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WOMEN MPs OF ARMENIAN NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF 5TH, 6TH AND 7TH CONVOCATIONS: DESK RESEARCH

Final Report



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The desk research was conducted in April-July 2021.

Within the framework of the desk research **quantitative content analysis** method was used for data collection and analysis. The following two information sources have been analysed: www.parliament.am (official web page of the RA NA) and www.parliamentmonitoring.am (alternative source of information on the activities of the RA NA) websites. The comparative analysis of Women MPs activities during the 5th, 6th and 7th Convocations (respectively the years of 2012-2017, 2017-2018, and 2018-2021), is provided in the current report.

It should be taken into account, that both descriptive and substantive representation of women MPs has been considered within the framework of this desk research. Substantive representation in this desk research, considers women to “act on behalf” of other women. Substantive representation implies active representation of a female constituency through participation in parliament (e.g. debates, legislative proposals, and votes). Descriptive representation, conversely, is understood as women reflecting the demographic characteristics of being a woman in parliament.¹ Women representatives bring their experience of being a woman to the decision-making process, and in the process, legitimise democracy by contributing to a more “representationally diverse” parliament. It is not expedient to analyse activities of women MPs in frames of their descriptive representation, taking into account the fact that about 90% of legislative proposals, which have been authored² by women MPs have been authored in cooperation with men MPs as well. While some studies showed that women were generally more likely than men to introduce legislation focussed on so-called “women’s issues”, and that women were more likely than men to consider it their responsibility to represent women, according to the desk review, political parties in Armenia strongly influence policy, which impacts the level of influence any individual parliamentarian - including women - can have.

Within the framework of this desk research the activities of women MPs have been analysed from the following perspectives:

- ▶ number and type of legislative proposals introduced by women MPs,
- ▶ success rate of legislative proposals introduced by men and women legislators,
- ▶ voting records of women MPs,
- ▶ the topics of the proposals, etc.

1. If we look at the dynamics of women’s representation in the Parliament of Armenia over the past 25 years, we can see that it has increased almost four times, from 6% in 1995 to 23.5% in 2020. This growth is entirely due to the gender quota secured in the RA Electoral Code, which has increased from 5% to 25% over the same period.³

Table 1 - The dynamics of women’s representation in the RA National Assembly in 1995-2020

Year	Convocation	Introduced quota	Women’s representation in the Parliament
1995	1 st convocation	-	6.0%
1999	2 nd convocation	-	3.0%
2003	3 rd convocation	5%	5.3%
2007	4 th convocation	15%	9.2%
2012	5 th convocation	20%	10.7%
2017	6 th convocation	25%	18.0%

¹ <https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/pdf/10.1146/annurev.polisci.11.053106.123839>

² “Authored legislative initiatives” used in the report presupposes both co-authored and authored initiatives by one MP.

³ https://oxygen.org.am/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Women-PP_ENG.pdf

Year	Convocation	Introduced quota	Women's representation in the Parliament
2019	7 th convocation	25%	24.0%

2. There were in total, 51 women MPs in the last three convocations, of which 13 represented in the 5th convocation, 20 - in the 6th convocation, and 31 - in the 7th convocation. 40 out of 51 women MPs have been represented only in 1 convocation, 9 women MPs in 2 convocations, and 2 women MPs in 3 convocations. Thus 22% of women MPs were more experienced (represented in at least 2 convocations). Interestingly, this does not necessarily mean that they have been more productive, than those with one convocation.
3. During the 5th Convocation women MPs were mainly included to meet the required quotas. The role of women MPs in decision making and participation in legislative activities increased during the 6th and 7th Convocations.
4. Women's work as MPs did not significantly differ from their male colleagues' during all convocations. They took part in the various activities in the same proportion as men and did not display a variety of behavioural divergences, even if some variations appeared depending on the type of the duties.
5. Parliamentary behaviour depends on party membership, and the most numerous groups of women MPs did not show more interest in women's issues than the other parliamentary groups, invalidating the link between descriptive and substantive representation during all convocations. Even if equal representation has not been reached, the number and visibility of women in the Parliament has increased, and these female Members demonstrate a complete involvement in the various aspects of a Member of Parliament's activities. However, they have not created a new style of parliamentarians, a female parliamentary model, with contributions and priorities radically different from men's.
6. Women MPs had active participation in the voting of legislative proposals and other bills during the 7th convocation⁴. The average activity rate⁵ of women MPs participation is 80% as of June 10, 2021. The voting experience of MPs in Armenia and women MPs, in particular, is generally conditioned by the position of the party related to the bill and not by the opinion of the MPs. In total, 978 different legislative acts and other bills have been presented during the 7th convocation. About 64% of women MPs voted for 601-800 out of 978 bills introduced, and on average 6-8% of bills have been rejected (voted against) by women MPs. Only 39% of women had more than 20 speeches during the 7th convocation.
7. Women MPs have been more actively engaged in discussions related to the legislative initiatives compared to men MPs. During the 7th convocation, 97% of women MPs arisen at least one question, while 22% of men MPs didn't ask any question.
8. Non-party women MPs are among the 4 most "productive" deputies, which have been actively engaged in the law-making process, with 7 out of 11 women MPs authored at least one legislative initiative. This, in fact means that active women MPs with effective engagement in law-making have not been necessary members of factions/parties.
9. The number of oral interventions of the 31 women MPs of the 7th convocation constituted 23% of the total number of spoken input (510 for women MPs and 1,692 for men MPs)⁶. This percentage corresponds to the representation of women in the Parliament and shows that the verbal mode did not put women off, they were as often seen and heard as their male colleagues.

Although the number of women in Parliament and accordingly their participation in different activities increased, their influence on decision making process did not change significantly. This is conditioned by the fact that parliamentary behavior of both women and men in Armenia mostly depends on party membership.

⁴ The information on voting records is available only for the 7th convocation.

⁵ The activity rate in frames of this research is considered as participation of Women MPs in voting.

⁶ <https://www.parliamentmonitoring.am/am/deputies/votings>

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 OBJECTIVE

The desk research is aimed to:

1. Accumulate evidence on women MPs activities, propositions and legal initiatives with their outcomes, and other activism during 5th, 6th and 7th Convocations, disaggregated by years, factions and effectiveness⁷.
2. Provide a comparative analysis of the disaggregated data, mainstreaming the gender sensitivity perspective where relevant.
3. Support with the research data, the Annual Assessment of the CSO-NA Cooperation Platform (2020-May 2021).

1.2 DESK RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Within the framework of the desk research, **quantitative content analysis** method has been used for data collection and analysis. This method allows to systematically categorize and record features of textual, visual, or aural material so that they can be analyzed. In addition to quantitative analysis the qualitative content analysis method has been applied in order to analyze the meaning and semantic relationship of words and concepts existing in legal initiatives and respective information sources. The aim of the desk research is to collect and analyse comparative statistics of women MPs activities during the 5th, 6th and 7th Convocations, including:

- ▶ legislative proposals,
- ▶ the topics of the proposals,
- ▶ the authors/creators of these proposals and policy papers,
- ▶ share of adopted/not-adopted legislative proposals authored by women, etc.

Quantitative analysis of documents presupposes the conversion of qualitative data into quantitative indicators and further statistical processing. The following steps of content analysis have been applied during the desk research:

1. **Selection of the content to be analyzed** - the following components served as selection criteria:
 - ▶ The **genre** of the documents is legislative documents, proposals, policy papers, and respective news.
 - ▶ The **criteria for inclusion** of information will be those legislative proposals and initiatives authored by women MPs. The data range of the desk research is 2012-2021 years.
2. **Definition of the units and categories of analysis:** the next step is to determine the level at which the chosen text will be analyzed. This means:
 - ▶ **Identification of units to be coded** (frequency of individual words and phrases),
 - ▶ **Identification of the set of categories** that will be used for coding.
3. **Developing a set of coding rules:** Coding involves organizing the units of meaning into the previously defined categories. For example, in considering the category “female politician,” we decide which titles will be coded with this category.
4. **Coding the text or topics of legislative proposals according to the rules of coding.**
5. **Analyzing the results and drawing conclusions:** Once coding is complete, the collected data is examined to find patterns and draw conclusions in response to our research question. Based on these information the statistical analysis will be conducted to find correlations or trends, discuss interpretations of what the results mean, and make inferences about the creators, context and audience of the texts. Based on the comparative analysis of the disaggregated data by years, effectiveness and other factors of activism of women MPs, recommendations aimed to

⁷ The effectiveness of legislative initiatives in the report presupposes the fact of adoption by the Parliament.

support the Annual Assessment of the CSO-NA Cooperation Platform (2020-May2021) are provided.

In order to conduct proper and high quality quantitative and qualitative document analysis the MAXQDA software has been used, which is one of the best computer-assisted qualitative document analysis softwares (CAQDAS). Using CAQDAS make research more explicit and transparent, helping research audiences to evaluate quality, and positively influence validity, robustness and trustworthiness of research results. Whatever type of qualitative data we choose, (in our case legislative documents, etc.) we can import it into MAXQDA and then we can have MAXQDA assist in transcribing it.

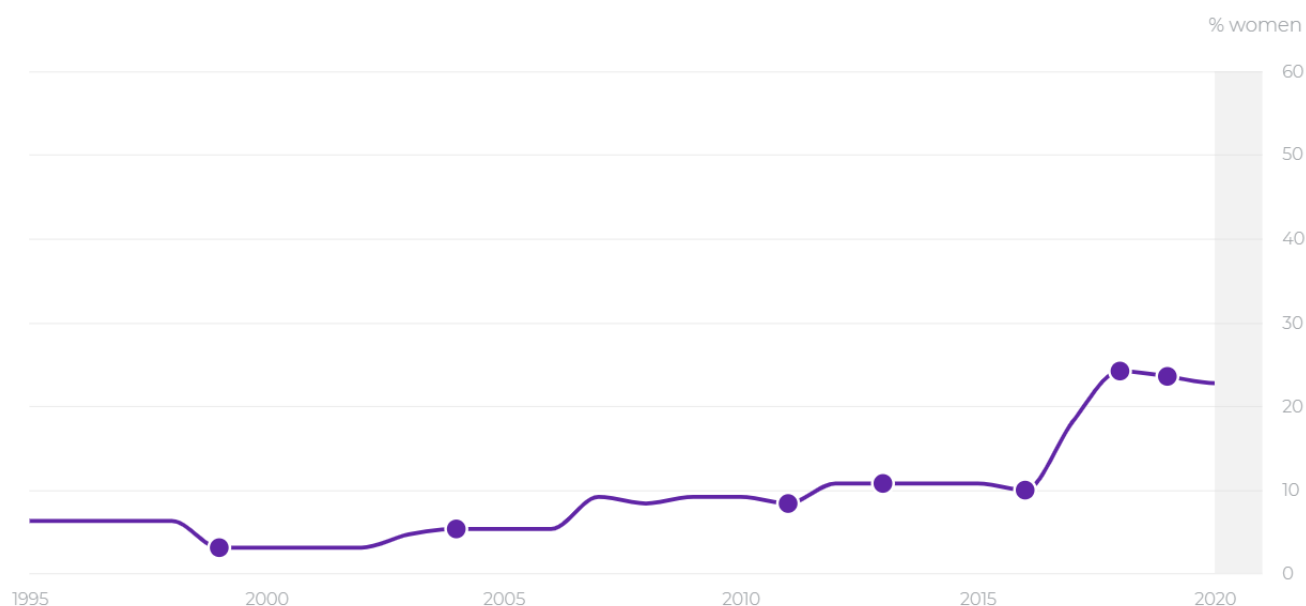
Based on the selected data from the websites it became possible to easily code and provide statistical analyses of codes with help of MAXQDA. For example, to find out how many times the phrase "vulnerable groups" is found in the content of the draft law, or to find out how many of the draft laws the women MPs participated during the 5th convocation. The analysed information or the preliminary database was easily exported into excel format. By downloading the collected data to this system, it was possible to conduct statistical analysis according to pre-separated codes.

2 ACTIVITIES OF WOMEN MPs IN THE PARLIAMENT DURING 5TH, 6TH AND 7TH CONVOCATIONS

2.1 WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA

Women's participation in the Parliament of Armenia has increased over the past 25 years, measuring 24 percent in 2019, compared to 6 percent in 1995. Taking the average rate of change in Armenia in the past 25 (past trends forecast) and 5 years (recent trends forecast) and projecting it into the future, Armenia will reach gender parity in parliament by 2030.⁸

Figure 1 - Women's participation in the Parliament of the RA



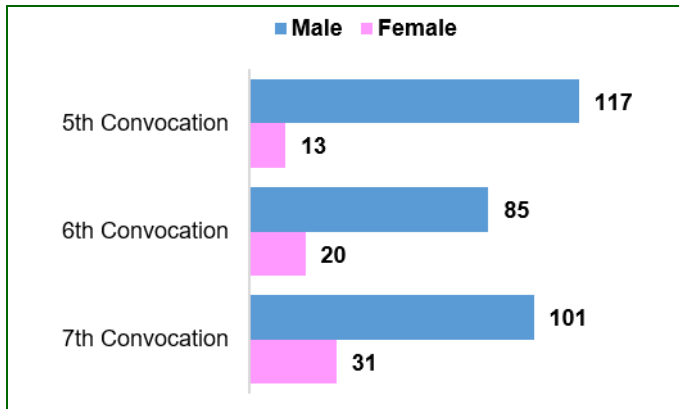
In international practice, the percentage of women's representation in parliament is considered as one of the important indicators, which reflects the advancement of gender equality in the socio-political life. The degree of realization of women's right to elect and to be elected is indicative. This is due to on the one hand, of the status of women, their influence on the formation of political institutions and political decision-making processes and, on the other hand, of the stability of democratic processes.

Over the past 25 years Armenia have implemented measures to increase the number of women in politics. The history of women's participation in the Parliament of Armenia includes the following important stages:

- ▶ In 1999, the first quota legislation was adopted requiring that political party lists of candidates for the proportional representation election contain no less than 5% women candidates.
- ▶ In 2000, Armenia develops the National Action Plan on improving the status of women and enhancing their role in society.
- ▶ In 2011, Armenia introduces a 20% electoral gender quota for candidate lists in parliamentary elections.
- ▶ In 2013, Armenia passes the Law on Ensuring Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for women and men,
- ▶ In 2016, Armenia amends the Electoral Code, further increasing the electoral gender quota to 25% for the 2017 elections and to 30% for subsequent national elections,
- ▶ In 2019, Armenia adopts the 2019-2023 National Programme and Action Plan to Ensure Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for men and women.

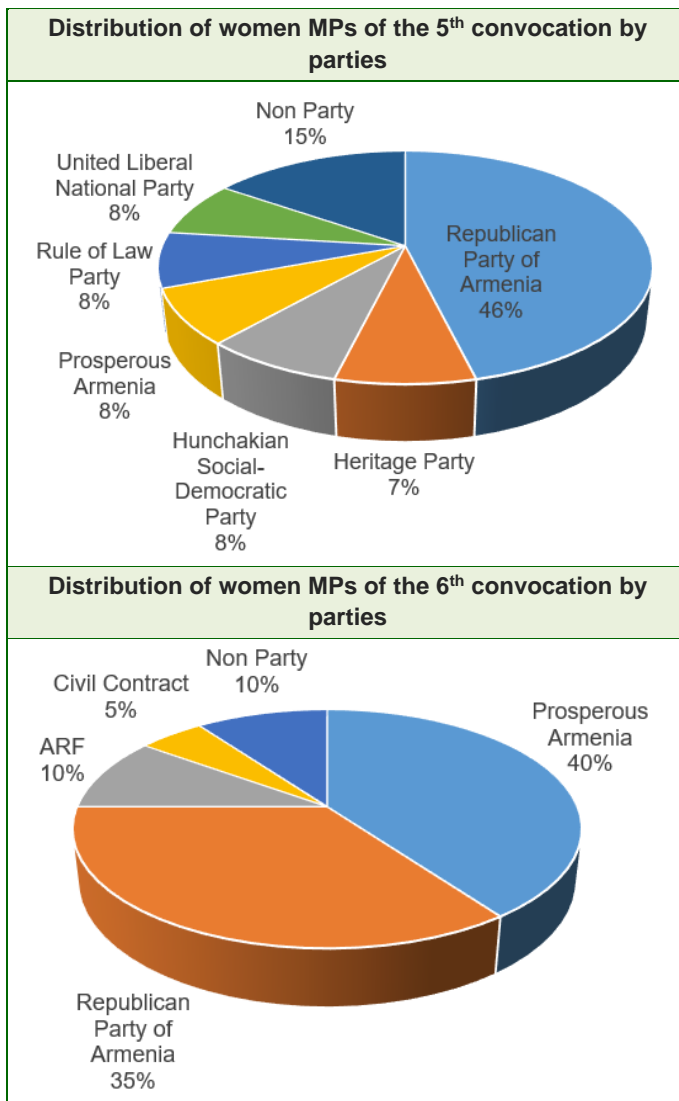
⁸ <https://equalfuture.eurasia.undp.org/>

Figure 2 - Number of men and women MPs by convocations



the requirement to promote de facto equality stipulated in the Constitution and the increase in the percentage of women’s representation in the legislature, which has been conditioned by continuous application of gender quotas.

Figure 3 - Distribution of women MPs in 5th, 6th and 7th convocations



The actual impact women MPs depends on a number of variables, including economic and political context, background, experience and number of the women in NA, and the rules of the parliamentary process. Each of these factors has significant bearing on the extent to which women MPs can make difference once elected. The number of women MPs in the RA NA of the 7th convocation increased by 58% compared to the 5th convocation, and by 35% compared to the 6th convocation.

Increase of women’s political participation in Armenia are connected with the introduction of

As a result of the application of the 25% quota envisioned by the Electoral Code, 31 out of 132 MPs elected to the Parliament of 7th convocation formed in 2018 were women (23.5%), including 22 of 88 MPs (25%) of My Step faction, five of 23 (22%) MPs of the PAP faction and four of 18 MPs (22%) of the BAP (Bright Armenia Party) faction.

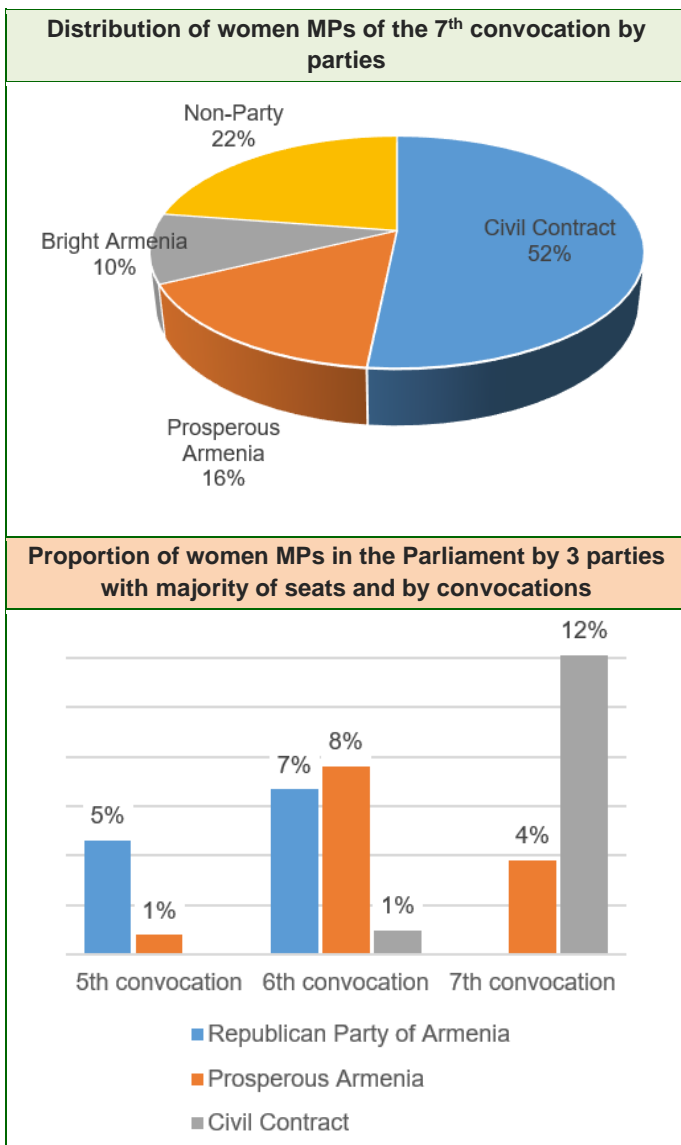
Distribution of women MPs in the 5th, 6th and 7th convocations by political parties is presented in [Figure 3](#).

The highest increase in proportion of women MPs is identified in “Civil Contract” party from 6th to 7th convocation, which is related to increase in total number of MPs of the party (from 5 to 59 MPs). However, the increased number of women MPs in “Proporerous Armenia” parties and “Republican Party of Armenia” could be considered as more significant, taking into account the fact that total number of MPs of these parties remained almost the same, or even decreased, but share of women MPs increased.

The comparative analysis of women MPs activism during the 5th, 6th and 7th Convocations, disaggregated by years, factions and effectiveness is conducted in frames of the following rights and obligations of deputies of the Parliament⁹:

- ▶ Take the floor with a legislative initiation,

⁹ <http://www.parliament.am/parliament.php?id=bylaw&lang=eng#2>



- ▶ Submit draft laws, resolutions, statements and addresses of the Parliament,
- ▶ Deliver speeches, pose questions and make proposals at the sittings of the Parliament and its committees and working groups as well as at parliamentary hearings,
- ▶ Be included in the composition of a working group of a standing or ad-hoc committee,
- ▶ Be included in the composition of a standing committee,
- ▶ Participate in the sittings of the Parliament, as well as the committees, and the working groups of which s/he is a member.

2.2 LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVES PROPOSED BY WOMEN MPs

A wide body of behavioral researches conducted worldwide has pointed to clear differences in the legislative styles and strategies of male and female lawmakers. In the international practice there are also differences in topics of legislative initiatives proposed by women and men MPs. It should be taken into account, that it is hard to identify differences between legislative initiatives proposed by women and men in the RA NA. This is conditioned by the fact that most of the legislative initiatives proposed by deputies were co-authored by men only or by women and men. There were only few initiatives proposed by women only during the 5th, 6th and 7th convocations.

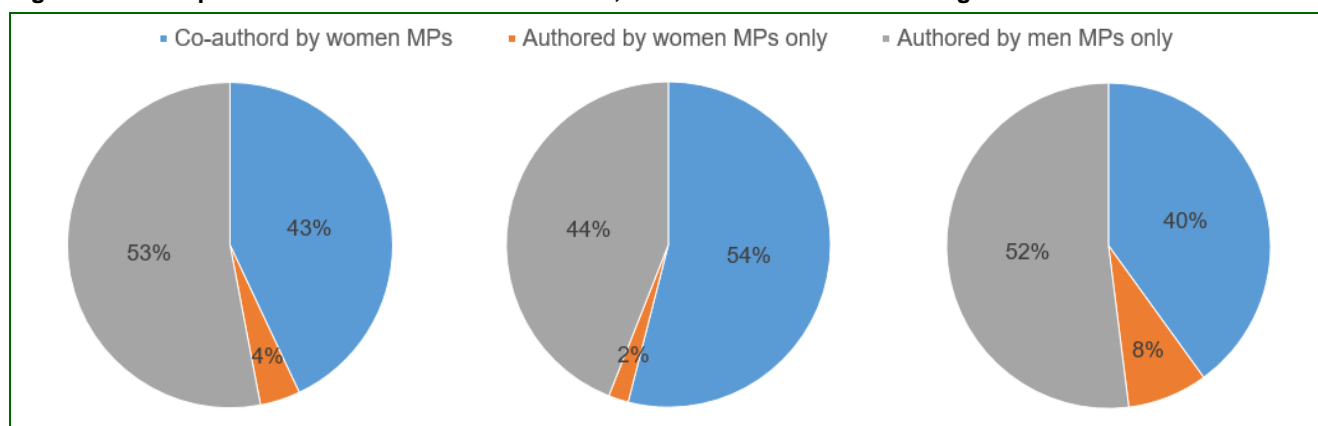
Within the framework of the current desk research substantive representation of women MPs have been considered. Substantive representation considers women to “act on behalf” of other women. Substantive representation implies active representation of a female constituency through participation in parliament (e.g. debates, legislative proposals and votes).

There were, in total, 51 women MPs in 5th, 6th and 7th convocations, of which 40 MPs have been deputies during one convocation, 9 MPs during two convocations and 2 MPs during 3 convocations (Naira Zohrabyan and Karine Poghosyan).

During the **5th convocation**, in total, 1,078 laws were adopted with 66 of them being “mother” laws and 1,012 amendments and additions to the operating laws. Only 83 (8%) of the adopted laws were authored by the parliamentarians and the remaining 995 (92%) by the government.¹⁰ Interestingly, the shift to the parliamentary system during the **6th convocation** did not significantly affect the ratio of drafts proposed by the government and NA, which remains almost the same: in total, during the 6th convocation 648 laws were adopted 63 (10%) of which authored by the Parliament and 585 (90%) by the government. During the **7th convocation** 122 (19%) authored by the Parliament (deputies and factions) and 535 (81%) by the government.

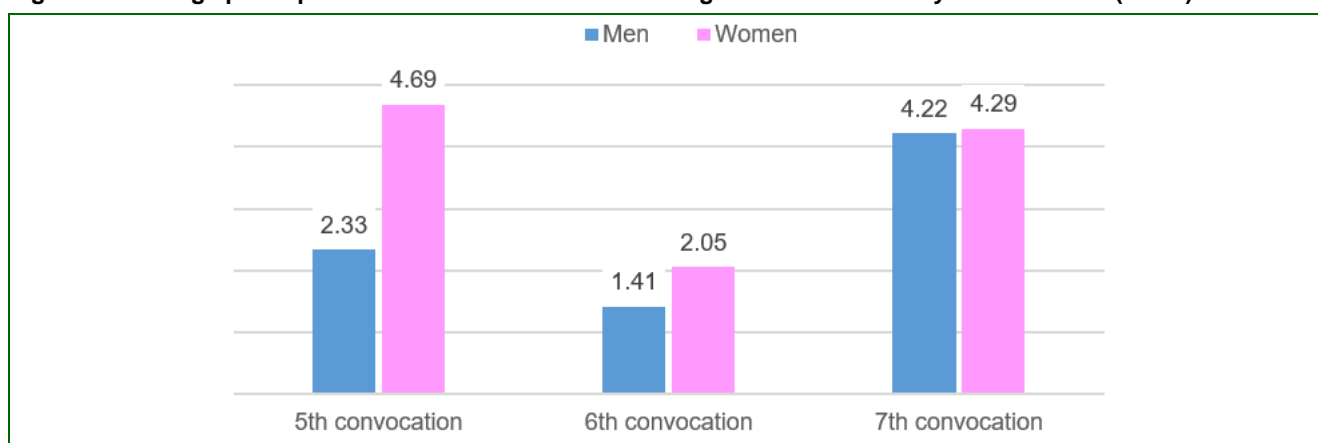
¹⁰ <https://www.parliamentmonitoring.am/assets/files/report/1504909143.pdf>

Figure 4 - Participation of men and women MPs of 5th, 6th and 7th convocations in legislative initiatives



Though the number of women MPs is not high, women have been actively involved in legislative initiatives during the 5th, 6th and 7th convocations. Interestingly, participation of both women and men MPs in legislative initiatives increased during the 7th convocation. Thus, in total, only 17 MPs did not participate in any legislative initiative during the 7th convocation, while accordingly 59 and 52 MPs did not take part in legislative initiatives during the 5th and 6th convocations. The average participation rate¹¹ of men and women MPs in legislative initiatives during the 7th convocation is almost the same (see [Figure 5](#)):

Figure 5 - Average participation rate of men and women in legislative initiatives by convocations (mean)



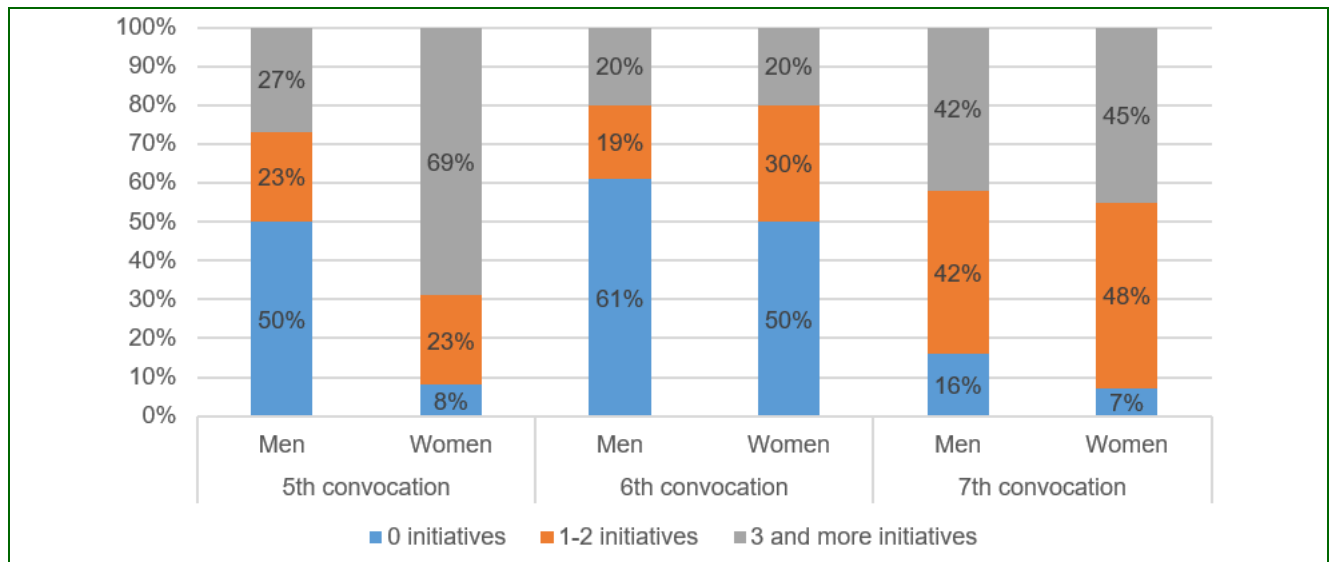
The participation of deputies in the adopted legislative initiatives is conditioned by the following factors:

- ▶ By the party affiliation of the deputies. As a rule, the initiatives presented by the parties forming the majority in the Parliament were more likely to be adopted, than those presented by minority parties.
- ▶ Professional skills and experience of individual deputies,
- ▶ Increasing the number of deputies participating in legislative initiatives.

Interestingly, the average participation rate of men was smaller than that of women in all three convocations (see [Figure 5](#)). The highest participation rate of women MPs has been registered during the 5th convocation (4.69 adopted legislative initiatives authored by women).

¹¹ Average participation rate in this research is the mean of the number of legislative initiatives authored by men or women.

Figure 6 - Percentage of adopted legislative initiatives authored by men and women, by convocations



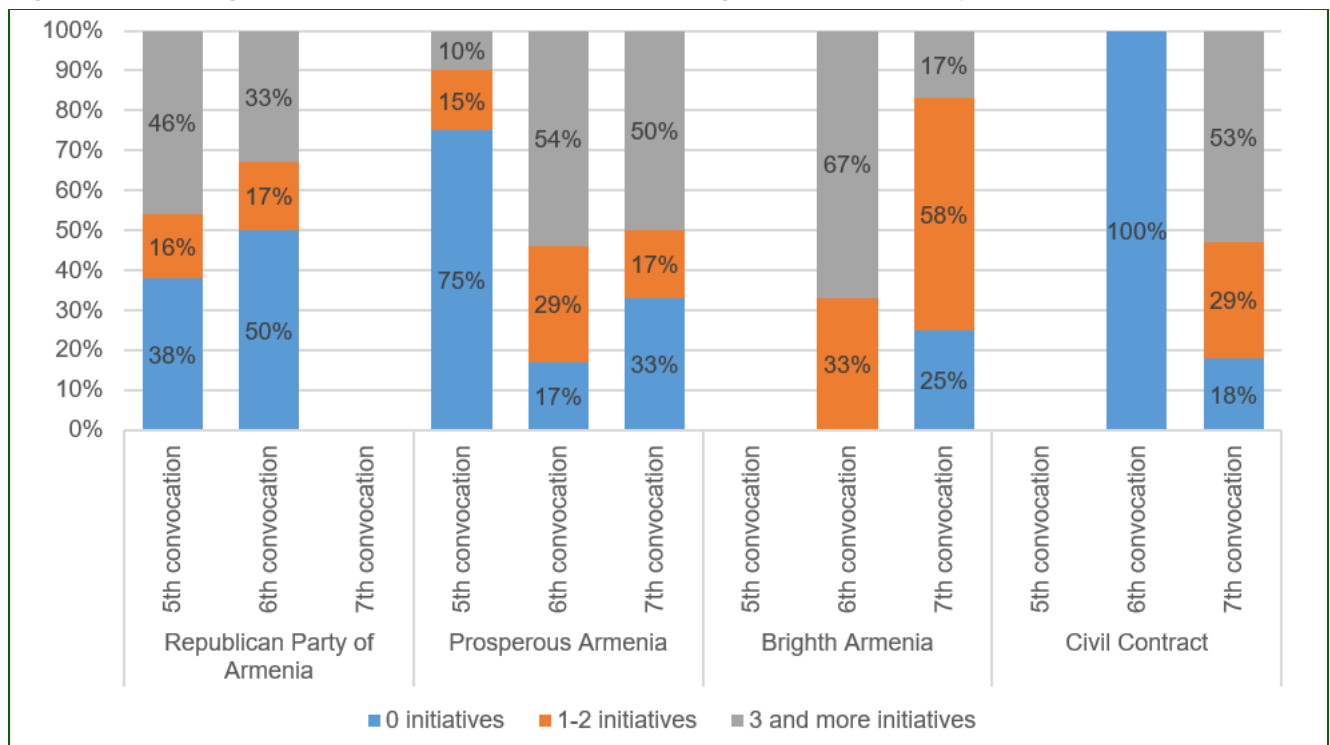
At the same time, 69% of women MPs authored at least 3 legislative initiatives in the 5th convocation, while only 27% of men MPs took part in the legislative initiatives (see [Figure 6](#)). Men and women MPs participated in almost equal number of legislative initiatives, which is conditioned by the following facts:

- ▶ Increase in number of legislative initiatives authored by the NA,
- ▶ More pro-active participation of both men and women MPs in lawmaking process.

The low number of initiatives authored by MPs during the 6th convocation is conditioned by the short duration of the convocation (April 2, 2017 - November 1, 2018). At the same time, about 35% of adopted legislative initiatives have been joint proposals by the RA government and one-woman MP (namely - Ms. Arpine Hovhannisyanyan).

Increase in the participation of deputies in the elaboration of legislative initiatives is more noticeable, when we look at it in the context of factions.

Figure 7 - Percentage of parliamentarians authored adopted legislative initiatives, by convocations



Taking into account the participation of MPs in the elaboration of legislative initiatives, the most active faction of the Parliament was the “Prosperous Armenia” party (all the MPs from this faction authored at least one legislative initiative during the 7th convocation. At the same time most “inactive” MPs were from the “Republican Party of Armenia” during the 5th and 6th convocations (see [Figure 7](#)).

Compared to the 5th Convocation when women MPs were not treated seriously and equally in parties because they were typically included just to meet the required quotas, during the 6th and 7th Convocation the role of women MPs in decision making and participation in legislative activities increased. Participation of women MPs in adopted legislative initiatives is even higher than of men MPs. In total, 80% of all women MPs (during the last three convocations) authored at least one adopted legislative initiative, at the meantime, only 60% of men MPs take part in the adopted legislative initiatives.

More detailed analyses of women MPs contribution in development of legislative initiatives shows, that total number of women MPs increased during the 7th convocation, compared to the previous two convocations. In total, 28 women MPs authored 4.8 legislative initiatives (in average) during the 7th convocation, compared to 10 women MPs, with 4.1 legislative initiatives (in average) in the 6th convocation and 12 women MPs, with 5.1 legislative initiatives in the 5th convocation. Interestingly, 8 out of 42 women MPs contributed to 52% of legislative initiatives authored by women during the three last convocations (see [Table 2](#)).

Table 2 - Number of adopted legislative proposals authored by women MPs by factions and convocations

Name of the women MP	Faction/ Party	Convocation	Number of legislative proposals authored
Zohrabyan Naira	Prosperous Armenia	5, 6, 7	25
Hovhannisyan Arpine	Republican Party of Armenia	6	22
Tigranyan Heriknaz	Non-Party	7	15
Karapetyan Anna	Civil Contract	7	12
Badalyan Lusine	Civil Contract	7	11
Bisharyan Heghine	Rule of Law	5	11
Davoyan Arpine	Civil Contract	7	10
Naghdalyan Hermine	Republican Party of Armenia	5	9
Atshemyan Karine	Republican Party of Armenia	5,6	8
Makunts Lilit	Civil Contract	7	7
Postanjyan Zaruhi	Heritage Party	5	6
Isayan Shake	Prosperous Armenia	6,7	6
Muradyan Ruzanna	Republican Party of Armenia	5	6
Hovsepyan Sofia	Civil Contract / Non-Party	7	6
Ghazaryan Sona	Civil Contract	7	5
Julhakyan Arusyak	Civil Contract	7	5
Sardaryan Shushan	Republican Party of Armenia	6	5
Karapetyan Naira	MIAK / Non-Party	5	4
Yesayan Margarit	Republican Party of Armenia	5,6	4
Poghosyan Karine	Republican Party of Armenia/ PA	5,7	4
Stepanyan Lilit	Civil Contract	7	4
Baghdasaryan Nazeli	Non-Party	7	4
Poghosyan Kristine	Civil Contract	7	3
Vardanyan Tsovinar	Civil Contract	7	3
Tonoyan Iveta	Prosperous Armenia	6,7	3
Begloian Anush	Civil Contract	7	2
Ghazaryan Taguhi	Civil Contract	7	2
Hayrapetyan Tatevik	Civil Contract	7	2
Karapetyan Maria	Civil Contract	7	2
Nazaryan Lena	Civil Contract	7	2

Name of the women MP	Faction/ Party	Convocation	Number of legislative proposals authored
Arustamyan Nora	Prosperous Armenia	6,7	2
Baghdasaryan Jemma	Republican Party of Armenia	6	2
Vardanyan Elinar	Non-Party	5	2
Samsonyan Ani	Bright Armenia	7	1
Grigoryan Hripsime	Civil Contract	7	1
Sargsyan Lyudmila	Hunchakian Social-Democratic Party	5	1
Sargsyan Luiza	Prosperous Armenia	6	1
Petrosyan Shushan	Republican Party of Armenia	5	1
Galstyan Meri	Non Party	7	1
Gasparyan Tatevik	Non Party	7	1
Grigoryan Anna	Non Party	7	1
Tovmasyan Taguhi	Non Party	7	1

Interestingly, 8 out of 42 women MPs took part in more than half (52%) of adopted legislative initiatives by the Parliament during the previous three convocations. Women's proactiveness in the elaboration of legislative initiative depends on number of factors, and characteristics of women, including their education, experience, the role of women in decision-making within the faction, their specific interest in the sector or topic of legislative initiative, etc.

Political parties play a key role in increasing the representation of women in the Parliament and the politics of RA in general. Under the current electoral system, they have become a springboard for people to get into politics. On the other hand, while having political power, merely parties' representatives get the opportunity to influence the legislative changes aimed at increasing the involvement of women in the politics of the RA.

The "Civil Contract" faction has got the highest participation rate of women MPs authored legislative initiatives adopted by the NA. Thus 94% of women MPs from the "Civil Contract" faction took part in elaboration of at least on legislative initiative during the 7th convocation (see [Table 3](#)).

Table 3 - Average number of adopted legislative proposals authored by women MPs by factions and convocations

Faction/ Party	Convocations	Number of women MPs authored	Total number of women MPs	Average number of LPs authored	Participation rate (%)
Civil Contract	7	15	16	5.4	94
Republican Party of Armenia	5,6	9	13	6.0	69
Non-party	5,7	7	11	3.1	64
Prosperous Armenia	5,6,7	5	14	5.5	36
Rule of Law	5	1	1	11	100
Heritage Party	5	1	1	6.0	100
MIAK/ Non-Party	5	1	1	4.0	100
Hunchakian Social-Democratic Party	5	1	1	1.0	100
Bright Armenia	7	1	3	1.0	33

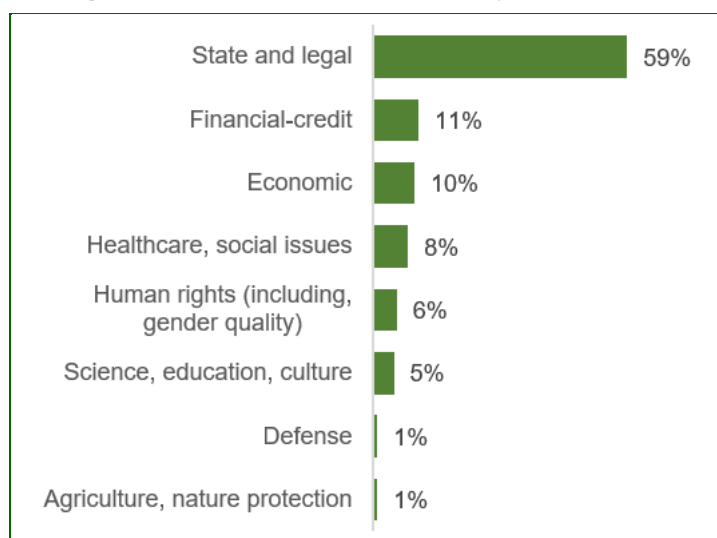
Interestingly, non-party women MPs are among the 4 most "productive" deputies, which have been actively engaged in the law-making process, with 7 out of 11 women MPs authored at least one legislative initiative. This, in fact means that active women MPs with effective engagement in law-making have not been necessary members of factions/parties.

According to the international research literature compared to their male counterparts, female politicians are more likely to hold left-wing attitudes¹² (with regard to issues such as civil rights, social equality, etc.) and substantively advance women’s rights in areas such as pay equity, violence against women, health care and family policy. Female politicians are expected to be better equipped to represent the interests of female voters because they, at least to some extent, share the same experiences. There are plenty of counterhypotheses to this expectation—for example, that ideology is what matters in politics, that social characteristics are more decisive than gender, and that parliamentary institutions influence politicians more than politicians are able to influence them.

There is a non-formal agreement in the international research practice that gender has an impact; what varies between studies is the strength of the impact. According to the results of the current desk research women MPs have some impact in decision making process, which is however not high.

Active participation of women MPs in various standing ad-hoc committees and discussions of the RA NA related to issues such as civil rights, social equality, etc. In the meantime, legislative initiatives related to human rights, health care, gender equality is not so high, due to the low number of adopted legislative initiatives related to these sectors: in average 2-5 legislative initiatives related to human rights, health care, have been adopted by the Parliament during the one session of the 5th, 6th and 7th convocations. Thus, increase in the number of women MPs in the Parliament had no significant effect on the topics of legislative initiatives authored by MPs.

Figure 8 - Legislative initiatives authored by women MPs during the previous three convocations by sectors



About 14% of adopted legislative initiatives authored by women during the previous 3 convocations related to healthcare, social issues, human rights, gender equality sectors. More than half of the adopted laws related to state and legal sector (59%), 29%-to financial-credit and economic sectors.

During the last three convocations, about 85% legislative initiatives authored by women MPs were amendments and addenda made to laws already in function, 10% were mother laws, the rest 5% were international agreements.

Interestingly, the number of legislative initiatives authored by women MPs, related to the “state and legal” sector increased in the 7th

convocation compared to 5th convocation, in contrast the number of initiatives related to “human rights” sector decreased (see [Table 4](#)). The decrease related to the “human rights” sector is conditioned by the low number of legislative initiatives related to this sector adopted by the Parliament in the 7th convocation, compared to the 5th convocation.

Table 4 - Percent of legislative initiatives authored by women MPs by convocations and sectors (%)

Sectors	5 th convocation	6 th convocation	7 th convocation
State and legal	41	61	67
Financial-credit	9	26	6
Economic	13	11	8
Healthcare, social issues	9	0	9
Science, education, culture	16	0	4

¹² For example, in Canada, <https://www.utoronto.ca/news/more-women-government-healthier-population-u-t-expert>

Sectors	5 th convocation	6 th convocation	7 th convocation
Human rights (including, gender quality)	11	0	4
Agriculture, nature protection	2	0	1
Defense	0	3	1

While the increase of the “state and legal” sector related legislative initiatives could be considered as a positive fact for women MPs, which is an indirect indicator of women’s participation in sectors and areas traditionally considered to be men related.

2.3 VOTING ACTIVITIES OF WOMEN MPs AND MEMBERSHIP IN COMMITTEES

The membership of women MPs in different standing and ad-hoc committees are among the important indicators of women's participation in the work of NA.

The standing committees are established for the preliminary review of draft laws and other issues under the jurisdiction of the NA, and presenting their conclusions thereon to the NA, as well as for exercising parliamentary oversight.¹³ The Ad-hoc Committees are established for the review of separate draft laws, draft resolutions, addresses and statements of the Parliament as well as issues related to the Deputy ethics and for submitting conclusions thereon to the Parliament.¹⁴ In total, 15 (12 standing and 3 ad-hoc committees) have been established during the 5th convocation, 12 (9 standing and 3 ad-hoc committees) - during the 6th convocation and 18 (12 standing and 6 ad-hoc committees) - during the 7th convocation.

During the previous 3 convocations all women MPs except 2 were members of standing and/or ad-hoc committees. 59% of women MPs have been members of 1 committee, the rest 41% of 2 and more committees. The highest engagement rate of women MPs during the three convocations is in the Standing Committee on Health Care and Social Affairs, thus 18% of women MPs have been members of this committee.

Table 5 - Percent of women MPs in standing and ad-hoc committees during three convocations (%)

Standing and ad-hoc committees	Share
Standing Committee on Health Care and Social Affairs	18%
Standing Committee on Protection of Human Rights and Public Affairs	16%
Standing Committee on Science, Education, Culture, Youth and Sport	16%
Standing Committee on European Integration	13%
Counting Commission of the 7th convocation of the NA	11%
Standing Committee on State and Legal Affairs	10%
Committee on The Inquiry Committee for studying the effectiveness of the measures taken by the Government and the Commandant’s Office to prevent the spread of the new coronavirus (COVID 19), to mitigate or eliminate the consequences of the epidemic in the fight against the virus, as well as to study the effectiveness and legality of restrictions of human rights and fundamental freedoms during the state of emergency	8%
Standing Committee on Economic Affairs	8%
Standing Committee on Science, Education, Culture, Diaspora, Youth and Sport	8%
Committee on Inquiry Committee for Studying the legality validity and reliability of financial and other reports submitted to the bodies of executive power and adopted by them in the framework of investment programs in the area of industrial metal mining	6%
Standing Committee on Foreign Relations	6%
Committee on Ethics	5%
Standing Committee on State and Legal Affairs and Protection of Human Rights	5%
Standing Committee on Territorial Administration, Local Self-Government, Agriculture and Environment	5%

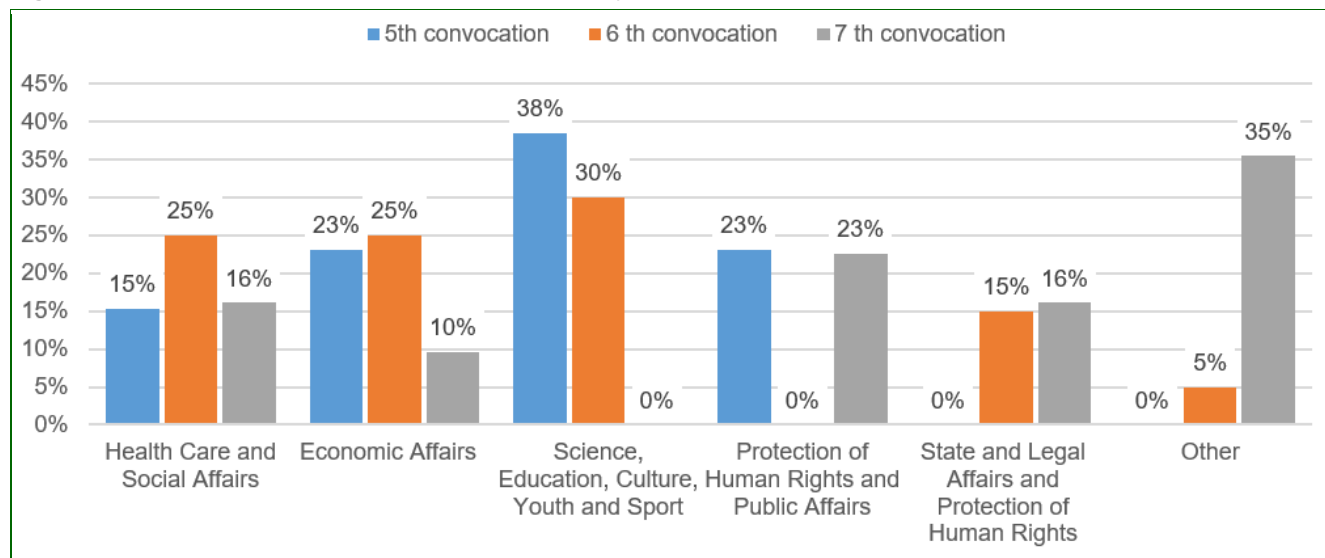
¹³ Article 10.1 of the Law of the Republic of Armenia on "Rules of the Procedure of the National Assembly

¹⁴ Article 16.1 of the Law of the Republic of Armenia on "Rules of the Procedure of the National Assembly

Standing and ad-hoc committees	Share
Committee on Counting of the 6th convocation of the Parliament	3%
Committee on Counting	3%
Committee on Inquiry Committee for Studying the Activities of the Water Committee of MEINREA (Ministry of Energy Infrastructure and Natural Resources of the Republic of Armenia), its Structural Subdivisions and Activities of ORP (Office for Realizing Programs), of Water Economy of the State Committee of Water Economy of MEINREA (Ministry of Energy Infrastructure and Natural Resources of the Republic of Armenia) in Ararat and Armavir provinces, to study its substantiation and problems	3%
Standing Committee on Financial-Credit and Budgetary Affairs	3%
Standing Committee on Health Care, Maternity and Childhood	3%
Committee on Inquiry Committee for Examining the Circumstances of the Military Activities of April 2016	2%
Committee on Inquiry Committee, studying the activities of the plenipotentiary bodies, serving, coordinating and supervising the area of 2016-2019, regarding the Process of the Organization of Land Passenger Transportation of the Republic of Armenia	2%
Committee on Inquiry Committee, studying the legality and corruption risks of the transfer to Yerevan Community means of transport and other property by various entities, contracts for the provision of services, as well as the transfer, regarding them, by the Yerevan community of other immovable or movable properties, including property, as well as non-property rights, construction permits and allotment privileges since September 2018	2%

Women MPs have been engaged in committees traditionally considered as women related sectors (see [Table 5](#)), particularly, “Health Care and Social Affairs”, “Protection of Human Rights and Public Affairs” and “Science, Education, Culture, Youth and Sport”. Interestingly, the “Standing Committee on European Integration” is among the top three committees occupied by women MPs.

Figure 9 - Membership of women MPs in committees by convocations (%)



The highest engagement rate of women MPs in committees has been registered during the 5th and 6th convocation in the “Standing Committee on Science, Education, Culture, Youth and Sport”, where accordingly 38% and 30% of women MPs has been engaged. Interestingly, the percent of women MPs involved in the “Standing Committee of Human Rights and Public Affairs, during the 5th and 7th convocations are the same (23%). However, if we take into account legislative activities of women by convocations (see [Table 4](#)), we may notice that their participation in the sector of human rights has been more influential in the 5th convocation compared to the 7th convocation.

During the previous 3 convocations women MPs have been engaged in the work of “Interparliamentary Committees”, “International Parliamentary Organizations” and “Friendship Groups of the RA NA”. Thus, all women MPs except 3 deputies have been members of at least one of the above mentioned committees/groups. More than half of the women MPs (52%) have been members of the above mentioned

three types of committees. 94% of women MPs have been members of different friendship groups, 81% - of interparliamentary committees and 55% of the international parliamentary organizations.

The detailed list of the interparliamentary committees, organizations occupied by women MPs in decreasing order (from the highest number of women engaged to the lowest) is presented below¹⁵:

International Parliamentary Organizations

- ▶ Parliamentary Assembly of the participating States of the Commonwealth of Independent States
- ▶ Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe
- ▶ EU-Armenia Parliamentary Partnership Committee
- ▶ Parliamentary Assembly of the Collective Security Treaty Organization
- ▶ Inter-Parliamentary Union
- ▶ Inter-Parliamentary Assembly on Orthodoxy
- ▶ Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Co-operation
- ▶ Parliamentary Assembly of the Eastern Partnership "Euronest"
- ▶ Parliamentary Assembly of the Francophonie
- ▶ Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe /PA OSCE /
- ▶ Parliamentary Assembly of the NATO

Interparliamentary Committees

- ▶ Interparliamentary Committee on Cooperation between the RA NA and Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation
- ▶ Interparliamentary Committee on Cooperation between the RA NA of the Artsakh Republic
- ▶ Interparliamentary Committee on Cooperation between the RA NA and NA of the Republic of Belarus
- ▶ Interparliamentary Committee on Cooperation between the RA NA and the House of Representatives of the Republic of Cyprus

Women MPs of three convocations have been actively involved in discussions and debates with CSO sector representatives and media. However, the cooperation between of women MPs (and the Parliament in general) and CSO sector increased during the 7th convocation. Particularly, in 2018 NA-CSO Platform has been created. During the extended meeting the “Women’s agenda for development” document was presented to all the political forces of the Parliament voicing the problems that women face in Armenia: problems such as women at decision making, women in labour market, women with disabilities, reproductive health issues, rural women, etc.

“Women Agenda” stepped into another stage of development after the meeting of the representatives of civil society organisations (CSO’s) and the newly elected members of the Parliament in December 2018.¹⁶ Aiming to set a foundation for cooperation between the members of the Parliament and the representatives of the civil society organisations through launching an effective dialogue on equal rights and equal opportunities for women and men and taking joint steps to address the issues included in the document “Women’s Agenda for Development”. During the meeting it was decided to form a cooperation platform between the Parliament and CSOs. During 2018-2021, in total, 15 meetings have been conducted, with the following topics which have been discussed:

- ▶ Development of an action plan of the NA-CSO Cooperation Platform for 2020 aimed at improvement of gender policies in the country.
- ▶ Hate speech in Armenian media: targeting women,
- ▶ Promoting women’s political participation,
- ▶ Gender mainstreaming of the reform on the “Law on Political Parties”,
- ▶ Domestic violence issues in Armenia,

¹⁵ Starting from the organization where women MPs are more represented till less represented organizations

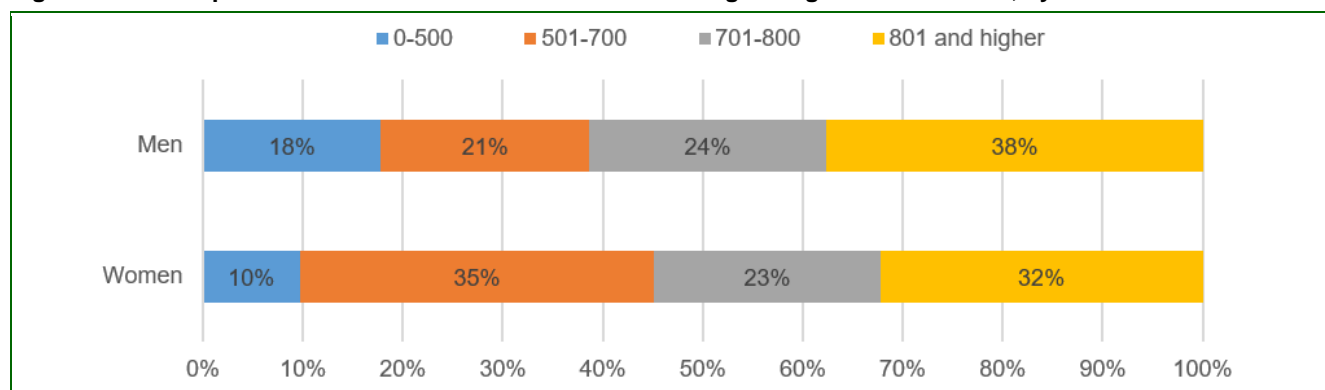
¹⁶ <https://havasarihub.am/en/national-assembly-cso-cooperation-platform-annual-review-meeting2/>

- ▶ Women reproductive health,
- ▶ Women and the humanitarian crisis in Armenia: challenges of the war and pandemic,
- ▶ Educational issues from the perspective of equal rights and equal opportunities for women and men,
- ▶ Beijing+25: Armenia's Commitments, Achievements, and Challenges,
- ▶ Domestic Violence Issue in Armenia in light of COVID-19 Pandemia,
- ▶ State support programs for the improvement of the demographic situation and childcare,
- ▶ Employment and Labour Market access: current challenges with the specific focus on youth and women,
- ▶ Women, Peace, and Security: Discussion on the Republic of Armenia's National Action Plan (2019-2021) on the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325.

Women MPs' voting behaviour in the NA, may prove to be another good indicator of parliamentary activity. Voting for or opposing a legislative initiative may be interpreted as the reflection of a personal point of view or as political loyalty to one's party. However, the specific Armenian context of strict party discipline limits the relevance of roll call voting in revealing gender differences. Indeed, on most issues, MPs have to respect the party whip - they have to vote according to the official party line, except in case of free votes on matters of conscience such as human rights and gender issues. The study of the frequency of attendance over the three previous convocations does not show any gender gap. During the 7th convocation women MPs voted as often as men (and even more), with an average of 76% attendance compared with 72% for men.

One of the important indicators of activities for both men and women MPs in the work of the Parliament is their voting activity. During the 7th convocation deputies¹⁷ voted for 772 legislative initiatives¹⁸ (laws, amendments to the laws, etc.) 978 times in total. If we take into account, only the active participation of MPs in voting (without absent and non-voting), we may notice that participation rate of men MPs is a bit higher, than women's participation rate. Thus, in average 76% of men and 71% of women MPs actively voted for legislative initiatives. However, the percentage of women MPs with the lowest participation rate is lower than of men MPs (see [Figure 10](#)).

Figure 10 - Participation rate¹⁹ of men and women MPs in voting for legislative initiatives, by sex



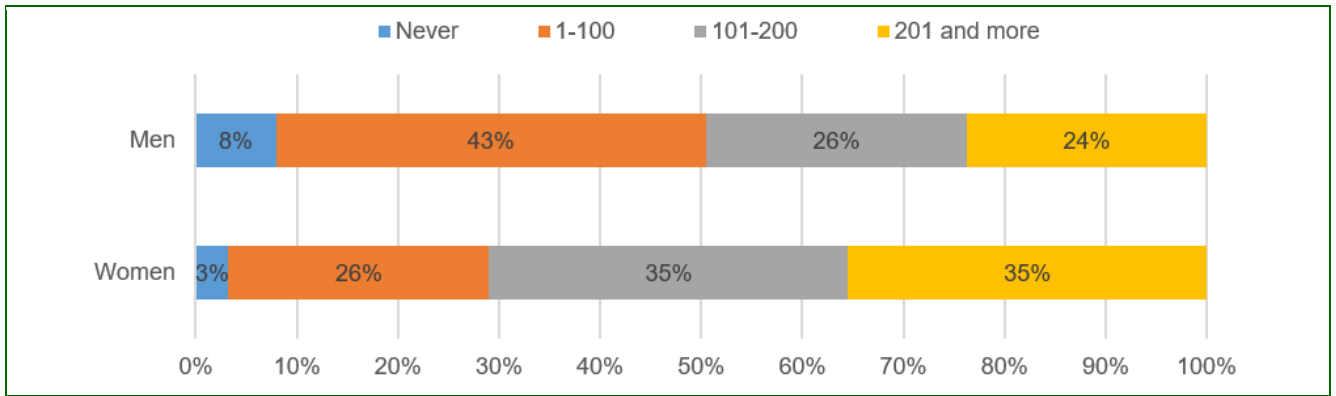
Interestingly, the percent of women MPs, who have been absent during voting is higher, than of men MPs: thus 65% of women MPs has been absent for 101 and more times, while only 50% of men was absent 101 and more times.

¹⁷ The information on voting activities of MPs for 5th and 6th convocation is not available

¹⁸ <https://www.parliamentmonitoring.am/am/deputies/votings>

¹⁹ Participation rate is the percent of active votes among the total number of votes

Figure 11 - Percent of absentees in the total number of votes, by sex

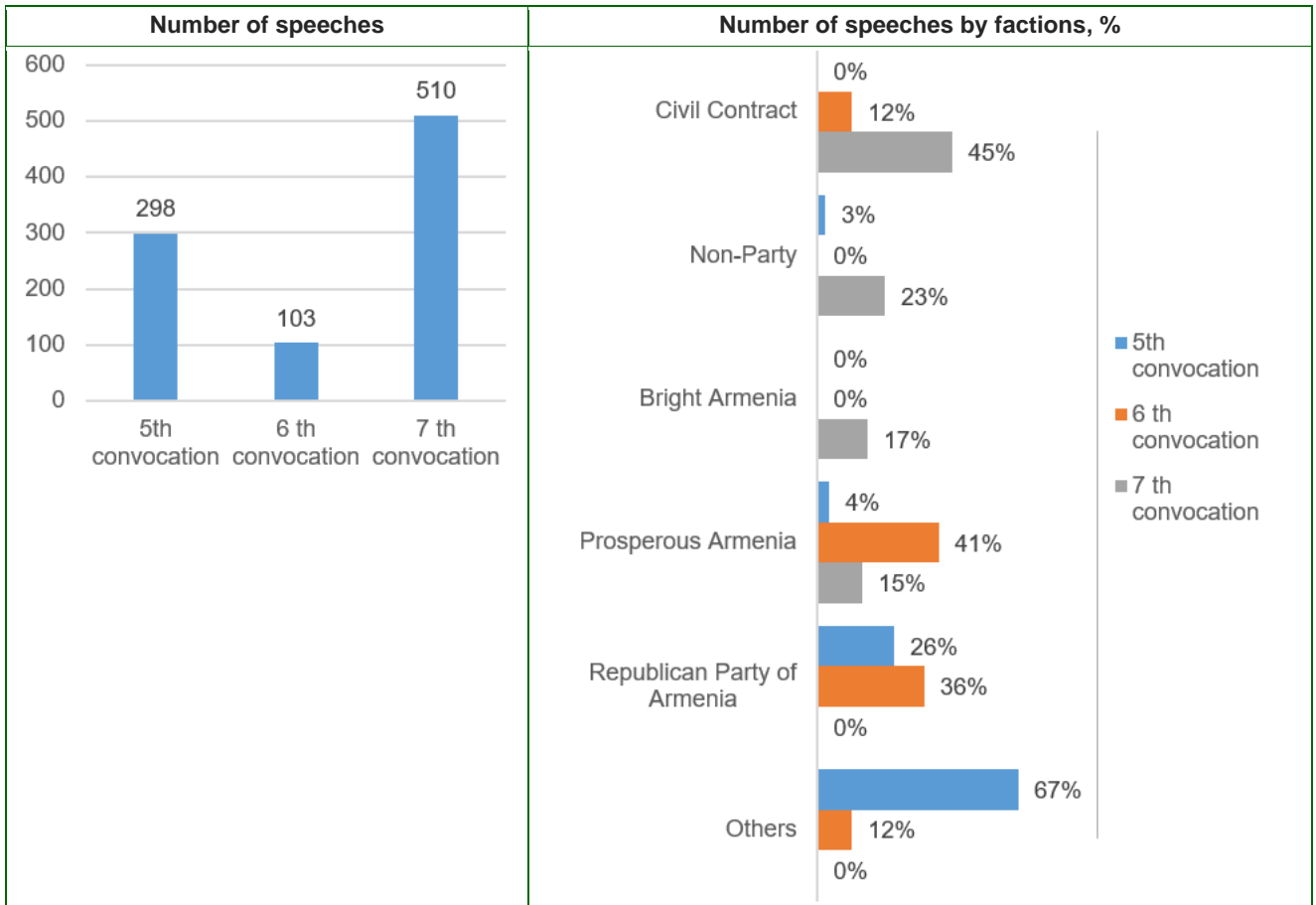


However, women MPs have been more actively engaged in discussions related to the legislative initiatives compared to men MPs. During the 7th convocation, 97% of women MPs rose at least one question, while 22% of men MPs did not ask any question.

2.4 NUMBER OF SPEECHES OF WOMEN MPs

The total number of speeches of women MPs in the Parliament during the 7th convocation has increased compared to the previous two convocations ([Figure 12](#)), which is conditioned by the increase in the number of women. At the same time, the average number of speeches of women MPs of the 5th convocation (23 speeches) is more than of, accordingly, 6th (5 speeches) and 7th convocation (16 speeches). The high number of speeches during the 5th convocation was mainly conditioned by the activity of Heghine Bisharyan, a member of the “Rule of Law” faction, who had the most speeches (124 speeches) compared to the other women MPs in all three convocations.

Figure 12 - Number of speeches of women MPs by convocations and factions



Compared to the 6th and 7th convocations when women MPs forming the majority of the Parliament had more speeches, during the 5th convocation the representatives of non-majority factions made more speeches (**Figure 12**). During the 5th convocation 4 women MPs from non-majority factions (“Rule of Law”, “Heritage”, “Hunchakian Social-Democratic” and “MIAK”) made 201 speeches, which makes 67% of the total number of speeches.

During the short-term activity of the 6th convocation women MPs had 103 speeches in total. In the course of the 6th convocations the most speeches have been made by the women MPs from “Prosperous Armenia” faction (41%) and Republican Party of Armenia (36%). During the 7th convocation, the majority of speeches (45%) have been made by representatives of the “Civil Contract” party, followed by non-party women MPs (23%). Interestingly, during the 7th convocation non-party women MPs made more speeches than the representatives of the “Bright Armenia” and “Prosperous Armenia” factions.

The number of oral interventions of the 13 women MPs of the 5th convocation constituted 13% of the total number of spoken input (298 for women MPs and 2,061 for men MPs).

The number of speeches of the 12 women MPs of the 6th convocation constituted 18% of the total number of spoken input (103 for women MPs and 482 for men MPs).

Compared to the previous two convocations, the number of speeches of women deputies has increased during the 7th convocation. The number of oral interventions of the 31 women MPs of the 7th convocation constituted 23% of the total number of spoken input (510 for women MPs and 1692 for men MPs)²⁰. This percentage corresponds to the representation of women in the Parliament and shows that the verbal mode did not put women off, they were as often seen and heard as their male colleagues: in average both men and women MPs had 17 speeches during the 7th convocation. Furthermore, as verbal statements, especially during debates, are the contributions most likely to be reported by the media to a wide audience, women did not give the impression of working behind the scenes, but of sharing the scene with men.

Interestingly, women MPs were more active in having a speech compared to men MPs. Thus, 32% of men MPs never had a speech, while only 7% of women never had a speech. At the same time, during the 7th convocation 71% of women MPs have more than 5 speeches, while only 49% of men MPs have more than 5 speeches. This fact is conditioned by lack of time allocated for the speeches. At the same time, this is an important indicator that factions are currently more confident in women MPs to have a speech and express opinion of the party related to different sectors, laws, socio-political, socio-economic situation in Armenia.

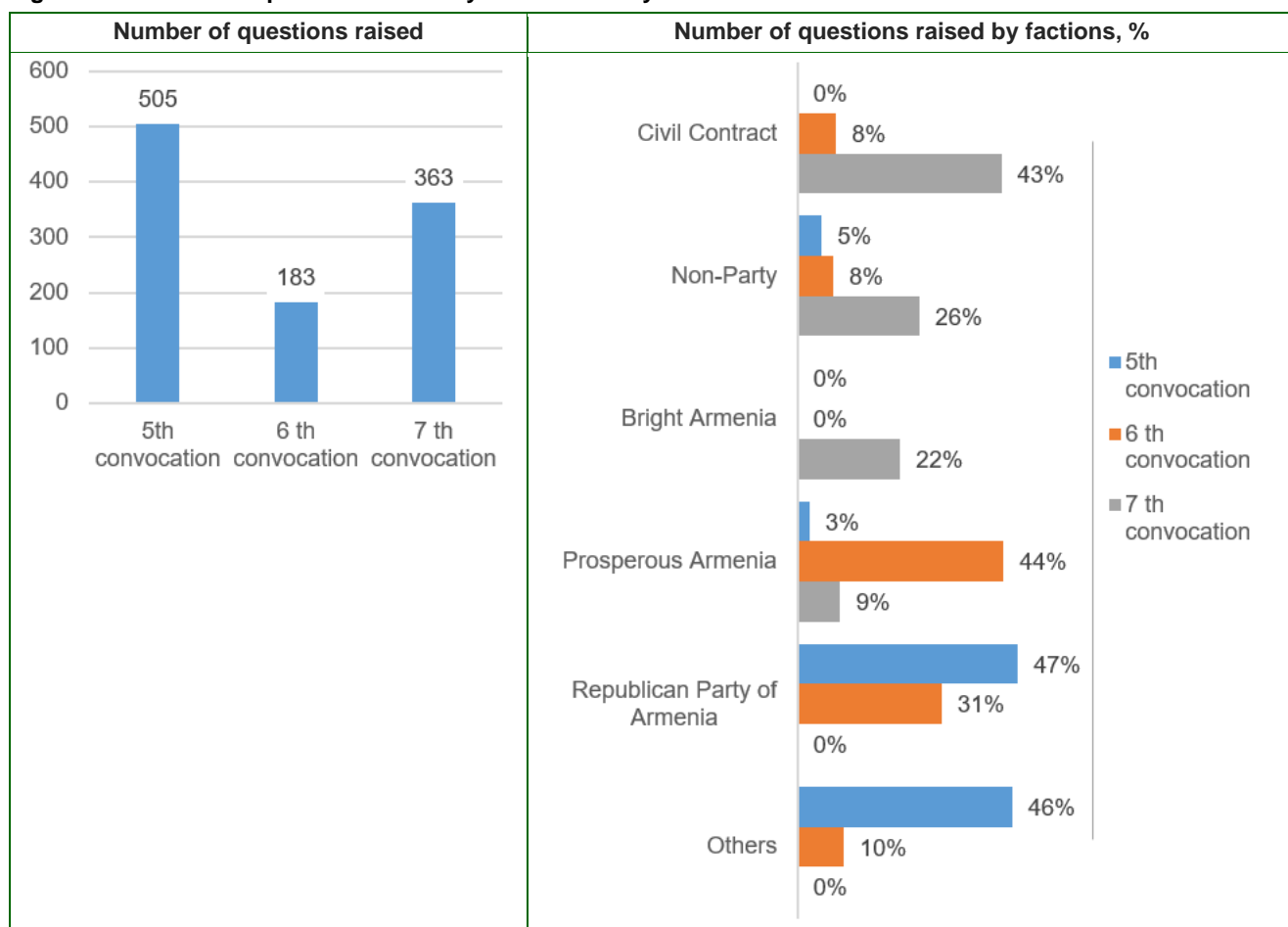
2.5 NUMBER OF QUESTIONS RAISED BY WOMEN MPs

Compared to women MPs of the 6th and 7th convocations, women MPs of the 5th convocation raised more questions (505 questions) (**Figure 13**). The fact that on average one-woman MP submitted 29 questions during the 5th convocation (excluding the questions 156 questions raised by Heghine Bisharyan) is another evidence of more active participation of women MPs in asking questions than of women MPs of the 7th convocation, which raised 12 questions in average.

During the 5th convocation the most questions have been raised by women MPs from Republican Party of Armenia (47%) and from non-majority parties (46%). In the course of the 6th convocation the most questions have been raised by women MPs (44%) from the “Prosperous Armenia” faction. And during the 7th convocation women MPs from “Civil Contract” (43%) party and non-party women MPs (26%) raised more questions.

²⁰ <https://www.parliamentmonitoring.am/am/deputies/votings>

Figure 13 - Number of questions raised by women MPs by convocations and factions



The strong parliamentary activity of "Bright Armenia" faction is confirmed if one looks at the detailed activity of the 7th convocation. During question time debates, they put 21% of all the questions whereas they represented 14% of all the MPs. Women MPs from "Bright Armenia" faction accordingly have the highest participation rate in questions arisen. The average number of questions asked by women MPs is as follows: "Bright Armenia" faction - 26 questions per person, "My Step" faction - 10 questions per person, and "Prosperous Armenia" faction - 6 questions per person. Interestingly, men MPs asked in average 3 more questions per person (15 questions per person), then women MPs (12 questions per person).

During the 7th convocation, 51% men MPs asked more than 5 questions related to the topics of the sessions, at the same time 77% of women MPs asked more than 5 questions. Although men MP raised more questions on average due to their number in the Parliament, women MPs took have been more active in raising questions.

Comparing the activities of women MPs of the 5th and 7th convocations based on the statistics of their speeches and raised questions, we may conclude, that in both cases representatives of **minority factions** in the Parliament were quite active. During the 5th convocation women MPs from the "Rule of Law" and "Heritage" factions raised more questions than other factions, and during the 7th convocation non-party women MPs were very active. Which, in turn, indicates that women with relevant professional skills and experience, regardless of faction/party affiliation, can make a significant contribution to the work of Parliament.

2.6 THE ACTIVITIES OF WOMEN MPs TOWARDS WOMEN RELATED ISSUES

The comprehensive study by factions during the 7th convocation highlights the high degree of participation of women MPs from “My Step”²¹ faction, both in oral and written activities. This phenomenon may be partly explained by a greater representation and group dynamics: they may feel more confident and assertive due to their number. On the other hand, as women MPs from the leading party could be expected to benefit from the support of the majority of the Parliament and to feel at ease to express themselves.

The following positive changes have been identified with the increase in female representation in the Parliament during the 7th convocation compared to the previous 2 convocations:

- ▶ Women have started to play a bigger role not only within their faction, but also occupied leading positions in the Parliament, which, in turn, increased their direct participation in decision making process.
- ▶ Regardless of whether the deputy is a woman or a man, they first express the opinion of their faction. However, they have an opportunity to raise questions related to the field of their professional interest, previous experience and those aspects of socio-economic life in Armenia, which have not been raised before. For example, most of the women MPs from the leading faction of the 7th convocation previously have been CSO sector representatives. This creates additional opportunities for women MPs to highlight the importance of the issues related human rights, healthcare and social affairs, in their speeches, discussions with colleagues and legislative activities.
- ▶ A major role in expanding women’s representation at the decision-making level is played by public perceptions of women’s leadership, which are largely stereotypical and can be a serious impediment to women’s advancement. The activism of women in the current Parliament provides an opportunity to break those stereotypes, and to create preconditions for the increase of women's political participation.

Researchers, feminists and equal rights campaigners have tried to show a correlation between the number of women representatives – descriptive representation – and the ideas and policies they promote – substantive representation. These studies rely on the four-part typology of representation established by H. Pitkin in the 1960s, and most particularly on descriptive and substantive representation²². This hypothesis is based on the notion of a critical mass, the idea that as women reach a certain number - as they become a “tilted group” to use D. Dahlerup’s phrase, comprising between 15 % and 40 % - they will be able to influence the political culture, dominant discourse and policy agenda.

The comparative analysis of women’s MPs activities during the 5th, 6th and 7th convocation in the RA NA however shows, that the increase of the women MPs from 11% (5th convocation) to 24% (7th convocation) had not significantly increased their impact in decision making, or changed the dominant discourse. At the same time, in the course of the previous 3 convocations, women MPs brought a specific contribution to public life and legislative work in particular. Women politicians expressed their commitment to women’s issues, gender equality, human rights in their attitudes and values as well as through their actions and activity (discussions, interviews, speeches).

Within the framework of the desk research, the range of tasks women MPs are involved in through various activities, votes and rebellions have been analysed. It assesses the topics women work on the respective influences of gender and party affiliation as motives for political action. Three primary dimensions of legislative roles were identified by politicians themselves²³:

1. “Constituency workers” (helping people with individual problems and defending the interests of their constituency in Parliament),

²¹ The Faction includes MPs from the “Civil Contract” party and non-party MPs

²² The other types of representation are formal and symbolic representation, Hannah Pitkin, *The Concept of Representation*, Berkeley: Berkeley University Press, 1967, 209.

²³ Pippa Norris, *op. cit.*, 99-100., <https://www.pippanorris.com/book-chapters>

2. “Party loyalists” (acting as party representatives, defending the leader and the party line), and
3. “Parliamentarians” (giving priority to legislative activities, speaking in debates or working in committees).

At the same time, women are also confronted with a choice between different role models. On the one hand, they can act like their male colleagues without taking their sex into account, alternatively, they can feel a special commitment to the defence of the female population’s interests.

Taking into account the legislative activities, speaking in debates, and other activities of women MPs in parliament we can conclude that the image of women MP in the RA NA includes all the three above mentioned legislative roles in the following order:

1. Women MPs in the Parliament are first of all “party loyalists”, who usually acts as party representatives, defending the leader and the party line. Despite changes in Electoral Code and increase of the number of women MPs in the Parliament, factions (parties) continue having significant influence on the decisions of the deputies and their activities in the Parliament.
2. Secondly, they give priority to legislative activities, speaking in debates or working in committees,
3. Helping people with individual problems and defending the interests of their constituency in the Parliament is in the third place.

The trends which have been identified so far concerning the oral and written interventions of women MPs do not enable us to contrast two distinct political conducts or to single out a specific gender induced stance, even if some slight differences have emerged. Concerning their voting behaviour, a gender specific characteristic appears only as far as the respect of the party whip is concerned. Moreover, the gap between representation and contribution in Parliament, when it exists. Therefore, female MPs do not work in a way which is radically different from men. The global analysis of women MPs’ work revealed a specific female parliamentary model. The following study of characteristics by party may help to determine the respective influences of gender and party affiliation on political behaviour.

Women’s work in the Parliament does not consist in putting women’s issues on the agenda and in defending women’s interests only; very few female MPs actively championed the cause of women, on the contrary, these issues represented a minor part of their job. The analysis shows that women MPs did not ignore women’s issues even if they clearly did not constitute their priority. Women Members’ work on behalf of the female population was the greatest during the debates and different discussions in standing committees.

The questions which have been arisen and discussed during the previous 3 convocations focused on

- ▶ health (breast cancer, domestic violence),
- ▶ reproductive health issues,
- ▶ social security benefits for women,
- ▶ women’s issues, highlighting questions of maternity,
- ▶ women’s political participation, etc.

The battles women MPs have fought for their own sex have been but a small proportion of their total effort. Several factors can be put forward to explain this seeming disregard. There may be no reason to assume that, because of their sex, women politicians should focus exclusively on fields supposedly of traditional interest to women. Furthermore, some women MPs may try to avoid being distinguished from their male colleagues and being labelled as feminists, because of the strong negative connotations the word has come to carry; they “fear that by taking up women’s concerns, they would be stereotyped and marginalized as only interested in women’s concerns.” On the other hand, women MPs may believe, that socio-political and economic situation in Armenia dictates more important issues to be addressed than gender issues.

During the 5th, 6th and 7th convocations, women MPs’ from the leading parties did not use those opportunities to promote women’s interests and their action did not reflect a greater commitment to the women’s cause

than women MPs from minority parties, who intervened less in parliamentary procedures and who belong to a party which has a lower number of women representatives and which used to promote a very traditional vision of the family and of women's role in society. The comparison of the three factions of the 7th convocation, which have very different percentages of women Members showed that there was no direct link between the number of women representatives and the commitment to women's issues, between descriptive representation - the number of women representatives – and the substantive representation – the impact of women politicians.

3 CONCLUSIONS

1. Compared to the 5th Convocation, when women MPs were mainly included just to meet the required quotas, during the 6th and 7th Convocation the role of women MPs in decision making and participation in legislative activities increased.
2. The study showed that once women were elected to the NA, their work as MPs did not significantly differ from their male colleagues'. They took part in the various activities in the same proportion as men and did not display a variety of behavioural divergences, even if some variations appeared depending on the type of duties.
3. Even if 10-20% of women MP's work dealt with social and gender issues, the defence of women's interests did not constitute their priority and they did not act as representatives of the female population only.
4. Parliamentary behaviour depends on party membership, and the most numerous group of women MPs did not show more interest in women's issues than the other parliamentary groups, invalidating the link between descriptive and substantive representation. Even if equal representation has not been reached, the number and visibility of women in the Parliament has increased, and these female members demonstrate complete involvement in the various aspects of the Parliament's activities. However, they have not created a new style of parliamentarians; female parliamentary model, with contributions and priorities radically different from men's.
5. Though the number of women MPs is not high, women have been actively involved in legislative initiatives during the 5th, 6th, and 7th convocations. Total number of women MPs increased during the 7th convocation, compared to the previous two convocations.
6. Increase in the number of women in the Parliament had no significant effect on the topics of legislative initiatives authored by MPs. About 14% of the adopted legislative initiatives authored by women during the previous 3 convocations related to healthcare, social issues, human rights, gender equality sectors. More than half of the adopted laws related to state and legal sector (59%), 29%-to financial-credit and economic sectors.
7. 8 out of 42 women MPs took part in more than half (52%) of adopted legislative initiatives by the Parliament during the previous three convocations. Women's proactiveness in the elaboration of legislative initiative depends on number of factors, and characteristics of women, including their education, experience, the role of women in decision-making within the faction, their specific interest in the sector or topic of legislative initiative.
8. Women MPs have been engaged in standing and ad-hoc committees traditionally considered as women related sectors, particularly, "Health Care and Social Affairs", "Protection of Human Rights and Public Affairs" and "Science, Education, Culture, Youth and Sport". Interestingly, the "Standing Committee on European Integration" is among the top three committees occupied by women MPs.
9. The cooperation between women MPs (and the Parliament in general) and CSO sector increased during the 7th convocation, compared to the previous 2 convocations.
10. Women MPs have been more actively engaged in discussions related to the legislative initiatives compared to men MPs. During the 7th convocation, 97% of women MPs arisen at least one question, while 22% of men MPs didn't ask any question.
11. The number of oral interventions of the 31 women MPs of the 7th convocation constituted 23% of the total number of spoken input (510 for women MPs and 1,692 for men MPs)²⁴. This percentage corresponds to the representation of women in the Parliament and shows that the verbal mode did not put women off, they were as often seen and heard as their male colleagues.
12. Women have started to play a bigger role not only within their faction, but also occupied leading positions in the Parliament, which in it's turn increased their direct participation in decision making process.
13. Comparing the activities of women MPs of the 5th and 7th convocations based on the statistics of their speeches and raised questions, we may conclude, that in both cases representatives of minority factions

²⁴ <https://www.parliamentmonitoring.am/am/deputies/votings>

in the Parliament were quite active. During the 5th convocation women MPs from the “Rule of Law” and “Heritage” factions raised more questions than other factions, and during the 7th convocation non-party women MPs were very active. Which, in turn, indicates that women with relevant professional skills and experience, regardless of faction/party affiliation, can make a significant contribution to the work of Parliament.

14. Regardless of whether the deputy is a woman or a man, they first express the opinion of their faction. Their current status gives them an opportunity to raise questions related to the field of their professional interest, previous experience and those aspects of socio-economic life in Armenia, which have not been raised before. For example, most of the women MPs from the leading faction of the 7th convocation previously have been CSO sector representatives. This creates additional opportunities for women MPs to highlight the importance of the issues related human rights, healthcare and social affairs, in their speeches, discussions with colleagues and legislative activities.
15. Increase in number of women MPs and their active work in the Parliament provides an opportunity to break those stereotypes, and to create preconditions for the increase of women's political participation.
16. The trends which have been identified so far concerning the oral and written interventions of women MPs do not enable us to contrast two distinct political conducts or to single out a specific gender induced stance, even if some slight differences have emerged. Concerning their voting behaviour, a gender specific characteristic appears only as far as the respect of the party whip is concerned.