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Women's Political Empowerment in Spain and Denmark

A comparative case study of women's political participation in Spain
and Denmark during the 20th and 21st Century

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ABSTRACT

The Kingdom of Spain and the Kingdom of Denmark have substantial similarities in their political systems, geographical locations and cultures; both have developed gender equality under the scope of the European Union. However, their evolution towards women's political empowerment differs vastly. Spain has opted for gender quotas following EU's recommendation of using positive action to address gender equality in political participation. Meanwhile Denmark has refused to adopt gender quotas, Danish society defend *free-choice* and prefer "democratic voluntary means" (Rolandsen, 2015). The adoption of gender quotas is found to be crucial for Spain in surpassing the 40% mark of women's participation, while Denmark seems to be unable to achieve 40% participation with its current strategy. Spanish quotas have led Spain to the top of world rankings (GGGR, 2021). In addition, women in maximum power positions continued to be the area with least development as gender quotas are not adequate to tackle this gap.

KEYWORDS

Women; empowerment; politics; gender; Equality; Europe; Spain; Denmark

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1:

Proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments (%) – Spain.....32

Figure 2:

Proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments (%) – Denmark....37

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ANME - Asociacion Nacional de Mujeres Españolas (National Association of Spanish Women)

EC – European Commission

EC – European Community

ECJ - European Court of Justice

ECSC - European Coal and Steel Community

EEAS - European External Action Services

EEC - European Economic Community

EU – European Union

EU-GER - European Union’s Gender Equality Report

Euratom - European Atomic Energy Community

GGGR - Global Gender Gap Report

IPU – Inter-Parliamentary Union

SDG- Sustainable Development Goals

UN – United Nations

WEF – World Economic Forum

WI - Woman’s Institute

INDEX

1. INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Research Question	2
1.2 Research Justification	3
1.3 Research Objectives: General and Specific	5
1.4 Structure and Methodology	6
2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	7
2.1 Feminist Theory in International Relations.....	8
2.2 Gender gap.....	12
2.3 Women’s political empowerment	14
3. Global Gender Gap Report	16
4. EUROPEAN UNION AS A COMMON FRAMEWORK.....	18
4.1 Introduction.....	18
4.2 Historical background	19
4.3 Gender equality efforts	20
4.4 Equality status.....	25
5. ANALYSIS OF SPAIN	26
5.1 Introduction.....	27
5.2 Spanish political scene.....	27
5.3 Evolution of women’s empowerment in Spain	29
5.4 Current status, Outcomes and Statistics	31
6. ANALYSIS OF DENMARK	33
6.1 Introduction.....	33
6.2 Danish political scene.....	34
6.3 Evolution of women’s empowerment in Denmark.....	35
6.4 Current status, Outcomes and Statistics	36
7. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS	38
7.1 Comparison of Background.....	38
7.2 Comparison of Baseline	38
7.3 Comparison of Evolution	39
7.4 Comparison of Outcomes and Statistics	39
8. CONCLUSION.....	40
REFERENCES.....	42

1. INTRODUCTION

The 20th Century meant a great progress for women's empowerment due to their first formal access to policy-making through women's suffrage in western countries. Up until that moment they were just mere observers and advisors behind men's shadows, later on despite having the possibility to run for political positions it was not an easy road and in many cases the way to achieve political participation was standing next to a man. Even now female leaders are rare and they continue to be numbered as exceptional cases.

The lack of women's representation and appreciation on political dimension has been addressed through many agreements, projects and laws but it has not been efficiently fixed. It has been added to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and an entire United Nations' (UN) entity has been design to promote and protect women's empowerment and equality, the UN-Women. Meanwhile the World Economic Forum estimates that we will need 95 years to close the gap (Global Gender Gap Report, 2020); according to the UN-Women, it will take 130 years to achieve equality in the highest spheres of policy making. Moreover, according to the WEF's 2020 Global Gender Gap Report (GGGR) and 2021 Global Gender Gap Report, it is shown that the greatest gender divergence is found in political representations and it is improving the least. Globally only 25% of all chambers are composed by women being the desired minimum 40%; although global average is expected to be lower, sadly most developed countries have not achieved the aspired goal of real political equality. As a matter of fact, only nine out of 44 European countries have achieved or surpassed 40% of representation (GGGR, 2021)

Among these nine countries is the case of Spain which is proximate to the 40% of female representation in national parliaments since 2014 and since 2019 remains at 44% being ranked the third in the EU (The World Bank, 2020). However, another European country with similar political system, Denmark, has never reached more than 40% women in parliament (The World Bank, 2020). Thus the intention of this thesis is to analyse the evolution of gender equality in Spain and Denmark since women's suffrage through policies taken as well as to evaluate the impact and progress made by these measures towards an equal

inclusion and appreciation of women in the political sphere. It will give us the framework needed to understand why although Denmark had an earlier access to women's suffrage; Spain has a greater score in women's political empowerment.

The principal concept of this research is women's empowerment; however this concept has no general accepted definition, therefore for the purpose of this research women's empowerment follows Sushama Sahay's (1998) definition: "Empowerment is an active, multi-dimensional process which enables women to realize their full identity and powers in all spheres of life". Moreover, as it is mainly focus on women's political empowerment the research uses Helen O'Connell's definition: "women's ability and capacity to engage in decision-making and influence policy-making, make demands on state institutions and hold them accountable to respect, protect and fulfil women's full human rights, and provide means of redress if these rights are denied or abused" (2011, p. 456). Since the maximum representation of decision making is the political organisms of a state, the research bases its analysis in the Global Gender Gap Report criteria to measure political empowerment taking as valuable features the participation of women in parliament, ministers and as head of the executive branch.

1.1 Research Question

This research's focal point is the evolution of women's participation in politics based on the laws and regulations made to promote and protect their access and participation. The assumption is that although Spain had a late commencement, it showed a remarkable improvement through the regulations established. It is supported by Lombardo: "Gender equality policies in Spain have shown a path of positive development" (2016, p.8). Meanwhile, "although the idea of gender equality was formulated and broadly accepted early in Denmark" (Ravn & Rosenbeck, 2008, p.5), setting a better starting point, it is making little or no progress at all. Therefore the expected result of this analysis is that the reason for these distinct evolutions is due to different political

strategies, each with different objectives at the forefront of their policies. Bearing this in mind the research question is:

“Has gender quotas led Spain to have a higher level of women’s political empowerment than Denmark?”

The research aims to evaluate gender equality measures taken in Spain and Denmark with its focal point on political empowerment measures and its efficacy and adequacy to address the problem. The analysis will take into account the political landscape of the country, the evolution of gender equality, with special attention to the process of political empowerment. In addition it will be important to consider the aftermath: the implementation, quantitative data of the direct consequences of these measures as the final intention of this research is to evaluate “women's ability and capacity to engage in decision-making and influence policy-making” (O’Connell, 2011, p. 456) Then after considering the development of the status of women’s equality in these territories, it could be analysed the differences of means implemented and results obtained, thus being able to provide a deep understanding of why women’s empowerment has continued to increase in one country but not in the other.

1.2 Research Justification

Politics are essential for a community to maintain peace and order between individuals, and for citizens is essential to take part in politics in order to exercise their freedom and their right to determine the rules that are applied upon them. It is a duty and a right to be aware of and participate in local political issues as to defend and promote everyone’s ideology. To vote or to participate directly in policy making processes is a crucial part in women’s empowerment since its final goal is to enable women to be autonomous, give them voice and space for them to express themselves and to allow them to have their own ideology and criteria in decision making. Therefore, political participation is a remarkable index to take into account to measure the progress on women’s empowerment as it is the least developed goal and the most decisive in order to achieve gender equality in all levels.

Despite the fact that political participation has been a fundamental right for men, mainly white men with a certain level of privilege, for centuries; it has not been until the early 20th century that women began to gain access to it. Starting with this fact, it is clear that the gender breach has been there for a long time and most probably it will take long before this historical asymmetry is fully regulated. Although surprisingly, along the 20th century we have seen remarkable and historical advances providing women with some opportunities, space and support to thrive. All these huge advances have made little impact providing the expected outcomes and the astonishing mobilization taking place around women nowadays.

It is said that all men and women are born equally, however it is a shocking fact that women got the same rights as men with centuries of delay and in most cultures women and children are packed in together as innocent and helpless individuals who need to be protected and led. Although this situation would be expected to have been amended through time, it has been proved by recent events that it has not. In 2019 the first female was elected to preside over the European Commission: Ursula von der Leyen; although just this simple fact – a woman in such an important political position - could mean a great improvement in the women's political participation, latest news shows that while holding similar positions to men women continue to be undermined.

The last visit of the European Union to Turkey is known as the incident of three presidents and two chairs due to the absence of enough chairs for the three presidents present in the meeting: the president of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdogan; the president of the European Council, Charles Michel; and the president of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen. Another name by which this incident is known is "SofaGate" as Ursula von der Leyen had to sit down on a sofa close to Turkey's foreign minister who has a much lower position than her. Images, seat positions and protocols are crucial to clarify power hierarchy in this kind of meetings, however in this meeting the president of the European Commission was left apart. The reasons and explanations provided by Turkey's government to justify the incident has not been enough to satisfy public opinion, they were even less accepted as before the meeting they

had announced Turkey's withdrawing from the global Istanbul Convention on preventing violence against women and children.

Although Turkey is known to be a long way from reaching gender equality, they should have been lived up to the relevance of the meeting. Meanwhile who was supposed to be a European culture representative and co-worker with the same values of equality and respect and in charge of promoting and protecting these, failed to react properly as he took the chair next to the Turkish president without hesitation. It has been shown that when women reach high power positions, others fail to value and consider them as equals. Women's political empowerment is a current issue that needs to be addressed with urgency as it is the left-behind topic in the feminist development process. Therefore this research analyses the impact of gender equality measures concerning political empowerment in order to provide a broadened perspective on the gender dilemma and to expose the status of democracy and equal representation in this countries. As Verba & Nie argue "Where few take part in decisions there is little democracy; the more participation there is in decisions, the more democracy there is" (1972, p. 1)

1.3 Research Objectives: General and Specific

The general objective of this research is to analyse the development of women's political empowerment in Spain and Denmark separately; then carry out a comparison between them to find out divergences that may explain their particular evolutions and current status.

Meanwhile, this final degree project aims to achieve the following specific objectives:

- To provide a historical background exposing the past political situation of Spain and Denmark to expose the obstacles to women's political participation.
- To explore the diverse measures taken by the Spanish government and the Danish government in their attempt to narrow the gender gap in politics.

- To analyse the impact and performance of laws and regulations implemented by each government.
- To expose the similarities and differences between the two processes towards a higher women's political empowerment.

1.4 Structure and Methodology

This research has chosen Spain and Denmark as subject of analysis due to its highly similar political system; due the fact that both countries also share geographical location, western-culture and same political framework (the EU) they are expected to carry out similar evolution and to take up similar trends as well as to be conditioned by analogous events. This project derives from diverse disciplines due to the necessity to appeal to national and international laws, international relations and feminist movement; thus it entails an interdisciplinary approach to the analysis of the subject. These elements have the purpose to bring light over the background of the situation as well as a framework to its later analysis.

The first part of the research serves as a theoretical framework from which it can be extracted the main principles and terms that are used in the forthcoming parts. A simple exposition of ideas from secondary sources, mainly academic journals which settle the starting point of this paper. All of them gender related as the feminist theory serves as main framework for this research dealing with the gender dilemma.

The second part is a study of the development of women's equality in Spain and Denmark. First it is analysed their international context and the common framework of these two nations: the European Union (EU). Second a historical background of the countries as well as the evolution of women's rights, followed by an analysis of the evolution of women in politics in the last two centuries through laws and regulations, based on the relevance, impact and efficacy of these actions which aim to palliate the gender inequality gap through statistics and data retrieved. The second part uses secondary sources which enhance our understanding of the situation through contemporary and updated articles,

reviews, analysis and statistics as the Global Gender Gap Report of the World Economic Forum or the statistics of the World Bank.

Finally, the third part of the research carries out a comparative analysis of both countries and their starting point as it sets the base to understand their following development up until today. It is followed by the main objective of this research as it is a comparison of evolutions, measures and policies along with its outcomes and statistics. These comparisons enable us to see the differences and similarities of these two Western European countries and their performances in their process to achieve gender equality in political decision-making.

Due to the fact that it is a historical review of the progress of political inclusion a great amount of articles and previous analysis were found and used. Many international organizations are interested in the development and progress of women's empowerment in European Countries as Spain and Denmark, therefore this research uses those previous analyses as a base to extract information related to the evolution of Spain and Denmark concerning political empowerment. Data to analyse impact and consequences is retrieved from different index reports as the Global Gender Gap Report (GGGR) by the WEF, the World Bank and the UN Women. Although social and cultural context is also taken into account, major relevance is placed on indicators, statistics and quantitative data as these are recognized by the World Economic Forum as the most objective basis to analyse in order to discussing underlying contextual factors.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework exposes concepts and definitions relevant for the topic as the feminist theory in international relations, the gender gap, women's empowerment and the Global Gender Gap Report. These terms introduce the issue and gives further context of the analysis as a whole. It is a pillar supporting the study as it is intended to be the base to explain and understand the existence, relevance and implication of the research study.

2.1 Feminist Theory in International Relations

There are various theories to see and interpret the world, society and international relations, these theories have been changing and adapting to new trends and perspectives along the years. All of them are based on the recognition of the asymmetrical relations of power (Lascuarín & Villafuerte, 2016), found in the social arena and can be extrapolated to all levels of interaction: international and national level, even at local level. These theories aim to explain the reasoning of social actors' actions and as social construct it changes with trends; now the feminist theory has started to gain popularity since the last century.

As previously mentioned above, these theories identify unequal relations of power in international relation, since countries and other main actors in the international arena perform according to classifications or status. Gender and feminist studies have identified those same unbalanced relations between men and women setting the fundamentals of the feminist theories. The feminist theories according to Lascuarín & Villafuerte (2016) set its point of view through "gender lens", starting from this, "feminist analysts argue that the theoretical foundations of International Relations are male-defined, and are constructed around malefemale dichotomies, which define female as "other" and assign gender-specific roles that exclude women from the public sphere" (Lascuarín & Villafuerte, 2016, p. 1) Also, as explained before, these theories can be applied to all levels of social interaction; the same patterns of gender roles can be found at international, national and local levels. Moreover, due to the constant interaction between these categorized groups as male and female, this conflict affects social, cultural, economic and political spheres; "in almost every society and in every sphere of life women assume unequal position and status" (Mandal, 2013, p.2). The whole system is identified to be a political order which subordinates and excludes one group: women. This is the reason why "the feminist approaches to International Relations have introduced gender as an essential tool for analysing the interactions between states in the international framework" (Lascuarín & Villafuerte, 2016, p. 1); this gender lens aims to

describe and explain the causes of these asymmetrical relations with the objective of finding possible solutions.

Historically and sadly also lately, feminist ideas, contributions and claims have been ignored and dismissed by policy and decision makers or treated as not worthy to investigate. Claims as equal pay, equal access to jobs, equal political representation and legal changes towards the protection of women; as women don't enjoy the same level of security neither economically nor in public life. Furthermore, "women's roles have been treated as if they were natural and not worthy of investigation" (Lascuarín & Villafuerte, 2016, p. 8). This fact is another clear indicator of the exclusion of women from policy and decision making processes. As previously mentioned, feminist approaches claims theoretical bases are male-defined, excluding women from public life (Lascuarín & Villafuerte, 2016), and thus categorizing women as non-political actors preventing them from participating in political decision making. The feminist explanation is that for years the political elite was meant only for men and it was thought that they were the only ones able to deal with politics and to act as decision makers (Enloe, 1993). As a consequence, the exclusion of women prevents us from increasing our knowledge, options, understanding and ways of thinking as a large part of human experience is not being considered. Tickner (1992) claims that the system "ignores a large body of human experiences that has potential for increasing the range of options and opening up new ways of thinking about interstate practices" (p.17-18). Therefore, from a feminist point of view for a society or nation to thrive, women need to be included in development processes and be placed in its core efforts. As Pam Rajput (2001) claims that women need to be empowered in all spheres, particularly the political sphere as it is crucial for their establishment and evolution of a gender equal society. He identifies women's political empowerment as an essential requirement to obtain equality, development and peace.

Gender analyses have concluded that international and any other social relations are structured on a dichotomy of male-female and seen from a partial and incomplete male perspective (Tickner, 1992; Lascuarín & Villafuerte, 2016).. One of the most radical feminist authors,

“Ann Tickner, who represents one of the most radical feminist authors.... shows that the international system is structured and understood by a male, partial, and incomplete vision therefore proposes to add a female perspective which help to conceptualize a world different from the existing view and generate a feminist epistemology of international relations which proposes to build an alternative feminist allowing to make it more accessible” (Lascurarín & Villafuerte, 2016, p. 1).

In other words, politics are set according to male values and thus definitions of terms as security, power and authority are gendered and associated to masculinity. For this reason we need to reformulate these terms including the women’s perspective so the system does not exclude women from the theoretical base. The feminist approach promotes the inclusion of a female perspective to set an alternative to the current viewpoint and also proposes to redefine terms as masculinity and femininity. Coming from a masculine dominant landscape, it is fundamental to contemplate women’s perspective as it is a crucial factor to obtain a complete and impartial terminology. It is essential to have a fair and equal system from bottom to the top and to make politics and decision making processes more accessible to women (Lascurarín & Villafuerte, 2016).

Another consequence of the omission of female’s point of view is the programming of international, national and local agendas following men’s concerns. Tickner (1992) and Sylvester (1994) argue that the gender dilemma has shaped the political structure at all levels and continues to shape its dynamics. However, since the 20th Century gender considerations have been included in agendas, projects and programs and gender inequality has improved in many areas as the participation of women in the labour market or the accessibility of women to education.

This research will focus on a variant of feminism theories known as “Feminist Institutionalism”, Mackay et al, (2010) argues that institutionalism “has allowed for greater understanding about the co-constitutive nature of politics: the various ways in which actors bring about or resist change in institutions; and the way institutions shape the nature of actors’ behaviour through the construction of

rules, norms and policies” (p.1). This theory is relevant for this research as the main subject of analysis is the implementation and outcome of measures intended to change the way institutions work. The variant of “feminist institutionalism critiques and seeks to overcome the gender blindness of existing scholarship in the field, to include women as actors in political processes, to ‘gender’ institutionalism, and to move the research agenda towards questions about the interplay between gender and the operation and effect of political institutions” (Mackay et al, 2010, p.1).

According to Hawkesworth (2005) gender can be understood as a “constructive element of social relations” and they are based on differences found between men and woman establishing “a primary way of signifying and naturalizing relations of power and hierarchy” (Hawkesworth, 2005). Therefore gender is a part of institutions as it set the base by which individuals are nested. According to Mackay et al. “Not only are gender relations seen to be ‘institutional’, these relations are ‘institutionalized’, embedded in particular political institutions and constraining and shaping social interaction” (2010, p. 9) Moreover, Kenney (1996) claims that based on feminist theories and empirical work it can be concluded that gender relations are “cross-cutting”, meaning that they appear in different types of institutions and different institutional levels. Kenney (1996) argues that for an institution to be identified as gendered the social constructed concepts of masculinity and femininity interferes in the daily life or in the logic of political institutions rather than “existing out in society or fixed within individuals which they then bring whole to the institution” (p.456). Meanwhile, Olsen (2009) recognizes that institutional actors have differences in power based on the access to resources as this access is determined by “rules and worldview”. Thus, Olsen (2009) concludes that access to resources and the power emanated from them are influenced by gender bias.

The feminist institutionalism authors and previous mentioned authors agree that gender norms affect politics and policy making institutions since ideas of masculinity and femininity structure policies, legislation and rulings (Annesley and Gains, 2010; Weldon, 2002). Therefore the male perspective continues to underpin the structure, practices and norms of institutions, while it shapes the “ways of valuing things, ways of behaving and ways of being’ (Duerst-Lahti and

Kelly, 1995, p.20). Feminist Institutionalism enables the study of the factors that determine changes in political life; the way laws and policies are developed and implemented; and the relationship between formal political institutions and actor involved in social movements.

2.2 Gender gap

The gender gap is a term generally used to refer to “systematic differences in the outcomes that men and women achieve in the labour market” (Goldin, 2008, para. 1); it is one of the major trends identified by feminist theories and one of the most obvious signals of the gender dilemma as it can be observed through quantitative data as employment percentage and level of income. The gender gap is also visible and measurable thanks to various indicators such as type of occupation, presence in power positions and hourly wages (Goldin, 2008).

At the beginning of the 20th century, with the inclusion of female considerations into policy agendas, women started to be encouraged to participate in public life. The percentage of women in the labour market was the main concern and its increase was the principal objective. The 20th century witnessed a slow progress of improvement in this area, by the 80s 60% of labour force were women (O’Neill, 2003) culminating in 2000 when the women were about half of total labour force. According to Goldin (2008) the evolution was not equal for all demographic groups; the 40s was the time for older women, then the 70s and 80s were the times for young women and the final group to be included in labour market was women with infants.

After achieving the objective of an equal gender participation in the labour market, the 21st century had to set new goals towards gender equality. Other indicators as types of jobs chosen, the level of income, job opportunities and the hourly wages were under the scope. From the beginning of this century a major interest were place in the unbalance earning of men and women (Goldin, 2008). In the 80’s women’s average income was half average male income, which can be translated to women’s work being valued as half of men’s work although being the same work. As the United Nations Decade for Women’s famous

formulation claims: “While women account for half of the world’s population and perform two-thirds of the hours worked, they receive one-tenth of the world’s property registered in their name.” Surprisingly, unlike the exponential growth of female participation in the labour market, the ratio of male-female income continued to be 0.75 in 2000 since 1994.

Reasons given to explain the gender gap were education, job experience and hours of work; although these observable factors intended to explain around 50% of the gender gap, Francine Blau and Lawrence Kahn (2000) claimed it can only explain 33%. An increase in the idea of women as a productive individual was essential for the reduction of the gender gap in 2000, proving the relevance of other explanations and therefore other factors as worker’s choices or economic discrimination came up as main justifications.

Analysing the income gap, Goldin observed that “the ratio of women’s to men’s earnings decreases with age and rises with education. Most telling is that the ratio is higher for single than for married individuals, particularly for those without children” (2008, para. 5). Family responsibilities were identified as a huge factor in women’s empowerment and employability. Not only were women the last to enter in the labour market but also the income gap that improved the least (Goldin, 2008). However, from an economist point of view an increase in income gap or at least an impediment in its improvement could have been expected due to the high number of recent women available in the market. Thus, the fact that income gap remained almost the same can be explained as a consequence of the decrease of the gender gap in employment. It made it impossible for women to hold long job experiences preventing them from increasing their value and earnings from the 50s to the 80s.

According to The World Bank from the 80s to 1994 there was a remarkable increase in the male-female income from 0.6 to 0.75. From an economical point of view, women of all ages, levels of education and experience increased their ratio, being women around thirty years old which made the best increase performance (Goldin, 2008). According to Goldin (2008), almost 20% of the change responds to efforts in education, job experience and skills place on female workforce in the 80s. Up until nowadays the ratio has increased and

reached the ratio 0.82; it is not the desired ratio but public attention has started to change towards another indicator of gender gap: the presence of women in positions of power.

2.3 Women's political empowerment

Women's empowerment is a feminist concept which has gained popularity since the second half of the 20th Century; although there is not a universally accepted definition, according to Moghadam & Senftova (2005) it can be defined as a multidimensional process to "the achievement of basic capabilities of legal rights, and participation in key social, economic, and political domains"(p.391). As previously observed through the feminist theory, women have unequal position and status in every spheres of life, thus according to that we can conclude as Sushama Sahay (1998) "Empowerment is an active, multi-dimensional process which enables women to realize their full identity and powers in all spheres of life" (p. 202). This concept claims that the way to achieve goals as equality, development and peace is based on the inclusion of women to all levels of decision and policy making. Moreover, Moghadam & Senftova (2005) states that the process to do so is through legal and public reform, which is a fundamental characteristic of this process as both are necessary to produce a real impact.

Due to the vast possible definitions of empowerment, it has been divided into five categories: social, educational, economic, political and psychological. A subcategory of empowerment is political empowerment which aims to transfer political powers to the low power groups, in this case women. According to Helen O'Connell (2011) women's political empowerment can be defined as "women's ability and capacity to engage in decision-making and influence policy-making, make demands on state institutions and hold them accountable to respect, protect and fulfil women's full human rights, and provide means of redress if these rights are denied or abused" (p. 456). Women's empowerment depends greatly in their presence in political activities as politics decide what is has to be done and how to do it; therefore in order to

obtain real equality, development and peace is necessary to count with female voices inside all levels of decision and policy making.

The UN proclaimed in 1975 the “Women’s Decade” and then called for the empowerment of women economically, culturally and politically in 1995 at the Fourth World Conference on Women. Later on, in 2001 the UN declared the year as the “International Year for Women’s Empowerment”. Nowadays women’s empowerment as well as feminism has become a global phenomenon, promoting and protecting women’s rights and fighting against women’s rights violations worldwide. It has its origins as a revolutionary movement with merely extremist followers; however the ideology has expanded and gained allies from all ages and genders. It has become a popular movement politically associated with leftist ideologies due to its mutual interest in social policies. Despite the fact that it started with different objectives, it has evolved to be the public image of every feminist movement without distinction claiming all reforms needed for an equal society and promoting women’s empowerment in all spheres of life as its slogan.

The boom of the feminist movement has forced societies, nations and international bodies to place women in its core efforts and to recognize the impact and relevance of women in the world. The constant pressure of public opinion and the increasing number of feminine voices speaking up has unleashed an accelerating process of female presence in public life and female participation in decision making (van der Vleuten 2007, 105). Moreover, there is a trend of public denounce of women’s rights violations exacerbating its impact and increasing the number of potential individual reactions as happens with any trend in social media. This trend demands a higher accountability for these crimes as consequences for these tend to be too soft or right’s violators do not get any legal consequences.

Taking in to account the vast feminist movement seen in parades, demonstrations and social media, little legal progress has been made towards gender equality. However, as mentioned before women’s empowerment is a process that needs both legal and public reform and although legal reform has a long way to go, public reform has made an enormous progress. The feminist

movement has encouraged women to get to know their rights and to stand for them; more than legal consequences this movement has meant a popular uprising against systematic inequalities and finally accepted oppressive and abusive treatment have started to be identified as women's rights violations.

3. Global Gender Gap Report

The Global Gender Gap report is an index carried out by the World Economic Forum since 2006 in an annual basis. It aims to portray the progress and status of gender equality globally and by countries, comparing performances across four aspects: economic opportunities, education, health and political leadership. The comparison made between countries and regions provide information about the drivers of gender gaps and most profitable measures (GGGR, 2021). Since 2006 the number of countries included in this index has grown to 156, providing an accurate analysis of gender gap in the world. It will serve the research as an objective base to analyse the progress of equality and women's political empowerment. Moreover, it would provide a global and regional perspective, presenting the global and regional status before the commencement of a more specific analysis.

The Global Gender Gap Report (2021) report set the Global Gender Gap score at 67.7%, being the remaining gap of 32.3%. Although no country has achieved full gender equality, top countries (mostly Nordic countries) are around the 80-85% (GGGR, 2021). However, the area which remains to have the wider gap in Political Empowerment, only 22% has been closed, and even Iceland the best general performer and the first in Political Empowerment still has to close 24% of its gap. Iceland's score in Political Empowerment is 56 points above the average global performance and surpasses by 23 points to the 95% of countries included (GGGR, 2021). Another shocking data of the global situation of women in politics is that out of 35,500 parliaments from 156 countries, women represent only the 26%. Same happens in ministerial positions, from 3,400 ministers only 22% are women. Shockingly, in 2021 there are countries which have no female presence in parliament or female ministers. Moreover, if we take a look into the highest political positions we can easily observe that

relatively no women has served as head of state in the past 50 years. Out of 156 countries, 81 have never had women as head of state; even developed countries as Spain and Nordic countries like Sweden belong to the 81 countries (GGGR, 2021).

Western European countries remains to carry out the best performances in the Global Gender Gap Report with 77% of its gap closed. It has increase one point since last year and if it continues to increase like this it is estimated that it will take 52 year to close the gap in western countries. Out of the 20 countries comprising this region only Greece has not reached the 70% and six countries of the top 10 of the global ranking are from Western Europe. However, Political Empowerment gap is the most persistent, only 43.8% is closed. Despite that fact, the general average covers the performance of countries where the gap in much smaller as Iceland with 76%, Finland 67% and Norway 64%. There are almost 64 points between Iceland's to Greece's average, as Greece's Political Empowerment Gap remains at 12.3%.

To completely understand the previous data, it is necessary to consider the indicators and criteria taken into account to level and grade each performance. However, as this research is focus on Political Empowerment only those criteria used to evaluate Political Empowerment will be considered. As explained in the GGGR there are the Political Empowerment index aims to evaluate and quantify the gap in the highest level of political and decision making (GGGR, 2021); placing the scope under men and women in political organisms. It takes into account the ratio of women-men in ministerial positions as well as in parliamentary positions; also it considers the ratio of women-men in executive office as prime minister or president in terms of years for the last 50 years. Therefore we will have three parameters to consider when evaluating the progress of political empowerment:

- Women in parliament: it is measured by the percentage of women holding parliamentary seats in relation to the total parliamentary seats (GGGR, 2021).

- Women in ministerial positions: it is measured by the percentage of women holding ministerial positions in relation to the total ministry positions (GGGR, 2021).
- Years with female head of State in the last 50 years: it is measured by the number of years out of the last 50 years for which women was holding executive positions as an elected head of state or as head of the government . However this index only takes into account since 1971 (GGGR, 2021).

These same parameters are used on the analysis and evaluation processes of the forthcoming parts of this research, in order to produce an objective analysis based on parameters recognized by influential international organizations as effective criteria for gender gap analysis.

4. EUROPEAN UNION AS A COMMON FRAMEWORK

This research is focus on the comparison of the performance on political empowerment of two countries: Spain and Denmark. These two countries have been chosen due to its similarities as political system, culture and geographical position. Moreover, apart from sharing the category of Western Countries, these two countries belong to the European Union which reaffirms the cultural and legal similarities among them. Therefore first of all the European Union needs to be analysed as a common framework to expose the international legal context of women's empowerment of these countries as it affects its individual evolution.

4.1 Introduction

The European Union is an international organization composed of 27 countries from the European continent: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden. The United Kingdom which was an original founding member left the union in 2020. The

union was created by the Maastricht Treaty in 1993 to set common policies in economic, social and security issues over the member countries in order to promote political and economic integration and collaboration. Some of the biggest achievements towards political and economic integration are the creation of a single currency known as the euro and common citizenship rights as well as a unified foreign and security policy. Nowadays, the European Union is a major world trading power and the world's second-largest economy.

4.2 Historical background

The European Union is the result of political efforts to integrate European countries since the World War II; there was a long process to get to today's level of cooperation and integration. Six countries – Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and West Germany- signed the Treaty of Paris in 1951 to achieve economic growth and military security founding in 1952 the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC). The ECSC implemented a free trade area for resources as coal, coke, steel, scrap and iron ore. After that, the member states signed two Treaties of Rome establishing the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom) and the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1957. The EEC established a common market almost eliminating barriers to the movement of goods, services, capital and labour and a common external trade policy. Later on, members of EEC signed the Brussels Treaty in 1965 merging the ECSC, the Euratom and the EEC. Then through the 70s and 80s its membership expanded. Both countries analysed in this research were among the first new members of the union; Denmark entered in 1973 along with the United Kingdom and Ireland and the Spain entered in 1986 with Portugal.

Finally the European Union as it is known today was created by the Treaty of Maastricht in 1992 and officially took effect in 1993. The two most ambitious project of its agenda was the incorporation of a common currency; in 2002 the “euro” was introduced for the general public use. Some countries failed to meet the criteria to enter in the monetary union; however Spain was qualified and adopted the change of currency. Meanwhile Denmark chose not to apply.

Despite that fact, the European countries have developed an unprecedented level of cooperation and integration at the political and economic levels.

The membership of the organization gradually grew to the number of 28, although since 2020 it is only 27 as the United Kingdom carry out the first withdrawal from the union. This is the most obvious result of the recent emergence of Euroskepticism as a popular movement, which has exponentially increased since 2009 economic crisis and then exacerbated by the migrant crisis peaking in 2015. Nowadays many euroskepticist political parties have gained popularity in national governments and the European Union faces its worst crisis as the union itself is a risk.

4.3 Gender equality efforts

The creation of the European Economic Community meant a crucial turn over for gender equality policies in Europe (van der Vleuten 2007, 178). Since then the European Union has served as a fruitful framework for gender equality to thrive; it has adopted equal treatment legislation and specific measures for the advancement of women, it has also carried out gender mainstreaming, incorporating the gender lens to all other policies. EU's historical evolution on gender equality can be categorized into three phases, starting in the 70s with a focus on equal treatment, and then moved to positive action in the 80s and finally in the 90s chose a gender mainstreaming approach (Rees, 1998). Lately the EU has adopted an approach of multiple discrimination, taking into account the different axes of inequality.

Since the beginning of the union the member states set the fundamentals to develop women's rights in the EU. The Treaty of Rome which established the European Economic Community (EEC), although mainly economic, it also open to debate of equal pay between men and women (Hoskyns, 1996). Article 119 of the treaty introduced "the principle that men and women should receive equal pay for equal work" (European Economic Community, 1957). In that time in most European countries women earned less than their male colleagues working the same, in some countries even around 50% less and women's

income was seen as a supplement to the family income while men were the head of the family. The motivation of the article 119 were merely economic and it was not until 10 years later that women realized their possibilities and “switched the debate from one of economic rationality to a demand for rights” (Hoskyns, 1996, 57).

As the founding fathers of Europe – literally all men – were mainly economically motivated, issues of social justice were not immediate relevant. “It was not surprising that the member states were in no rush to apply the clause or act upon it” (Debusscher, 2015, p.5); however in the late 60s the general social context and feminist activism got the article implemented. Ten years had to pass for the European Court of Justice (ECJ) to step in a place direct effect of Article 119 so it could be directly invoked by individuals against the State as well as against individuals (Chrystalla 2003).

This first equal treatment approach responds to the liberal feminist tradition; it “implies that no individual should have fewer rights or opportunities than any other” (Rees 1998, 29) and a “legal redress to treat men and women the same” (Rees 2002, 46). This tradition focuses on compensation rather than transformation of society. Then EU changed its approach to positive actions as it was observed that equal treatment does not entail an equal outcome in reality.

According to Woodward (2012) during the 60s the women’s movement had rose and consolidated across Europe, adopting more radical form of feminism and public activism involving young generations. The increase in women’s political consciousness was due to the improvement of women’s educational level and their entrance in the labour market. Women’s Enlightenment changed elections and voting patterns driving socialist and liberal parties to gain representation. And by the 70s women’s empowerment had a high relevance in the EU political agenda; it was encouraged by the UN in 1973 urging members to take concrete actions towards gender equality and declaring 1975 the International Women’s Year. After the intervention of the ECJ, the European Commission (EC) prepared three directives. This directives entailed significant changes to member states’ laws, however not a single country vetoed the directives due to the different pressures. The women’s movement, women in trade unions and

political parties were exerting pressure from below; while women in governments and ministries were pressing from the inside, and the EC, ECJ and the International Women's year declared by the UN were pressure from above (van der Vleuten 2007, 105).

To approve gender equality legislation became more complicated in the 80s as previous directly caused great costs to member states and they were reticent to adopt new ones. Moreover, the 1979 oil crisis originated an economic recession all over the world bringing conservative parties to rule. Measures implemented during the crisis carried out cutbacks on social services, affecting mainly women. Between 1979 and 1992, hardly two directives were passed under the crisis climate, only because of previous commitments from the previous period. Despite the national and supranational pressure, no more binding regulations were approved as they were blocked by British vetoes. Ironically the British government was ruled by a woman at that time, Margaret Thatcher that had a strategy to recover from the crisis in progress and wanted EU's concerns to be limited to the free European market.

Nevertheless, the European Commission continued to deliver non-binding regulations, recommendations for member states and action programmes among other soft law measures. For example, the European Council issued a Recommendation to "adopt a positive action policy designed to eliminate existing inequalities affecting women in working life and to promote a better balance between the sexes in employment" (Council of the European Communities 1984). Moreover, while gender-specific institutional structures were acquired by the Commission and the Parliament; the Commission promoted the foundation of a transnational European women's lobby. According to Hoskyns (1996) this network kept stable the attention placed on gender equality during the climate of the 80s.

This second approach of positive action responds to the tradition of cultural feminism. After the equal treatment approach it was observed that it did not directly entail equal outcomes, therefore this new approach aims to create conditions that more likely equalise the starting positions of men and women (Rees 1998). In the following years, the EU adopted a gender mainstreaming

approach in response to the granted access to address social issues at the beginning of the 90s.

In 1992 was the year when gender equality started to thrive again mainly thanks to two fundamental changes: First, the European Parliament was recognized as a full decision maker next to the Council of Ministers and second, the social dimension entered to take part of the European integration process. This changed follows the collapse of the Soviet Union and the fall of Berlin wall which push European countries to seek deeper integration. The social protocol was introduced in 1997 by the Treaty of Amsterdam adding sex-discrimination protection as an explicit objective in all its activities what is known as gender mainstreaming. As a result the flux of gender equality directives was restored.

This phase approach responds to postmodern feminism which sets gender mainstreaming as its core principle. Gender mainstreaming can be defined as “the integration of a gender perspective into every stage of policy processes – design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation – with a view to promoting equality between women and men” (EU-GER, 2011). Gender mainstreaming should analyse systems in order to find out means by which the system favours men and should find ways to change the system in order to bring equality for men and women (Rees 2002). This approach goes beyond previous ones: equal treatment and positive action that focus on equality of opportunity and equality of outcome respectively. Gender mainstreaming takes a system approach is believed to have a “more transformative potential” (Squires, 2005, p. 370); as it “focuses on the structural reproduction of gender inequality and aims to transform policy processes” (Squires, 2005, p. 370). The European Union officially adopted this approach in 1995 after the UN Beijing Conference on Women, with the adoption of the fourth Action Programme from 1996 to 2000 including gender mainstreaming in its core strategies. Nowadays, gender mainstreaming continues to be the model used by the EU to address the gender dilemma up until today.

Being the European Union an international organization, further global cooperation is expected and demanded. The recent Leader Summit in November 2020 in Riyadh responds to these claims of international efforts

towards gender equality. In the 2020 Summit, “the EU and other G20 leaders agreed to increase efforts on women’s empowerment to help reduce the gender employment gap by 25% by 2025” (EU-GER, 2021, p. 59). These states also renewed its commitment to women’s empowerment promoting women in leadership and the “WeEmpower” programme valued in 22.5 million euros increased the commitment to gender equality and women’s empowerment of public and private sectors at all levels. Moreover, the Women4Mediterranean conference in November 2020 “launched the first region-wide monitoring mechanism built on a set of 20 indicators to measure progress made in gender equality” (EU-GER, 2021, p. 60). Meanwhile, the European Commission has “continued its work with the EEAS for the implementation of the 2019-2024 EU strategic approach and action plan on Women, Peace and Security (WPS), recently incorporated into the Gender Action Plan III for 2021- 2025” (EU-GER, 2021, p. 60). The intention of this action plan is to increase women’s inclusion and integration in areas where they are underrepresented such us security and military sectors and peace and transition processes which continue to be male dominant.

Actually, the Von der Leyen Commission has set a Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025 along with policy objectives and actions intended to be achieving a remarkable progress by 2025. These key objectives are focus on gender-based violence, gender stereotypes, gender equal economy, gender equal labour market, gender pay and pension gaps, and achieving gender balance in decision-making and in politics. The 2020-2025 strategy “reaffirms the importance of ensuring equal opportunities for women and men to participate and lead in society. To implement these new objectives, the European Commission uses all available tools, including legislation, policy measures and funding to promote gender balance in decision-making” (European Union’s Gender Equality Report, 2021, p.45).

Verge & Lombardo (2018) argues that:

“Although legally binding directives on gender quotas have not been adopted, the endorsement of positive actions in the Treaties and the development of soft policy measures on women’s political representation

have contributed to promoting social learning on this issue in the member states” (p. 128)

4.4 Equality status

The European Union has meant a framework under which gender equality has performed an exponential improve, directives, recommendations, efforts and conferences have taken European countries to a higher degree of parity. In order to have a similar evaluation process in the forthcoming part, three main variables will be place under the scope; women’s representation in parliament, women’s representation in ministerial positions and years with women as head of the executive branch.

A high representation of women in political organisms is expected to be found; however according to the 2021 Report on Gender Equality in the EU (2021) “Women's political representation in most EU countries remains below the 40% recommended by the Council of Europe” (p.42). The great difference between EU states keeps the general index relatively low; for example the proportion of women in elected assemblies in the EU as a whole is 32.7% at national level, 34.1% at regional and 34.1% at local level although half member states (EU-GER, 2021, p.42). Spain among other two countries: Sweden and France; are the only members of the union that achieved a gender- balanced representation (at least 40%) in all levels; meanwhile other European countries as Greece and Romania has only 25% (EU-GER, 2021, p. 43). In the last 20 years, eleven member states have placed gender quotas to ensure a minimum of representation in their parliaments; nevertheless a gender balanced candidate list does not entail a gender balanced results. “To date, the proportion of elected women members matched (or exceeded) the quota target only in Portugal and Spain” (EU-GER, 2021, p.44). Notwithstanding, the EU Report (2021) has observed that women are usually placed in areas considered of low political priority as social-cultural policies; it also states the necessity of women being in charge of male dominated areas as security, defence and finance.

The indicator of women at head of executive branches, remains to be the most challenging aspect; although great progress has made towards the inclusion of women in public life, access to high power position have not suffered the same development process. According to the EU Report (2021) as to 2021 only five states had women as head of the government; moreover since 2004, only eight have had a woman as prime minister. Likewise, among the countries where heads of state can be elected, only three have women as presidents (EU-GER, 2021)

The European Union as an organism itself has also carried its own development process of gender equality; back in 2019 European elections, the European Parliament achieved 40% of female representation for the first time. It achieved the most gender balanced composition as the percentage of women representation increased to 48%, but it is committed to reach the 50% at all levels by the end of 2024 (EU-GER, 2021). According to the EU Report (2021), “there is a steady progress towards gender balance in the European Parliament, as the proportion of women has doubled since the first elections in 1979” (p.43). Moreover, the European Commission leads by example in terms of women as head of the executive branch as the first ever female President of the European Commission was appointed in December 2019. Ursula von der Leyen, the recently appointed President of the European Commission, was previously mentioned due to the “SofaGate” incident; this fact reaffirm the fact that although quotas and legal efforts grant women’s access to high power position a public reform is needed (Moghadam & Senftova, 2005) for a real equal appreciation of women at all levels.

5. ANALYSIS OF SPAIN

This research analyses the performance of Spain as relevant feature to have a deeper understanding of gender equality policies and its outcomes due to the fact that Spain has developed an interesting evolution in gender equality despite its late commencement. Spain as other eleven EU member states “have taken steps to improve gender balance in their parliaments by applying legislative quotas ensuring a minimum proportion of each gender amongst candidates”

(EU-GER, 2021, P. 44) However, only Spain and Portugal has managed to increase its proportion of women in elected positions to the quota target (EU-GER, 2021). Therefore it is interesting to analyse the measures implemented in Spain as well as its following outcomes.

5.1 Introduction

The Kingdom of Spain is a country located in the south-western part of the European Continent, being the second largest in the European Union; with a population of 47.3 million people is the fourth most populous country of the European Union (The World Bank, 2021). The political system in Spain is based on the 1978 Constitution which establishes a democratic parliamentary monarchy. The legislative branch is ruled by a bicameral parliament called General Courts formed by the Congress of Deputies and the Senate. While the executive branch is called Council of Ministers and is led by the Prime Minister; the current Prime Minister of Spain is Pedro Sanchez representing the head of the government. Meanwhile, the head of State of this constitutional monarchy is Felipe VI and his position is hereditary; this fact is really relevant for this research as the King's offspring is completely female. Therefore it is generally expected that women will hold the maximum position of power in Spain in the future to come. In economic terms, Spain is identified as a developed country; Spain is the thirteenth largest economy in the world and the sixth largest of Europe. (UN, 2021)

5.2 Spanish political scene

This research identifies women's suffrage as the turning point in women's historical status and as the origin of women's political empowerment; due to the fact that it was a "major event in the history of democratization" (Aidt & Dallal, 2008, p.1). Therefore an historical review of the political context of Spain around the approval of women's suffrage enables us to analyse the starting point of women's empowerment within the Spanish organisms.

Women's suffrage in Spain was introduced in 1931 by the Second Republic of Spain which ruled between 1931 and 1939. At that time Spain had an unstable political landscape as there were more than 10 different governments in less than 9 years. At the time that women's suffrage opened to debate, there were three female representatives in the 1931 legislature, but only one of them, Clara Campoamor (1888-1972), supported women's rights (Tolliver, 2011). Campoamor was extremely relevant in the debate of women's suffrage as she argue that "a constitution that gives the vote to beggars, to servants, and to illiterates cannot deny it to women" (1931). Surprisingly, "left -wing parties were initially reluctant to grant women the right to vote, whereas right-wing parties were generally supportive....based on expectations about women's political behaviour" (Verge & Lombardo, 2018, p.126-127). Finally the article 36 which provided women with the right to vote was approved. Not surprisingly, accordingly to Tolliver "women voters were blamed for the right-wing victory in 1933" (2011, p.248); despite that fact, when women were still voting in 1936 the left-wing won.

According to Tolliver (2011), "it is a commonplace that feminism came late to Spain" (p.243) compared to other western countries. "The so called first wave of feminism - widely associated with the campaign for women's suffrage - was virtually non-existent in Spain" (Tolliver, 2011, p.243). However, in 1915 at the end of the World War II, the The Asociacion Nacional de Mujeres Españolas (National Association of Spanish Women; ANME) was founded to promote women's rights; it was one of the most important Spanish feminist organizations in the early 20th Century (Scanlon, 1986). The association was the most stable and far-reaching in the era between wars; it continued its activity until 1936 with the beginning of the Spanish Civil war which took place between 1936 and 1939.

Despite that war, a new group of women called Mujeres Libres (Free Women) was founded in 1936 with the objective of liberating women. "Mujeres Libres mobilized over 20.000 women and developed an extensive network of activities designed to empower individual women" (Ackelsberg, 2005, p.21). The ANME "strongly supported the inclusion of Article 36 guaranteeing women's right to vote in the new Republican Constitution" (Tolliver, 2011, p. 247) however, once more "its activities in Spain were brought to an abrupt halt by the victory of

Franco's forces in February 1939" (Ackelsberg, 2005, p.21). The following era characterised by censorship and repression was established by the Francoist authoritarian regime which placed a strict limitations of liberties and deterred the women's empowerment in Spain between 1939 and 1976. Therefore despite the fact women's suffrage had been "early" introduced, Spanish women couldn't exercise it until 40 years after the 1936 military coup (Verge, 2012). Thus for the purpose of this research the evolution of women's empowerment in Spain is analysed from its transition to democracy.

5.3 Evolution of women's empowerment in Spain

Short after the culmination of the democratic transition of Spain, as soon as left-wing parties were in power, gender equality was institutionalised in 1983 by the foundation of the Woman's Institute (WI). Its creation responded to the international pressure previous to the entrance of Spain in the European Community in 1986 (Lombardo, 2016). According to Verge (2012) since its inception, the WI has placed women's political representation as one of its highest priorities; proof of that are the three Gender Equality Plans passed between 1982 and 1996. Later on, the WI was reinforced by the creation of Equality Policies General Secretariat in 2004 and the Ministry of Equality in 2008 (Lombardo, 2016).

Threlfall (2005) suggests that "gender balance in elective office became an instrument of renewal and re-legitimation for a party facing political stagnation" (p.1), she argues that "parity can be envisaged not as an 'ethical burden' to parties, but as a factor of revitalisation and reconnection with the electorate" (Threlfall, 2005, p.1) Anyhow, "progress towards a more gender equal representation in politics started in the late 1980s through voluntary quotas in left-wing parties" (Verge 2013), it was a great success and it increased levels of women's representation in Spain. Quotas are a type of positive action, which as previously mentioned were promoted by the European Union between 1979 and 1992; quotas are the most common measure to address women's political participation (Selanec & Senden, 2011). In contrast with previous gender conflicts, party's opinion about gender quotas aligned with to other Western

European countries, “the left being the main advocate and the right the main detractor” (Verge & Lombardo, 2018, p.126).

Later on, the Law 3/2007 was adopted to complement previous quotas establishing legislative gender quotas, it is known as the Equality Law. “Spain is one of the few countries where all three types of quotas – namely electoral, public administration and corporate boards – have been adopted. However, immediate and strong measures were only applied to the electoral sphere” (Verge & Lombardo, 2018, p.126). The Equality Law of 2007 set Legislated Candidate Quotas:

“Lists of candidates put forward under this Act for elections to Congress (...) shall have a balanced proportion of women and men, so that candidates of either sex make up at least 40 per 100 of total membership. Where the number of seats to be covered is less than five, the ratio between women and men shall be as close as possible to equal balance” (Organic Law on Regime of General Elections, Article 44 bis (1)).

This law reforms introduced the principle of “balanced presence by mandating party lists for all elections to include a minimum of 40 per cent and a maximum of 60 per cent of either sex, a proportion to be respected in each stretch of five candidates” (Lombardo, 2016, p.20). Moreover, “most States prescribed financial consequences for political parties that failed to satisfy quota requirements (Selanec & Senden, 2011). The Spanish Equality Law set a strong sanction for non-compliance: “Political parties are given a short period to adjust lists that do not meet the quota requirement. If they fail to do so, the lists will not be approved by the Electoral Commission” (Organic Law on Regime of General Elections, Article 47 (2 and 4)). “This legally binding measure has effectively promoted equality of outcome in political representation” (Verge 2013).

Krook (2009) argues that under a feminist institutionalism approach quotas may not work at the first attempt as they interact with systemic, normative and practical institutions. Nevertheless, he argues that proportional representation systems facilitate women’s representation and produce better fit with quotas, as they are inspired by norms of group participation” (Krook, 2009, p.790) (Selanec

& Senden, 2011) also claim that “Since quotas per se cannot guarantee more equal representation, some States have also insisted on the so-called zipper rule, requiring alternating distribution of places on the list” (p. 16). In 2009 Spain adopted the zipper rule, setting placement rules to party lists:

“Quotas are not only applied to the whole party lists but also to every 5 posts. If the number of eligible posts is less than 5, then the list must be as close as possible to the 40–60% equilibrium (Organic Law on Regime of General Elections, Article 44 bis (2)).

According to Lombardo (2016) the United Left IU political party and the PSOE party have been using the zipper system since 2008 and 2013 respectively. Moreover, the new left-wing political party, called Podemos, “also used zipping in most of the districts in the 2016 general elections, and elected 47.9 per cent women” (Lombardo, 2016, p.20) According to Verge & Lombardo (2018) the fact that 2016 Spanish general elections achieved the highest ever women’s representation (39.4%) is due to left-wing parties using the zipper system. Anyway, Rodríguez Teruel (2011) observed that women are most likely to be changed from one minister to another and thus continuity in the post is more likely for men. The appointment of the pregnant minister of defence Carme Chacón meant a symbolic change in the representation of women in 2008 (Lombardo and Meier 2014), however ministries related to social, family and cultural issues are still assigned to women (Diz and Lois 2016).

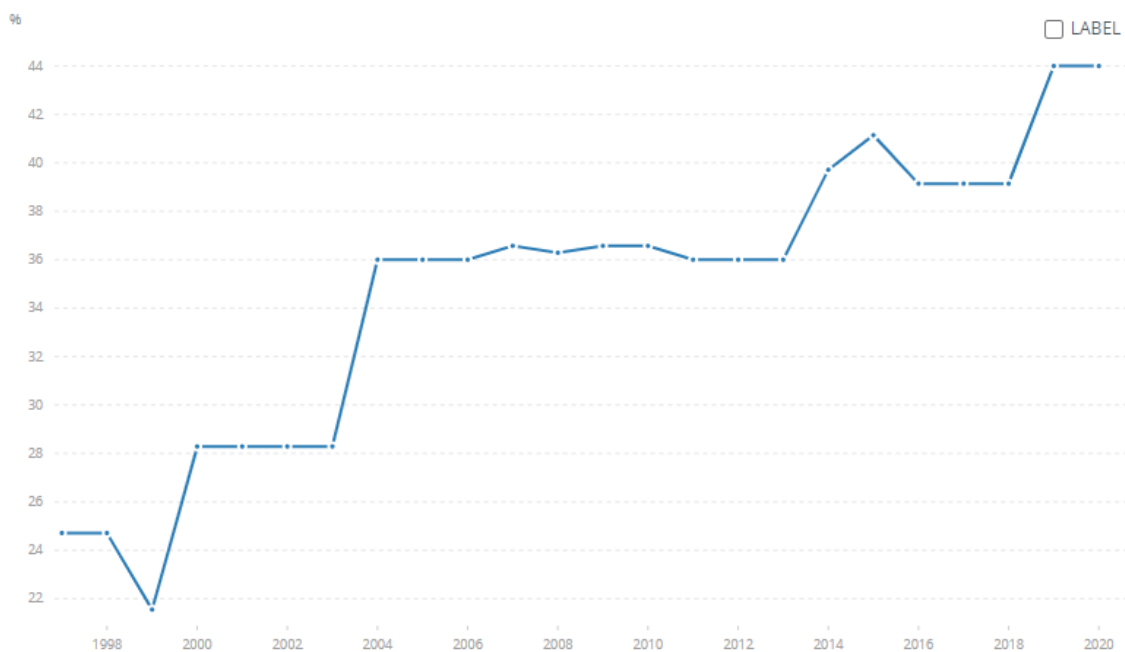
5.4 Current status, Outcomes and Statistics

The current status of Spain is relevant for the research as to analyse the impact and performance of laws and regulations implemented by each government. In order to maintain an objective perspective; same three main variables will be place under the scope; women’s representation in parliament, women’s representation in ministerial positions and years with women as head of the executive branch. According to Threlfall (2005) “in the space of two decades, Spanish women radically repositioned themselves in relation to the political system” (p.2). The GGGR (2021) has evaluated Spain’s political empowerment with a score of 0.491 out of 1; it seems a low score however it is relatively high

taking into account that the world average score is 0.218 out of 1. What is more, Spain holds the 15th position in the world ranking (GGGR, 2021).

In terms of women's representation in parliament, in 2002 Spain "broke a record by having both chambers of parliament presided over by women simultaneously - under a conservative government" (Threlfall, 2005, p.2). Later on, in 2004, after a dramatic general election the percentage of women's representation in the Congress of Deputies rose to 36%; it set Spain in the seventh position in the world ranking (Threlfall, 2005). In the previously mentioned 2016 elections, the Congress of Deputies counted with a 41% of women's representation while the Senate had 36.8%. Another peak in women's participation in Spanish parliament can be observed in 2019 when it reached 44%; since then the female representation in parliament remains the same (The World Bank, 2021)(Figure 1). Recently, Spain has been scored as 0.786 out of 1 by the GGGR (2021) being the 14th in the world ranking.

**FIGURE 1: PROPORTION OF SEATS HELD BY WOMEN IN NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS (%)
- SPAIN**



Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU, 2021)

In terms of women's representation in ministerial positions, 2004 meant a landmark in women's political empowerment in Spain. "The Prime Minister, José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero appointed a gender parity cabinet of eight women and eight men (50%) – one of the very first in Europe" (Threlfall, 2005, p.2). Since then, Spanish government has continued to be one of only two governments with gender parity: Spain and Sweden. As a result of its 50% women's representation in ministerial positions (IPU, 2021); GGGR (2021) evaluated Spain with a score of 1 out of 1 being the first in the world ranking of this area.

Meanwhile, in terms of years with women as head of the executive branch Spain shows the worst improvement, in fact it shows no improvement at all. Spain has never had a female as head of government, but it has had women as head of state in its history as the famous Isabella II from 1833 to 1868. However as previously mention the GGGR only takes into account since 1971 (GGGR, 2021). Therefore the score obtained by Spain is of 0 out of 1 as to 2021 (GGGR, 2021), and despite the female offspring of the current King Felipe VI, the ranking in this area would not be affected as this indicator only takes into account elective positions.

6. ANALYSIS OF DENMARK

This research analyses the performance of Denmark as it has developed an interesting development in women's political participation. "Although the idea of gender equality was formulated and broadly accepted early in Denmark" (Ravn & Rosenbeck, 2008, p.5), Denmark's gender equality in political empowerment is lower than in Spain (GGGR, 2021). Therefore it is interesting to analyse the measures implemented in Denmark to understand its following outcomes.

6.1 Introduction

The Kingdom of Denmark is a country located in the northern part of European Continent; with its population of 5.84 million it is the 16th most populous country

of the European Union (The World Bank, 2021). It is identified as a Nordic country which are recognized as the best performers in gender equality by the GGGR (2021). Denmark's political system is based on the 1953 Constitution; it establishes a democratic parliamentary monarchy. The legislative branch is ruled by Folketing and the executive branch is ruled by the Danish government and leaded by the Prime Minister. The current Prime Minister of Denmark Mette Frederiksen, however she is not the first women representing the head of the government. Denmark is a constitutional monarchy and its head of State is also a woman Margrethe II since 1972; despite that fact, the Queen's offspring is completely male and thus soon men are expected inherit the thrown as it is a hereditary monarchy. In economic terms, Denmark is the 36th largest economy in the world and the 15th largest of Europe (UN, 2021).

6.2 Danish political scene

This research identifies women's suffrage as the turning point in women historical status and as the origin of women's political empowerment; as Dahlerup, et al. (2002) considers women's suffrage as "one of the most important issues of recognition in feminist history" (p. 341) A historical review of the political context of Denmark around the approval of women's suffrage enables us to analyse the Danish starting point of women's empowerment.

Dahlerup (2001) argues that the history of the feminist movement in Denmark can be categorized in three waves and these form one long feminist movement in history, called "the continuity thesis". "In the Nordic countries the continuity of the feminist movement is unquestioned" (Dahlerup, et al., 2002, p.341); that is because "the original feminist organizations that fought for women's access to education, for the legal rights of married women and later for the suffrage still exist in the Nordic countries" (Dahlerup, et al., 2002, p.341). Dansk Kvindesamfund (Danish Women's Society), founded in 1871, is the oldest Danish Organization and nowadays it has a notorious role as a Women's trade union. According to Dahlerup, et al. (2002) up until 1909 "the first free Danish Constitution of 1849 was celebrated for, among other things, having introduced "universal" suffrage...The fact that women as well as male servants were

excluded was ignored” (p.341). Denmark’s political system could be identified as a gendered institution by feminist institutionalism analysts, as women were categorized as non-citizens and thus excluded from political life based on its gender.

According to Dahlerup, et al. (2002) the first wave started in 1871 with the foundation of the Danish Women’s Society and the Social Democratic Party in Denmark. The objectives of this first wave “married women’s legal maturity, women’s access to higher education, and unmarried women’s right to jobs in the public sector. The urge for recognition as equal to men was very strong” (p.343). At the start of the 19th Century the feminist movement in Denmark changed its focal point; the second wave’s objective was women’s suffrage (Dahlerup, et al., 2002). It united the broadest alliance of women in Danish history; Richards Evans has noted that, in relation to the size of the population, the mobilization for suffrage in Denmark was remarkable (Evans, 1977, p.80). The right to vote in and stand for public local elections was approved in 1908 and the parliamentary suffrage was obtained in 1915 (Ravn & Rosenbeck, 2008). However, according to Ravn & Rosenbeck (2008) “in most cases women’s voices were heard...influenced by a strong alliance of the Danish Women’s Society and female Social-Democratic trade unionists” (p. 9). The between-wars period the feminist movement remain silent, it continued to establish women organizations (Dahlerup, et al., 2002). The third wave was defined as a “radical and leftist feminism with the consciousness-raising group as its main organization base” (Dahlerup, et al., 2002, p.346); it challenged traditional gender roles and the patriarchal biologicistic discourse.

6.3 Evolution of women’s empowerment in Denmark

According to Rolandsen (2015) “Denmark has never adopted national legislation regulating gender quota in politics and has no voluntary gender quota in political parties” (p. 1). Despite that fact women’s representation in Danish parliaments has been about 37% for the past five elections (Rolandsen, 2015). He claims that “it is a paradox that the relatively high female representation since 1998 has been reached without gender quotas” (Rolandsen, 2015, p.1).

According to Bergqvist et al. (1999) it follows the Danish equality policy's bottom-up approach. Borchorst and Siim (2008) argue that civil society solutions are preferred by Danish democracy and political culture. As Rolandsen (2015) observes "the Danish tradition for mobilizing social actors from below dates back to at the beginning of the 20th century. Alliances between social movements and social partners and women were important for the adoption of women's right to vote" (p. 2).

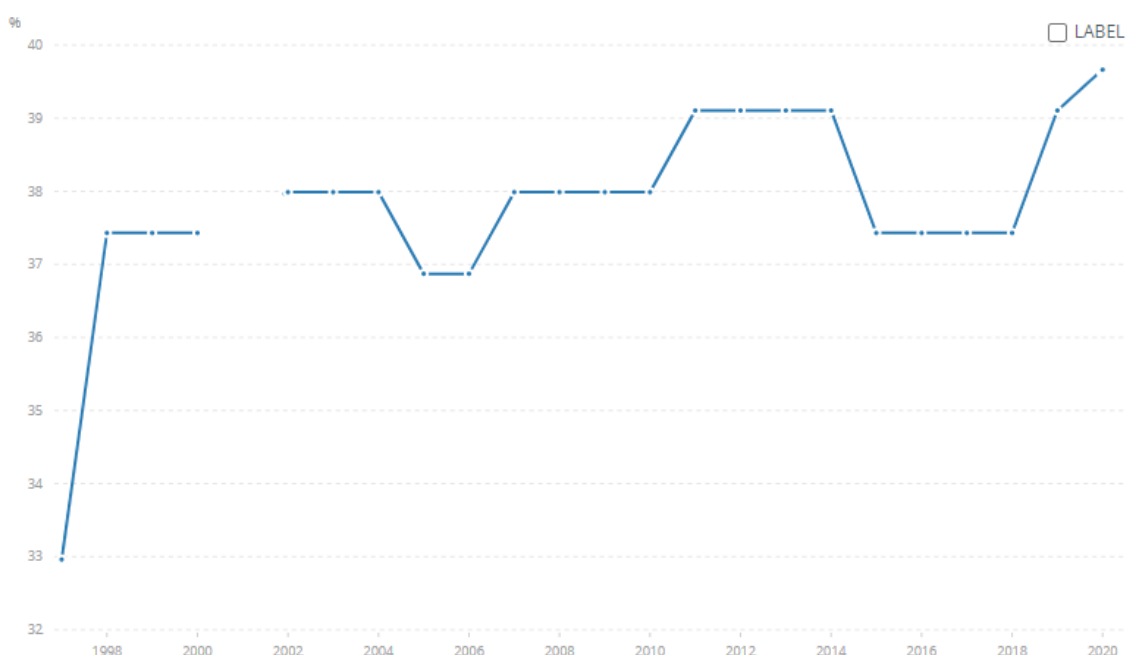
Since the 1990s, Rolandsen (2015) claims that "there has been a growing resistance to gender parity, especially to gender quota, coming from both women and men in liberal, conservative and populist parties based upon strong beliefs in the liberal principles of individual citizens "free choice"" (p.3). "Two political parties, the Social Democrats and the Socialist People's Party did adopt voluntary gender quotas but only for short periods. Both parties abolished these quotas again at party congresses in 1996" (Christensen, 1999, p. 78). In the 1980s the Social Democrats used party candidate quotas for EU and municipal elections while the Socialist People's Party used them for national parliamentary elections (Niskanen, 2011). Arguments of these parties were that "equal representation should and could be reached by voluntary democratic means through a mobilization of women and men within and outside the parties to get them to vote for female candidates through the electoral system" (Rolandsen, 2015, p. 4).

6.4 Current status, Outcomes and Statistics

The impact and performance of laws and regulations implemented by the Danish government can be observed through the current status of the country. For this purpose the same three variables are used once more to analyse Denmark's status in order to keep the research's approach objective: women's representation in parliament, women's representation in ministerial positions and years with women as head of the executive branch. The GGGR (2021) has evaluated Denmark's political empowerment with a score of 0.371 out of 1; it is relatively high taking into account that the world average score is 0.218 out of 1. Denmark holds the 32th position in the world ranking as to the GGGR (2021).

In terms of women’s representation in parliament Denmark “is characterized by an almost gender balance on national level but also a slow development rate at the point of stagnation” (Rolandsen, 2015, p. 3). Since 2009, the average has been around 39%; however (as observed in the Figure 2) it has never surpassed the 40% (the World Bank, 2021); being the only Nordic country out of the top 10 world ranking in political empowerment (GGGR, 2021). Recently, Denmark has been scored as 0.658 out of 1 by the GGGR (2021).

**FIGURE 2: PROPORTION OF SEATS HELD BY WOMEN IN NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS (%)
- DENMARK**



Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU, 2021)

In terms of women’s representation in ministerial positions, Denmark as to 2021 has a 31.6% as from 19 positions women only hold nine of them (IPU, 2021). According to Rolandsen (2011) “the former liberal-conservative government had already challenged traditional gender segregation into different policy areas by appointing both a female minister of defence and a female foreign minister” (p.13). According to the GGGR (2021) Denmark’s score is 0.462 holding the 43rd position of the world raking.

In terms of years with women as head of the executive branch; it is remarkable to mention the first even female Prime Minister, Helle Thorning-Schmidt appointed in 2011 (Rolandsen, 2015) and the current female Prime Minister

Mette Frederiksen. In addition to that, the head of state is a woman since 1972; however this fact does not affect the GGGR score as it only takes into account elective positions. Denmark's score in this area is 0.118 being the global average 0.114; as to the last 50 years women has hold the maximum position of the executive branch for 5.3 years.

7. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

7.1 Comparison of Background

The Kingdom of Spain and the Kingdom of Denmark were chosen as subject of study due to its similarities: both are European countries under the European Union and they are based on constitutions setting constitutional hereditary monarchies. Moreover, they are developed countries ruled by parliamentary democracies. The only difference found in the setting of both countries is that Spain is a bicameral parliamentary system while Denmark does not divide its legislative branch. Apart from that, it is relevant to mention that while both, the Spanish Prime Minister and the Spanish Head of State, are men; in Denmark both highest positions in policy-making are currently hold by women.

7.2 Comparison of Baseline

The differences in this area are obvious as each country showed a particular process in the establishment of women's suffrage. While Denmark carried out "the continuity thesis" Dahlerup (2001), feminist efforts in Spain originated under an unstable political landscape and women's access to vote was constantly revoked by conflicts and male-dominant repression of liberties. Although Danish women had to fight first for more basic rights delaying its empowerment; Spanish women encountered notably more obstacles for their voices to be heard as according to Ravn & Rosenbeck (2008) "in most cases women's voices were heard" (p. 9) in Denmark. From that point of view, Spain faced a greater barrier as the real challenge for Spanish women is to be valued and

heard equally as men. Because of that, while “the campaign for women’s suffrage - was virtually non-existent in Spain” (Tolliver, 2011, p.243); Richards Evans (1977) described the mobilization for suffrage in Denmark as remarkable.

7.3 Comparison of Evolution

The way Denmark and Spain have addressed gender equality differ greatly as Spain has relied in gender quotas since the European Union promoted positive action on addressing the issue. Denmark, however, has refused to add gender quotas to promote women’s political representation; Danish society aims to achieve gender equality “by voluntary democratic means through a mobilization of women and men within and outside the parties” (Rolandsen, 2015, p. 4). It is aligned with the Danish equality policy’s bottom-up approach (Bergqvist et al., 1999); Danish democracy and political culture prefer civil society solutions (Borchorst and Siim, 2008), for that reason Denmark has never adopted national legislation regulating gender quota in politics (Rolandsen, 2015). The opposite approach is observed in Spain where the Equality Law was necessary in order to achieve parity; in Spain women’s participation in political life was not generally accepted, even women act against women’s suffrage approval (Tolliver, 2011). Moreover, in order to fully fight against the obstacles predicted by the feminist institutionalism when interacting with gendered institutions, Spanish law has also added more articles stating sanctions for non-compliance and placement rules known as zipper system.

7.4 Comparison of Outcomes and Statistics

According to the asymmetrical evolution of women’s political empowerment in Spain and Denmark, each country has its own development pattern. Spain has shown an exponential increase in parliamentary and ministerial participation of women since the 90s following the party quotas established by left-wing parties of that time (Verge 2013) and the later 2007 Equality Law. Notwithstanding, Denmark had an impressive acceptance of women in politics at their entrance in the political life, as women counted as to the 36% of parliamentary

representations in 1998 (The World Bank, 2021). This data responds to the fact that feminine voices were already taken into consideration for political change and debate (Ravn & Rosenbeck, 2008). However, in the following years Denmark has failed to improve and remains at a point of stagnation (Rolandsen, 2015). Meanwhile, the area of women at highest political positions has developed the less as gender quotas failed to address the issue, it is remarkable to mention that Denmark has had improvement in this area. This fact responds to the image of women in Nordic countries where the gender gap on public opinion is lower and women are accepted as trustworthy political individuals.

8. CONCLUSION

From the perspective of a simple fact check, it could be concluded that Denmark has higher women's political empowerment as the maximum power positions of Denmark's policy making are currently held by women. This expectation is reinforced when looking at the way women's access to political life started: in Denmark "the idea of gender equality was formulated and broadly accepted early in Denmark" (Ravn & Rosenbeck, 2008, p.5), meanwhile, Spain did not only have to obtain women's suffrage but also men's respect and value, which is harder to achieve, in order to have a real impact and influence in politics. This is shown by the fact that no women have ever held maximum power positions in the Spanish system (GGGR, 2021).

Although legal provisions to grant women access to vote appear late in Denmark in relation to the institutionalized feminist movement already present. Women were already influencing in politics by other means and were completely recognized as a political lobby (Ravn & Rosenbeck, 2008). For this reason Danish equality policies follow a bottom-up approach (Bergqvist et al., 1999) and after the European Union promoted positive action, Denmark refused to add gender quotas to its legislation as they prefer "voluntary democratic means" (Rolandsen, 2015). However, this approach has its limitations as it has been observed that Denmark does not manage to surpass the 40%, neither in women's participation in parliament nor in women's representation in ministerial positions. Meanwhile, gender quotas implemented in Spain has effectively

improved women's participation in parliaments (44% of women's representation) and enabled the ministries to achieve total parity, 50% (GGGR, 2021).

Therefore, the implementation or non-implementation of gender quotas for electoral candidate lists seems to be the determinant variation to explain the different evolutions of these two European countries. Despite the first impressions of these countries, the later outcomes and statics show that Spain "has shown a path of positive development" (Lombardo, 2016, p.8) despite its obstacles and unstable commencement. And Denmark, in exchange, has wasted the gender policy-making momentum trusting in the free choice of its society. Surprisingly, each strategy works in a different way providing advantages in different matters. Gender quotas, identified as a legal reform, work perfectly to increase and ensure balanced compositions of political bodies, while trusting in public and civil reform promotes the empowerment of the women's public image as equal to men. Moghadam & Senftova (2005) states that the process to integrate women in political life is through legal and public reform, thus it can be argue that a change of strategy by both countries shall be made in order to tackle the remaining gaps in women's political empowerment of each country.

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