

Gender issues in rural governance: experiences within the LEADER approach

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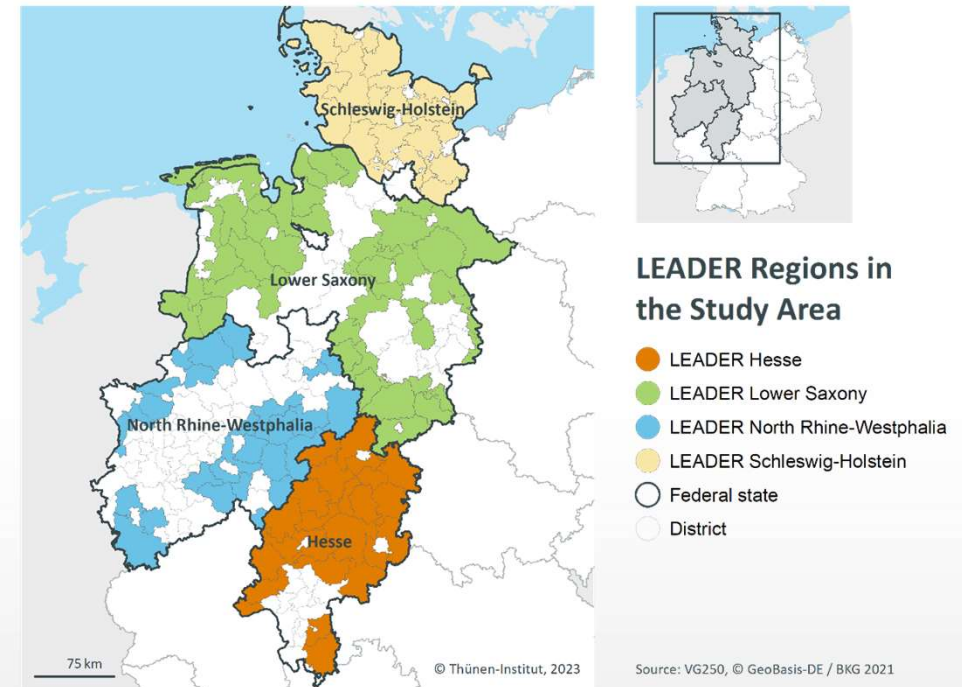
WG 30 Participatory local development policies like LEADER and CLLD - what do we see?

Rennes
6th July, 2023

5-“Länder” Evaluation: Project Background

„Länder“ = „Bundesländer“
= Federal states in Germany

- Evaluation of **Rural Development Programmes (RDPs)**
- Ongoing research: 2007 – 2016, 2015 – 2026
- **Mixed methods** approach:
 - Interviews with project initiators and government employees
 - Different surveys (written questionnaires, mostly as online surveys) with various stakeholders
 - Quantitative analyses of data from the project databases



Outline

1. **Gender issues in rural development/
research questions**
2. **Current results**
 - Gender representation within LEADER
 - Effects of unbalanced gender representation
3. **Preliminary conclusions**



RG4

gibt es kein anderes Bild hier ging es doch um die langsam mahlenden Mühlen als Sinnbild für die schleppende Umsetzung von Evalergebnissen in die Praxis

Regina Grajewski; 13.06.2023

1. Gender related issues in rural development

Gender Mainstreaming is (theoretically) an obligation for all EU-financed funding programmes

“Member States and COM shall ensure that equality between men and women and the integration of gender perspective is promoted in the preparation and implementation of programmes (Art. 7, ESIF-Reg. 1303/2013)”

LEADER as a participative funding approach with “local governance arrangements” as a core element should be able to do this. Aspects of gender justice should be a central aspect for the participation itself as well as for the output.

1. Research question / Focus of presentation

➤ State of knowledge:

(I) An underrepresentation of females in rural development is widely known
(Bock & Derzken 2008, Thuesen & Derzken 2016, Oedl-Wieser 2016)

(II) Studies assume a gender gap in social preferences with related consequences for decision-making

(Hessami & da Fonseca 2020; Pearson et al. 2017)

LEADER implementation occurs in a multilevel system:

Vague requirements set on the EU level regarding gender representation

Programme authorities may set more specific conditions for Local action groups (LAGs)

➤ Research questions I + II:

(I) “Who has been included?” → gender representation within LEADER

(II) “What are the implications?” of differences in gender representation



Angela Parszyk / pixelio.de

2. Results:

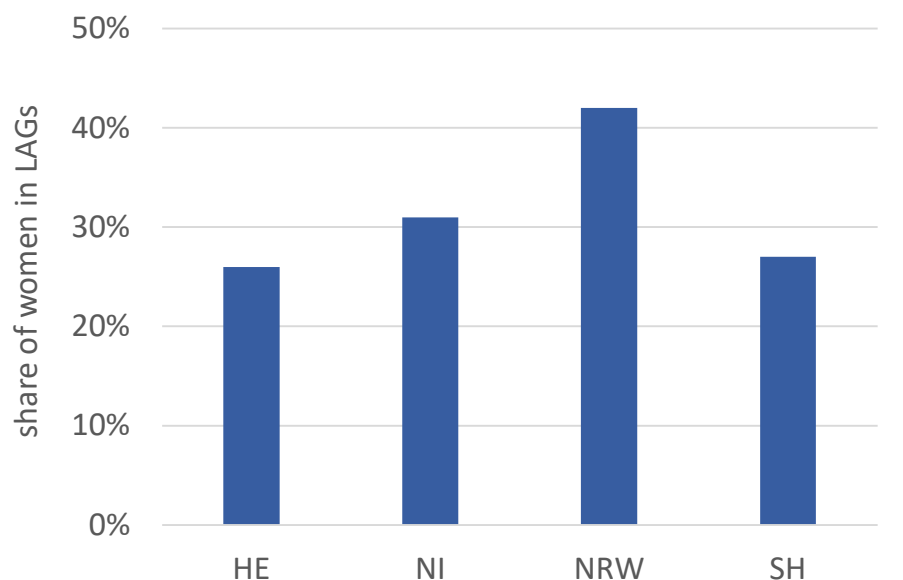
(a) “Who has been included?” - gender representation

- Focus on decision-making bodies (responsible for decisions about funding):
 - Generally consisting of 10 to 30 members
 - Usually share of 40-50% public sector, 50-60% civil society/business
 - Public sector often „ex officio“ (thus leeway in selecting LAG members is limited)
 - Civil society/business: „sending decision“ by groups themselves, depending on position, experience and commitment to LEADER

2. Results

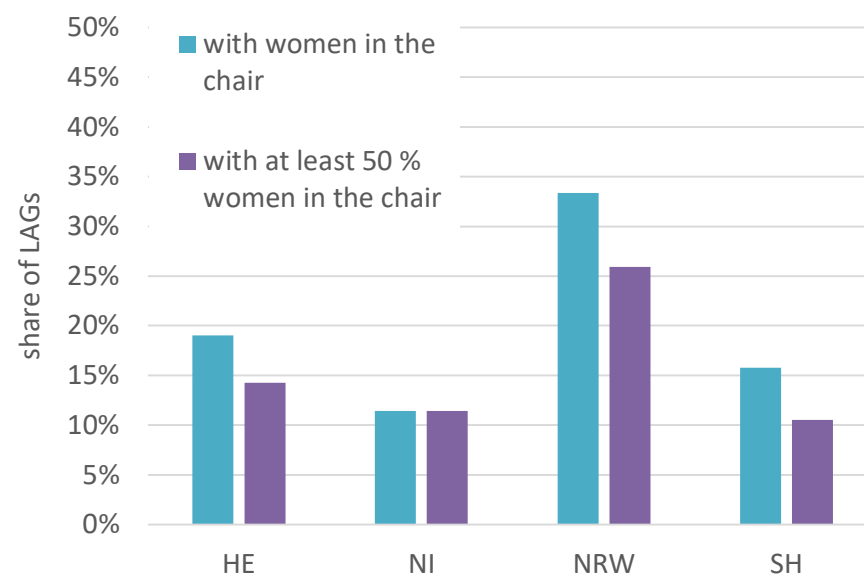
(a) “Who has been included?” - share of women in LAGs

- in decision-making bodies



Source: own figure, Fynn und Pollermann (2022)

- chairpersons of the LAG



Source: own figure, Fynn und Pollermann (2020)

- As expected women are underrepresented in LAGs and are rarely in the function as chairperson
- A female quota of 1/3 in NRW led to clearly higher shares of women in LAGs and as part of the chairpersons

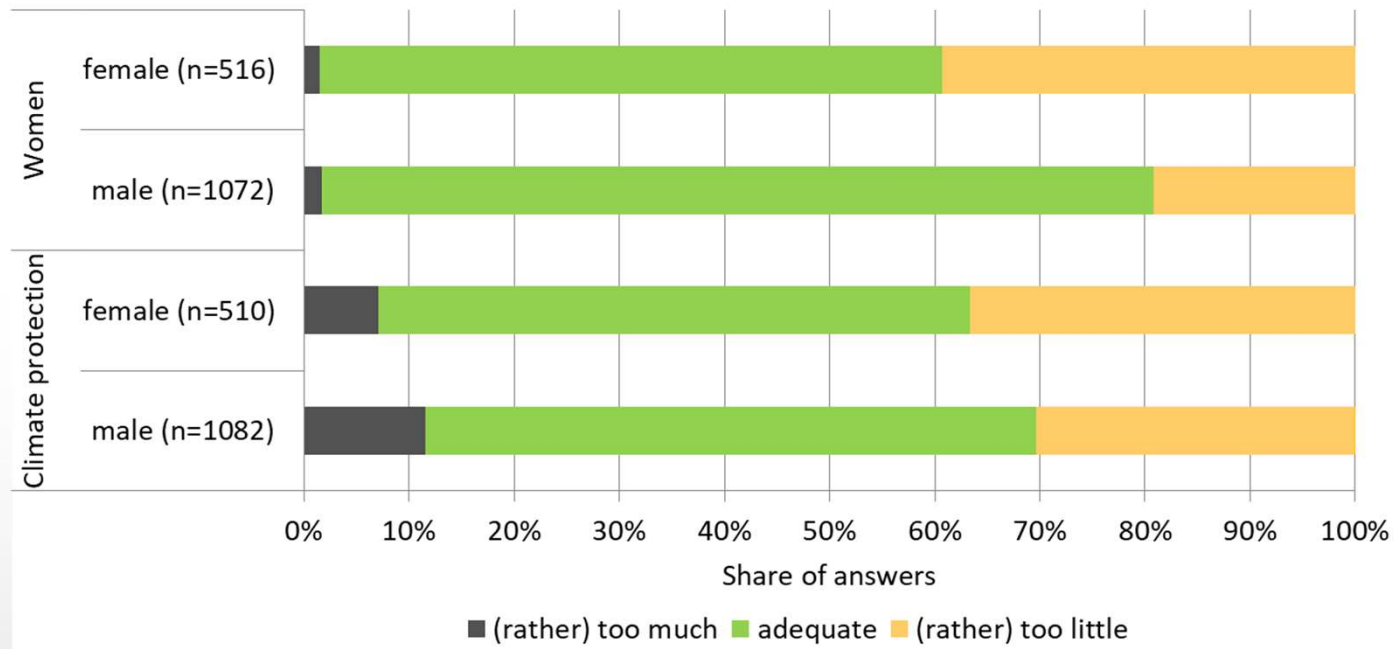
2. Results:

(b) What are the effects of unbalanced gender representation?

- Online-Survey of LAG members, including i. a. estimations on the working process in the LAG and the consideration of several target groups and subjects in the implementation of the LDS
- Working process-Items:
 - Satisfaction with aspects: Information flow, Decision making process, Contents of decisions
 - Level of agreement to statements like “Meetings are results-oriented”, “Conflicts are dealt with constructively”, “The region as a whole is in the front of the agenda”
 - Scale from 1=very satisfied/agree totally to 6=not satisfied at all/disagree totally
- Regression analysis (OLS)
 - no significant effect of the share of women in the LAG and gender of respondent, but some effect of age and federal state (context).

Consideration of different target groups/topics: male/female view

Ratings of LAG members regarding the question „To which extent are different target groups/ topics taken into account“?: Results for the target group „women“ and the topic „climate protection“

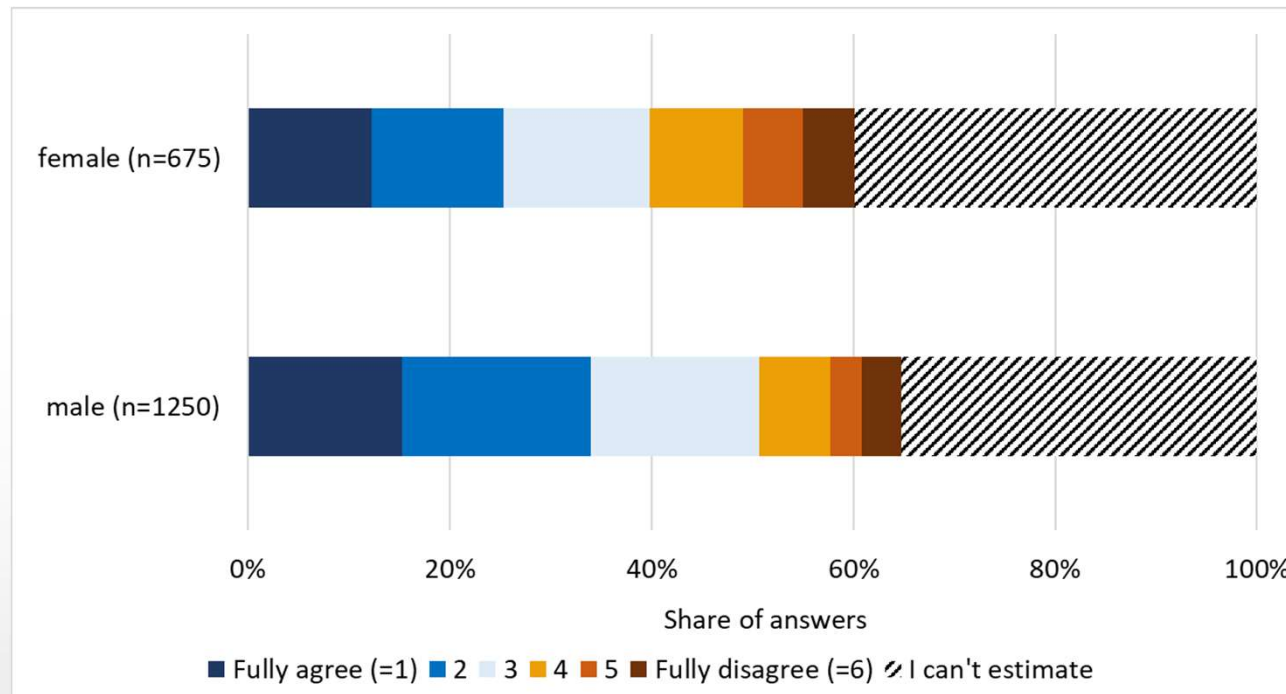


- Analysis, controlling for institutional background, age, federal state (context)
- Based on literature, differences could be expected: higher awareness for climate issues shown by women (Pearson et al., 2017)

Source: LAG member survey 2018, results for all four federal states (Fynn/Pollermann)

Consideration of Gender equality in project selection

View of the LAG-members on the statement: „Regarding project contents gender justice is taken into account“.



- Expected differences between men/women, based on different awareness of gender-related issues?
- Both genders have a very high share of „I can't estimate“ => clarification/ increase in awareness needed !

Source: LAG member survey 2021, results for all four federal states (Fynn/Pollermann) / Raue (2021, 2022, 2023)

What is/could be the impact of balanced participation of men and women in LEADER/rural development?

- Only some qualitative data from interviews with different stakeholders in two federal states (HE and NI)
- The kind of projects is/would be different:
 - *“In the elaboration of the new REK, significantly more women than men were involved in the working groups. This is also reflected in the projects. There is a big drive to support garden projects. A network of garden projects shall be promoted within the framework of the Education for Sustainable Development network. Such projects would not exist without the participation of women.” (LAG-management, NI)*
 - Other topics would be put on the agenda, such as families, local mobility, support for care work, etc. (several key persons, HE)
- The process could be different:
 - The implementation of projects would be more flexible, with more willingness to learn and less "we have always done it this way". (several key persons, HE)
 - There would be a different culture of mutual cooperation in local politics, more fact- and compromise-oriented and less focused on party-political confrontation and status. Settlement development would probably also be different, less interested in growth through the designation of new building areas, but rather more small-scale. (several key persons, HE)

3. Conclusion / recommendations

- The share of women in LAGs has increased over time, but slowly
- Changes also depend on general shifts in society
 - majority of representatives of municipalities and civil society associations in rural areas are men (Holtkamp et al. (2020), Kleiner (2022))
- To achieve balanced female participation some pressure (quota) is needed at beginning of the EU funding period
 - Recommendation for LAG approval criteria: fixed minimum quota of 33% share of men and women
 - Outlook 2023 - 2027: some more federal states adopted quota, but no quota regulation on EU-level yet
- The impact of balanced gender participation of LEADER is difficult to grasp
 - Further research needed
- Capacity building is needed to increase gender awareness and gender competence at LAG level and beyond

Literature

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Thank you for your attention
For further information:

Thünen-Institute of Rural Studies

www.thuenen.de

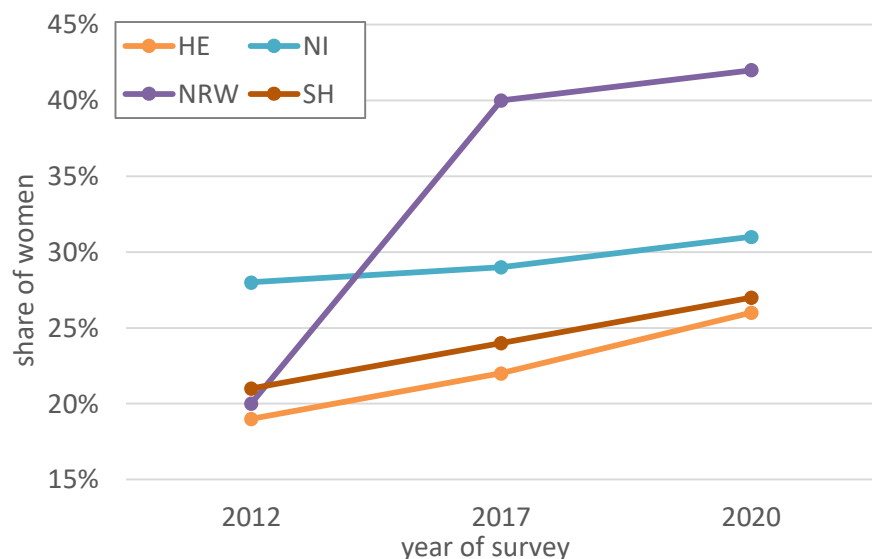
www.eler-evaluierung.de

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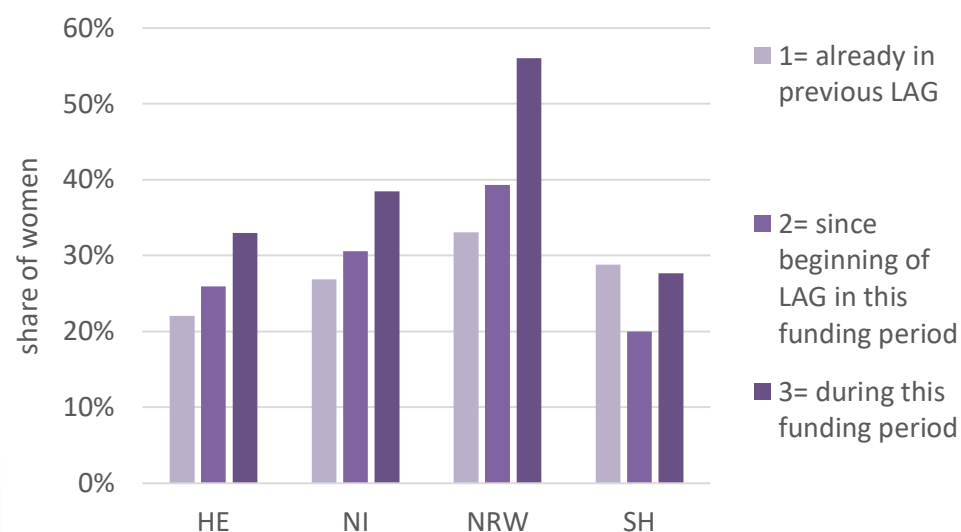


2. Results:

(a) “Who has been included?” - Development of share of women



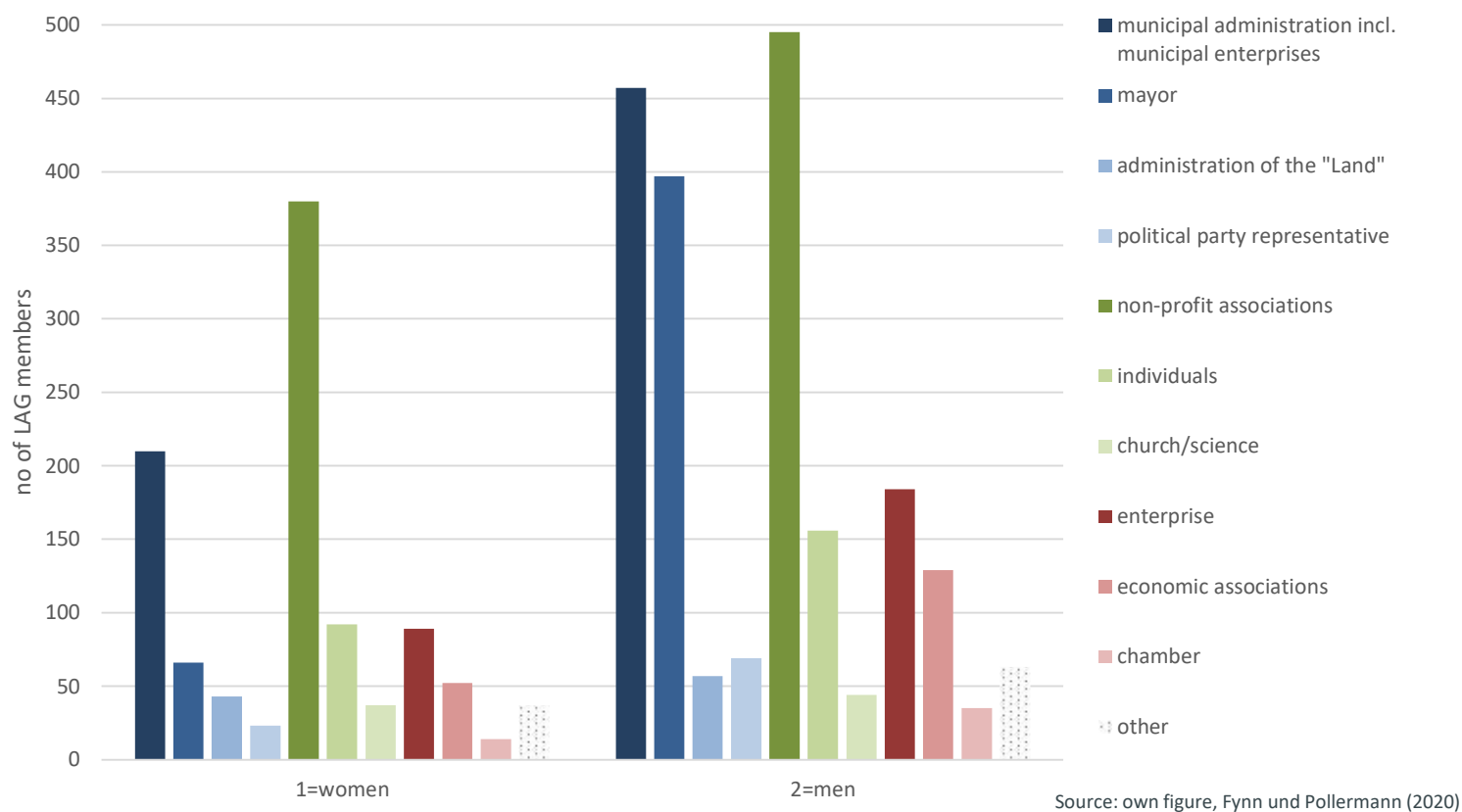
Source: own figure, Pollermann et al. (2013), Pollermann und Trostorf (2017), Fynn und Pollermann (2020),



Source: own figure, Fynn und Pollermann (2020)

- Share of women in LAGs has increased in all federal states
 - Without external „pressure“ (requirements for LAGs and/or LDS) changes are minor
 - If no action is taken („Waiting for the trend“) a gender balance would set in no earlier than around 2050

2. Results: (a) “Who has been included?” - Institutional background of LAG members by gender



- In all categories there are more men than women
- Most of the men represent associations or municipalities
- Most of the women are associations