

In January 2011, the ECPR Executive Committee commissioned an Event Participation Study, the aim of which was to find out how our members are participating in ECPR events and activities. Designed by Vello Pettai, the Study collected into a single database participant information from 13 recent ECPR events:

Joint Sessions	2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011
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Please send questions and comments to: vello.pettai@ut.ee

frequent users

The ECPR and its events have become a major part of how political scientists disseminate their results, network with their community and develop their careers. Attending an ECPR event has become almost standard in the profession. For more and more scholars, it's a regular activity.

Yet because the ECPR's events are varied and attract different types of scholars, individual participation patterns also differ. Using data from the ECPR's Event Participation Study this poster examines some of the typical attendance patterns. See if you recognise yourself in any of them!

'Repeat offenders'

Since 2006 more than 9,500 individuals have been registered as participating at the 13 ECPR events examined in this study. (See explanatory box.) Of these, 1683 have participated more than once. In fact, these 'repeat offenders' account for 4255 (or some 44.6%) of all the registrations in the database. The ECPR clearly has a sizeable core community.

On average, repeat ECPR-goers participated in 2.5 events, with the record going to four individuals, who have been to seven ECPR events since 2006 (you know who you are!). Another nine hearty souls have been to six ECPR events.

Nr. of events attended	Nr. of individuals
2	1097
3	369
4	148
5	56
6	9
7	4
Total	1683

Lining-up the suspects

Yet not all recidivists are the same. Some stick to just one venue-genre, others mix and match, while still others grow into them gradually. Here are some typical profiles:

The Workshoper

Old-timers in the ECPR will probably associate themselves most of all with the Joint Sessions. In fact, for some people, that's main attraction in the ECPR. Fully 209 or 12.5% of our steady clientele attended only the Joint Sessions. These were the Workshopers, for whom the General Conference (as the ECPR's other main event) seemed to hold no attraction at all.

The Panelist

In almost equal numbers we have the Panelists or those 222 people who attended solely the General Conference in both 2007 and 2009. Given their biennial strike pattern, these people may well be stalking again here in Reykjavik. So keep an eye out! That said, once the General Conference goes annual in 2014, they might have to re-examine their behavioural pattern...and their travel budget. Time will tell.

The All-arounder

The largest group of hardened ECPR-goers involves those people who attended one or both General Conferences as well as at least one Joint Sessions. This amounted to 759 people, spanning the entire 13-event spectrum. A total of 353 of these people attended at least 3 ECPR events in this category. Often the events were many years apart. A typical case would encompass a Joint Sessions in 2006 or 2007, the General Conference in 2009, and the Joint Sessions in 2011. You might also call these people 'recurring members'.

Inductee

Since 2006 the ECPR has developed the Graduate Conference and the Summer School in Methods and Techniques (SSMT) as a way for doctoral candidates to ease into the profession and develop their own networks. Data from our study show that often this is the way things happen. More than 37% of those who attended the 2006 Graduate Conference as their first ECPR event went on to attend another ECPR event later on, in some cases up to four! Some 22% of those who debuted at the 2008 Graduate Conference followed up with another ECPR event, sometimes the very next Joint Sessions.

Upstarts

Others graduate students, however, found their start in events preceding the Graduate Conference or SSMT. In fact, fully a fifth of the participants at the 2010 Graduate Conference had already been to another ECPR event. In about half of these cases it was the Summer School in Methods and Techniques. But in the other half it was either the Joint Sessions or the General Conference. Likewise, the SSMT has seen many people come to it only after attending other ECPR events. Some 10% of those who participated in the 2010 Summer School had previously been to a Joint Sessions or General Conference, sometimes even several years earlier.

Champions

Our participation champions are those, who have attended all four of the ECPR's different events, and sometimes more than once. The complete gamut has been run by:

Damien Bol
Patrick Mello
Angela Movileanu
Giulia Sandri and
Eline Severs.

Perhaps these people would agree to do a follow-up a focus group...???

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how do members use the ecpr?

The ECPR is the most diverse political science organisation in the world in terms of the range of activities and events we organise. Yet, not all of our member institutions take advantage of our activities in the same way.

Data from our Event Participation Study show that member institutions have distinct profiles in terms of how their faculty and students participate in our events.

In this poster we look at institutional participation at the ECPR's six major events held in 2009 and 2010:

- the 2009 Joint Sessions (Lisbon)
- the 2009 General Conference (Potsdam)
- the 2009 Summer School in Methods and Techniques (Ljubljana)
- the 2010 Joint Sessions (Münster)
- the 2010 Graduate Conference (Dublin)
- the 2010 Summer School in Methods and Techniques (Ljubljana)

These events represent a complete 'cycle' of ECPR activities, since they encompass both the Graduate and the General Conference, each of which are only biennial.

Needless to say, there are no 'normal' or 'expected' distribution patterns across the events. Levels of participation will often depend on the size and structure of a member department. For example, larger departments may have more graduate students, who might attend a Graduate Conference or the SSMT.

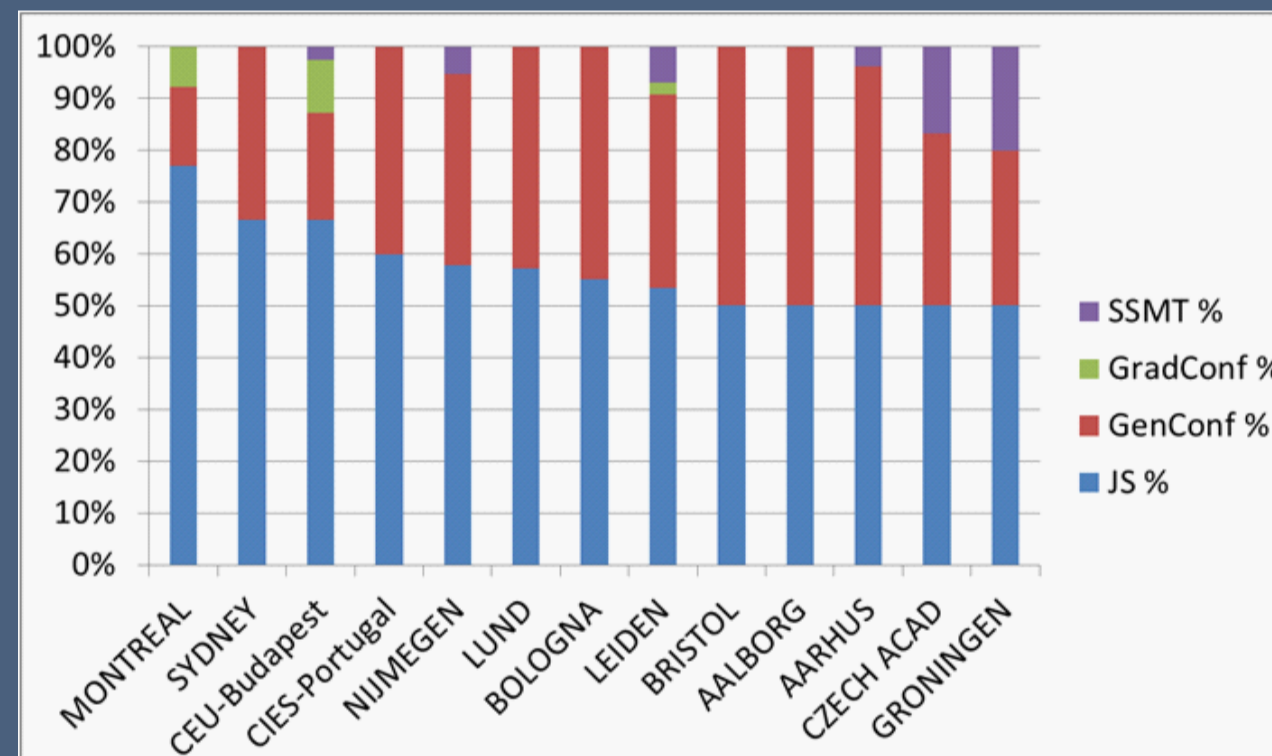
Still, the proportion of ECPR events attended by individuals from a given member institution is telling to see which events people are most keen to attend.

To do this we took all the institutions who had a total of at least 10 people attend across the six ECPR events listed above. This tally encompassed 126 institutions, ranging from heavy-hitters like the European University Institute (with over 100 attendees) to smaller members like Tilburg University (with the threshold of 10).

The profiles fall clearly into three groups.

Traditionalists

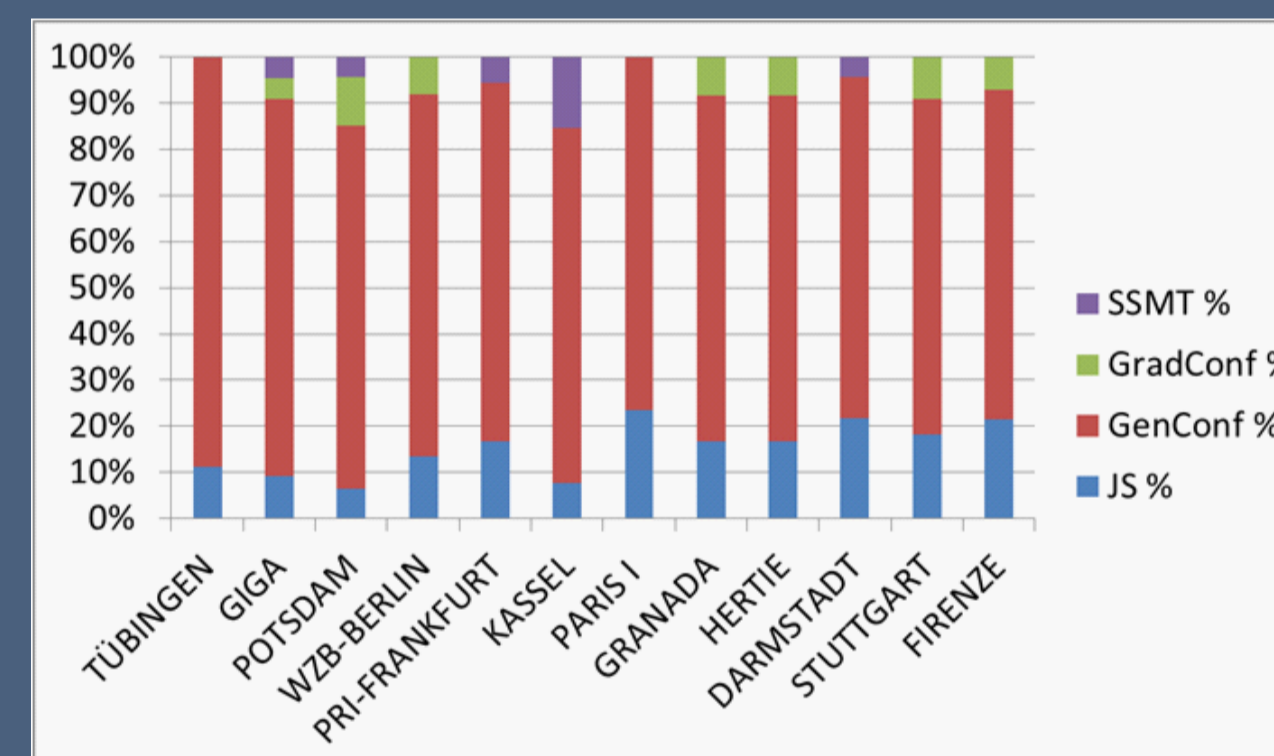
The ECPR was founded in 1970 with the Joint Sessions of Workshops as its main activity. Over 40 years later a number of member institutions continue to be attracted first and foremost to this 'crown jewel' event. Although the Joint Sessions are much smaller than, for example, the General Conference (with roughly 500 participants as opposed to over 2000), they remain the predominant form of participation for more than a dozen of the institutions included in our study. (Figure 1)



Unsurprisingly, this category includes a number of associate (overseas) members, whose scholars clearly see the ECPR's value added in the Joint Sessions. At the same time, a number of European institutions (such as Lund or Bologna) are equally oriented toward the Joint Sessions, with the General Conference a close second.

Generalists

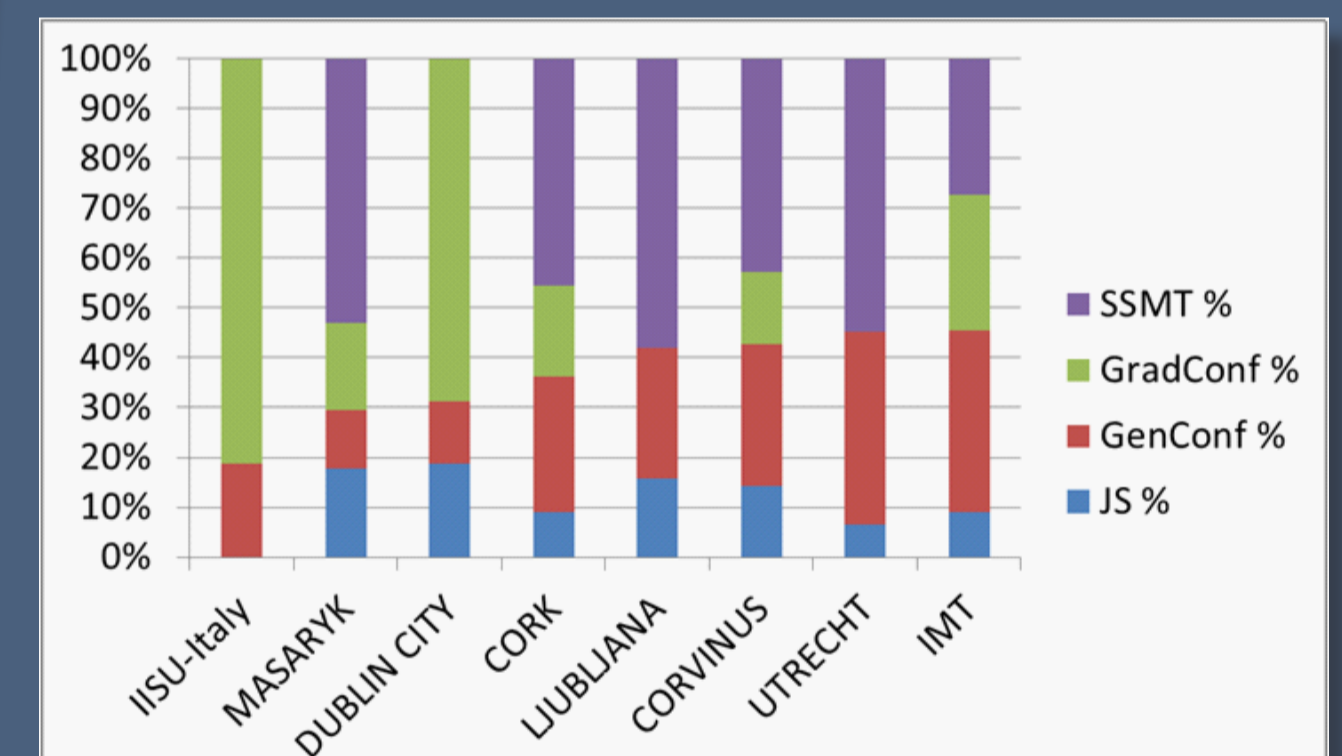
Since its launch in 2001, the General Conference has grown larger and larger with over 2300 people registered for this year's event in Reykjavik. A number of ECPR member institutions have come to prefer this broad-ranging gathering because of the opportunity it offers to engage the full spectrum of topics within the discipline.



Indeed, given the Conference's size, it has become the predominant 'profile' for around half of the institutions analysed in this poster. Figure 2 shows those institutions, where more than 70% of ECPR-goers attend the General Conference. These members include a number of research-only institutes, but also larger universities. It is no surprise that Potsdam – the host of the 2009 General Conference – was an active participant.

Next Generation

The ECPR sponsors two unique events, where graduate students can either present their initial work (the Graduate Conference) or refine their research skills (the SSMT). Where more than half of an institution's ECPR participants are in these two activities, we can see that members of the next generation have clearly anchored themselves well into the European political science community.



Again, participants from the two relevant event locations (Dublin and Ljubljana) stand out prominently. But a number of other institutions (including several in Central and Eastern Europe) have clearly identified the SSMT, for example, as a major component to how they utilize the ECPR.

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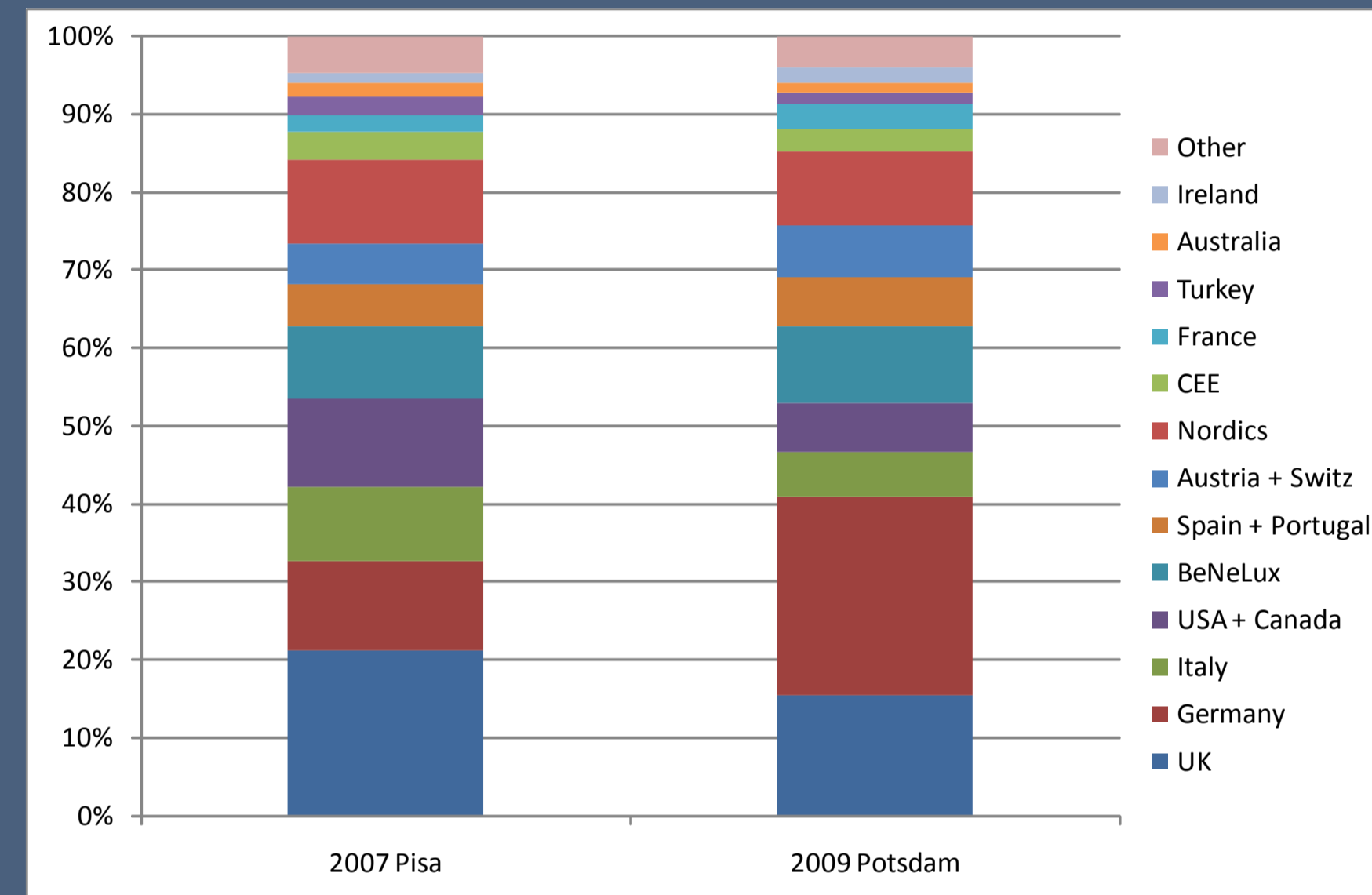
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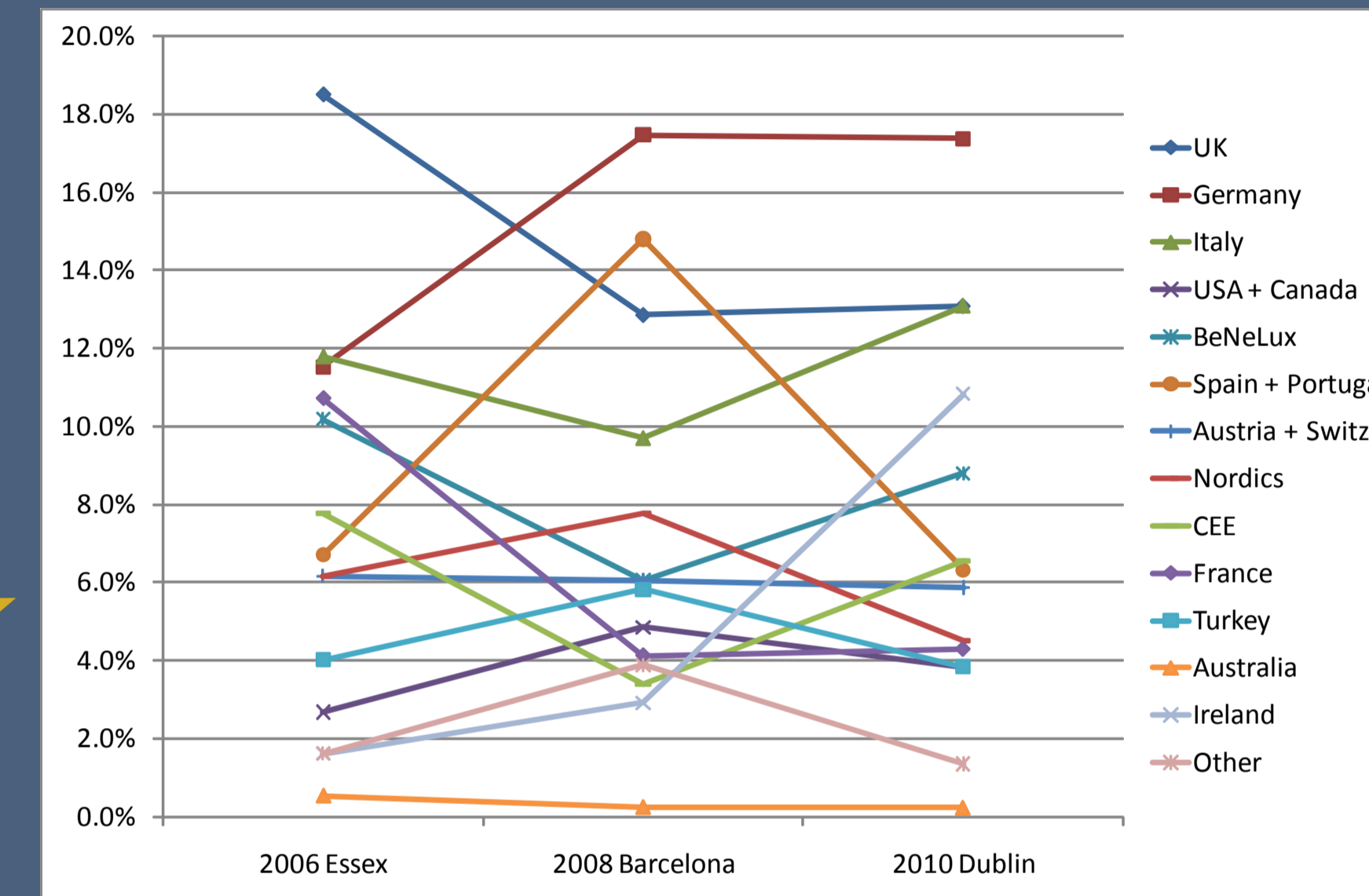
does geography matter?

It's a well-known peculiarity of the scholarly world that attendance at a conference tends to go up when the event takes place in a warm and sunny place. The ECPR is no exception with, for example, the highest Joint Sessions attendance recorded in Granada, Nicosia and Lisbon...

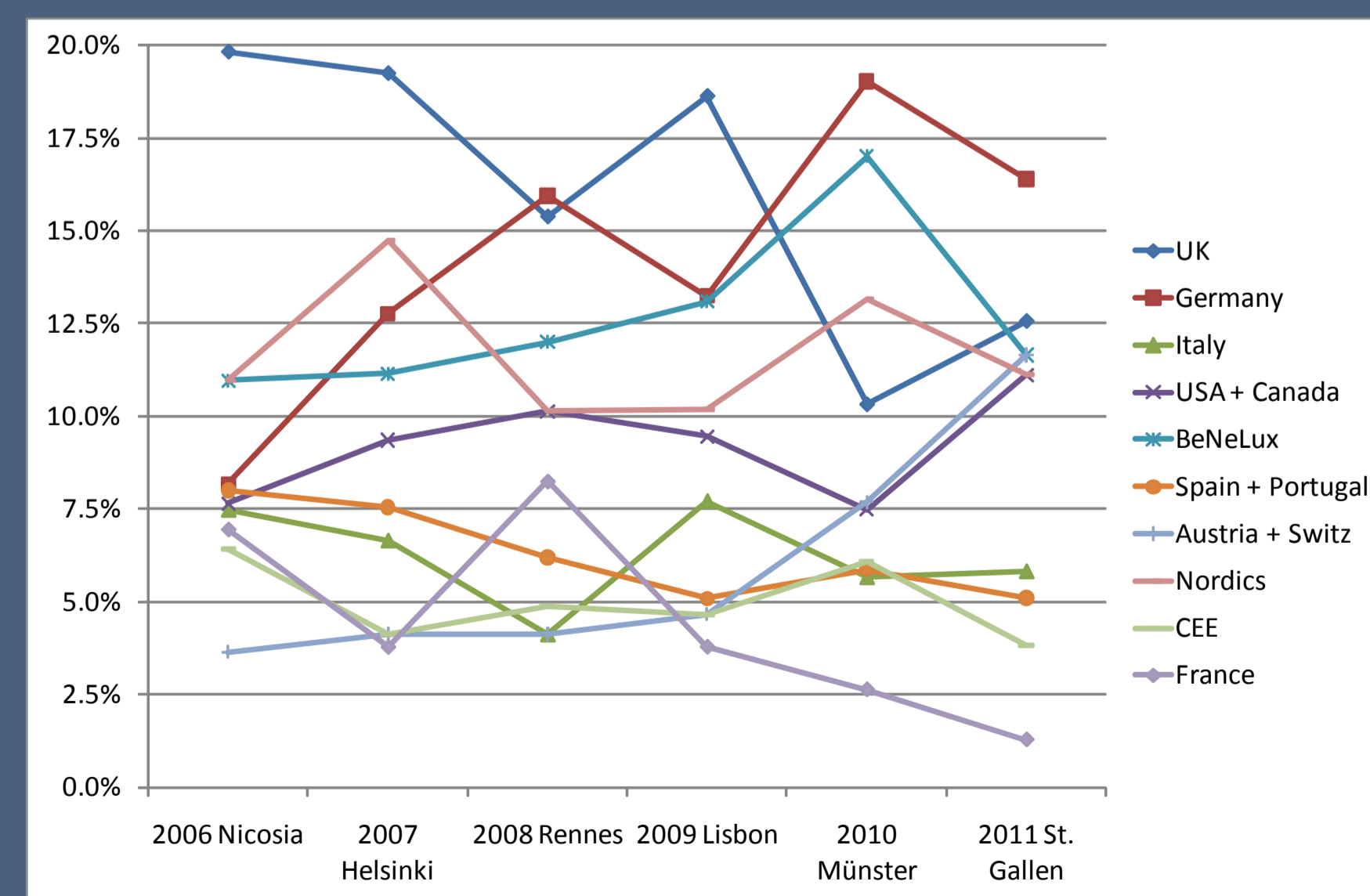
What other geographic patterns lurk behind the numbers?



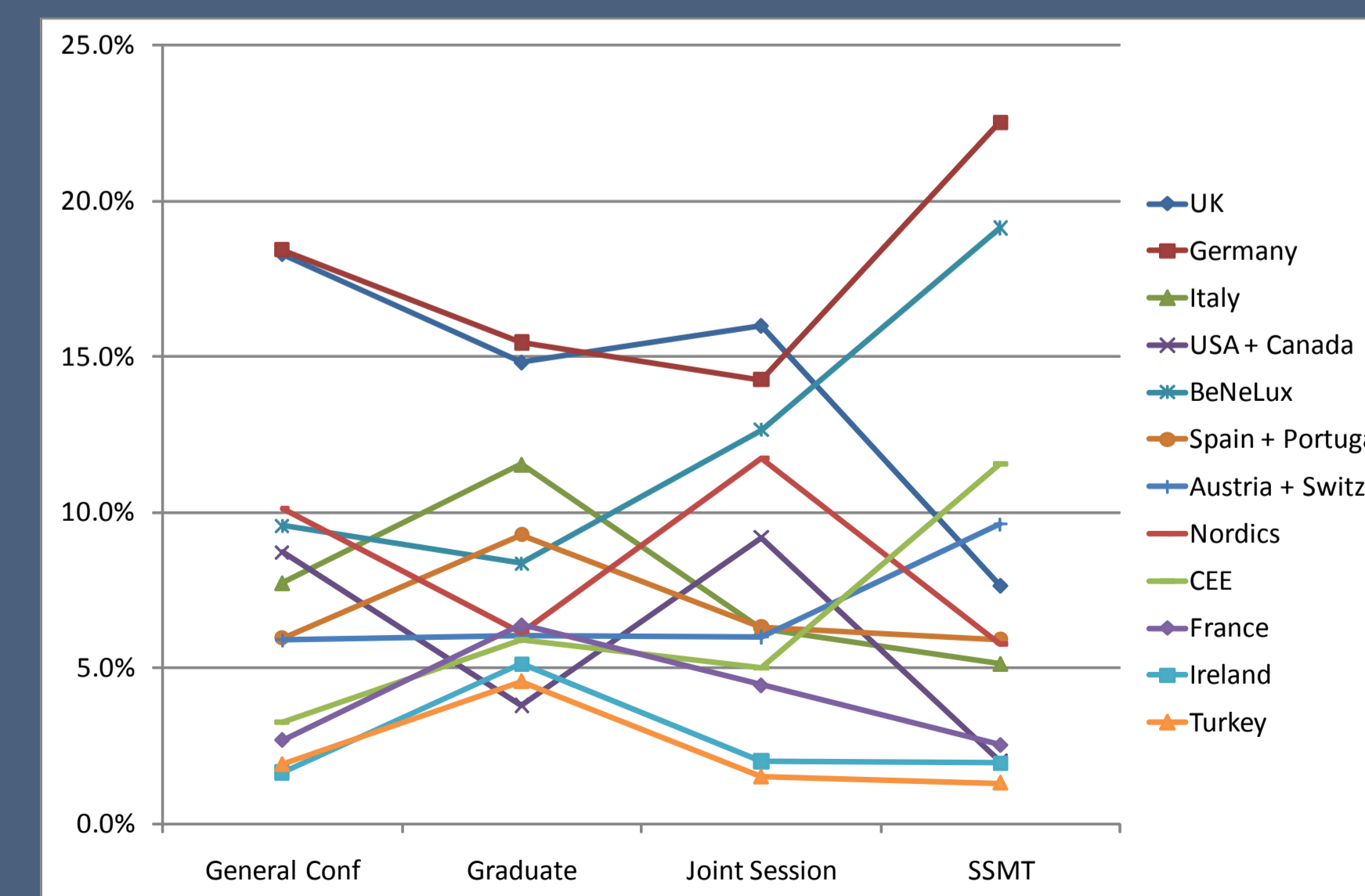
First and foremost attendance at ECPR varies nationally, with members from some countries clearly more attracted to certain destinations than others. Locations such as Pisa for the General Conference in 2007 attracted disproportionate numbers of Britons and North Americans, while Potsdam was a draw not only for Germans, but also for Austrians and Swiss.



Graduate students reflect the same kinds of travel trends and preferences. Locating the 2008 conference in Barcelona and the 2010 conference in Dublin boosted Spanish and Irish participation by a factor of 2 or 3. Interestingly, however, Essex in 2006 was a popular choice amongst French (as well as Britons), but less so amongst Germans.



The local appeal of an event site is reflected also in national attendance of the Joint Sessions. Looking back at data since 2006, locations such as Rennes prompted large numbers of French scholars to participate. Overall, meanwhile, geographic proportions have gradually shifted toward Germany, Austria/Switzerland, and the Benelux countries, primarily because of the 2010 and 2011 Joint Sessions venues: Münster and St. Gallen. Not only did these sites attract more German-speakers, they also wooed Dutch and Belgians, for whom Münster, for example, was quite close. In 2012, the Joint Sessions will be on home turf for the Dutch: Antwerpen.



Looking across the ECPR's four main event types, we see that on average Germans and Britons tend to participate in the same proportions for the General Conference, the Graduate Conference and the Joint Sessions. But their numbers diverge significantly for the Summer School in Methods and Techniques. British students appear to be drawn more to other summer schools (perhaps those at Essex or Oxford), while Germans make up an average of over 22% of those attending the SSMT. An equally large contingent in Ljubljana comes from the Benelux countries, with Austrians and Swiss also participating in disproportionate numbers.

At first glance, the high percentage of Central and Eastern Europeans attending the Ljubljana SSMT would appear to again betray the factor of location. But surprisingly Slovenia accounts for only part of this increase. Hungary, the Czech Republic and Estonia contribute as well. When speaking about how the ECPR might bring more Central and Eastern Europeans into European political science, it appears the strongest flow is through graduate training.

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gender balance

In 2009, the ECPR set up a Gender Task Force to examine gender-related issues in the ECPR. One of the group's initial undertakings was to collect information on gender balances across the organisation.

While a full report and analysis will be prepared for the 2012 Review of Activities, the Event Participation Study helped to collate relevant gender-related data across recent ECPR events.

Since 2006, the ECPR has averaged a gender balance of **41.8%/58.2%** (women/men) per event.

Since commensurate data from other organisations have not as yet been studied, it is difficult to interpret this figure in comparative terms.

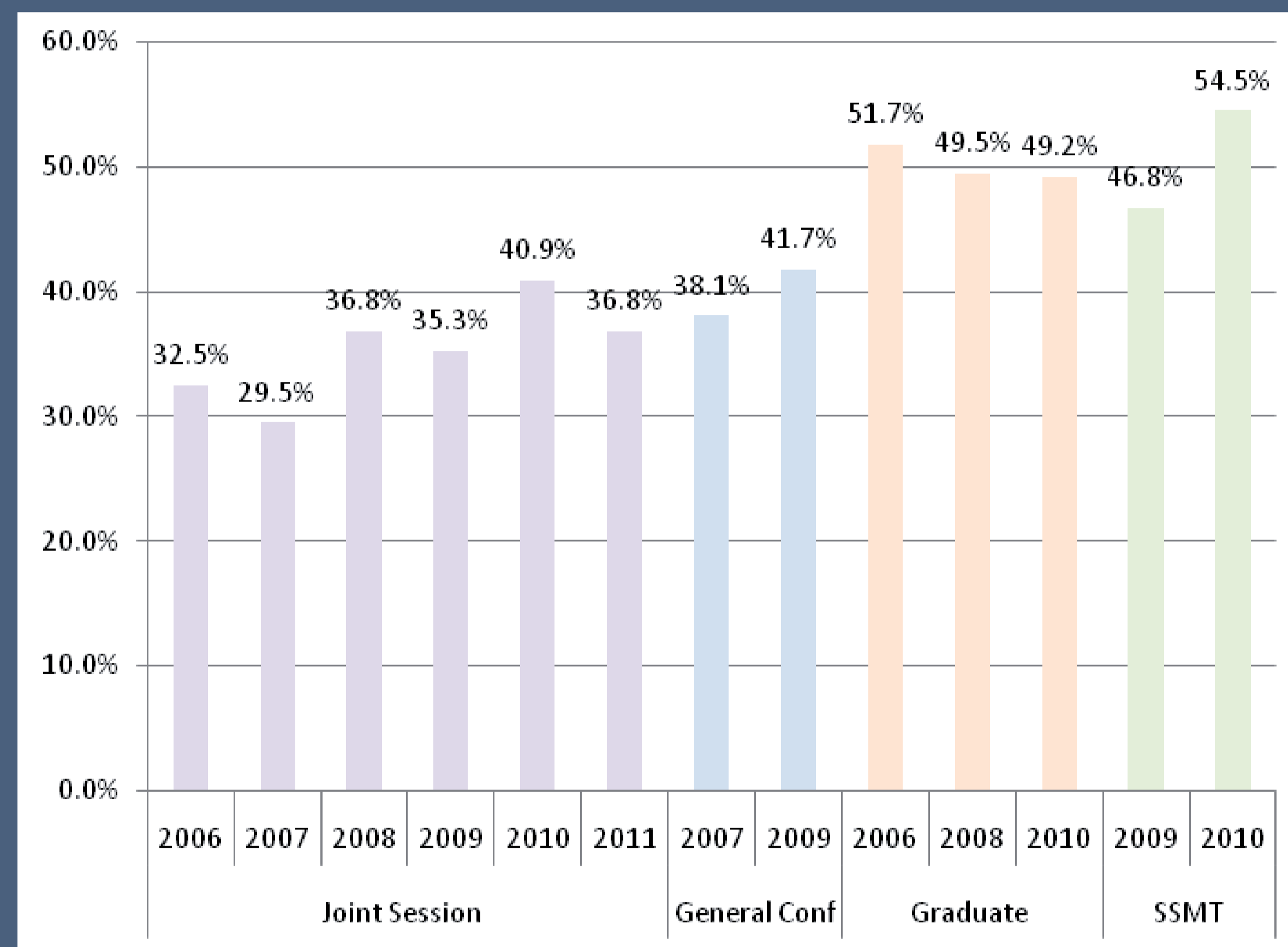
However, from a pure numerical point of view, this balance appears relatively good.

At the same time, it has long been known that gender balances deteriorate as one moves up in the ranks of the profession.

The number of women professors in many countries is in the teens or even single digits, even though the percentage of female undergraduates typically surpasses that of males.

Gender data across the ECPR's individual events indicate a similar underlying pattern in that female participation in the ECPR's graduate-level events (the Graduate Conference and the Summer School in Methods and Techniques) is on a par (if not exceeding) that of men.

Meanwhile, at the General Conference, where typically hired faculty will participate, the average proportion of women declines to 39.9%, while most problematic is the gender balance across the Joint Sessions, where the average female participation rate goes down to 35.3%.



Participation in ECPR events does therefore echo the gender divide in the profession to the extent that typically the Joint Sessions will attract more senior colleagues, and these will disproportionately be male.

Although workshop directors are instructed to select participants with an eye to equal gender participation, it is possible that the numbers may be skewed already at the level of workshop participant applications. (Unfortunately no data exist on this score.)

Nevertheless, recent years show a slight improvement in the gender balance for Joint Sessions.

This upward trend is also reflected amongst workshop directors. Whereas in 2006 only 26.5% of workshop directors were women, in 2011 this had risen to 41.2%.

Hopefully this surge will also help to support equal gender participation among workshop paper-givers.