerial departments (i.e. HM Revenue & Customs) and 405 agencies and other public bodies (i.e. the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency). It is important to emphasise that some UK departments and agencies cover the whole of the UK (i.e. Foreign Office, whereby foreign affairs are a reserved matter), others cover most of the UK but not Northern Ireland (i.e. Deptartment for Work and Pensions), and others cover only England (i.e. Dept. of Education, as education is a devolved matter). There are currently estimated to be over 414,000 civil servants in the UK.[74] Some scholars have noted a recent change in the

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https://www.gov.uk/government/how-government-works#how-government-is-run

74

https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/explainers/civil-service-staff-numbers

relationship between ministers and civil servants on policy issues, where ministers are now more likely to arrive in office with their own strong policy priorities (and advisors to support these), rather than relying solely on the advice of civil servants supporting them.

Access points

Some scholars have argued that the UK Government has moved in recent years from a consensual policy style that involves interest groups in a process of collaboration (which is similar to the 'Scottish approach', as described above) towards a more hierarchical and adversarial policy style, known as the traditional 'Westminster model'.[75] Under this model, policy-making tends to be top-down without due consultation and which privileges 'insider' pressure groups whose political views complement those of the party in government (such as right- or left-leaning think tanks). In our previous research, this theory was confirmed as we found that UK Government policy processes were more difficult for external stakeholders to access, especially those who were not part of an 'insider group', compared to the devolved administrations such as Scotland.[76] That being said, "the UK government has a relatively high policy capacity and a well-established set of policy networks including interest groups and a range of think tanks not present elsewhere" in the UK.

[77] *Which* interest groups are allowed access to, and influence over, the UK Government policy process often depends, however, on the ideology of the governing party of the day (for instance, trades unions are often more consulted under Labour).

The reduction of access points for interest groups to engage with, and influence, UK government policy has been partly attributed to the changing status (indeed some say the weakening) of the civil service as the engine of policy ideation and formulation, and the rise of non-elected SPaDS outwith government machinery. As one scholar puts it, "the changing relationship between ministers and civil servants has important effects on policy style because civil servants are now less able to strike a consensus with interest groups, as the civil servants often arrive at the table to decisions already made, rather than to engage in a process of mutual learning and exchange in order to generate policy solutions."[78] However, the main channels to influence UK government policy-making remain the same: informal meetings with civil servants, ministers, cabinet secretaries and NDPB leads; responding to consultations; developing policy briefs; inviting government officials to workshops or round-tables; and using social media or traditional media (through press releases) to get an issue onto the public agenda.

Gender equality

The UK Government Equalities Office (GEO)

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[75] https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/politicsandpolicy/the-changing-british-policy-style/

[76] Keating, M., Cairney, P. & Hepburn, E. (2009) ''Territorial Policy Communities and Devolution in the United Kingdom'' *Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy and Society*, vol. 2(1), pp. 51-66.

[77] M. Keating, P. Cairney & E. Hepburn (2012) 'Policy Convergence, Transfer and Learning in the UK under Devolution', *Regional & Federal Studies*, 22:3, 289-307.

[78] https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/politicsandpolicy/the-changing-british-policy-style/

was established in 2007 as a successor to the old 'Women and Equality Unit' that was based in the Dept. for Communities and Local Government. The GEO has lead responsibility for policies on gender equality and works across UK departments to provide equalities advice.[79] The GEO is headed by the Minister for Women and Equalities, who has overall responsibility for policy on women, sexual orientation, transgender equality and cross- government equality strategy and legislation (a position created in 1997).[80] In 2019 the GEO published a gender equality 'roadmap' for government action on gender inequality, including closing the national gender pay gap and tackling gender stereotyping.[81] It also published a *Gender Equality Monitor*, to measure gender equality outcomes using a suite of measures.[82] The GEO's intention is to mainstream gender equality, whereby "commitments in this roadmap will be absorbed into departments' 2020/21 single departmental plans as necessary, but we will also provide an annual progress report to Parliament, alongside annual reporting against the Gender Equality Monitor," as laid out in the GEO's Strategic

Plan.[83]

Recent initiatives of the GEO include the creation of a Period Poverty Taskforce[84], a consultation on sexual harassment[85], and spearheading gender pay gap reporting.[86] However, the HoC Women and Equalities Committee found a lack of coherence and high degree of fragmentation in the organisation of the GEO, due to the division of the ministerial and civil service teams across several departments, several changes in leadership and the GEO's lack of resources, concluding that "the degree to which GEO has levers or capacity to influence policy in government departments relating to other protected characteristics is also uncertain."[87] The most recent change, resulting from the 2019 Conservative party leadership victory of Boris Johnson, has resulted in the UK Government's 'core executive' lagging in gender balance. In the current Cabinet, less than a quarter of members (24% - 8 out of 33) are women.[88] More broadly, only 28% of all ministers in the UK Government are women

[79] https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/government-equalities-office

[80] https://www.gov.uk/government/ministers/minister-for-women-and-equalities--3

[81] UK Government Equalities Office (2019) *Gender equality at every stage: a roadmap for change*, HM Government. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/821889/GEO_GEEE_Strategy_Gender_Equality_Roadmap_Rev_1__1_.pdf

[82] UK Government Equalities Office (2019) *Gender Equality Monitor*, HM Government. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/814080/GEO_GEEE_Strategy_Gender_Equality_Monitor_tagged.pdf

[83] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/814357/GEO_Strategic_Plan_080519_.pdf

[84] https://www.gov.uk/government/news/period-poverty-taskforce-meets-for-the-first-time

[85] https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-to-further-protect-employees-from-sexual-harassment

[86] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closing-the-gender-pay-gap-actions-for-employers

[87] UK Parliament (2018) *The role of Minister for Women and Equalities and the place of GEO in government*, House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee. Available at: https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmwomeq/356/356.pdf

[88] https://www.gov.uk/government/ministers

(33 out of 116).[89]

UK Parliament

How is policy made?

The UK Parliament contains two legislatures: the House of Commons (HoC) and the House of Lords, which means that the legislative process has several more stages and opportunities for scrutiny than the Scottish Parliament. Within the UK Parliament, political parties are the key players within the policy process, but their influence depends on which side of the government they are on. Generally speaking, the party in government makes policy, which they expect to be able to gain support for in the UK Parliament. The strength and unity of the governing party (or parties, if they are in a coalition) has usually ensured that their policies have been approved by the UK Parliament. But this might be thwarted if a governing party's MPs are opposed to a particular policy, in which case it might be abandoned or modified before making it to the Parliament. This was recently evident during the introduction of the EU Withdrawal Agreement to Parliament by Theresa May, which was defeated three times by the UK Parliament in the early months of 2019, including by a number of Conservative backbench MPs.

The UK Parliament offers opposition parties (and their supporting organisations) the greatest means by which to use their own channels to influence policy-making. Opposition parties tend to rely more on their influence and veto powers within the UK Parliament, where they can propose Private Members Bills, seek to influence policy through the Select committees (whose reports can prompt a change in policy), and to exploit divisions between the Cabinet and the parliamentary backbenches.

Opportunities for interest group engagement with the UK Parliament includes: lobbying individual MPs and their staff (directly or via public affairs consultancies), giving evidence to select committees, engaging in all-party (cross-party) parliamentary groups, informal meetings with clerks, and sending policy briefs to MPs. The UK Parliament has also introduced lobbying regulations to ensure transparency in state-group relations, however, the requirements are less comprehensive than the Scottish Parliament's Lobbying Register.[90]

Gender equality

The structures, culture and working practices of the UK Parliament have been criticised by academics and political commentators as presenting barriers to the participation of women.[91] A gender audit of the UK Parliament revealed four particular barriers: (1) a culture of bullying and harassment; (2) online threats to MPs; (3) challenges for family life, i.e. long hours; (4) financial impact of standing for election.[92] Despite these

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https://www.gov.uk/government/ministers#ministers-by-department

[90]

http://www.parliament.scot/LobbyingRegister/Hepburn_Lobbying_Register_Report_2017_Nov2017.pdf

[91] For a good overview, see Maguire, S. (2018) *Barriers to Women Entering Parliament and Local Government*, Institute for Policy Research. Available at: https://www.bath.ac.uk/publications/barriers-to-women-entering-parliament-and-local-government/attachments/sue-maguire-barriers-to-women-entering-parliament-and-local-government.pdf

[92] UK Parliament (2018) *UK Parliament Gender Sensitive Audit 2018*, available at: https://www.parliament.uk/documents/lords-informa

barriers, the percentage of women MPs has risen from 18% in 1997 to 32% in 2017, which is an all-time high.[93] The visibility of gender equality issues in the UK Parliament has been strengthened with the creation of the Women and Equalities Select Committee in the HoC in 2015, which has conducted inquiries on prostitution, abortion law, sexual harassment intersectional inequalities, and pregnancy and maternity discrimination.[94]

There are also several All-Party Parliamentary Groups (APPG) relating to women - i.e. Women in Parliament, Women and Work, Women in Enterprise, Women's Health, Women in Transport, and State Pension Inequality for Women[95] - which bring together members of both houses of the UK Parliament and foster engagement with external stakeholders.

tion-office/UK%20Parliament_%20Gender%20Sensiti ve%20Parliament%20Audit_Report_DIGITAL.pdf

[93] Browning, Steve (2019) *Women in Parliament and Government*, House of Commons Library Briefing Paper No. 01250, 4 March, available at: https://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBrief ing/Summary/SN01250#fullreport

[94] https://www.parliament.uk/womenandequalities

[95]

https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm/cmallparty /190731/register-190731.pdf

European Union

The European Union (EU) has a very complex system of policy-making.[96] This is mainly because it has evolved over time to try and be as inclusive as possible of different actors, and to strike a balance of power among decision-makers. So, not only does it involve a wide variety of actors – such as supranational institutions, member state actors (at the state and substate levels) and non-state actors (such as interest groups, trade unions and NGOs) – but it also takes place in a context of multiple locations for addressing different policy issues (local, regional, national, European and global), using both formal and informal processes. There are two distinct methods of EU policy-making:

1.   Community Method, which results in 'hard law' and reflects the balance of interest between three key actors (the European Commission, European Parliament and Council of the EU); and

2.   Open Method of Coordination, which results in 'soft law', emphasises decentralisation and flexibility, and allows for a greater role for devolved legislatures and non-state actors (i.e. third-sector organisations).

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[96] This section focuses exclusively on policy-making within the EU, in which Scotland has direct and indirect representation. Decisions on gender equality by the Council of Europe (CoE) - through the European Convention on Human Rights in particular, but also through the Committee of the Parties of the Convention (Lanzarote Convention) on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse - are also important, but fall outwith the scope of this research project. Likewise, work by the United Nations (UN) on gender equality - through the Human Rights Council, Sustainable Development Goals and UN Women - is also extremely important, but fall outside the parameters of this report.

EU 'Community Method' of Policy-Making

How is policy made?

Most legislation in the EU is made through the 'Community Method', which is the core of the EU policy process. The Community Method is based on the 'ordinary legislative procedure' (OLP) process, which emphasises the role of supranational institutions such as European Commission and the European Parliament, and the Council of the EU. The OLP also emphasises the right of the Commission to initiate legislation, the co-decision power between the Council and the European Parliament, and the use of qualified majority voting in the Council.

ATo map this out, the Community Method therefore typically involves the Commission developing a policy proposal and submitting it to the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers, which they then scrutinise, amend and - if they are happy - approve the legislation. There is extensive input from non-state and substate actors at all stages of this process, especially when proposals have been submitted to the European Parliament and interest groups intensify their lobbying as they become aware of any new proposals. Once approved, the regulations and directives are then legally binding, and national and substate jurisdictions are required to implement them and meet minimum standards.

Access points

Scottish policy actors currently have various access points to influence EU legislation in devolved areas such as agriculture and the environment. Scottish governmental actors can engage with the European Commission

at the time of developing the proposal, Scottish MEPs engage with the European Parliament when making amendments (i.e. membership of committees, voting on proposed legislation), and Scottish public and third-sector actors may seek to influence and/or lobby the UK Government to influence its position in the Council of Ministers. Scotland is also represented at the European level in the Committee of the Regions (CoR), which was created in 1994 by the Maastricht Treaty, through transregional associations such as RegLeg (Regions with Legislative Powers) and through Scotland House - the Scottish Government's information office in Brussels.[97] However, substate regions such as Scotland are generally marginalised in the centres of EU decision-making, such as the Council of the EU, which represents Member States. Therefore, states hold the policy power in the EU, by co-deciding at the EU level. In order for Scottish actors to influence EU policy processes, the more effective route is often to influence the position of the UK Government and its Permanent Representation in the EU (UKRep).

Gender equality

The EU has played a major role in promoting gender equality across Europe and the world, through its Treaty provisions and legislation, as well as its support of international initiatives, such as the UN World Summit on Women in Beijing in 1995, which laid out an approach for gender mainstreaming. In particular, since the Treaty of Amsterdam in 1999, the promotion of gender equality has been enshrined as one of the essential tasks of the EU and obliged Member States to

eliminate inequality.[98] The EU's primary legislation on gender equality that has resulted through the Community Method includes: directives on equal pay for men and women, equal treatment of men and women in employment, equal treatment in statutory schemes of social security, equal treatment in access to and supply of goods and services, the Pregnant Workers' Directive and the Parental Leave Directive.[99] The European Court of Justice has further embedded gender equality in law, by establishing that equal pay is an expression of a fundamental human right. Advances in EU gender equality law were at least partly the result of the coordinated lobbying campaign by the European Women's Lobby (EWL), the largest umbrella network of women's associations across EU Member States, which has lobbied Member State representatives across the EU during treaty negotiations and legislative discussions, as well as European institutions at all stages of the policy process to embed a strong gender equality dimension into EU law.[100]

EU Open Method of Coordination

[98] http://www.genderequality.ie/en/GE/Pages/WP13000032

[99] Burri, S. and S. Prechal (2008) *EU Gender Equality Law*, European Commission. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=1771&langId=en

[100] The EWL represents over 2000 organisations across EU Member States. For more details of its impact on the development of equalities legislation, see B. Helfferich and F. Kolb 'Multilevel Action Coordination in European Contentious Politics: The Case of the European Women's Lobby', in D. Imig and S. Tarrow (eds) *Contentious Europeans. Protest and Politics in an Emerging Polity*, Rowman and Littlefield (currently available on Google Books). For more info on the EWL, see https://www.womenlobby.org/-Our-membership-?lang=en

[97] See Eve Hepburn (2010) *Using Europe: territorial party strategies in a multi-level system*, Manchester University Press.

How is policy made?

A newer method of policy-making is the Open Method of Coordination (OMC), which emphasises intergovernmental coordination around more sensitive policy areas. The OMC is part of a range of softer policy tools which were introduced with the Lisbon Treaty in 2000. The OMC doesn't result in 'hard' binding laws, but rather 'soft laws' such as guidelines. The basic tenet of the OMC method is voluntary intergovernmental cooperation to establish broad policy frameworks in areas of high political sensitivity, such as socio-economic policies, where Member States may be more unwilling to give up authority. For instance, the OMC method was first applied to employment policy, and has since been used to set guidelines on social inclusion, poverty, education, asylum and migration, culture, pensions, and environmental policy. In the OMC process, Member States and the Commission often begin by setting broad policy goals, which the Council of the EU agrees on, and then member states are expected to translate these into guidelines. If no agreement is reached in the Council of the EU, the process ends there and policies are not implemented.

Access points

For the OMC method, Scottish actors can lobby the European Commission when developing common guidelines, benchmarks and indicators at the EU level (directly or indirectly through umbrella organisations or lobbying groups), seek to influence the UK position to shape as well as implement OMC guidelines and 'national action plans' (where the UK Government invites multiple actors from civil society to develop action plans),

and Scotland also has the option to exceed guidelines (in areas of devolved competence, including employability and social inclusion) by implementing higher standards than the UK. The OMC method was explicitly designed to encourage civic participation, and studies have shown, for example, how the Scottish Poverty Alliance played a key role in developing guidelines on EU Social Inclusion policy.[101]

Gender equality

One of the key policy areas governed by the OMC method is employability, which has significant implications for gender equality. After the Treaty of Amsterdam, in 1997, equal opportunities between women and men was established as one of the four pillars of the European Employment Strategy (EES) and in 1998 a commitment to gender mainstreaming was established across all pillars. The Council of the EU has also made specific recommendations for Member States to adopt gender equality targets in employment, childcare provision and the gender pay gap.[102] Gender mainstreaming has also been included in the EU's other principal OMC policy area: social inclusion. The European Commission has established

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[101] McPhail, E. (2010) 'Examining the Impact of the Open Method of Coordination on substate employment and social inclusion policies: evidence from the UK', *Journal of European Social Policy*, 20(4).

[102] See Rubery, J. (unpublished) 'Gender mainstreaming and the Open Method of Coordination: is the open method too open for gender equality policy?' Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Jill_Rubery/pu blication/265225673_Gender_mainstreaming_and_th e_open_method_of_coordination_is_the_open_meth od_too_open_for_gender_equality_policy/links/5527 7d370cf2520617a71234/Gender-mainstreaming-and-t he-open-method-of-coordination-is-the-open-method -too-open-for-gender-equality-policy.pdf

two groups - the High Level Group on Gender Mainstreaming[103] and the Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men[104] to assist in formulating policies in gender equality. European policy on gender equality is facilitated by engagement with a wide range of groups, including the European Institute for Gender Equality, national gender bodies and networks of experts.[105]

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[103] https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regexpert/index.cfm?do=groupDetail.groupDetail&groupID=1240&NewSearch=1&NewSearch=1
[104] https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regexpert/index.cfm?do=groupDetail.groupDetail&groupID=1238&NewSearch=1&NewSearch=1
[105] https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/who-we-work-gender-equality_en

How do these sub-systems interact in the development of policy?

The policy landscape in Scotland is both complex and interconnected and there are multiple routes through which public policy is developed. Below we describe the interrelationships between different 'sub-systems' in this multi-level system.

Scottish (National)-UK Linkages

In the UK, intergovernmental relations (IGR) between the UK and devolved administrations (Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland) are largely based on informal channels rather than formal machinery, which are weighted to the UK level. For instance, one of the few formal structures of IGR - the Joint Ministerial Committees (JMC) between Scottish and UK ministers - are chaired and summoned by the UK minister in question, and held in private with no scrutiny possible. The sharing of information between the Scottish and UK levels is heavily dependent on informal interpersonal relationships (especially amongst civil servants in Edinburgh and London), and relies on a great degree of trust and goodwill. In the early days of devolution, when the Labour Party was in power at the Scottish and UK levels, party political backchannels also provided an important means of IGR, however that is not the case when different parties are in power.

When it comes to policy development, there is some evidence that - on devolved matters (such as education, transport, housing) there is virtually no interaction or discussion between the Scottish and UK Governments, and moreover, there is often a lack of awareness in Westminster policy circles of what policies have been developed in Scotland.[106] On shared policy areas, such as social security, there has been extensive interaction between the UK Department of Work and Pensions and the Scottish Government to ensure coherence in the devolution and hand-over of certain functions and benefits. Meanwhile, on reserved matters, such as the EU/foreign affairs, the UK Government tends to keep policy development close to its heart, and is often reluctant to share information with the devolved administrations, especially on controversial policy issues. There is a legal obligation for the UK Government to consult the Scottish Government on reserved matters that have an impact on Scotland's devolved competences, to give 'appropriate consideration to the views of the other administrations', and to ensure 'that the interests of those parts of the UK in non-devolved matters are properly represented and considered'.[107] However, the term 'consult' has not been strictly defined or operationalised, and Scottish policy-makers often complain that they are left 'out of the loop' on reserved issues (evident in the Brexit negotiations).

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[106] This observation is the result of data collected from over 300 interviews with policy actors in London, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland (including civil servants in UK departments) for a project funded by the Leverhulme Trust which resulted in the publications: Keating, M., Cairney, P. & Hepburn, E. (2009) ''Territorial Policy Communities and Devolution in the United Kingdom'' *Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy and Society*, vol. 2(1), pp. 51-66; and M. Keating, P. Cairney & E. Hepburn (2012) 'Policy Convergence, Transfer and Learning in the UK under Devolution', *Regional & Federal Studies*, 22:3, 289-307.
[107] Memorandum of Understanding between the UK and the Devolved Administrations (2012), available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/316157/MoU_between_the_UK_and_the_Devolved_Administrations.pdf

Scottish (National)-Local Linkages

Relationships between the Scottish Government and the 32 unitary Local Authorities are complex. Single Outcome Agreements and Community Planning arrangements may be the overarching framework and CoSLA have had a key brokering role working through a range of subject committees. However, relationships are often fraught around financial resources and influenced by party politics, and the balance of power is weighted toward the national level, despite the recommendations of the Christie Commission.

There are several ways in which the Scottish Government exerts an influence at the local level. Firstly, national-level initiatives or policies can strongly affect the ways in which policy is developed and implemented at the local level. For instance, following the 2011 Christie Commission report on the delivery of public services the Scottish Government has made efforts in several areas to increase levels of collaboration, partnership and integration in local service delivery. As a result, there have been significant changes in the duties local authorities have with regards to matters including Community Planning and the integration of health and social care, with important consequences for policy development locally. Secondly, the Scottish Government provides around 85% of local authorities' net revenue through a block grant, and also has the ability to 'ring-fence' parts of this funding by specifying particular services which local authorities are obliged to fund. Both the level of the total grant that local authorities receive, and the issue of which services do or do not receive 'ring-fenced' funding, have an important influence on decision-making at the local level.

Finally, the Scottish Government has established various bodies which scrutinise or otherwise monitor the performance of local authorities in different areas. Audit Scotland, for example, carries out annual financial audits of every local authority. In addition, local authorities are expected to play a key role in helping Scotland make progress towards the outcomes set out in the revised National Performance Framework, launched by the Scottish Government and COSLA in June 2018. It is likely that councils' performance with regards to the achievement of these aims will be in some way monitored or scrutinised in the years ahead.[108]

Scottish (National)-EU Linkages

The Scottish Government and Parliament have also engaged extensively with EU institutions to implement EU directives in areas affecting devolved policy matters (i.e. environmental policy, employment policy) in ways that are tailored to Scottish needs. There are a number of venues and channels by which Scottish actors seeks to engage with EU policy-making, including Scotland's membership of the EU Committee of the Regions (an advisory committee), Scotland's elected Members of the European Parliament, and Scotland House (Scotland's base of representation in Brussels). However, when it comes to the Council of the EU and European Commission, Scotland has less direct influence as the UK Government holds 'membership' as a Member State government, and may act as a policy gatekeeper. Certainly, this has not prevented

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[108] Audit Scotland (2019) *Local government in Scotland: Challenges and performance 2019.* Pg 12.

the Scottish Government from meeting directly with Commission officials. However, the SG also needs to focus its energy on trying to influence the UK position on EU issues, bringing us back to the importance of IGR between Scotland and the UK.[109]

Local-State Linkages

In some policy areas (especially in reserved matters such as immigration), the UK Government and Local Authorities in Scotland have established direct relations that may or may not exclude the Scottish Government level. This is evident, for instance, in refugee integration policy, where the UK Home Office interacts directly with Scottish LAs on the housing (devolved policy) of refugees and asylum seekers that are distributed to Scotland (reserved policy). However, generally speaking, there are far fewer local-state linkages than local-national linkages, given that local government is a devolved competence in Scotland.

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[109]

https://www.gov.scot/policies/europe/eu-negotiations/

Chapter three - *Policy in Practice*

In this chapter, we explore some of the practical realities of policy-making from the personal perspective of a range of policy actors working across government. We draw out how the practice of policy-making matches up to the theory described above, we identify some of the formal and informal relationships, and we illustrate what policy-makers themselves see as the main barriers and opportunities to better embed gender sensitivity in policy making.

The rich interviews with the 10 respondents have revealed a wide range of important issues Unsurprisingly, a number of interconnected tensions and ambiguities exist in the system and we focus the discussion here on some of those to help us better understand policy-making in practice.

- Political leadership and stakeholder agenda-setting
- Political expediency and long-term decision making
- Organisational capacity and resources
- Gender equality as a part of policy roles and gender equalities seen as an add on
- Formal and informal communication and influencing channels (external)
- Formal and informal communication and influencing channels (internal)
- Local policy-making and national policy-making

Political leadership / stakeholder agenda-setting

In recent years, the Scottish Government has shown political leadership in adancing gender-based issues, for example, in seeking to prevent and eradicate violence against women and girls, sexual harassment and female genital mutilation, and in promoting gender equality in the workplace. In all interviews for this project, officials identified political leadership as a key enabler and driver of action. In particular, the support of the First Minister and Permanent Secretary - both of whom are women - to advance gender equality has helped drive the agenda.

Political leadership is important in developing a broader, societal and more coordinated set of policy responses and, some have argued, it has mitigated the risk of individual interest groups or organisations setting the agenda. As one respondent put it,

"...[Minsters have] a much more direct influence on policy-making and shaping agendas. So while stakeholders put forward policy ideas to civil servants and work with civil servants, I would say there is a lot more explicit agenda-setting because we have a pretty well-informed and engaged set of cabinet ministers and ministers in a way you don't always have".

Other interviewees pointed out that the closeness between Ministers and constituent parts of the policy system had, in many areas, genuinely allowed policy to be "co-owned" with stakeholders. The Scottish Government's work around the Gender Pay Gap is a good example of a complex, cross-cutting policy area which achieved cross Ministerial support and was developed openly with a whole range of external stakeholders. In that example, there was evidence of a high level of organisational maturity to invite stakeholders in, allow

them to challenge policy direction and negotiate with civil servants and Ministers around a shared Action Plan.

At a local government level, the political leaders of all 32 local authorities come together once a month to discuss papers put to them on a range of issues from policy officials. There is no dedicated Committee looking at equalities issues and it is expected that each Committee considers gender equality within their overall remit. The President and Vice President of CoSLA are also able to hold informal discussions with the Scottish Government around any potential emerging issues that may fall outwith the agreed National Performance Framework.

Another interesting aspect of how agendas are set within a political environment is in the work of the Scottish Parliament's Equal Opportunities and Human Rights Committee. Whilst most of the Committee work around gender is done around the budgetary process, the Committee's extended remit on human rights has meant there has been a push to acknowledge the extent to which women are being treated fairly, from a rights-based perspective, rather than considering whether a policy is likely to discriminate against women. That can be seen as a useful development.

Political expediency / long-term decision making

In practice, good policy-making depends upon developing sustained relationships with stakeholders, which allows for the gathering of insights, information, research and evidence - and that of course takes time and sustained effort. However, it is generally acknowledged that politics is often driven by

cycles of media interest, which has far-reaching implications for how policy is developed. The reality is that Ministers will sometimes be expected to produce a policy, strategy or piece of legislation on an issue that is gaining party political or media interest. In turn, Ministers may expect civil servants to produce a policy or supporting work in short period and under considerable time pressure. The effect is that there may not be sufficient time available to properly explore or understand both the potential intended and unintended consequences of policy interventions. While that can be seen as an inherent aspect of policy being developed within a political environment, as one respondent pointed out, *"it can happen too often"*.

As such, looking at policy through a gender lens may not be seen as a priority in the time available for civil servants to properly undertake, for example, Equality Impact Assessments. It has been noted that Equality Impact Assessments often come to Scottish Parliamentary Committees very late in the scrutiny and accountability process, which means that MSPs do not have sufficient time to scrutinise Bills from an equalities perspective, alongside the overall policy direction. It has also been noted in the interviews, however, that MSPs often do little to challenge that situation and have *"come to expect that Equality Impact Assessments will not be thorough"*.

So, in summary, whilst the theory of policy-making, as discussed above, affords time for the in-depth exploration of all the issues, with gender sensitivities being built into those explorations, in practice, that is often superseded by political expediency, limited parliamentary time available and low expectations of MSPs. Those contributing

factors may result in lack of foresight and an overall lack of policy coherence over the long-term. In consequence, it may mean that legislation and policies need to be revisited from a gender perspective down the line, when problems emerge. As one interviewee suggested, the debate is driven by

"the level of knowledge that underpins parliamentary interest and scrutiny. The more evidenced based, longer term, complex and systemic issues can get lost. Simply because of the levels of media scrutiny and short term political scrutiny generally don't lend themselves to complex argument or systemic arguments."

Capacity / resources

It can be reasonably argued that whenever party political agendas are privileged within the policy system there will be an important focus put on certain policy areas, whereby policy makers will have the chance to raise the profile of different policies. However, at an organisational level, over time, privileging new and increasing numbers of policy priorities can serve to add undue pressure to the system. As one interviewee put it *"it can make sustaining policy development efforts difficult to maintain momentum when the political focus is constantly changing and being added to."*

Almost all the interviewees for this project referred to the limited capacity of their organisation as constituting a major challenge, due to issues around bounded rationality as described above. A challenge at the ministerial level and civil service level is that there are so many priorities which keep being added to. As one interviewee put it *"Over time, they lose meaning as not everything can be a priority and in human*

resources or in financial resourcing, that kind of build up of priorities year on year without any of them falling away, just becomes untenable after a while." It seems that political priorities can help set an agenda but this starts to dissipate and may become too diffuse if there are too many priorities to manage, and people stop listening because they can't act.

The potential for overwhelm - driven by an increasing number of policy priorities added to civil servants' briefs with limited capacity to address - indicates that there may come a time when hard choices need to be made about which policies to prioritise (and which should receive less attention), and what impact this may have on gender policies and mainstreaming (and other areas) with limited resources and capacity. As one respondent suggested *"It's something about the difficult choices and I don't think we have necessarily faced that."*

Gender equalities as a central part of policy roles / an add on

Based on the practical experiences of those interviewed, a central discussion emerged around mainstreaming and the degree to which every policy-maker should consider gender equality as part of their role. Was that unreasonable to expect given some of the pressures discussed above? One suggestion is that more progress could be made if trained specialists were embedded across the organisation who would act as experts in equalities and who could look at any given policy through a gender lens and offer advice and guidance to policy colleagues. Whilst in theory, and in law, it is the duty of every public servant to act fairly and not in a discriminatory manner, some policy-makers do not always see the need to look at a policy

area through a gender lens. One interviewee commented *"Many do but others need support to see that by looking at a policy area through a gender lens, they will be in a better position to meet their policy ambitions."* It was noted that there are so many obvious gender dimensions to key government policy themes such as health and wellbeing, children and young people, reducing the poverty gap, education, the labour market and working conditions that it would be hard to justify not looking in any real depth at these issues through a gender lens.

Within severe budgetary constraints, the corporate centre of the Scottish Government has neither the capacity nor the resources to offer in-depth equality training for policy makers across the organisation, concentrating efforts instead to promote equality and diversity in terms of recruitment and career development routes. The main responsibility for equalities therefore sits largely with the Equality Unit policy team (including its Gender Equality Team). Notwithstanding the constraints around capacity and resources, it could be argued that taking responsibility for the design and delivery of training around gender sensitivity, including for example training around Equality Impact Assessments, should rest with a corporate function rather than a policy team, to ensure reach across the whole organisation. Centralising equalities resources and training would also provide a clear sign of how important gender is being taken by the organisation. In addition to this, it may be effective to develop a formal network of equality specialists around the organisation to support policy colleagues. Some work on developing training around Equality Impact Assessments within national and local government is already in progress.

Within CoSLA, there is no single Committee or policy team looking at gender. It is expected that each policy team takes account of equality issues as part of their day-to-day work. While some external training is provided for Chief Officers - who support each of the subject Committees - it is recognised that there is a need for CoSLA staff to be more proactive when considering policy through a gender lens.

The Scottish Parliament's espoused values around equality, accountability and sharing of democratic power are very clear, and there is some evidence that MSPs and parliamentary staff have acted through those values. One interviewee pointed out,

"The Equal Opportunities and Human Rights Committee has done a lot of good work in the Parliament in trying to mainstream equalities. From as far back as 2001, every Committee was tasked to look at equalities and think about equality when scrutinising government plans or when conducting inquires."

However, over time, the operating values may have changed. One of our interviewees observed that gender mainstreaming in the eyes of MSPs has become more of a worn concept, and some complacency is perhaps noticeable. On the other hand, interviewees have also pointed out that there are other workstreams in the Scottish Parliament that have increased the emphasis on gender. The #metoo campaign and public awareness around sexual harassment has been a strong focus, and there is also wider diversity and inclusion work ongoing. A focus on human rights has also been seen as a way of invigorating the discussion and making gender less tokenistic.

Formal and informal communication and influencing channels (external to Scottish Government)

Each interviewee spoke of the currency of collaboration, and the importance of developing shared priorities with stakeholders. It can be observed that there has been a steady increase in dialogue, open policy-making and even citizen participation in recent years when developing policy. Also, at a local government level there have been various attempts to codesign and coproduce service delivery. Participatory budgeting has increased in popularity in recent years, particularly during times when difficult spending cuts have had to be made.

There is a central narrative in policy-making that citizens are no longer simply passive recipients of services and they should be fully involved in decision making. That is a narrative that is playing out in national policy-making as well as through local government. There has been a noticeable shift in policy-making to include the wisdom and expertise of the wider community beyond statutory consultation processes. The service design approach to designing elements of the new Scottish Social Security system is but one example.

In part, the Scottish Government views collaboration as a purposeful way to ensure policies are embedded and acted upon. An interesting view that emerged from this project was that civil servants often don't perceive themselves to have power, *"we simply work to enable others to act."* Another interviewee suggested that civil servants had *'convening power'* and could bring interests around the table quickly to mobilise action, listen and develop shared priorities.

Most major policy areas have a good spread of formal institutions to develop shared priorities, for example, National Strategic Forums, stakeholder groups, expert panels, steering groups, and national networks. In the area of mental health policy, for example, there are a number of existing frameworks, including a 10-year mental health strategy, a children and adolescent taskforce, and a number of other areas where policy had been developed around the Programme for Government. There is also a national forum which is open to all and a strategic board which the minister chairs with representatives of the Scottsh Government's main partners. Those kinds of formal engagement forums and channels are fairly common in any key policy area.

These forums can also, however, be a source of frustration for civil servants as priorities are negotiated. It is often the case that many stakeholders around the table of such Forums are funded by the Scottish Government, and different stakeholders may be in direct competition with each other for funding. That dynamic can play out in such Forums and as one interviewee pointed out that, *"stakeholders can engage in the discussions in quite a competitive manner."* There are also sometimes unrealistic expectations around what the Scottish Government can reasonably do and what is expected of stakeholders by way of roles and responsibilities.

However, good practice does exist and one interviewee pointed to the Domestic Abuse Act as being a good example of *"policy makers working closely with Scottish Women's Aid to ensure the legislation reflected the needs of people most affected by the issues and in understanding what the likely impacts might be of legislation on the very people it is*

trying to help." It is seen as critically important that such discussions are open to civil servants, so they can access 'expert' voices and lived experience. As one interview pointed out *"Civil servants are not necessarily the experts."*

In Scotland today, there are nearly fifty executive and advisory Non-Departmental Public Bodies (NDPBs). Those bodies are answerable to Ministers and are publicly funded. Such bodies support Ministers to discharge their duties, and they are an invaluable source of subject expertise. NDPBs are connected, and are answerable, to the Scottish Government on a day-to-day basis through 'sponsorship units' within the Scottish Government.

Regulators such as the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) and the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) are also NDPBs and can therefore be in a position of offering advice and expertise to ministers whilst also enforcing regulations and policy developed by the Scottish Government. Regulation is an important way for the Government to achieve its policy objectives. Regulators do this by setting standards, assessing performance, and encouraging change in the behaviour of organisations to meet policy outcomes (for instance, protecting the rights of employees, consumer protection, or maintaining standards in health and social care). But while regulators may be involved in 'policy-making' through their advice to ministers and their recommendations to regulated organisations, it is the Scottish Government that defines the framework and parameters within which regulators operate and make their decisions.

For example, Audit Scotland supports the Auditor-General and Accounts Commission in assessing the overall performance of key parts of the public sector. Audit Scotland is responsible for auditing 215 public bodies in Scotland (including the Government, Parliament, NHS, Councils, colleges and joint boards) and giving independent assurance that public money is being spent properly. Auditors are independent of the organisation that they're auditing, and they produce reports on the performance and financial management of Scotland's public bodies that set out recommendations for audited bodies to act upon. These reports are considered by the Accounts Commission and/or Scottish Parliament's Public Audit and Post-legislative Scrutiny Committee.

For instance, Audit Scotland recently produced a report on *Mainstreaming Equality and Equality Outcomes*[110]*,* which sets out how Audit Scotland and the Accounts Commission are addressing their responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010. This includes embedding a stronger equality thread in their performance audits and local government Best Value audits, including equalities in their financial audit planning guidance, and examining how well public bodies are addressing human rights, for instance in the devolution of new powers and the National Performance Framework. Here, then, Audit Scotland is implementing equalities policy and meeting its statutory duty under the Equality Act, as well as shaping equalities policy through standards-setting for audited bodies.

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[110] Audit Scotland (2019) *Mainstreaming Equality and Equality Outcomes*, Edinburgh. Available at: https://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/uploads/docs/report/2019/as_mainstreaming_equality_report_1719.pdf.

In contrast, the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) – which is Scotland's principal environmental regulator – has a different role. Its aim is to provide a system of environmental protection for Scotland, to improve the environment and deliver the Scottish Government's environmental objectives, as contained in the NPF. SEPA meets these aims by regulating and advising on a wide range of environmental activities – from advising businesses on how to understand and comply with their environmental responsibilities and regulations, to monitoring the quality of our air, land and water. In addition to regulating organisations to ensure compliance with government policies, SEPA also has a strong policy-making role in itself. It works in partnership with other agencies and policy-makers to "increase environmental understanding and build consensus on environmental priorities and issues."[111] In that way, SEPA is actively involved in the agenda-setting and policy-framing side of policy development, as well as supporting the implementation, regulation and evaluation of environmental policies.

Finally, a different form of regulation is provided by the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC), which is the regulator for the social service workforce in Scotland. The SSSC sets standards for the practice, conduct, training and education of social service workers, and if they are seen to fall short of these standards, the SSSC *"investigate and take action"* on the grounds of conduct, health or deficient professional practice, which may result in sanctions, to protect those who use social services.[112] The SSSC publish a Register that social service workers must be on, and pay a fee for, to be allowed to work in the sector.[113] In this sense, the SSSC takes on a standards-setting and investigative role in determining if social services workers comply with codes of practice that are shaped by the Government's policy aims. In addition, the SSSC exercise a role to *"influence government policy on social services through the knowledge of the sector we gain from being the workforce regulator."[114]*

Cross Party groups (CPGs) within the Scottish Parliament are also examples of forums that can influence policy development and scrutiny. Although not a formal part of parliamentary business, there are a range of CPG's that keep MSPs informed of stakeholder experiences, including a range of gender based issues. It has been noted by one interviewee that MSPs have purposefully used the intelligence, feedback and discussions obtained at CPG's to support and inform their scrutiny roles in parliamentary Committees.

It has to be noted that there has traditionally been a dearth of formal spaces for policy-makers to come together with stakeholders to consider policy issues through a gender lens. The NACWG itself and the Scottish Women's Budget Group are some of the notable exceptions. In the course of the interviews for this project, there was

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[111] https://www.sepa.org.uk/about-us/our-role/

[112] https://www.sssc.uk.com/the-scottish-social-services-council/about-the-sssc/

[113] http://sssc.uk.com/about-the-sssc/what-do-we-do-for-you/did-you-know

[114] http://sssc.uk.com/about-the-sssc/what-do-we-do-for-you/did-you-know

an appetite for creating additional forums, networks, and expert groups to examine policy areas from a gender perspective and to share stories of how policy has impacted on women. As one interviewee said, *"I would welcome a sphere where we can explore how policy up to now has impacted on people, in practice, through gender."* Another interviewee said that, *"we need somewhere where data can be properly analysed from a gender perspective."* Sex-disaggregated data and statistics would be invaluable in helping to make the business, policy as well as moral case for policies to be gender sensitive.

Formal and informal communication and influencing channels (internal to Scottish Government)

'Relationships are the context for collaboration'

Some interviewees suggested that internal relationships within the Scottish Government needed to replicate the depth of external relations. The SG is one organisation, however, with numerous Directorates, all with different organisational cultures and norms; it can therefore be a challenge to maintain consistency in how people work together across boundaries.

The overall culture within the Scottish Government is regarded as collaborative in nature, perhaps reflecting the fact that policy is guided by a framework of outcomes for people. As one interviewee pointed out, *"The real challenge is collaboration. Everything relates to everything else. There are no siloed issues anywhere!"* Interviewees reported an organisational culture where they are expected to work on cross-cutting issues on top of day-to-day responsibilities. One interviewee made the point that *"she was on*

a number of cross-cutting boards, forums and networks."

On asking interviewees where they saw their authority coming from, when working with others to develop policy through a gender lens, most pointed to their overall policy strategy giving them legitimacy. However, every interviewee also pointed to their ability to foster relationships across boundaries. One interviewee was able to cite a range of informal approaches she had used to encourage others to support a gender-based cross-cutting policy lens: *"Gain high-level support from within the organisation including political endorsement, make a compelling argument policy-wise to look at the issue through a gender lens and how this will help them achieve their policy aims, make the financial case, call people out, escalate to Ministers if necessary and point out how working on this as a gender-based issue will help them upskill, something the civil service Appraisal System expects, and lastly... be persistent with the same message."*

It was pointed out that despite the moral, legal or financial arguments for looking at policy in a sustained way through a gender perspective, there will still be some officials who do not see the point or do not see gender equality as part of their role. For them, training might be important but there was a sense too of realism from interviewees; a sense that perhaps not everyone will fully understand the need to look at policy through a gender lens. In those situations, interviewees believed that the best efforts might be the ones designed to embed gender sensitivities around small practical steps and encourage people to work with simple guiding principles. This was seen to have more of a chance of embedding gender sensitivity systemically over time.

Another enabling factor within the SG was the sharing of information and data. It was seen by interviewees to be particularly important to give trust and permission to staff to talk to colleagues, to talk informally to stakeholders, and for staff to have the chance to feedback into the decision-making process. Horizon scanning work, internal feedback loops, and customer insight were all seen as proven ways of determining action; these methods rely on good management and leadership to encourage staff at all levels to build relationships across the organisation.

Local / national policy-making

CoSLA's role as a policy actor is to work with the Sottish Government and others to negotiate on behalf of local government on, for example, employment contracts, pay rises, and funding from the Scottish Government, as well as the vast majority of local government service areas. Policy teams within CoSLA have day-to-day interactions with colleagues in the Scottish Government, in the third Sector and within policy development spheres.

CoSLA also have a key role within *political* decision-making. Key decisions are taken by CoSLA leads who are made up from the 32 Leaders of the 32 LAs. They come together once a month, and give official direction to the policy teams. This mechanism is designed to ensure, as one interview put it, *"coherence and consistency to the approach local government is taking on a range of issues"*.

However, as mentioned before, gender is not seen or approached as a discrete area. From the interviews there was a sense that gender

mainstreaming may not work particularly well at the moment, and it is variable. *"There are some individuals who openly seek views and challenges from organisations and individuals who would be affected by the issue and some do not."* Similar to the Scottish Government, a lack of resources and capacity issues have meant that attention is focused on other issues. However, as one interviewee argued, *"We're not looking at the point that most people who are likely to be affected by poverty are women. The fact they are in caring roles, in part-time roles, discriminated against by the universal credit system... They will be the ones most affected. There is a real opportunity for us to use a gender lens. It's going to be very hard to make a difference if we don't start using a different lens to think about those most affected by poverty."*

Within each policy area in CoSLA, there is an individual political Board who meet every two months and oversee policy development. They tend not to make decisions that are finance-based but have an oversight at a strategic level and tend to be populated by Convenors of LAs. This governance system means that policy teams take direction from their Board and also the Leaders group as to how they want policy to developed. They link to the SG and other key players in the system to build the policy, test policy and challenge it. At times they go into 'lobbying mode' and other times they are asked to contribute to building policy, so theirs is a dual role.

Gender equality has gained local and national support. It is something that is agreed upon politically, but at the same time, as one interviewee responded, *"I think there are a lot of warm words about gender. The value of gender equality is not in doubt within local government but the opportunities are*

not being used to really challenge each other or call each other out."

Overall, policy coherence is dependent on good relations between national and local government. There are pockets of good practice but it is not consistent. One interviewee pointed out that, *"Mudslinging between national and local politicians when people are suffering and in need of support and help is not helpful. That is a huge fundamental structural barrier."*

Furthermore, the fact that there is a lack of women standing for election to local government was noted as a barrier to embedding a gender equality perspective at the local level. One interviewee from local government suggested that the reason for this, *"may be in part because of a fear that they may suffer from adverse social media, they may feel their voice would not be heard within council meetings; a lot of the same reasons women don't stand up and speak in a whole range of situations. However, political decision-making is so vital we hope to do something supportive. It would be good to get the women and girls council to give advice on what could practically be done."*

Chapter four - Systems mapping and systems analysis

In this chapter, we consider the nature of the system through which policy is made in Scotland. The policy system is certainly *complicated*. As discussed, each small part is different and separate. Each part knows its own role and each part routinely undertakes discrete actions within silos. There are many formal processes and conventions that provide opportunities for policy actors to work together, but those often serve to maintain and protect the mechanical nature of the system.

That said, those working within the system also see it as *complex*, with one interviewee describing it as *"a great tidal wave of policy complexity"*

Many policy actors feel a sense of interconnectedness in how they work together. There is a prevailing culture evident within the Scottish Government that, when asked, policy-makers will step up and be willing to contribute to cross-cutting issues on top of their day-to-day work. During the research interviews for this project, a shared purpose around gender equality was evident from different parts of the system. There was recognition that when working within a complex (not just complicated) system, maintaining good relationships across boundaries was a key condition to ensure collaborative working around gender. The system depicted here is not mechanical but living and each part of the system is interdependent.

It can be observed that policy-makers try to work with each other, and those they serve, by building relationships through dialogue

and by establishing shared priorities within an overall system that overly relies on formal mechanical processes. That is a major challenge.

In order to achieve policy coherence when working within complex systems, policy-makers must act together to challenge each other and the organisational cultures, processes and procedures they work through. For example, revisiting the training for staff around Equality Impact Assessments, but also through informal means of working together, will enable policy-makers to support each other to achieve gender sensitivity. New networks, alliances and innovations are required, and more 'touchpoints' must be identified for people to coalesce around issues from a gender perspective. Over time and through repeated small-scale action, systemic change is possible.

"The very features that make systems so powerful – the way they bring together different components to achieve a purpose – also make them difficult to change. Setting out to change an entire system, in all its complexity, often seems hopelessly ambitious. The result is that would-be systems reformers do little more than tinker at the edges, changing a part of a system but leaving the rest untouched……

Changing entire systems, however, requires alliances of partners who will be co–innovators…..

Successful systems innovators create constellations of other actors aligned around them." Charlie Leadbetter

Systems mapping

Whilst by no means exhaustive and only based on the discussions identified above, it is now possible to map out the established 'touchpoints' within the Scottish policy landscape to see where the main points of engagement currently occur between policy actors and where there are already specific engagement points for exploring gender equality within the system.
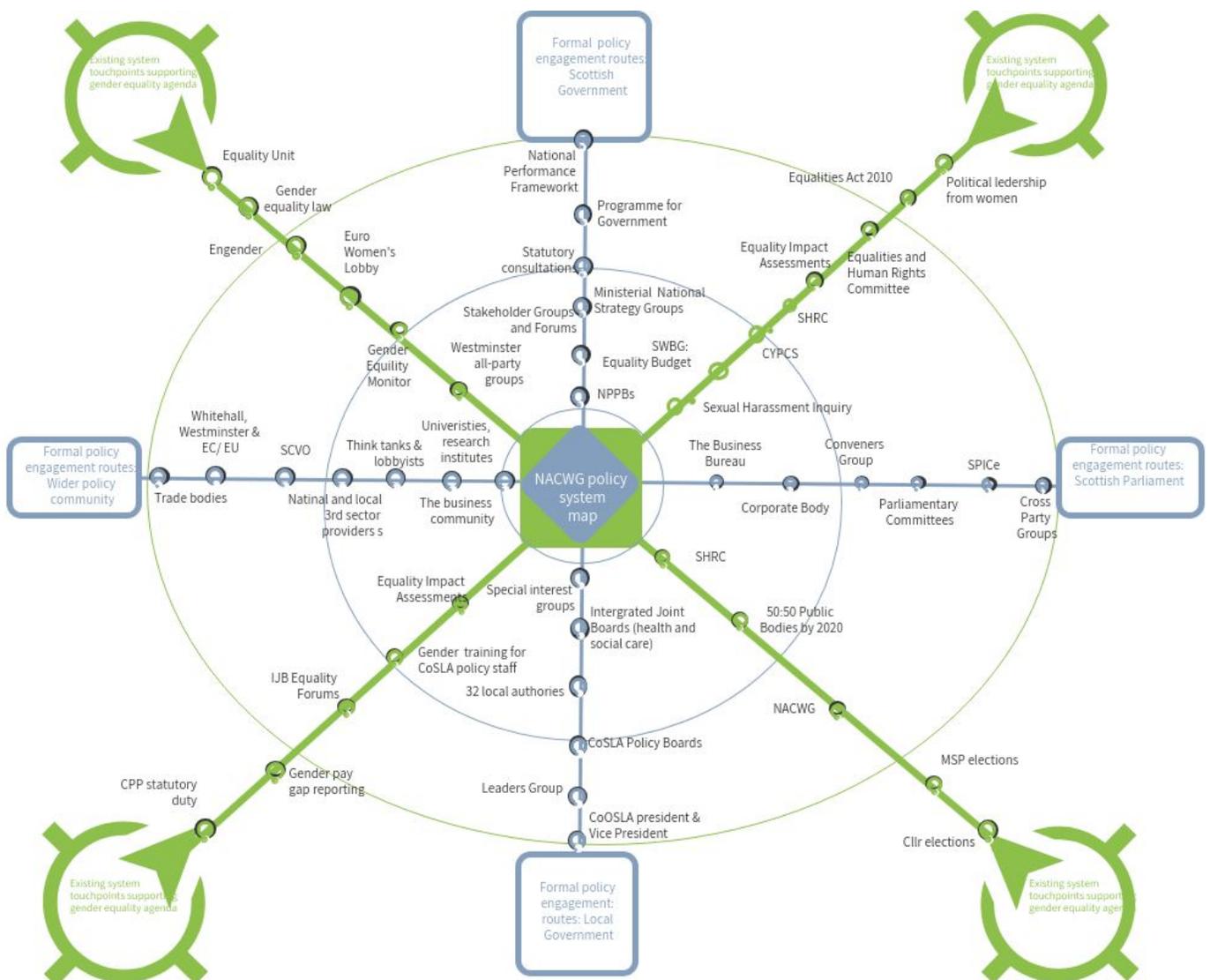
During this mapping exercise a number of issues were identified as key barriers within the policy

system to achieving policy coherence around gender:

- Lack of capacity and resources
- Bounded rationality - civil servants have competing policy priorities, and some have been more committed than others to gender equality
- Culture of working in policy silos and not collaborating across boundaries enough
- Gender equality is spread across different ministerial portfolios and directorates in the Scottish Government - need stronger lines of accountability/integration
- Lacking gender equality coordination structures across SG departments
- Need leadership commitment to gender equality across all levels of SG
- Lack of sex-dissagregated data and statistics
- Lack of training and genuine commitment to Equality Impact Assessments
- Lacking formal forums and networks to engage stakeholders and experts and to explore gender equality policy learning with other countries
- Lacking independent oversight mechanisms to measure SG gender equality outcomes
- Lack of a single key policy document on gender equality
- Cross-party support exists, but need to push gender equality up the agenda
- Lack of national-local-state cohesion and coordination on gender equality
- Some indications of complacency around gender mainstreaming

A number of enabling factors when working in this complex system were also identified:

- Relationships - the need to develop positive, trusted, open and sustained relationships across system boundaries; both externally and internally to government
- SG policy makers have 'convening power' and can bring stakeholders together quickly to gain insights, develop shared agendas and facilitate action
- Women and equalities activists amplify each other's voices within all manner of public fora
- Political and civic leaders can mobilise and energise efforts towards gender equality by offering trust and permission for staff and volunteers to act
- Action is often undertaken when policy actors within the system cede power to enable others to act to support gender equality
- Capacity can be improved by increasing the number of people supporting and coordinating policy efforts through a gender lens
- Policy makers are required to work across system boundaries, share and connect with others who are working towards gender equality
- Policy makers who take up the role of 'host' can facilitate others and bring together people who may not normally have their voices heard around the impact of policy on their lives
- Policy makers have a role in holding themselves and other policy actors to account for their actions and inaction around gender equality
- Policy makers have success in progressing gender issues when they understand the organisational norms, culture and power dynamics within the organisation and use that knowledge and understanding to progress a gender equality agenda.

Chapter five – A focus on the future

This report has sought to provide a limited overview of policy-making processes in Scotland up to the present day, and the extent to which they are informed by policy coherence in gender equality. We have explored what we believe are the main tensions within the system, and we have identified touchpoints for developing greater gender policy coherence. In this concluding section, we would like to reflect on factors and wider drivers-of-change that may significantly affect the realisation of gender policy coherence in the future.

This report was written at a time of great political and economic uncertainty and change in Scotland and the UK as a whole, and we believe that there are several challenges that are currently emerging - Brexit, austerity/recession, disillusionment with formal political structures, and rising incidences of discrimination and intolerance - which may shape the system in years to come.

Brexit and Equalities

The UK's decision to leave the European Union will disproportionately affect women more than men and exacerbate gender inequality. So say a range of organisations - from university researchers to economists, business groups and regulators - which have examined the impact on UK citizens of leaving the EU's legal, economic and political systems. European legislation has advanced women's rights to equal pay, maternity leave and safe workplaces.[115]

However, the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has warned that advances in women's rights are potentially under threat if the UK does not enshrine the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights into domestic law once it leaves the EU. The EHRC identifies women's employment rights, a free-standing right to non-discrimination, and funding for women's organisations (via the European Structural and Investment Fund programmes) as areas of particular concern.[116] Furthermore, UK women risk losing out on future advances in EU gender equality legislation, such as extended parental leave, paid carers leave and further measures to implement the Istanbul Convention to end violence against women and girls, which are currently being discussed in Brussels.[117] The EHRC believes a reduction in rights could "undermine the UK's equality and human rights infrastructure." It is especially important, therefore, to anticipate the gendered impacts of Brexit, and to ensure that post-Brexit policy-making is gender-sensitive and does not undermine women's legal rights.

Austerity and Recession

[115] https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/brexit/2018/07/27/gender-equality-adrift-in-the-brexit-backwash/

[116] EHRC (2018) *Pressing for progress: Women's rights and gender equality in 2018*, London. Available at: https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/pressing-for-progress-womens-rights-and-gender-equality-in-2018-pdf.pdf

[117] https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/brexit-vote-theresa-may-no-deal-eu-crash-out-women-sexism-feminism-a8753881.html

Economists have overwhelmingly argued that Brexit will be bad for the UK economy.[118] And the outcome of a No-Deal Brexit could be significantly worse, with the Governor of the Bank of England Mark Carney arguing that this could result in an 'instantaneous shock' to the UK economy, which would raise prices and reduce household incomes. The Bank warned that there was a one-in-three chance of recession due to uncertainty over Brexit[119], and forecasts by the National Institute for Economic and Social Research (NIESR) indicate that the UK may already be entering a recession and would face a severe economic downturn if there is no deal - a view compounded by the recent 0.2% contraction in GDP.[120]

Women's organisations and feminist academics have consistently argued that women are disproportionately affected by austerity and economic downturns. This is because women are more likely than men to be living in poverty; they earn less than men and have less financial capital (i.e. savings and investments); they make up 80% of the low-paid sector workforce; and they are less mobile due to caring responsibilities; which means that they are more vulnerable to erosions in employment standards and wage squeezes.

Furthermore, women are more affected by budget cuts and reductions in public

services, given that women are more likely to use public services and the benefits system.[121] It is thus more important than ever to bring a clear gender lens to policy making, given the disproportionately negative economic impact that Brexit is expected to have on women.

Rising Discrimination and Xenophobia

Since the EU referendum in June 2016, there has been evidence of rising levels of racism, xenophobia and intolerance. The UN Special Rapporteur on Racism, Prof. Tendayi Achiume, has identified a Brexit-related growth in "explicit racial, ethnic and religious intolerance" and a stark increase in hate crimes across the UK since the referendum.[122]

A nationwide survey by Opinium in May 2019 reveals that 71% of people from ethnic minorities have experienced racial discrimination (an increase from 58% in January 2016) and that online racism has doubled since the referendum.[123] In particular, minority ethnic women reported a sizable increase in racial discrimination (from 61% in 2016 to 74% in 2019). There has been a rise in Islamophobic and sexist incidents, with Muslim women wearing the burqa being referred to as 'letter boxes' and 'bank

[118] https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/brexit/2017/08/23/economists-for-brexit-predictions-are-inconsistent-with-basic-facts-of-international-trade/
[119] https://www.theguardian.com/business/2019/aug/01/bank-of-england-warns-1-in-3-chance--brexit-recession-interest-rates
[120] https://www.politico.eu/article/uk-brexit-recession-warning/; see also https://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/uk-on-brink-of-recession-ahead-of-no-deal-brexit-1-4980972

[121] See Women's Budget Group (2018) *Exploring the Economic Impact of Brexit on Women*, available at: https://wbg.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Economic-Impact-of-Brexit-on-women-briefing-FINAL-1.pdf; and https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=23749&LangID=E
[122] https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2018/may/11/uk-has-seen-brexit-related-growth-in-racism-says-un-representative
[123] https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/may/20/racism-on-the-rise-since-brexit-vote-nationwide-study-reveals

robbers' (comments made by Boris Johnson in 2018 prior to becoming prime minister[124]). EU migrant women have also reported feeling more prone to racial harassment.[125] Studies have also shown that austerity and public services cuts will disproportionately impact black and minority ethnic (BAME) women "as a result of structural inequalities, which means they earn less, own less and have more responsibility for unpaid care and domestic work".[126]

For women from marginalised backgrounds - BAME, migrant, disabled, LGBTQIA+ - gender inequality intersects with and is compounded by racism, xenophobia, ableism and homophobia. As such, it is crucial to adopt an intersectional perspective on gender equality, to understand and anticipate not only how policies could affect women and men, but how they could specifically affect BAME women, disabled women, migrant women, LGBTQIA women and others. Scholars have pointed out that analytical frameworks and methods for integrating intersectionality into policy processes are 'in the nascent stages'[127], however, lessons can be drawn from abroad,

and the Swedish Government has sought to develop a gender mainstreaming approach that builds on an intersectional perspective, which shows that "gender equality work is more effective if can see that women and men are not static or homogenous groups [...] Since power structures are intertwined, inequalities are most successfully dealt with together."[128]

Citizen disillusionment/disempowerment

Finally, an obstacle to embedding gender equality at all levels in Scotland - and indeed, in galvanising support for any progressive policy, is the increasing degree to which citizens are becoming disillusioned and disengaged with formal political processes. This is not a phenomenon restricted to Scotland; levels of voter turnout and political engagement through formal channels (such as political parties) have been decreasing for decades across advanced liberal states. This is partly due to poor public perceptions of politics and political systems, and high levels of distrust, that have led to reduced participation in formal political processes. Some commentators have argued that it is also due to an 'expectations gap' between what citizens hope for and what politicians and policy-makers actually deliver.[129]

So how can we ensure that policies better reflect the expectations of citizens and that the voices of ordinary citizens are heard in the policy-making system - which, as we've

[124] https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2018/08/05/denmark-has-got-wrong-yes-burka-oppressive-ridiculous-still/

[125] https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1369183X.2018.1451308

[126] Women's Budget Group and Runnymede Trust (2017) *Intersecting Inequalities - The impact of austerity on Black and Minority Ethnic Women in the UK*, available at: https://www.runnymedetrust.org/uploads/PressReleases/Correct%20WBG%20report%20for%20Microsite.pdf

[127] Hankivsky, O. and R. Cormier (2011) 'Intersectionality and Public Policy: Some Lessons from Existing Models', *Political Research Quarterly*, 64(1): 217-229.

[128] Swedish Secretariat for Gender Research (2015) *Gender Mainstreaming with an Intersectional Perspective*, at: https://www.includegender.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Gender-Mainstreaming-with-an-Intersectional-Perspective-pdf.pdf

[129] http://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/127957/3/86%204%20Forstenzer%20revised%2009_07_15.pdf

seen, is a high-level system involving countless professionals? These are important questions for any policy areas, but they are especially important for gender equality, Research has shown that young women, while amongst the least engaged in electoral politics, have high levels of civic engagement and volunteering with communities.[130] If these are the routes by which current and future generations of young women are making their voices heard, then the systems we create to develop policy must find clear and creative ways to capture their voices.

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[130]

https://cawp.rutgers.edu/sites/default/files/resources/gendercivicengagmnt.pdf

Annex A - Interview questions

Research questions

1.   *Tell me a bit about your policy area?*

2.   *Who sets the agenda around [your policy area?]. From your perspective, how is policy made in theory?*

3.   *Who controls the agenda in practice?*

4.   *Describe the steps taken in developing / reviewing / refreshing your policy area in recent times. What went well? What could have gone better? What were the enabling / prohibiting factors?*

5.   *How do organisations / individuals represent their interests (access points, influence, lobbying etc)*

6.   *How (were) these different voices / perspectives taken into account as your policy area / framework was developed?*

7.   *[Recognising the complexity of system and many variables at play] How is gender equality built into policy-making at this level / in this process?*

8.   *Are there differences in SG's espoused values around the promotion of gender equality and its operating values / culture? In what ways? Examples?*

9.   *What do you think might be the impact (intended and unintended) of your policy area, with regard to gender issues?*

10.   *What do you see as the main opportunities and barriers within SG to achieving more policy coherence around gender issues?*

11.   *What support, resources, training, advice etc would you like to see available to policy makers to help them better understand and act to achieve gender equality through their policy practice / making? (what is on offer now?)*