



EU: A Boys' club?

Feminist theory and the European Union: Does it matter who our representatives are?

Ástrós Signýjardóttir

Lokaverkefni til MA-gráðu í alþjóðasamskiptum

Félagsvísindasvið



HÁSKÓLI ÍSLANDS

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Ritgerð þessi er lokaverkefni til MA-gráðu í alþjóðasamskiptum og er óheimilt að afrita ritgerðina á nokkurn hátt nema með leyfi rétthafa.

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Útdráttur

Viðfangsefni þessarar ritgerðar er Evrópusambandið og staða kynjajafnréttis innan framkvæmdastjórnar þess. Á undanförunum áratugum hefur veik staða kvenna innan alþjóðastofnana orðið æ meira áberandi. Aukið jafnrétti kynjanna, og aukið hlutfall kvenna í háttsettum stöðum, ættu að vera hluti markmiða í stefnumótun innan framkvæmdastjórnar sambandsins. Markmið þessarar ritgerðar er að kanna hvort það skipti máli að meirihluti þeirra sem starfa innan alþjóðastofnana séu karlmenn. Kannað verður sérstaklega hvort framkvæmdastjórn Evrópusambandsins uppfylli eigin kröfur um jafnrétti kynjanna.

Tvennskonar rannsóknaraðferðum er beitt við að leita svara við vangaveltum og spurningum. Meginþungi ritgerðarinnar byggir á fræðilegum heimildum, s.s. rannsóknum, bókum, fræðigreinum og útgefnu efni af vef Evrópusambandsins. Til þess að geta metið stöðu kynjajafnréttis innan framkvæmdastjórnarinnar mun ég gera rannsókn á stofnunum hennar og störfum.

Helstu niðurstöður benda til þess að þrátt fyrir aukna þátttöku kvenna í stjórnmálum, þurfum við að gera betur. Það er ekki nóg að vona. Það verða allir að líta í eigin barm, hvort sem um ræðir einstaklinga, ríki eða alþjóðastofnanir. Þrátt fyrir góð fyrirheit hefur framkvæmdastjórn Evrópusambandsins ekki staðið við skuldbindingar sínar og loforð varðandi jafnrétti kynjanna. Margar ástæður kunna að liggja þar að baki, m.a. sú hvernig samfélög, bæði ríkja og á alþjóðavettvangi, hafa verið mótuð af karllægum gildum.

Abstract

In this thesis the goal is to look at the European Union (EU) and see how the Union's Commission is handling the battle for gender equality. In the last decades it has become ever more obvious that women are under-represented in international organizations and decision-making. Gender equality, and more women among high-appointed officials, should be one of the guiding lights of EU's Commissions policy work. In this thesis, gender equality within the Commission will be closely looked at.

Seeking answers to these questions, two types of research methods are used. The main part of the thesis is based on already existing materials, e.g. surveys, books, articles and materials published by the EU. To get a critical judgement on the collected materials, I will do an empirical analysis on the Commission's infrastructure to get a deeper sense of how gender equality issues are evolving within the Commission.

The main results are, that in spite of the increased participation of women in politics, it is not enough to hope and encourage others to work further on gender equality. We have to start with ourselves. In spite of all the good promises, gender equality within EU's Commission is yet to be perceived. There are multiple reasons for why that is so, and in this thesis the biggest emphasis will be on the patriarchal system and how the political system, international and regional, has been, and still is, shaped by men's experiences.

Key words: feminist theory, hegemonic masculinity, the European Union, societies, gender equality, international relations, the international system.

Foreword and Acknowledgements

The European Union has been of my interest for a long time. After Iceland's application for membership was delivered in 2009, I became even more interested in the Union's structure and policies. With the ever-growing attention for the status of gender equality, I found my self highly intrigued to do an empirical analysis on the status of gender equality within the European Union. I decided to focus my analysis on the Union's Commission.

This thesis constitutes my Master's thesis, worth 30 ECTS, in International Relations at the Faculty of Political Science of the University of Iceland. The thesis was written under the supervision of dr. Maximilian Conrad, Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Political Science.

The thesis' idea came to life when I wrote an essay in dr. Conrad's class on European integration theories. There, I wrote about women in the EU and whether the EU was working on gender equality issues. The title, EU: A boys' club, reflects the thought that although the EU is working on many good policies, it is still criticized for not putting enough effort on women and gender equality. I wanted to take a closer look.

I would not have managed to finish this analysis without the help of some people. First, I would like to thank my mentor, dr. Maximilian Conrad, for his help, comments and for somehow managing to keep me on track during this work. Also, I would like to thank my sister, Sara Hrund, for her help, support, comments and babysitting during my writings. I thank my partner, Hugl, for showing me understanding, and last, but not at least, I thank my mother, Signý, for her endless encouragement.

I dedicate this paper to my nine months old son, Auðunn Sölvi, who for sure makes this world a better place.

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1. Introduction

As Eleanor Roosevelt and many others have observed, international politics are a men's world. It is a world inhabited by international, masculine, civil servants. Apart from an occasional head of state, there is little evidence suggesting that women have played much of a role in shaping the foreign policy within states and international organizations in the 19th and 20th centuries. The dominating view has been that women are not supposed to be interested in the foreign policies of states and international organizations. Women who have had the chance to work in the sector have been regarded as emotional and weak for the tough life within foreign policy and decision-making.¹

International politics have always been a gendered activity in the modern state system. Since foreign policy has always been conducted to men, the discipline has primarily been about men and masculinity.² However, gender equality is one of the issues that many international and regional organizations are working on. Still, somehow, women are in the minority of those working in policy and decision-making within the international system.

The European Union has long been a subject matter among those who are interested in home and foreign affairs. Since its establishment in 1952, by the Treaty of Rome and the Coal and Steel Community, the Union has expanded both in issue areas and members. What started as an economic community between five Member States is now one of the largest international organizations in the world, with 27 Member States.³ The Union stands at a crossroad at the moment because of its economic, eurozone, crisis and it will be interesting to see what path will be set out for the Union's future.

¹ J. Ann Tickner, *Gender in international relations; feminist perspectives on achieving global security* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 1-4.

² Tickner (1992), 6.

³ The European Union, "The history of the European Union," 2012.
http://europa.eu/about-eu/eu-history/index_en.htm (25.02.2012).

Gender equality is one of the issue areas tackled by the EU, and equality strategies have been set out. Women are still, today, under-represented in international institutions, both their decision-making and policy-making. The root cause of the problem may lie within the social structures, the institutions and those values and beliefs that create and perpetuate the imbalance between men and women. The goal should therefore be to reshape these processes for women's involvement rather than just add women to the men's world. The existing knowledge of the international system must be thought of as in relation to those that have written the history and shaped the knowledge. Men have been in power, so therefore, the knowledge of the international system is shaped by their experiences and views.

The thesis' idea came to life while I wrote an essay in dr. Conrad's class on European integration theories. I wrote about women in the EU and whether the EU was working on gender equality issues. The title, EU: A boys' club reflects that although the EU is working on many good policies, it is still criticized for not putting enough effort on women and gender equality.

I was further intrigued after I read an article by Emanuela Lombardo, on whether EU's gender policy was trapped in her so-called Wollstonecraft dilemma. In the article, the author argues that the Spanish government has deliberately neglected EU's proposals and directives regarding gender equality. Therefore, the author assumes, that although the EU has many good gender policy programs, they are limited within the patriarchal context of the institutional infrastructure within the EU and its Member States.⁴ Later I read EU's published paper on the *good* progress of the Spanish government regarding gender equality. Therefore I found myself highly motivated to dig deep and examine EU's gender equality further.

I have always been interested in EU matters and issues regarding gender equality. As a woman, I am aware, even before this study begins, of the fact that women are under-represented within the international system due to, for

⁴ Emanuela Lombardo, "EU Gender Policy: Trapped in the Wollstonecraft Dilemma," *The European Journal of Women's Studies* 10(2) (2003): 159-180. <http://ejw.sagepub.com/content/10/2/159.full.pdf+html> (14.02.2012).

instance, the reason that men hold on tight to their power and refuse to promote women to political position above themselves. Throughout the thesis I will try to position myself away from my opinions, although I am aware that they might affect my findings.

The name of the thesis reflects the assumption that the EU is a boys' club. The research question: *Does it matter who our representatives are?* regards the assumption that by reshaping the international system, and getting more women to be involved in decision-making processes, the system will change. The question is based on the arguments put forward by feminist theory, that women are under-represented within international organizations. In the thesis I will answer why that is so and the possible affects it may have. As will be noted later, using the research methods within gender analysis, I look closely at whether it makes a difference that most of the officers working in international organizations are men.

The main part of the thesis is based on already existing materials, e.g. surveys, books, articles and materials published by the EU. To get a critical judgement on the collected materials, I will do an empirical analysis on the Commission's infrastructure to get a deeper sense of how gender equality issues are tackled inside the Commission and inside EU's infrastructure. By doing this I hope to answer the research question. Theories of feminism and of hegemonic masculinity will be used to question the status of gender equality within the Commission, and argue why the status is so. In order to trace the reasons behind the status of gender equality within the EU today, I will look at EU's history with a gender-critical view. I will look closely at the Commission's infrastructure and analyse its Commissioners, directorates general and presidency, especially.

Throughout my work I will try to be conscious of using material made both by men and women. As will be further noted in the chapter on theoretical background, women's exclusion from the theoretical aspect is a problem in itself.

1.1. Structure

In the first chapter the thesis' introduction and structure is outlined.

In the second chapter I outline the methodology, research methods and the discourse analysis behind my analysis.

In the third chapter I introduce the theoretical background of my analysis. The main focus is on feminist theory, its origins and its focus on the absence of women in international politics. Other mainstream theories of European integration, liberal intergovernmentalism and neo functionalism, will be discussed and criticized for not putting enough emphasis on the absence of women within the Union and the international system. I will also go through the theory of hegemonic masculinity. Throughout history, masculinity and politics have a close relationship. Characteristics such as toughness, courage and power have been associated with men while women have been regarded as weak, vulnerable and second-rated. Therefore, the concept of hegemonic masculinity is interesting when looking at international organizations such as the EU, its history and infrastructure.

In the fourth chapter, feminist theory and its many forms, liberal feminist theory, radical feminist theory, postmodernist feminist theory and critical feminist theory are discussed. The difference between how the various forms regard women in power position are of a special concern in that discussion.

In the fifth chapter I look closely at the history of the European Union, in a feminist critical view. The issue of whether the EU, and its history, has left women absent, is discussed. I look closely at the origins of the Union, its background and evolution throughout the years. Using feminist theory and the concept of hegemonic masculinity, EU's history will be criticized for neglecting women's status and impact.

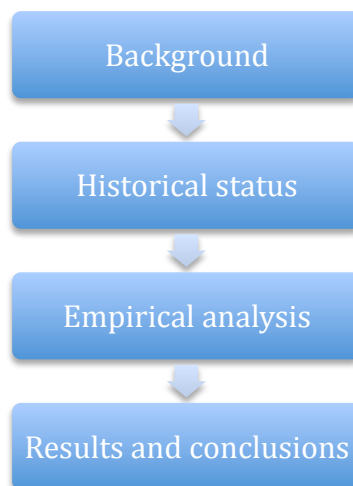
In chapter six, I look at the legislation and treaty reforms regarding gender equality within the EU. The concept of gender mainstreaming is explained and discussed, along with the Commission's role in enhancing gender equality within the Union and its Member States.

In chapter seven the descriptive, empirical, analysis is carried out on EU's Commission's work regarding gender equality. I look especially at the Commission's role in achieving gender equality within EU's Member States. Its Commissioners, presidency and the Commission's directorates general will be of a special discussion. I use graphs and statistics in order to make my analysis clearer to the reader.

In chapter eight the thesis' results are gathered. The results' limitations and further research on the topic are discussed. The main results point to the fact that gender equality within the European Commission has not yet been reached, in spite of good efforts. There are many explanations why so. In this thesis the biggest emphasis will be on the patriarchal system and how the political system, international and regional, has been, and still is, shaped by men's experiences.

Conclusions will be put forward in chapter nine.

Here is a graph of the thesis' structure:



2. Methodology

In this chapter, I outline the research methods, the discourse analysis and the methodology behind my empirical analysis on gender equality within the European Commission.

2.1. Research methods

It can be a challenge for a researcher to decide upon a methodological strategy for an empirical study, maybe especially so when the theoretical background lies within feminist studies. Perhaps the reason is, that within feminist theory there are many understudies.

The research methods used in this thesis are based on feminist theory and the idea of gender analysis. By introducing gender analysis, feminists argue, the impact of the state system and the global economy, on the lives of women and men, can be fully understood. Concepts such as sovereignty, the state and security, are critically re-examined and new questions are asked, such as whether it makes a difference that the majority of foreign political leaders and heads of international organizations are men, and why women remain disempowered in matters of foreign policy.⁵

In this thesis, these questions will be asked and answered. The questions whether it makes a difference that the majority of foreign policy leaders, and heads of governments are men, will be of a special concern, and answered by going through EU's history and the status of gender equality within the Union's Commission today.

As Tickner has noted, feminists are motivated by the goal of investigating the lives of women within the international structure in order to change it.⁶ The facts that men are the dominating sex within international organizations and women

⁵ J. Ann Tickner and Laura Sjoberg, "Feminism," in *International Relations Theories: Discipline and Diversity*, ed. Steve Smith, Tim Dunne and Milja Kurki, (Oxford University Press, 2010), 4.

⁶ Tickner (1992), 6.

have been the under-represented sex for centuries, is something that I was aware of before this study began. My goal is to seek a better understanding of how gender perspectives are integrated in the EU, from the beginning to its gender-status today.

I hope my analysis will lead me to a result, although I am aware of my thesis' limitations, outlined further in the results chapter. Although Tickner asserts that measures such as women's participation in politics and percentage of women in the workforce, do not adequately capture the fact that states have been historically constituted as gender entities⁷, I choose to look at the percentage of women within the Commission and its departments, amongst other resources. I believe that many feminist research questions, and the ones within gender analysis e.g. the one on whether it makes a difference that the majority of officials within international organizations are men, can be answered by looking at the background, and by looking for instance at the status of gender equality within states. To me, the percentage of women within the decision-making and policy-making is highly important when looking at the status of gender equality. As will be noted further on, the concept of hegemonic masculinity is about the ways in which men gain their power, and hold on to it. To me, therefore, as long as women are not able to participate not much will change.

It has taken some time to integrate feminist studies into the greater discipline of theories of international relations. Still today, a negative connotation persists and the debate over feminist methodology is rich within literature. Tickner has been one of the primary advocates for bridging the gap between feminist researchers and international relations scholarships.

Tickner argues that feminist studies are at times too different from other ontological assumptions of international relations. That fact makes it difficult to compare or evaluate the one to the other. Feminist theory and research is motivated by the goal of investigating women's lives within international

⁷ Tickner and Sjoberg, 4.

structures, or states, in order to change or reconstruct them.⁸ However, feminist theories don't always capture the whole reality.

Taking these arguments into account, it can be argued that other theories than feminist ones could apply to the theoretical background of my thesis. Karl Marx's theory, about the conflicts between the societal classes and how those conflicts push for progress within societies, could maybe apply. The conflicts are between the rich and poor, men and women, because of the economical sector.⁹ Therefore, it can be argued that individuals, according to Marx, are not just floating with the societal structure as, in my opinion, feminist theories often assume. Within Marx's theory, women are aware of their under-representation within the societal structure and therefore, the conflicts that push for societal progress occur. Marx's ideas will be further discussed in the section on hegemonic masculinity.

Max Weber's theory could also be of a use. Weber argued that ideas and thoughts of individuals shape societies and their progresses. Therefore he assumed that individuals shape the societal structure within societies, based on their believes and thoughts.¹⁰ Here, a similarity can be seen between Weber's theory and feminist theory, as will be noted later on in the thesis.

Based on the fact that other theories than feminist ones could be appropriate within the scope of my thesis, I will be critical regarding some of the assumptions put forward by feminist theory.

2.2. Methodology

The goal of my investigation on the European Commission is to evaluate its actions to tackle gender inequality. Due to the goal of my research I will evaluate the Commission's gender equality status within its presidency, directorates general and among its Commissioners.

⁸ Tickner and Sjoberg, 4-5.

⁹ Free Essays," Marx and Weber, " 2003. <http://www.freeessays.cc/db/38/pbk62.shtml> (23.03.2012).

¹⁰ Same reference.

There are a number of reasons for why I have chosen to put my emphasis on gender equality within the Commission. One of them being the arguments put forward by feminist theory, that women have been under-represented within international politics due to the socialization of their roles as women, e.g. they are not supposed to be interested in political matters and decision-making.¹¹ Due to that argument, I find it highly interesting to analyze the status of gender equality within the Union's Commission. As has been noted, my focus will be on the Commission's presidency, the directorates-general and on those working within the Commission. By looking closely at these three aspects of the Commission, with the arguments of feminist theory in mind, I hope to get a good sense of the status of gender equality within the Commission.

2.3. Discourse analysis

I believe it is important to inform the readers on how I understand some frequently used terms in the thesis.

The main concepts used are those that are often most difficult to explain. The concept of gender equality is used repeatedly. I use the definition from EU's Commission's 'Strategy for Equality Between Women and Men', which says that 'gender equality is when there is no discrimination based on sex, anywhere in the private or public sphere.'¹² Based on that definition, I assume that gender equality is not reached while there are more men than women working in decision-making positions within international institutions, as is argued by feminist theory.

When referring to the international system I include international organizations, the media and governments.

¹¹ Tickner (1992), 1-4.

¹² European Commission, Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, "New Strategy on Gender Equality," 2010.
<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=89&furtherNews=yes&langId=en&newsId=890> (25.02.2012).

2.4. Source criticism

Feminist theories have contributed substantially to the understanding of global and regional politics. They have worked hard on restoring women's visibility, investigated gendered constructions of international policies and questioned the naturalness of the masculinity, that shapes global politics and decision-making. However, feminist theory is worth some criticism. In my opinion, the arguments put forward by the theory sometimes look at individuals as 'think-less' victims of the societies' structure. It's sometimes like it is assumed that individuals don't question their beliefs and values by asking where they come from. In my opinion, the reality is not entirely so. Feminist theory would not have been created if women (and men) had not paid attention to the under-representation of women. If everyone's just going with the flow, without questioning for example why they act as they act, then in my opinion, feminist theory and feminist movements would not exist.

Therefore, I think it is worth criticizing and pointing out that feminist theory in its many forms is not perfect as it is today. Hence, in the thesis, I will be critical regarding some of the assumptions put forward by feminist theory. I could have used other theories of social sciences, for instance Weber's theory, but since feminist theory has been the most critical regarding women's status in the international system, I decided to apply it to my thesis.

3. Theoretical background

As an introduction to the main bodies of the theories used in this paper, in the following sections are discussions of the basic principles within feminist theory and other mainstream theories of international relations. From the theories, the close look on gender equality within EU's Commission will become clearer. Feminist theory is one of the most known and widespread theory regarding gender equality and women's emancipation. Therefore, it will be introduced to the reader in order to provide a basis of knowledge for assessing the gender perspectives within the EU and EU's Commission. In this chapter I hope to provide the reader with the impetus behind the literature used in my study. Since this thesis is partially built upon an empirical analysis, it is highly important to look closely at the theoretical background considering women's status within the international system.

3.1. Feminist theory

Feminist theory is the number one theory regarding the status of women within the international system. Within the theory, women's under-representation and the invisibility of women are highlighted, and relevant questions asked, e.g. why today, less than 10 percent of the world's heads of state are women. The main focus is on reaching equality between men and women. The ultimate goal is to make women visible within the field of international politics. Within feminist theory, the important role that women play in shaping the foreign policy of states is demonstrated. The focus is on studying issues that are most often disregarded by other theories of international relations, such as military prostitution, domestic service and home-based work. Those issues are usually regarded as 'women's only.'¹³ Why that is so will be further discussed later.

According to Estelle B. Friedman and Astrid Henry, the development of feminist theory happened in three waves. The first-wave was in the nineteenth century

¹³ Tickner and Sjöberg, 2.

and early twentieth century. The focus was mainly on the role of women within marriages, their parenting roles and equal contracts. The aim was to gain more political power for women, since it was noticeable that they were under-represented within the political field. At the same time feminists were actively campaigning for women's economic and sexual rights.¹⁴

Second wave feminism began in the early 1960s, and focused on equality issues regarding the discrimination of women. During the second-wave period, feminists tried to make the gendered political inequality apparent.

Third wave feminism began in the early 1990s, as a response to little improvements regarding gender equality, despite of the efforts made by the first and second wave feminist movements. In the third wave, the aim was to spread out the arguments put forward by feminist theory, and make the gender inequality visible to women outside the Western culture.^{15 16}

According to Tickner and Sjoberg, within feminist theory, gender is defined as 'socially made characteristics that describe what men and women ought to be.' However, the same characteristics do not apply to both men and women. Men are characterized by concepts such as rationality, strength and independence, while women are vulnerable, weak and emotional. Furthermore, the strong men are supposed to protect the vulnerable women. These characteristics are not unchangeable. They can vary over time and place, but they still need to depend on each other for their meaning. They are also unequal, in the sense that states, and the international system, think positively of the characteristics that are associated with men. However, women's characteristics have a negative value and view on them. This is clearly shown in the foreign policy of states, as it is often driven by the thought of protecting citizens from an outside danger.¹⁷

¹⁴ Estelle B. Freedman, *No Turning Back: The History of Feminism and the Future of Women* (Ballantine Books), 2003.

¹⁵ Same reference.

¹⁶ Astrid Henry, *Not my mother's sister: generational conflict and third-wave feminism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004).

¹⁷ Tickner and Sjoberg, 3.

Therefore, it can be assumed that the big and strong masculine state needs to protect its vulnerable citizens. There, a similarity is to the gender characteristics put forward by feminist theory. The state is considered to be of a masculine behavior. Arguably, so is its foreign policy-making. This could also be used to explain the reason for women's under-representation within the international system, as noted by feminist theory. There, women are maybe thought of as unnecessary since they are too weak and vulnerable to handle the 'toughness' within issue areas such as military and war.¹⁸

According to Locher and Prügl, masculine characteristics depend upon the maintenance of the feminine ones, and vice versa. The meaning of masculinity and femininity depends upon the way that gender informs social relations.¹⁹ By using that argument, societies are highly important when it comes to giving concepts, such as femininity and masculinity, meaning. These meanings can shape beliefs and behavior of the sexes.

According to the writings of Chris Beasley, and also of Tickner and Sjöberg, feminist theory first entered the theoretical framework of international relations (IR) in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The early feminists focused their work on challenging older theories, e.g. liberal intergovernmentalism and neo functionalism. Those two theories will be further discussed later. Feminist theory challenged the mainstream theories' thoughts and reformulation of the international system. However in the 1980s and 1990s, with the ever-growing awareness of feminist theory, questions were raised about gender inequality and whether the international system would be improved if more women would be involved. It was considered highly important to include women's experiences as a part of the subject matter.²⁰

Feminist theory has a particular view of the political and social life, a view that has been regarded as different from other theories of international relations. Feminist theory is critical of the way that male superiority and centrality has

¹⁸ Tickner and Sjöberg, 4.

¹⁹ Birgit Locher and Elisabeth Prügl, "Gender and European Integration," in *European Integration Theory*, ed. Antje Wiener and Thomas Diez, (Oxford New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 182.

²⁰ Tickner and Sjöberg, 4.

been regarded as the only means to build and uphold a society.²¹

3.2. Feminist theory and women in international politics

Throughout history, men have been the dominating sex when it comes to politics, international and regional. Women have been under-represented, although there have been, in the recent decades, memorable women like Mrs. Margaret Thatcher and Mrs. Angela Merkel. It is interesting to question, whether the international system would be a different phenomenon, if more women had been involved in policy-making and decision-making within international organizations. This question is among those asserted by feminist theory, because women are thought to be an important factor when it comes to international politics, and their voices need to be heard.

According to Cynthia H. Enloe, women have been excluded from international politics because the international system doesn't take women's experiences seriously. The consequences being, for instance, the fact that women are the clear majority of those trafficked for the sex industry. Enloe argues, that the reason why the sex industry still exists, is the fact that men are the majority of the decision-makers within international organizations and they are not interested in women's issues, or they could be, themselves, directly benefiting from the industry.²²

Enloe further assumes that throughout history, men have shaped the international political system and therefore women don't have the same opportunities as men for participation.²³

²¹ Chris Beasley, *What is Feminism?* (London: SAGE Publications, 1999), 4.

²² Cynthia H. Enloe, *Bananas, beaches and bases; Making feminist sense of international politics* (London: University of California Press, 1984/2000), 1-10.

²³ Same reference.

3.3. Feminist theory and mainstream theories of international relations

The question, 'where are the women' has been of a little importance in mainstream theories of international relations (IR), as will be discussed further in the chapter on liberal intergovernmentalism and neo functionalism. By asking questions and highlighting the importance of issues that have been neglected by mainstream IR theories, feminist theory can offer a different way of thinking. The focus on women gives a better sense of the status of women and gender equality within international organizations. By placing the issue of gender equality at the centre, feminist theory encourages traditional IR theories to open up a way of re-thinking. Feminist theory puts its focus on the activities that have traditionally seemed insignificant or irrelevant in international politics.

Mainstream theories within international relations are characterized by the under-representation of women in the international system. With the clear absence of one sex, it may not be surprising that women have been almost invisible within the mainstream IR theories. Men are the majority of those who construct the theories and write the history. They have shaped the system that the theories are shaped around. Within feminist theory, a light is shed on that fact, and mainstream IR theories are criticized for not putting enough emphasis on women's experiences and thoughts.

According to the writings of Beasly, and also of Tickner and Sjoberg, one of the goals of feminist theory is to get women into the system and decision-making. Within international organizations, decision-making is affected by the patriarchy that is evident in the international system. Men are the majority, they have shaped the system and they hold on to the powers. Women don't get opportunities to affect decision-making, since they are not let in. Therefore, one of the main purposes of feminist theory is to show how women have been neglected in the existing IR mainstream theories. The goal is not to re-shape the past, but to affect the future.^{24 25}

²⁴ Beasly, 4.

²⁵ Tickner and Sjoberg, 4.

Throughout the years, IR mainstream theories have neglected the fact that women have been under-represented in international politics. According to Whitworth, other theories have commonly confirmed and accepted the subordinate status of women within the international system. It is almost as women's under-representation is regarded as unimportant.²⁶ Women's thoughts have been defined of little significance and their contribution is not regarded as valued or desired. Feminist theory is critical of this mainstream theory's view and asks for women's under-representation to be regarded as vital.

3.4. Mainstream theories of European integration

As noted earlier, feminist theory has criticized the fact that women and women's experience has been ignored in these mainstream theories. Therefore, it can be said that mainstream IR theories are not complete and thus cannot explain for instance the European integration process from all aspects.

In the following, I will shortly discuss two of the main theories on European integration, liberal intergovernmentalism (LI) and neo functionalism (NF). Alongside, I will discuss the criticism put forward by feminist theory towards them.

It is important to explain why I have chosen to discuss these two theories specifically. The main argument lies within the thoughts, put forward by feminist theory, regarding the fact that women have been excluded from mainstream IR theories. The discussions on the two theories are mainly built upon the writings of Andrew Moravcsik, Frank Schimmelfennig, Arne Niemann and Philippe C. Schmitter. These two theories are about the European integration process, and since women have been excluded from the field of international politics, according to feminist theory, then perhaps it is not surprising that they are not visible in mainstream theories of the integration process.

²⁶ Sandra Whitworth, *Feminism and International Relations* (London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1994), 12-17.

3.4.1. Liberal Intergovernmentalism

Liberal intergovernmentalism (LI) is a theory that results from political science theories. It highlights the importance of national governments, and therefore sees states as the main actors within the international system. LI seeks to explain European integration in the broad term, e.g. the broad evolution that has occurred within the European region towards integration. Multiple factors are used to explain the integration process and its process over time. Although the theory relies so heavily on these different factors, it is generally regarded as a rather simple theory, in the sense that its premises can 'be summarized into few, general propositions that deliberately seek to simplify EU policies.'²⁷

States are the main actors within the international system, according to LI theory. Therefore, the European integration can only be understood fully by having states as the main focus in an anarchical environment. The theory argues, that states are always competing with each other and therefore they choose the behavior that maximizes their own facilities. So, by creating supranational institutions, like the EU, states have a better chance of achieving their goals than if they were acting alone. Within these international institutions states can keep a close eye on their neighbors and competitors and therefore, through bargaining and negotiations, achieve their goals better than if they were acting alone. In that sense, states are rational, and governments calculate the possible outcomes of their actions, and choose the one that satisfies their needs the best.²⁸ Hence, the EU is a result of government's bargaining. Governments of the Member States have calculated that their interests will be satisfied the most by cooperation, and by having their interests and activities, and the others' activities, monitored by a supranational institution.

As long as states see that their interests are best satisfied within international organizations, the process of integration will continue. Since states' behavior is rational, they will continue to push for further cooperation and integration as

²⁷ Andrew Moravcsik and Frank Schimmelfennig, "Liberal intergovernmentalism," in *European Integration Theory*, ed. Antje Wiener and Thomas Diez, (Oxford New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 68.

²⁸ Same reference.

long as they see the benefits of it. But, when they stop gaining from the cooperation, then the process will probably stop.

Who are the ones that choose whether the cooperation and membership of international organizations is beneficial for the states? It can be assumed that those are the same ones as have shaped the theories for centuries. As Tickner has argued, states are 'concepts that make invisible the power relations lying underneath.'²⁹ Underneath, women have been of a lower status than men, and therefore men are the ones evaluating state's benefits from membership within international organizations.

Taking that argument further, the assumption can be made that states are in fact a masculine concept. Therefore, when LI theory puts states at the centre, it is putting masculine characteristics there too. Hence, feminine values and women get excluded. This is also quite apparent when looking at the social constructions of states. The power relations within most EU Member States give masculine characteristics more value than feminine ones. As noted earlier, masculine characteristics are positive while feminine ones are negative. Therefore, when it comes to evaluating whether EU membership is beneficial for the Member States, it needs to be questioned who are the ones evaluating and on what grounds.

As is noticeable in Moravcsik's argument, states are looked at as 'genderless actors.'³⁰ However, it is visible when looking at, for instance, news or pictures from intergovernmental meetings between states, that the majority of those who speak on behalf of the states are men. Therefore, it can be said that LI theory has neglected the fact that throughout history, men have been the clear majority of those who have represented states in intergovernmental meetings, and therefore states are not genderless.

Lets take the EU summit held in Gothenburg in 2001 as an example. Of the official list of participants there were five women present, out of total 471

²⁹ Tickner (1992), 8-9.

³⁰ Moravcsik and Schimmelfennig, 68.

participants. Why this is so cannot be explained entirely by using LI theory's arguments. Within mainstream IR theories, it looks like gender issues are regarded as unimportant, they at least don't catch the attention of those who make the theories. Therefore, it can be assumed that LI theory reinforces the ongoing process, of masculine behavior as the norm, within international organizations.³¹

Within LI theory, there seems to be no attention given to the under-representation of women within states, governments or within international organizations. This is worth criticizing, since gender issues have become increasingly important in the area of international relations in the recent years. The under-representation of women, throughout the centuries, cannot be unregarded for within mainstream theories of international relations. Women have been a part of societies since its very first days. Therefore, by excluding them, women's views and beliefs are, sadly, not heard within the theoretical perspective.

3.4.2. Neo functionalism

The theory of neo functionalism (NF) regards the European integration process somewhat otherwise than the theory of liberal intergovernmentalism. NF theory sees the integration process as something happening *because* of supranational institutions and their expansion. Once these institutions are established, states see the benefits of cooperation under the supervision of these institutions.³²

According to Haas, the European integration process happens 'when political actors in distinct national settings are persuaded to shift their expectations, loyalties and political activities towards a new centre, whose institutions possess or demand jurisdiction over the pre-existing states. The end result is a new political community.'³³ Therefore, the European integration is an outcome of the sophistication of societal functions. Societies' evolution, throughout the centuries, therefore affects the way that the integration process

³¹ Annica Kronsell, "Gender, Power and European Integration Theory," *Journal of European Public Policy*, 12(6) (2005), 1022-1040.

³² Arne Niemann and Philippe C. Schmitter, "Neofunctionalism," in *European Integration Theory*, ed. Antje Wiener and Thomas Diez, (Oxford New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 45-47.

³³ Niemann and Schmitter, 47.

has happened. None-state actors, as well as governments, can have an impact on the process.³⁴

NF theory, is like the LI theory, a grand one. The main argument is that the European integration process is characterized by multiple, diverse and ever changing factors. These factors connect and build coalitions across national borders, in order to interact and cooperate. However, interestingly, within the NF theory, societies are said to be ‘a creature of elites.’³⁵

Since women have been under-represented in the international system for all those years, then it is likely that they are not considered a part of ‘the elite.’ Since, according to NF theory, the integration process is an outcome of the sophistication of societal functions³⁶, it looks like women have possibly had no impact. Societies and states have been characterized by masculine behavior, and therefore, since the elite groups are the ones that control, women are probably not noticeable there either. However, according to NF theory, interest groups can be highly important³⁷, so maybe they can be a chance for women to let their voices be heard. Within the EU context, these interest groups are not limited to the domestic context nor bound by state borders. They are transnational, since its actors have connected and built coalitions. Therefore, they supersede with individual Member States. In that sense, women’s interest group at the EU level, the European Women’s Lobby (EWL), will be further discussed in the chapter on EU’s history.

Feminist writers such as Tickner and Kronsell, have argued, that within NF theory, there is a need for a broader approach regarding the impact of interest groups, in terms of their resources and representation. The question of who is represented within these groups is seldom raised. Instead the main focus is on what is interesting.^{38 39}

³⁴ Kronsell, 1022-1040.

³⁵ Niemann and Schmitter, 47-48.

³⁶ Same reference.

³⁷ Same reference.

³⁸ Kronsell, 1022-1040.

³⁹ Tickner (1992), 8-9.

According to Enloe, women's issues are regarded as neutral within the European Union, and therefore not considered as important as 'hard power issues', such as wartime and economic cooperation. Based on that, Enloe further assumes this fact to be one of the reasons for women's under-representation within the international political system.⁴⁰ This argument could be a possible cause of why women have been under-represented in the international system for centuries. Women's thoughts and experiences may have been thought of as secondary, just like feminine characteristics have been within states. Since the EU has been mainly built up around economic cooperation, the focus on gender equality and other social welfare issues may have gotten left behind.

Within NF theory one of the main emphasis is on the idea of 'spill over.' The concept suggests that when international organizations, such as the EU, expand and evolve, they do so because of the spill over factor.⁴¹ Spill over happens when cooperation in one issue area results in cooperation in other areas. Regarding the European integration and the expansion of the Union, both in size and issue areas covered, NF theory suggests that the evolution happens because of this. The integration process started out with specific economic cooperation, as will be discussed in further details later in the thesis, and has expanded over to issues like social welfare and environmental policies.

According to arguments given by feminist theory, the spill over has not yet reached to the issue areas regarding gender equality and women's subordination. Somehow, EU policies on gender equality have been confined by the creation of the common market. Therefore it is worth questioning whether the spill over only constitutes to issue areas that are considered to be of an interest to men? The NF theory seems not capable of answering, for instance, why the spill over has been much more rampant in issue areas like environmental concerns and less in areas like gender issues and equal rights.⁴²

Maybe the same thing has happened within the NF theory as within the LI theory. Women's experiences, thoughts and views seem to have been forgotten or deliberately left out. Later in the thesis these issues will be discussed

⁴⁰ Enloe, 1-10.

⁴¹ Kronsell, 1022-1040.

⁴² Kronsell, 1022-1040.

in more details. It will be interesting to see whether the EU has neglected women's impact like the two mainstream IR theories on European integration seem to have done.

3.5. Theory of hegemonic masculinity

In this section, the theory of hegemonic masculinity will be discussed. Further on in the thesis, this theory will be used to get a better sense of why women, according to feminist theories, have been under-represented in the international system. Using that argument, the theory of hegemonic masculinity will be used to discuss the gender status within EU's Commission. The main discussion is based on the writings of Jeff Hearn, Chris Beasley and Cynthia H. Enloe.

The theory of hegemonic masculinity has become a rather widely accepted and well-used theory. The main focus is on the socialization of women's subordination, the reason being men's power struggle and their aim to hold on to their power gained.

Antonio Gramsci's theory of hegemony, aims to explain how societies are dominated and ruled by one class. According to Gramsci, this results in a web of collective political actors, men, controlling the law, the state and the intellectual system.⁴³ Hence women are under-represented within these issue areas. Women become the second-rated sex while men consider themselves as being the only ones capable of governing and taking decisions. Therefore, hegemonic masculinity refers somewhat to a set of circumstances in which power is won and held. So, to challenge it, there is a need to examine the gendered process of commercial mass media, the division of labor and the social definition of work and tasks.

Hegemonic masculinity has been proposed as a form of configuration of gender or as a form of masculinity, which is in contrast to other less dominant or subordinated forms of masculinity – marginalized and complicit. In debates on men, the term hegemony has been used rather widely in the recent years, mainly

⁴³ Jeff Hearn, "From hegemonic masculinity to the hegemony of men," *Feminist theory*, (2004), 49-72. <http://fty.sagepub.com/content/5/1/49> (20.02.2012).

as hegemonic masculinity.⁴⁴

In Marxian analysis the concept has been largely developed. Nicholas Abercrombie and Bryan Turner have pointed out, that Marx presented two different theories of ideology. The first one set out in the 'Preface', where Marx argues that the social experiences of particular social classes, determine the ideas of the members of the class. Thus, following immediate material relations, come ideas, in terms of both social structural locations and general economic locations. Furthermore, this approach lays down the basis for the articulation of several class-based systems of ideas. In Marx's second approach, also set out in the 'Preface', the economic structure determines a political and legal superstructure, in a way that the ideas of the ruling class are always the ruling ideas.⁴⁵

By using the Marxian analysis, it can be assumed, that since women have been under-represented, and even regarded as second-rated throughout the years, they have started to believe that they are secondary compared to men. Also, men have grown to believe that they are superior to women.

Mike Donaldson has described hegemonic masculinity as a concept that is about the winning and holding of power, and the formation that social groups have in that process. It is about the ways in which the dominant and ruling class establishes and maintains its domination. The ability to impose a definition of the situation, to set the terms in which issues are discussed and events understood, to formulate ideas and define morality, are an essential part of the process. Hegemony involves persuasion of the majority of the population, particularly through the media and social institutions, in ways that appear normal and ordinary.⁴⁶

Women's accepted subordinate status has been somewhat presented in mainstream thought. Women have been regarded as partial helpmates. They are defined in terms of men's needs, regarding pleasure, provision of services, children and so on. This perspective is particularly evident in Greek philosophy

⁴⁴ Hearn, 49-72.

⁴⁵ Same reference.

⁴⁶ Same reference.

and Judaeo-Christian theology, both of which remain fundamentally important in the Western political concepts of today. One example can be found in the work of Aristotle. He argued that the rational soul is not present in a slave, it is inoperative in a female and undeveloped in a child. In his view, women are therefore morally unstable and in need for care and control. Another example can be found in the work of St. Augustine, who asserted that men were the only image of God. For St. Augustine, women were partial beings because he linked God's image with a particular view of reason. Women's lesser social and spiritual status is a consequence of their link to nature and sensuality, while men are committed to authority and reason. Women can therefore only be cast as assistants, given their limitations and intrinsic failings. This notion of women as partial beings constitutes women as second-rated.⁴⁷

In mainstream Western thought, women have been regarded as complementary but different. In this account, both sexes are valued, but women have been defined not so much as for men. Men have been defined as the norm, along with their masculine characteristics, while women have been negatively defined in relation to that norm. That notion, of men as the norm, is alive and well today. For example, men are the standard industrial workers in Western societies. Meanwhile women, who may become pregnant, are rather represented as a particular group with problematic and special requirements. Therefore, women have taken on the bigger amount of responsibilities regarding childbirth and family life, even though men in the workforce have children as well.⁴⁸ Women are not as desired as workers, since they are the ones that take on the responsibilities that accompany childbirth. Women are, in that sense, regarded as more problematic workers than men are.

Whether the reason for this lies within the structure of the system or the socialization of women as the main caretakers of the households, it is obvious that women are considered to be at the mercy of men and their work. It can, however, also be said that women are lucky to be the sex that has the main household and childbirth responsibilities on their shoulders, and men are the

⁴⁷ Beasley, 6.

⁴⁸ Beasley, 7.

unlucky ones needing to be responsible for bringing in money. Maybe there is just a need to turn the tables around and say that women's socialized responsibilities are better than those of men. However, the questions of why this is as it is, and why societies think and assume that women's roles are second-rated, compared to the ones associated with men, are still left unanswered.

According to Enloe, hegemonic masculinity is a result of the socialization of feminine and masculine characteristics. Enloe argues, that in a world where conflict and war is possible, women are supposed to feel vulnerable, while men should be ready to protect them. When a conflict emerges, men become aggressive and protective while women feel weak. If women have children, they protect them, not because they are protective as men, but because they are supposed to be self-sacrificing. Women turn to their husbands, brothers or fathers in order for protection. The society has taught them to think that they are not capable of protecting themselves. They are supposed to believe that they are in the need for a masculine protection. As a result, the international system is controlled by masculine characteristics, and risk-taking policy-making becomes valid. Within that system, women are not supposed to be interested nor capable of participating. Men are the ones that lead the way, and set down the path that women are to follow.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Enloe, 1-10.

4. Different types of feminist theory

In this chapter the focus will be on the different types of feminist theory and how they, when combined, give a close look at the status of women in international politics. As has been noted, within feminist theory it is a general view that women have been under-represented within the international system for centuries. By looking at different types of feminist theory, I hope to get a better sense of women's status and the reasons behind women's under-representation in the international system. Many have written about the different types of feminist theory. In this chapter the main discussion is based on the writings of Sandra Whitworth and Cynthia H. Enloe.

4.1 Liberal feminist theory

Liberal feminist theory focuses on women's exclusion from the political, social and economic spheres, both within the international system and within states. Within the theory, questions are asked of why women have been under-represented within international relations and politics. Another question raised by the liberal feminist theory, regards where women would be if they were not under-represented in international organizations. If women had not been excluded for centuries, would the international system, along with politics within states, be any different? One of the aims of the theory is to work on overcoming the barriers to women's participation in international organizations.⁵⁰

There seem to be barriers to women's participation, such as the socialization of women's 'appropriate roles', that are keeping women away from participating in politics and issues of the international system. As will be further discussed later, appropriate gender roles, where women have been thought of as servants of men rather than international decision-makers and policy-makers, may have an impact on the way women think. According to Enloe, that can possibly result in women's low representation within the international system throughout the centuries. Women are more regularly regarded as assistants or secretaries, rather than top-level decision-makers. If the societal structure is not

⁵⁰ Whitworth, 12.

challenged, and women's experiences made more apparent, then changes, benefiting women, are unlikely to occur.⁵¹

How these barriers may be won over is one of the aims within liberal feminist theory. The purpose and goal is to get more women involved in international decision-making within organizations, such as the EU. Various reasons have been given to the under-representation of women. One explanation focuses on the socialization of women away from the political areas. As noted earlier, with the masculine and feminine characteristics, security issues and economic issues have traditionally been regarded as 'men's topic', that women are not supposed to be interested in, since they are characterized by the feminine factors. Another explanation points at the assumption, that women have internalized society's expectations and started to believe that they are not considered to be interested in decision-making within international organizations. That also has to do with women's lack of confidence. It may be that women have started to believe that they are not capable of participating in decision-making and policy-making at the international level. Yet another explanation regards the assumption that women, more than men, are often facing 'a double day'. They have to balance their own career alongside with their family responsibilities. By doing that they are limiting their career opportunities.⁵²

The final explanation often mentioned for the under-representation of women, points to the systematic barriers to their participation in politics. This explanation assumes that women are in fact interested in decision-making and policy-making, but men don't let them in. Men have gained their power-status and are not willing to let women take over some of their power. Men in power therefore refuse to promote women, and use legislations to limit women's participation in e.g. employment. Women who actually make it, and are successful at work, have a high need for being taken seriously by their colleagues. The root cause lies within, the earlier mentioned, socialization of women's role.⁵³ The theory of liberal feminism argues that while this socialization exists, women will not be taken seriously or 'let in.' Women are

⁵¹ Enloe, 1-10.

⁵² Whitworth, 12-13.

⁵³ Whitworth, 13.

considered to be housewives, not high-appointed officers within international institutions.⁵⁴

The theory of liberal feminism has been under some criticism from mainstream IR theories. The first criticism mentioned here, regards the theory's focus on the under-representation of women within the field of international relations. The aim, of making women more visible, is at the same time putting emphasis on the fact that women were not there to begin with, because of their lack of interest in political matters. Therefore, the theory accepts that the reason why women have been under-represented is their lack of interest in the issue areas often tackled, for instance within international organizations. By this, the theory of liberal feminism is, neatly, agreeing with mainstream IR theories on the matter that women really are not interested in the political matters, such as security matters and war controls.⁵⁵

Another criticism emphasizes the view of liberal feminist theory, that by adding more women to the international decision-making the elimination of gender inequality will become a reality, is ignoring the structural features behind women's subordination. The liberal feminist theory therefore fails to see the problems that follow the historical relationships between the sexes, and women's under-representation, within for instance the workforce.⁵⁶

Taking that criticism further, it parallels the criticism made of liberal political economy more generally. It is argued that the collection of empirical information about women is made at the expense of assessments about the structural features of relations of inequality between women and men. Therefore, the theory of liberal feminism needs to put more emphasis on the structural features that lie behind women's under-representation. The reason for why men don't let women in, lies maybe within the fact that men are the dominant sex within the international political system. The reason therefore, lying within the social structure of societies and the international system. According to that, the societal structures need to change in order to tackle women's subordination within the international system. Based on this argument, I will discuss, later in

⁵⁴ Whitworth, 13.

⁵⁵ Whitworth, 13-14.

⁵⁶ Whitworth, 14.

the thesis, the status of gender equality within EU's Member States in order to trace where EU's institutional structure comes from.

4.2. Radical feminist theory

According to the theory of radical feminism, men hold on to their power through the concept of patriarchy and women's subordination is one of the 'fundamental forms of oppression.' Men keep their status by making a use of women's subordination within the fields of reproduction.⁵⁷ This affects everyone's daily lives, since the gender inequality affects how individuals think about the world and how the world operates. Therefore, the reason for women's under-representation within international organizations, lies within the patriarchy concept. Further on, the patriarchy is a result of men's status as the 'more worth sex'. This has an effect on how women think about their 'appropriate' roles and statuses and by that, women assume that the international system is not a field that they are considered to be interested in. Hence, women get under-represented.

Radical feminist theory argues that because of this patriarchy, all views within social sciences are biased by men's view. Therefore it is not enough to add women to the fields where they are under-represented.⁵⁸ There is a need to reconstruct the rules and norms by which the social sciences have been made up. Through the centuries, sciences have mostly been made up of masculine thinking, and masculine characteristics have been seen as the dominant ones. Hence, feminine characteristics have been regarded as non-vital, or according to Enloe, as neutral, resulting in women's low participation in the political fields. To tackle this, a change is needed in the attitudes within the science fields, so that women's feminine characteristics will be seen as important and vital as the masculine ones.

The main reason for why there is a need to change the attitudes, lies in the argument that women are in fact biologically different from men. Theorists are

⁵⁷ Jan Jindy Pettman, "Gender issues," in *Globalization of World Politics: An introduction to international relations*, ed. John Baylis and Steve Smith, (Oxford New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 673.

⁵⁸ Whitworth, 17.

concerned with outlining the difference between men, and women's, attitudes towards war and peace. Women understand these two concepts quite differently from men, because they embrace feminine characteristics and are therefore more peaceful and nurturing. Men, who are made up by the masculine characteristics, are more interested in issue areas associated with those characteristics, e.g. the basis of war. Hence, men are biologically more aggressive than women.⁵⁹

Critics of this view, such as Enloe, argue that this difference between men and women is not biological. Instead it is argued that it is of a social reason, because in societies it is 'normal' to devalue the work of women. Therefore, boys will learn to devalue women's work. It is considered to be a sign of weakness for boys when they are, for instance, close to their mothers.⁶⁰ Hence, in order to differentiate themselves from women, young boys take on the more aggressive characteristics. On the other hand, young girls are likely to take on their mothers nurturing characteristics and so they do.⁶¹ Taking that argument into account, it can be argued, that the roots for the under-representation of women lie deep within the societal structures of the modern state.

How can this be tackled? By the view put forward in the radical feminist theory, since masculine values have been the main factor behind wars, it is clear that feminine ones can end them. Therefore, it is necessary to bring more women into international decision-making.⁶² Since men and women are biologically different, they emphasize different issue areas. By excluding women from policy-making and decision-making within the international system, the system is missing out on important views regarding the issue areas tackled.

How can more women be involved? For a start, the anti-socialization of women's roles needs to be worked on. There is a need to tackle the incorrect thought that women are not supposed to be interested in issue areas covered by international organizations. To do that, the focus needs to be both on working with men's and women's views regarding women's participation.

⁵⁹ Whitworth, 17.

⁶⁰ Whitworth, 17-18.

⁶¹ Enloe, 1-10.

⁶² Whitworth, 18.

The theory of radical feminism has been under some criticism for its limitations. The first one criticizes the theory for putting most of its emphasis on the same concepts, state and war, as mainstream IR theories. The substantive focus within mainstream IR theories and radical feminist theory, is therefore not so different. Another criticism assumes that by characterizing women with special values and men with others, the theory is excluding the fact that there are differences within men and women, e.g. women are not all the same. As Enloe has noted, along with the theory of feminist postmodernism, there is substantive difference between women, for instance based on race, culture and religion. Therefore it is not possible to universalize women's attitudes and behavior. This categorization can therefore be dangerously political. By universalizing these gender characteristics, the theory is creating an essentialist vision of the masculine and feminine characteristics.⁶³

Much of the politics that emerge from radical feminist theory depend upon a form of re-thinking from women's perspectives. What is left unexplained is how this re-thinking will alter the realities that lie within men's domination.⁶⁴ Maybe it is not enough to just re-think the system. Maybe there is also a need to think about why the system is as it is, a need to tackle the socialization of gender roles by tackling it from its very roots.

4.3. Feminist Postmodernist theory

Other feminist and IR theories suggest, that women are a group that can be characterized by universal values, unaffected by race, class, sexuality, culture and history. However, within the feminist postmodernist theory, the suggestion that subjects have an essential identity that is universal, is rejected. A feminist postmodernist project aims for instance at deconstructing the category of women by exploring, unraveling and rejecting the assumed naturalness of particular relationships and understandings.⁶⁵

Within feminist postmodernist theory, the main focus is on rejecting everything that is finite and structured within the societies. The aim is to increase women's participation by increasing their freedom. It is not necessary to involve

⁶³ Whitworth, 19.

⁶⁴ Whitworth, 20.

⁶⁵ Whitworth, 20-21.

any gendered identities, determined by men or women. The reason lies within the assumption that women are not all the same, and neither are men.⁶⁶ Therefore it cannot be assumed that all women are characterized by feminine values. Thus, the main reason behind women's under-representation within the international system lies within the existing societal state, where structures are not women-friendly.

The theory has been under some criticism, mostly because of the political paralysis it is trying to create. Since the theory sees no universalized values that constitute with women, then it is difficult to see the vision or the need for women to be better represented within the international system. Also, by rejecting the universal feminine values, the theory is lacking an explanation for why women are under-represented within states and further on, how women can be better represented. It is clearly more difficult to reach out to individuals than to a universalized group.⁶⁷

4.4. Critical feminist theory

Within the theory of critical feminism, the idea that gender inequality is socially constructed, is regarded as the main focus. Thus, it is considered necessary to examine the societal structures to understand why women have been under-represented within the international system. The societies have constructed the appropriate relationships between men and women, and in order to examine those relationships there is a need to look closely at the conditions and habits within societies. These understandings can therefore differentiate through time and history, and hence they are variable and fluid.⁶⁸

The criticism that has been put forward regarding the theory of critical feminism regards mostly its focus on the structure of the societies. Therefore the criticism is similar to the one put forward within other feminist theories, noted earlier.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ Whitworth, 22.

⁶⁷ Same reference.

⁶⁸ Whitworth, 25.

⁶⁹ Same reference.

With all this in mind, lets look at EU's history and the presence of the EU.

5. The European Union – A men's history?

In this chapter, I will take a close look at the history of the European Union. When reading through the history of the EU, it becomes quite obvious that women are a clear minority of those who are celebrated as pioneers. One of the arguments put forward by feminist theory, is that the history might be different if more women, or just women at all, would have been given a chance to participate in decision-making and policy-making within the international system. Those arguments will be discussed further, later on in the thesis. In this chapter, EU's history will be looked at in a gender-critical way. The main discussion is based on the writings of Desmond Dinan, Chris Beasley and Sandra Whitworth.

5.1. The beginning

EU's history constitutes of men's triumphs.' When going through the list of individuals who were decision-makers in Europe's integration process, Mrs. Margaret Thatcher is visible as the only female participant. Taking that into account, it can be questioned whether the EU would be a different phenomenon today if more women had been involved in the early stages of the integration.

Celebration of the Schuman Day, and solemnization of the Schuman Plan, bolster what can be called the creation and beginning of the European integration. It depicts Jean Monnet, a French statesman, and Robert Schuman, a French prime minister, as hopeful visionaries who wanted to guide the way to the Promised Land. In the Promised Land, the concepts of prosperity and peace, along with economical and political integration of Europe, were supposed to take over the ruins of postwar Europe.⁷⁰

According to Desmond Dinan, men were the main actors from the very beginning of the European integration. Monnet and Schuman were high officials in France, and at that time, women were not seen among those who were in top

⁷⁰ Desmond Dinan, *Ever Closer Union: An Introduction to European Integration* (Europe: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 11.

political positions, e.g. as heads of governments within states. However, the 20th century could have been a century of professional opportunities for women, as a result of women getting more power over their body and even, in some states, getting the right to vote. It is the century in which women armed themselves with language, but at the same time it produced the boom in mass communication. With that boom, for instance with telephones and better transfer possibilities, women could have made themselves more apparent. Higher education for women provided the basis for new lifestyles that didn't, however, always directly benefit women. Regardless of unequal scholarly opportunities, and the segregated nature of employment, women's improved education could have allowed them a greater cultural, professional and political presence.⁷¹

Despite the good fortune, women were not among those who got a chance to have an impact on the integration progress in its first days. Despite women's increasing opportunities for having interest, they were either not interested or not let in. The reason for this may lie within the socialization of women's roles. They were not considered to be interested in political matters, those issues were under men's responsibilities.

Quite interestingly, from the beginning, Monnet put most of his emphasis on economic integration as the only means by which future conflict in Europe could be avoided. He did not pay any attention to future conflicts regarding the uneven status between the sexes, or individuals of different races, culture or religion. He seemingly did not pay attention to the gender inequality involved in the economic integration he was suggesting, e.g. within the field of gender pay gap as will be noted later.

Why was gender equality, or women's involvement, not regarded as an important issue at the time? Early feminists, in the 19th and 20th century, raised the question of how the understanding of global politics might be improved if gender issues were included as a category of analysis, and women's experiences were a part of the subject matter.⁷² At the beginning of Europe's integration process, women were not regarded as important in the international system, neither were gender

⁷¹ Women in the European Union, "Women in the history of Europe," 2012.
<http://www.helsinki.fi/science/xantippa/wee/weetext/wee213.html> (03.03.2012).

⁷² Tickner and Sjoberg, 12.

issues. Women were considered to be the servants of men, not decision-makers within international organizations. Women were appointed as assistants, and given jobs in what were called ‘women’s jobs’, such as in teaching and nursery.

The invisibility of women in the beginning of the European integration process is quite clear. Regarding the EU, it is interesting to question whether the Union’s structure would be different if more women had been involved from the very beginning. Would women have suggested other issue areas than economical ones? Would there have been more emphasis on gender equality within the Union and its Member States? Would EU still exist if women had been a part of its process and evolution from the beginning? Within the EU, it seems like men’s views have been taken as the main viewpoints from the beginning. Men took their own beliefs, made a group based on them, and those views have grown into the European Union as it is today. Women’s views have been less important than men’s universally spread views. Based on that argument, it can be said that hegemonic masculinity has been evident in EU’s history from the very first days.

According to Enloe’s argument, gendered power patterns don’t disappear. If they are there to begin with, they don’t vanish with time if radical changes are not made.⁷³ Taking that argument into account, since women were excluded and absent in the European integration’s first years, it is unlikely they will be welcome in later stages of the process.

5.2. Still no women

The Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), which later became a part of the European Community (EC), began operating in August 1952. Six countries agreed upon participation, France, Germany, Luxembourg, Italy, Belgium and the Netherlands. What emerged was a supranational institution, the institutional depository of shared national sovereignty over the coal and steel economic factors. The institution was supposed to be responsible for formulating a common market in coal and steel, and for supervising related issues such as wages, pricing, competition and investment. Monnet said that the purpose of The

⁷³ Enloe, 199-200.

Coal and Steel Community was to make consumers, producers and workers all gain.⁷⁴

Regarding that thought, the notion of ‘all would gain’ is quite interesting. Who are the ‘all’ Monnet was talking about? Apparently, women were not regarded as ‘all’, since their subordination was not regarded as important. Also, it is quite clear, when looking at the gender gap in payment and low participation of women on the job market at the time, that not everybody were gaining from the cooperation. As will be further discussed later in the thesis, women have been a minority of those working within, and gaining from, the economical sector.

For a long time, the main issues covered by the EC/EU were issues that have been thought of as ‘men’s issues’. Security issues, coal and steel investment and arms control have been thought of as ‘men’s topic’, about which women are not supposed to have neither expertise nor interest in.⁷⁵ Maybe that’s the reason why women were not among those who impacted the integration in its first steps, they were not interested in the issues that the EC covered, or they were not supposed to be interested. Women are considered to be interested in ‘soft power issues’ such as humanitarian issues, culture and education. As has been noted, those issues were not among those that the EC covered in its first years. Therefore the integration process, or politics at the time of post-war Europe, were not interesting to women.

It can be assumed that since the EU rose out of the 2nd world war, women were not interested in the issue areas covered by the Union. Men, however, were and therefore they were the ones that led the way.

5.3. Where were the women?

During the era from 1958 to 1972, women and women’s issues were not on EC’s agenda. The meetings between the Member States’ heads of states were ‘all men’ and no women were among the decision-makers. The main emphasis was on the enlargement of the Union. In 1961, the question of the EC’s enlargement arose for the first time, when Britain applied to join. Britain’s final entry negotiations

⁷⁴ Dinan, 27.

⁷⁵ Whitworth, 12-13.

began in June 1970, and ended almost a year later in Luxembourg. Britain, Denmark and Ireland joined the EC in January 1973.⁷⁶

Had the EU, from its beginning, put emphasis on gender equality and women's representation within the Union, then maybe more women would have sought to become heads of states and therefore more women would have taken part in EU's policy and decision-making. Of course, such an evolution would have taken some time. But had women been encouraged to participate in the Union's early days, then maybe they would have made their way in at the times of the Union's uncertainty. It is not unlikely that women would have emphasized other issue areas and therefore led the EU down another path from the beginning, had they been involved.

5.4. Women's interest group created

At a conference in London, in November 1987, the European Women's Lobby (EWL) was established. At the conference, a total of 120 women came together and adopted two resolutions. The first one called for the 'creation of a structure for influence, open to all women who were interested in exerting pressure on European and national institutions to ensure better defense and representation of women's interests.' The second resolution called for the European Commission to lend its support for the Organization in early 1988.⁷⁷

As has been noted, around the same time, feminist theory was gaining ever more attention and support. Feminist theory started questioning whether international organizations, and the international system, would be any different if women's experiences were a part of the subject matter. With that argument in hand, EWL started asking for more women, or women at all, to be on board within the EC/EU. A well-deserved argument, women's status within the Union was far from being acceptable at the time as has been noted.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Dinan, 61-63.

⁷⁷ European Women's Lobby, "20 years of EWL," 2012.

<http://www.womenlobby.org/spip.php?rubrique43&lang=en> (10.03.2012).

⁷⁸ Same reference.

It is interesting, that women were the ones to notice and point out their under-representation and lead the way in demanding better representation of women and women's interests within the EC/EU. This can, in fact, be a sign of hegemonic masculinity. Men were the ones in power within the integration process and held on to it tight. Men were the ones that established their power within the Union. They controlled the policies and subject matters, and did somehow not pay attention to the fact that women were under-represented. So, it became women's role to make sure their voices could be heard. With the EWL, they had started an interest group, and began to pressure for women to have more say in policy-making and decision-making within the EC/EU.

5.5. Then enters the woman.

In this discussion I will go quite deeply into Mrs. Margaret Thatcher's being in the European Union. The effects she had, the questions and feelings she rose and the responses she got. There are other remarkable women that have worked within the EU, for instance Mrs. Angela Merkel. However, I decided to mention Mrs. Thatcher especially, since she was the first woman to enter the relatively masculine EU world.

The Conservative party won the British national elections in 1979 and Mrs. Margaret Thatcher became the Prime minister of Britain. In her maiden speech as the opposition leader in the House of Commons, in 1975, she had strongly encouraged the British government at the time, to continue its participation within the European integration process. However, when she became the Prime minister, she started showing a deep-seated prejudice against the EC. According to historical sources, she showed ignorance of the EC's institutions and policies. Later on, she actually became one of the foremost proponents of the Common Single Market program, accordingly after she grasped the potentials that lay in the program, of British trade. She believed the EC was supposed to confine itself to the removal of barriers within the fields of investment and trade, along with the coordination of foreign and economic policies. She wanted the integration to be exclusively on intergovernmental basis, and was against the supranational

one.⁷⁹

In Mrs. Thatcher's view, Britain was receiving an unfair treatment within the EC. She thought Britain was paying too much, or at least not getting as much in return as it was putting in. In her opinion, this was an obvious unfairness. She demanded reforms, and for that she received widespread domestic support. In her opinion, this righting of Britain's unfairness in the budgetary system would strengthen the EC.

This relatively straightforward case evolved into one of the most complex and divisive issues in the EC's history. Mrs. Thatcher was a woman, in a hitherto exclusively male world, and her abrasive personality and truculent approach to negotiations, was new to the male environment. Her somewhat aggressive approach enhanced her reputation at home as a defender of British interests, and increased her political standing. However, with time, the public opinion in Britain started to turn against her.⁸⁰

What is interesting about the way that the history speaks about Mrs. Thatcher, is that she seems to have made some *enemies* within the EU. In line with that, it is questionable who writes history. Who are the storytellers? Well, the majority are men. Therefore, it is maybe not surprising that the woman that challenged the male world of the European integration process has been regarded as aggressive and with an abrasive personality. According to Enloe, Mrs. Thatcher's entrance into the male world of the European integration, made everybody think about the status of women within the integration process. People were used to seeing photos of men discussing the future of Europe, but when they saw a woman there, many started questioning where *all* the women were. It suddenly became obvious that all the others were men. As Enloe puts it, 'one woman in a photo makes it harder to ignore that the men are men.'⁸¹

Survey results, gathered by Glick, Diebold, Bailey-Werner and Zhu in 1997, further suggest that women who fulfill conventional gender roles, that serve men, are placed on a pedestal and rewarded with benevolent solicitude.

⁷⁹ Dinan, 81.

⁸⁰ Dinan, 82-83.

⁸¹ Enloe, 6.

However, women who attempt to usurp male power are rejected.⁸² As these survey results suggest, women who do not fulfill conventional gender roles that serve men are rejected. Maybe that's what happened with Mrs. Thatcher. She is the first woman to really challenge the masculine power system within the EU. She came on as aggressive, and is described as having an abrasive personality and a truculent approach, that was new to the male environment within the Union. She was a woman with an opinion and was, at the time, challenging the long-lived masculine EU world. She challenged the men who had established the Union, and had held very tight on to their power. Hence, she was not fulfilling her conventional gender role. Instead she was challenging men's power positions, or at least it looks like they saw her appearance that way, according to the history.

Another interesting wonderment is to ask why Mrs. Thatcher became Britain's prime minister in the first place. Maybe it was because she came on as aggressive, and therefore was thought of as a good government's leader and protector of Britain's interests. As will be noted later on, according to survey results gathered by Hughes, women need to take on masculine characteristics in order to be taken seriously, or to be voted for participation in the political field.⁸³ Perhaps Mrs. Thatcher got into the prime minister position, and into the EU, because she took on those masculine characteristics. She became opinionated, competitive and aggressive. If she had not, it is maybe unlikely she would have been voted as Britain's prime minister. Mrs. Thatcher was obviously challenging her conventional gender roles by entering the political field and for that she was, and still is, criticized.

Mrs. Thatcher, a woman, was behaving like a man in order to be taken seriously within the masculine EU environment. As has been noted, EU's history, until Mrs. Thatcher's entrance, was men's only. Therefore the structural environment was not women-friendly. Maybe Mrs. Thatcher realized that. Maybe she

⁸² Peter Glick and Susan T. Fiske, "An ambivalent alliance: Hostile and benevolent sexism as complimentary justifications for gender differences," *Science Watch* (2001), 112-114.

⁸³ Christina Hughes, "Women's contemporary lives: Within and beyond the mirror," (London: Routledge, 2002).

willingly took on masculine characteristics, such as aggressiveness, in order to be taken seriously. Maybe she didn't want to be regarded as a weak and vulnerable woman, in need for a masculine protection.

Mrs. Thatcher set the path for women wanting a political career. She is a role model, showing other women that it is possible for women to get in and have an effect. However, the sad thing is, women have needed to 'become men' in order to be taken seriously.

5.6. EU's Historical exclusion of women

In the 1990s, EU's Commission granted its support for the foundation of the European Women's Lobby (EWL), with its Secretariat based in Brussels. The founding members of the EWL were the national coordinating organizations of Denmark, Belgium, Germany, France, Ireland, Italy, Portugal, Luxembourg, Spain, The Netherlands and the United Kingdom, along with 17 large European-wide women's organizations.⁸⁴

At the time when the Single European Act was taking its first steps, European Women's Lobby (EWL) was created, in response to the growing awareness of the need to defend women's interests at European level. The SEA was a major revision of the Rome Treaty that underpinned the single market program. Jacques Delors, who became the president of the Commission in 1985, is generally credited as one of the founding fathers of the SEA.⁸⁵

The goal of the SEA was to make the decision-making process within the EC better, and strengthen its democracy with more economic well being within the Member States. The SEA included significant changes on environmental policy, development and research and cohesion between rich and poor Member States within the EC.

Since the scope of the Union's activities were continuously extending, and affecting areas with direct impacts on women's daily lives, the Commission thought it would strengthen the Union to allow the EWL to have more say in its

⁸⁴ European Women's Lobby, "20 years of EWL," 2012.

<http://www.womenlobby.org/spip.php?rubrique43&lang=en> (10.03.2012).

⁸⁵ Dinan, 97.

law-making processes. It became urgent for women to participate in the programs established by the EU, and to get acquainted with European legislation affecting them. The decision-makers within EU's institutions were not directly elected by the Member States, so therefore the creation of EWL corresponds to the need to be a bridge between EU institutions and EU's citizens. The EWL has, since its creation, lobbied at the European level and provided information to decision-makers, to ensure that women's rights and needs are taken into account in the preparation of legislations and policies.⁸⁶ Whether that is working will be discussed later.

After two intergovernmental conferences, the Maastricht summit crowned a yearlong series of negotiations among Member States, with the Commission as a formal participant. The Maastricht treaty was signed on February 7th, 1992, and the European Union, as such, was born. The EU still rests on the Maastricht treaty today, although it's been amended with the treaties of Amsterdam, Nice and Lisbon.⁸⁷

It is quite interesting, when looking at EU's history to see, close-up, how women have been under-represented in the international system. When taking into account the arguments given by feminist theories, on the socialization of women away from the activities of the political sphere, it is maybe not surprising to see how women have really been excluded. From EU's first days, until the completion of the SEA, women's issues and gender equality seem to have been of a very little importance. It wasn't until the EWL lobbied its way in, that a little attention was given to the status of women within the integration process. That fact coincides in a way with the arguments given by neo functionalist theory, that lobbying groups can have impact within international politics.

It will be interesting to go further and dig deeper into the European Union. It will be interesting to see whether the gender inequality, so evident in EU's history, still remains within the institutional framework of the Union as Enloe's arguments points at.

⁸⁶ Dinan, 97.

⁸⁷ Dinan, 118.

6. The EU; gender equality and gender mainstreaming

In this chapter the focus is on EU's measures towards reaching gender equality. A close look is on the Union's Treaties, and how they have reformed throughout the years, when looking at the concept of gender equality. The Commission's role will be of a special concern, among with the actions that the Commission has taken to target gender inequality.

6.1. EU's legislation and treaty reforms on gender equality

Provision for equal pay was a part of EC's (EU's) first treaty, the Treaty of Rome in 1957. In the Treaty said, in Article 141, that the EC announced the principle of equal pay for male and female workers in similar work. However, the emphasis was strictly bound to equality among those working in similar circumstances, as seen here:

In Article 141 of the EC Treaty says:

1. Each Member State shall ensure that the principle of equal pay for male and female workers for equal work or work of equal value is applied.
2. For the purpose of this article, "pay" means the ordinary basic or minimum wage or salary and any other consideration, whether in cash or in kind, which the worker receives directly or indirectly, in respect of his employment, from his employer.
3. The Council, acting in accordance with the procedure referred to in Article 251, and after consulting the Economic and Social Committee, shall adopt measures to ensure the application of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation, including the principle of equal pay for equal work or work of equal value.
4. With a view to ensuring full equality in practice between men and women in working life, the principle of equal treatment shall not prevent any Member State from maintaining or adopting measures providing for specific advantages in order to make it easier for the underrepresented sex to pursue a vocational activity or to prevent or compensate for disadvantages in professional careers.⁸⁸

⁸⁸ The European Union, "Summaries of EU legislation," 2012.
http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/institutional_affairs/treaties/amsterdam_treaty/a10000_en.htm (09.03.2012).

Despite the principles put forward in Article 141, the EC is thought to have started its long road for achieving gender equality in the 1970s. In 1975, the first European equality directive was passed covering equal pay for men and women. This was shortly followed in 1976, by a directive on equal treatment in access to employment, training, working conditions and promotions. In 2002, the directive from 1976 was strengthened, and extended to include a formal ban on sexual harassment. Other directives followed, e.g. in 1978, a directive on equal treatment in statutory social security schemes, and in 1996, a directive on parental leave and leave for family reasons.⁸⁹

The 1980s saw the introduction of specific actions addressing the disadvantages experienced by women. It was the start of women oriented policies that focused on what women lacked, and the fact that women needed to change the policy-making within international institutions. The EC recognized the shortcoming of equal treatment legislation to tackle the gender differences.⁹⁰

Based on those directives, it can be assumed that EC's/EU's first measures in supporting gender equality aimed at reducing the difference in the way that men and women were, and are, treated in the workplace, in terms of wages, training and access to employment. In this area, the EC/EU has introduced a number of directives, the first one in 1975, as has been noted.⁹¹ In the 1980s, when it became noticed that women were missing from policy-making within international organizations, arguments put forward by feminist theory were gaining ever more attention and support. According to the arguments, women need to be a part of law-making, because otherwise they will not benefit from it. The reason being the fact that men have shaped the structure of the international system and held tightly on to their power within it.

Gender equality became a highly important issue matter in the discussions leading to EU's fundamental Rights Charter in 2000. Today, the Fundamental Rights Charter is a part of the Lisbon Treaty, and is therefore of a constitutional

⁸⁹ European Commission, *Equal Guide on Gender Mainstreaming, Employment and Social Affairs*, 2004.

⁹⁰ Same reference.

⁹¹ Women for Europe and citizens initiative, "The European Citizens initiative," 2012. <http://www.femmes-europe.eu/initiative.php> (28.03.2012).

value within EU's Member States. In Article 23 of the Charter, gender equality is of a special concern as seen here:

Equality between men and women must be ensured in all areas,
including employment, work and pay.
The principle of equality shall not prevent the maintenance or
adoption of measures providing for specific advantages in favor of
the under-represented sex.

With this Article, Member States are bound to respect the prospect of gender equality within the economic sector, employment, work and pay. Like with older directives on gender equality, the main emphasis is on reaching it within the employment sector. After all, the EU is mainly an economic cooperation based system.

It wasn't actually until the Amsterdam Treaty came into force in 1999, that equal opportunities for men and women became considered as one of EU's fundamental aims. In the Treaty, EU's Member States lay down, that gender equality issues will be taken into account in all of the Union's doings.⁹² The Treaty of Amsterdam aims, therefore, to integrate respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms into EU's formal structure. Its purpose is to strengthen the Union's commitment on reaching gender equality and by that, it extends the equality principle of Article 141 in the EC Treaty.⁹³

EC's Article 141 was transformed into Article six in the Amsterdam Treaty, by reaffirming the principle of respect for human beings and fundamental freedoms. In Article six, new provisions are laid down on equal treatment for women and men, and more effective action is to be taken to combat all discrimination.⁹⁴

⁹² Women: Gender Equality Creates Democracy, "Gender equality in the European Union," 2012. http://www.gender-equality.webinfo.lt/results/european_union.htm. (25.02.2012).

⁹³ Elizabeth F. Defeis, "The Treaty of Amsterdam: The Next Step Towards Gender Equality?" 23 (B.C. Int'l & Comp., 1999) <http://lawdigitalcommons.bc.edu/iclr/vol23/iss1/2> (16.03.2012).

⁹⁴ The European Union, "Summaries of EU legislation," 2012. http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/institutional_affairs/treaties/amsterdam_treaty/a10000_en.htm (09.03.2012).

By extending Article 141, the EU itself has a general obligation in all of its actions not only to strive to eliminate inequalities, but to advocate gender equality.⁹⁵

EU's gender policy reflects the contradictions that women face in their struggle for equality. Almost all provisions devised to progress in gender equality, have negative effects on women, because of the patriarchal context in which they are applied. As noted earlier, radical feminist theory argues that relations of domination and subordination between men and women constitute one of the most fundamental forms of oppression. The way in which society is organized supports patriarchy, and this affects the way the world actually operates.⁹⁶ Therefore it can be argued, that when provisions of gender equality within the European Union, and its Member States, are laid down, they are done so by the governing masculine majority. The structure of the Union supports patriarchy, since men made it around their own values and beliefs. That further emphasizes the need for women to be involved in provisions making and policy-making within the EU.

Taking radical feminist arguments into account, it can be said that EU's gender policy is created by masculine views. Although lobbying groups, such as EWL, had some impact, it is men that have the decision-making and policy-making power in their hands. Therefore, EU's gender policy has been applied in a patriarchal context, since the EU has been dominated by men's views. Therefore it is necessary for the EU to get women to be more involved in decision-making, in order to get an unbiased view on gender equality. Taking that argument further, EU's policies toward gender equality are not good enough to tackle the gender inequality problem within the Union.

The EU aims to counter gender inequality in the decision-making process. In doing so, the EU works on encouraging the Member States to adopt legislative and regulatory measures. The aim is to promote more balanced participation between men and women within decision-making processes.⁹⁷ EU's

⁹⁵ Defeis, 1999.

⁹⁶ Pettman, 673.

⁹⁷ European Women's Lobby, "20 years of EWL," 2012.

<http://www.womenlobby.org/spip.php?rubrique43&lang=en> (10.03.2012).

aim to promote more balanced participation between the sexes is good, but the EU has to make sure that women are among those who set the path for the road ahead.

As noted earlier, EU directives on gender equality focus mostly on equality within the employment sector. Silvia Walby argues, that although these directives have had some impact, mostly because they are legally binding for EU's Member States, there are some critical limitations. First, she argues that women are not amongst those who fall under the category of standard employment. The majority of women are employed in part-time jobs and temporary employment. Thus, the majority of employed women don't benefit from EU's regulations on gender equality within the employment sector.⁹⁸

Secondly, according to Walby, EU directives don't take into account the fact that women are the main caretakers of homes. Therefore, the male life-pattern has been taken as the norm, maybe not surprisingly since men make the laws, and therefore women don't benefit from them. The EU is, in that sense, not tackling the deep-rooted cause for inequality that, according to Walby, lies within the Member States.⁹⁹

Walby's third criticism points to the fact, that although the EU has extended its policy-making towards reaching gender equality in issue areas that are beyond the employment sector, there are still big issue areas missing, for instance within the field of abortion and sexual preferences.¹⁰⁰

The fourth criticism points at EU's focus on soft law instruments, instead of hard law instruments. By that, Walby means that the EU has shifted its focus towards instruments that are not legally binding for the Member States. They are *only* advisory and therefore they are soft when it comes to implementation. That, according to Walby, does not have the same impact as legally binding directives.¹⁰¹

Walby's final criticism regards the constitutional value of treaty articles regarding gender equality. In her opinion, there is a need to increase the focus on

⁹⁸ Sylvia Walby, "The European Union and gender equality: Emergent Varieties of Gender Regime," (Oxford University Press: Social Politics, 2004), 4.

⁹⁹ Same reference.

¹⁰⁰ Same reference.

¹⁰¹ Same reference.

Member States' implementation of the gender equality articles. According to Walby, the status of gender equality is an endless debate.¹⁰² Hence, gender inequality isn't tackled.

6.2. Gender equality directives and EIGE

Directives on gender equality, along with a variety of soft law instruments and treaty provisions, are carried out within EU.¹⁰³ These directives have been built in stages and expanded in scope over time. In the beginning, the focus was foremost on equal rights and treatment in the employment sector, as has been noted. Today, the focus has shifted to areas of positive action and the consideration of gender differences in all areas of policy making and programming. Today, EU directives and treaty provisions are mainly focused on enabling workers to better reconcile work and family, with a pregnancy directive, a parental leave directive and on non-discrimination in the provision of services.¹⁰⁴

In 2007, the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) was inaugurated in Vilnius. The purpose of the institute is to support the EU and its Member States in their efforts to promote gender equality. The main focus is on raising awareness about gender equality issues and fighting sexual discrimination. Its tasks are to analyze and collect comparable data on gender issues, and to raise awareness among EU's citizens.¹⁰⁵

The idea of EIGE came into being in 1995, and was established on a draft proposal by the Swedish Minister for Gender Equality, Mrs. Margareta Winberg. The institute was confirmed by an agreement on the need for a body for coordination, distribution of information and exchange of knowledge within the field of gender equality.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² Walby, 4.

¹⁰³ Locher and Prügl, 183.

¹⁰⁴ Locher and Prügl, 184.

¹⁰⁵ European Institute for Gender Equality, "About EIGE," 2012.

<http://www.eige.europa.eu/content/about-eige> (03.03.2012).

¹⁰⁶ Same reference.

Despite all the good efforts mentioned here, let's look back at Walby's arguments noticed earlier. Walby argues that EU directives on tackling gender inequality in issue areas other than employment ones, are not as productive as they could be. The same can be said about the work of the EIGE Institute. This expanded emphasis is in issue areas that are not legally binding for the Member States.

EU's gender policy shows a number of problems that has to do with its narrow focus on employment, a focus that is maybe not only limiting the possibility of achieving a broader economic, social and political equality, but also undermines the effective achievement of gender equality at work.¹⁰⁷ Due to this, EU's impact is weaker than it would be if gender issues, other than those regarding employment, would be covered. The gender policy has, therefore, little chance of achieving substantive equality due to the interconnection between work, and all other social areas that affect women's enjoyment of substantive equality.¹⁰⁸ It can also be assumed, that the gender policy could be more effective if all directives regarding the issue area would be legally binding for the Member States.

Yet another criticism regards the fact that equality is an assimilation to the male's norm. To be equal, women are required to conform to the male norm. This argument is noticeable in feminist theory, as has been noted earlier.

6.3. Gender mainstreaming

The period of gender mainstreaming (GM) started following the fact that specific actions in favor of women proved to be a partial solution. The previous actions prepared women for operating in a male dominated culture, but did not challenge it. With the period of GM, the focus shifted to the systems and structures themselves, to the relationship between the sexes and to individual needs. This new approach gained worldwide acceptance at the 1995 United Nations fourth World Conference on Women, in Beijing. Within gender mainstreaming it is argued that existing social structures are not gender-neutral, but favoring one sex over the other. With GM came the call for EU policies to accept that ethnic

¹⁰⁷ Lombardo, 159-180.

¹⁰⁸ Same reference.

origin, age and sexual orientation have implications for a person's ability to compete equally.¹⁰⁹

EU's Commission defines gender mainstreaming as following:

"Gender mainstreaming involves not restricting efforts to promote equality to the implementation of specific measures to help women, but mobilizing all general policies and measures specifically for the purpose of achieving equality by actively and openly taking into account at the planning stage their possible effects on the respective situation of men and women (gender perspective). This means systematically examining measures and policies and taking into account such possible effects when defining and implementing them."

"The systematic consideration of the differences between the conditions, situations and needs of women and men in all Community policies and actions: this is the basic feature of the principle of 'mainstreaming', which the Commission has adopted. This does not mean simply making Community programs or resources more accessible to women, but rather the simultaneous mobilization of legal instruments, financial resources and the Community's analytical and organizational capacities in order to introduce in all areas the desire to build balanced relationships between women and men. In this respect it is necessary and important to base the policy of equality between women and men on a sound statistical analysis of the situation of women and men in the various areas of life and the changes taking place in societies."¹¹⁰

In 1996, the EU adopted its gender mainstreaming approach. From then on, the EU sets out to assess the different implications that every legislation and program has, on both men and women. With GM, the official aim is to tackle the causes of gender inequality with appropriate strategies. The goal is gender equality.¹¹¹

The fact that the EU has adopted and worked within the field of gender mainstreaming is very interesting and worth noticing. Within the mainstreaming, EU's Commission has announced that it wants to implement gender perspectives into the planning, monitoring, implementation and evaluation of all EU policies and actions, to evaluate their impact on women and men. As noted earlier, the Treaty of Amsterdam confirmed EU's importance in promoting gender equality. Then, the EU formalized its commitment to gender mainstreaming.¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ European Commission, *Equal Guide on Gender Mainstreaming, Employment and Social Affairs*, 2004.

¹¹⁰ Same reference.

¹¹¹ Same reference.

¹¹² Same reference.

Walby argues, that although the EU has adopted the principles of gender mainstreaming, the issues and policies regarding inequality of the sexes continue to be marginalized within the Union. Since the majority of policies adopted by the EU are of a 'soft power', the Union doesn't have the authority to set legally binding legislative for implementation within its Member States.

According to Jacqui True, GM is in EU's official policy and therefore supported by a variety of institutional mechanism and technical tools. However, the complex bureaucratic governance regime and weak transnational official policy, results in the fact that these policies are not working. According to True, the reason lies within the Union's institutions that deal, for instance, with gender equality. The policy-making is difficult and complex, since it is multiple at the national and regional levels.¹¹³

Within EU's gender mainstreaming policies, there is a lack of an overview of the proceedings and outcomes. Therefore the EU might end up with every institution within its framework, having the responsibility to focus on gender equality. However, that doesn't guarantee that everybody is *working* on reaching gender equality.

6.4. The Commission's role in enhancing gender equality

In 2008, a plenary session of MEPs from all around EU's 27 Member States concluded that that the participation of women in decision-making at local, national and European levels was inadequate. They called for EU's Commission, the Member States and political parties to envisage positive action to improve the situation and gain more power to women. Today, the Commission is working on this issue.¹¹⁴

In September 2010, EU's Commission adopted a five-year strategy for promoting equality between women and men in Europe. The strategy aims, in particular, to make better use of women's potential, thereby contributing to EU's

¹¹³ True, 193-195.

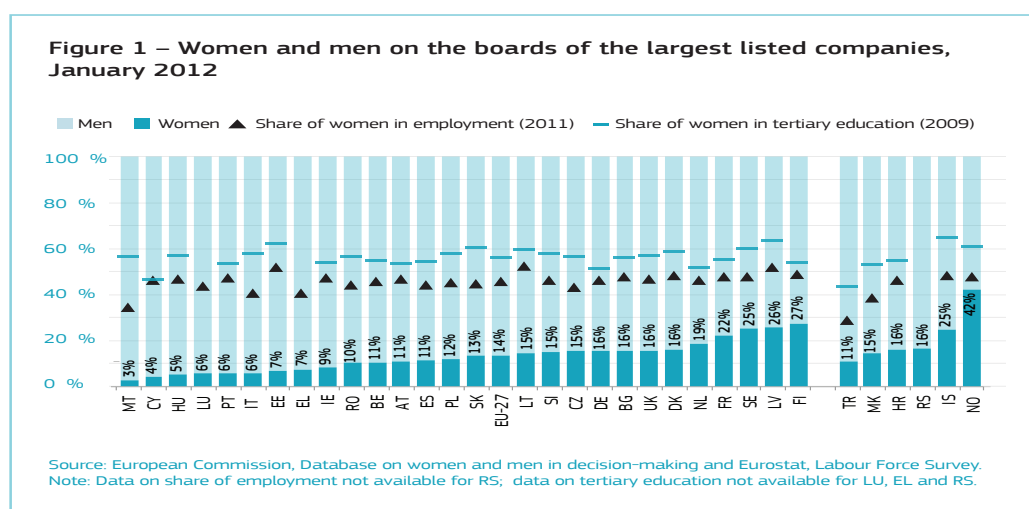
¹¹⁴ European Parliament, "Equality of men and women in the EU in 2008; For quality jobs," 2008. <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+IM-PRESS+20080902IPR35956+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN> (03.03.2012).

overall economic and social goals. The gender equality strategy spells out a series of actions, based around five priorities: the economy and labor market; equal pay; equality in senior positions; tackling gender violence; and promoting equality beyond the EU. They include working with all Member States on combating violence against women.¹¹⁵

Further on, the Commission has established a network to boost women in power, that has the aim to encourage debate and good practices. In that context, in 2011, Ms. Viviane Reding, Vice-President of the current Commission, met with European business leaders to debate on women's participation on companies boards.¹¹⁶

The need to increase women's participation in economic decision-making is visible when looking at table 6.4.1.¹¹⁷

Table 6.4.1.¹¹⁸



¹¹⁵ European Commission, Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, “New Strategy on Gender Equality,” 2010.

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=89&furtherNews=yes&langId=en&newsId=890> (25.02.2012).

¹¹⁶ European Women's Lobby, “20 years of EWL,” 2012.

<http://www.womenlobby.org/spip.php?rubrique43&lang=en> (10.03.2012).

¹¹⁷ European Commission, *Women in economic decision making in the EU: Progress Report, a Europe 2020 initiative*, 2012.

¹¹⁸ Same reference.

As is shown in table 6.4.1., women are outnumbered by men in boardrooms of the largest listed companies within Europe. European states are listed out by using their acronyms, and as is visible, Norway (NO) has the highest proportion of women in boardrooms, 42%, while Malta has the lowest, 3%. The proportion of women, involved in top-level decision-making, still remains very low, with many European states having around 15-20% female boardrooms members. The current Commission is working on increasing women's participation in economic decision-making, by encouraging the Member States to adopt legislations regarding gender quotas and launching a public consultation, that will contribute to assessing the impact of possible EU legislative measures.¹¹⁹ The issue of gender quotas will be further discussed later.

The Commission has the power to propose new laws to EU's Council and Parliament. The Union's legislations established in the area of gender equality encourage equal pay for men and women for work of equal value. Further on, it enforces equal treatment in social security. It sets out to protect workers, in case of maternity and pregnancy, special rights regarding maternity leave for mothers and fathers. Victims of discrimination can go to court and be protected by measures against retaliation. The legislations should ensure reversal of the burden of proof and sanctions for those who perpetrated the discrimination as well as compensation for the victims.¹²⁰

Later on, the Commission's, this term's goals towards gender equality will be discussed further.

The Commission has been criticised, for that the Amsterdam Treaty, adopted in 1999, has not been successful in fulfilling its goals of reforming EU's internal institutional structure. Some have criticised that the Commission is therefore not living up to its promises.¹²¹

¹¹⁹ European Commission, *Women in economic decision making in the EU: Progress Report, a Europe 2020 initiative*, 2012.

¹²⁰ Women: Gender Equality Creates Democracy, "Gender equality in the European Union," 2012. http://www.gender-equality.webinfo.lt/results/european_union.htm. (25.02.2012).

¹²¹ Defeis, 1999.

The Commission has also been criticised for that the main benefit of its directives and policies regarding gender equality, is that individuals must be granted the same opportunities, with regard to their access to certain fundamental goods. Thus, the legal basis for the elimination of discrimination against women in the field of employment has been set. On the grounds of these principles, governments of the Member States have initiated a process of revision of their country's legal frameworks.¹²²

On the occasion of the 15th anniversary of the Beijing United Nation's World Conference on Women, it was the outset goal to strengthen and reiterate the European's Commission commitment to making equality between men and women a reality. The Commission sets out to to this by strengthening the gender perspective in all its policies, throughout its term of office, and by bringing forward specific measures to promote gender equality. The following principles of equality between men and women are supposed to underpin actions under this European Commission's, lead by Mr. Barroso, term in office:¹²³

1. Equal economic independence

Educational stereotypes, labor market segregation, discrimination, precarious employment conditions and the unbalanced sharing of care responsibilities with men affect the choices and life and the economic independence of many women. The Commission reaffirms its commitment to ensure the full realization of women's potential and the full use of their skills and to facilitate more quality jobs for women.

2. Equal pay for equal work and work of equal value

Women in the European Union earn on average 18% less than men for every hour worked. Women face more difficulties in accessing finance, have fewer resources during their working life and in retirement and so are more affected by issues such as poverty. The Commission reaffirms its commitment to a forceful mobilization of all instruments, both non-legislative and legislative, to close the gender gap. Europe cannot afford the cost that follows the gender gap. The Commission sets out to work

¹²² Lombardo, 159-180.

¹²³ European Commission, *Women in economic decision making in the EU: Progress Report, a Europe 2020 initiative*, 2012.

with the 27 EU Member States, to significantly reduce the gender pay gap in the European Union by the end of its term in office.

3. Equality in decision making

Women still do not have full access to the sharing of power and decision-making. Gender balance in decision-making, in economic and political life and in the public and private sectors, will help Europe shape more effective policies, create a more prosperous and stronger democracy and develop a gender-aware knowledge-based society. The Commission reaffirms its commitment to pursue the fairer representation of men and women in power positions in public life and the economy. The Commission reasserts that it will use its powers, including Union incentive measures, to promote a greater share of women in positions of responsibilities.

4. Dignity, integrity and an end to gender-based violence

The full enjoyment of fundamental rights by women is an integral, inalienable and indivisible part of universal human rights. It is furthermore essential for the advancement of women, security, peace and development. Gender-based violence, including harmful customary or traditional practices, constitutes fundamental rights violence, in particular the right to life, human dignity and the right to the integrity of the person. Such violation prevents the exercise of a self-determined life. The Commission reaffirms its commitment to ensure that respect for fundamental rights is at the core of its activities. The Commission will undertake efforts to eliminate gender-based violence and to eliminate gender inequalities in access to healthcare.

5. Gender equality beyond the Union

The Commission's ambition is not limited to the borders of the EU. Gender equality must be fully incorporated into EU's external policies too so as to foster the economic and social independence and advancement of men women throughout the world. The EU is committed to promoting gender equality in all context, including post-conflict countries. Tackling gender inequality is essential for developing sustainable and democratic societies. The Commission reaffirms its commitment to the vigorous pursuit of gender equality in its relations with third countries by raising awareness of the rights of women and by strengthening cooperation with international and regional organizations.¹²⁴

¹²⁴ European Commission, *Women in economic decision making in the EU: Progress Report, a Europe 2020 initiative*, 2012.

In order to see whether the Commission is living up to these promises, lets take a closer look at the Commission and its presidency, commissioners and DGs.

7. Empirical analysis

In this section of my thesis I introduce my empirical analysis. The analysis on the European Commission, its Commissioners, Directorates-general and presidency will be used as a tool to evaluate the level of gender equality within the Commission. As noted earlier, in the methodological chapter, I use feminist theory, the theory of hegemonic masculinity and the principles associated with the theories to evaluate the status of gender equality. The discussion will start with an overview on the European Commission, its roles and obligations within the EU.

As noted earlier, the empirical analysis is based on already existing material. I will use the material gathered to value the status of gender equality within the European Commission. I will use arguments put forward by feminist theory and the theory of hegemonic masculinity, along with statistic material and EU's historical context, in order to come to a definite result. The results of the analysis will be gathered and put forward in the results chapter.

7.1. The European Commission

In this chapter the main discussion is on EU's Commission, its procedures, infrastructure and purposes.

The European Commission is a part of EU's singular governmental structure. Within the Union, there is a Council, a Court of Justice and a Parliament. Those three branches resemble the legislative, executive and judiciary branches of a national government, although it is not entirely the same. The Council is made up of Member States' government ministers, and it shares its legislative authority with the directly elected European Parliament. Unlike most national parliaments in Europe, the European Parliament does not determine the EU's government's composition, not least because the EU does not have a government similar to national governments. The Court of Justice is the only branch that approximates

its national counterparts. The Court is made up with judges appointed by the Member States.¹²⁵

The European Commission is different from the other three branches of the EU. It is an institution with no analog in national governmental systems. Its members are nominated by national governments, but are pledged to act in EU's interests, its quasi-executive authority and its multinational civil service. The Commission is the centre and heart of EU. Its headquarters are in Berlaymont, a large, star shaped, glass and concrete building at the heart of the European Quarter in Brussels.¹²⁶

The Commission has 27 members, known as Commissioners, one from each Member State. They make up the Commission's political leadership during their five-year term. Each Commissioner is assigned the responsibility for specific policy areas, by the Commission's president, and these policy areas are further known as directorates-general, discussed later in the thesis. The Commission also has a president that is nominated by the European Council, and appointed, among the other Commissioners, by the Parliament. Therefore it is the heads of governments, within the European Council, that come up with a proposal for the Commission's president for each term, as will be further discussed later. The appointment of the president, and the other Commissioners, is subject to the approval of the European Parliament. The Parliament has power to dismiss the Commission while in office.¹²⁷

The Commission has been a part of EU's infrastructure from day one. Its main purpose is to represent and uphold EU's interests as a whole. It also implements and oversees EU policy-making by the following:

1. Proposing new laws to the Council and the Parliament
2. Managing EU's budget and funding
3. Together with the Court of Justice, the Commission enforces EU law
4. Representing the EU internationally¹²⁸

¹²⁵ Dinan, 187.

¹²⁶ Same reference.

¹²⁷ The European Union, "The European Commission," 2012. http://europa.eu/about-eu/institutions-bodies/european-commission/index_en.htm (01.04.2012).

¹²⁸ Same reference.

The Commission has power to propose new laws to protect EU's interests and its citizens, but those laws need to be approved by the Council or the Parliament, after the majority of Commissioners have done so. When proposing a law, the Commission needs to satisfy the widest possible range of interest. To do so, the Commissioners consult experts and interest groups to, hopefully, get all technical details right.¹²⁹

Along with the Parliament and the Council, the Commission has to set broad long-term spending priorities for the EU, in EU's financial framework. It also has to draw up an annual budget, for approval by the Council and the Parliament, and supervise how EU's funds are spent. The Commission is also EU's guardian of the Treaties and oversees whether the Member States are applying the approved EU laws properly into their own legal system. If they are not doing so, the Commission can send reasoned opinions to the Member States and further on, if they don't respond, it can decide to take them to the European Court of Justice.¹³⁰

¹²⁹ The European Union, "The European Commission," 2012. http://europa.eu/about-eu/institutions-bodies/european-commission/index_en.htm (01.04.2012).

¹³⁰ Same reference.

7.2 The Commissioners

The Commissioners are members of the Commission. Their term is a renewable five-year term, and they are selected for membership by the governments of their own state, and appointed by the Parliament. The Commissioners, although they are nominated by their own state, are supposed to work in the interest of the entire European Union.¹³¹ Once appointed, Commissioners are, therefore, not allowed to accept instructions from the government of their home state, but must instead act in accordance to what they consider to be the Union's best interest as a whole.

Here is an outline of this chapter's discussion.



From the very beginning of the EC/EU, the Commissioners have been made up of two nationals from the “big” Member States and one national from each “small” state. Therefore, from 1958 to 1973, the Commission had nine members: two from France, two from West Germany, two from Italy and one from Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Belgium. Since the admission of Ireland, Great Britain and Denmark in 1973, of Greece in 1981, of Spain and Portugal in 1986 and Finland, Austria and Sweden in 1994, its membership rose to twenty.¹³² Since then, the Member States have gone up to 27. After the adoption of the Treaty of Nice in 2003, each Member State gets to appoint one official for the Commission. Hence, today, the Commissioners are 27, as the Member States.¹³³

The Treaty of Lisbon, adopted in 2009, provides that the current composition of the Commission, one Commissioner per Member State, shall be maintained until November 2014. From then on, the Commission must compromise a number of Commissioners corresponding for two thirds of the

¹³¹ Thody, 26.

¹³² True, 26.

¹³³ Moussis, 40.

number of EU's Member States. According to the Lisbon Treaty, in the year 2014 and onwards, the Commissioners shall be chosen according to a system based on equal rotation among the Member States, guaranteeing equal treatment and reflecting the geographical and demographic range of all the Member States.¹³⁴

The first Commission, in 1958, was under the presidency of Walter Hallstein. Since then, a total of 169 individuals have taken up positions as Commissioners. However, just 28 out of these 169, or 16,5%, have been women, with the first woman nominated thirty years after the Commission came into being.

In the following I will outline three possible reasons for why that is so.

Possible reason one:



Maybe the most obvious reason for women's under-representation as Commissioners, lies within the issue areas covered by the EU. Looking back at EU's history, it is visible that women's participation has increased with the expansion of the issue areas covered. In the very beginning, and until the 1990s, women were hardly seen among those serving at EU's top level, with Mrs Margaret Thatcher being the clear exception. As noted earlier, with the expanding issue areas, and since the scope of the Union's activities are continuously extending and effecting areas with a direct impact on women's daily lives, women now see a clear need to have influence on EU's policy and decision-making. Since the first steps of the European integration, the place given to fundamental rights, for instance gender equality, has changed considerably. At the outset, fundamental rights were not a central concern of those who drafted the Union's first treaties. The Treaty of Paris, which

¹³⁴ Moussis, 40.

established The Coal and Steel Community, as noted earlier, was e.g. concerned solely with the coal and steel issue areas.¹³⁵

As the European integration has progressed, the EU has widened its policy areas gradually. With the Treaty of Amsterdam, the ban against gender discrimination became legally binding for EU's Member States. In the EC treaty, article 141 provides ban against discrimination on the grounds of sex, though only as far as equal pay is concerned. In the amendment following article two of the Treaty of Amsterdam, says that the Commission has the task to promote gender equality within EU's Member States.¹³⁶

Therefore it can be concluded, that if the EU would continue expanding its issue areas, and include areas that are thought of as of an interest to women, then women would seek to participate further in its work. But, in order to be able to participate in the Commission's work, women need to make themselves apparent to their national governments.

As is noted in arguments given by feminist theory, women have been under-represented in international organizations due to their lack of interest in the subject matters covered. With the expansion of policy areas within the EU, and more general knowledge regarding the importance of hearing everyone's voice in policy-making, women's status has gotten better within the Union.

¹³⁵ The European Union, "Summaries of EU legislation," 2012.
http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/institutional_affairs/treaties/amsterdam_treaty/a10000_en.htm (09.03.2012).

¹³⁶ Same reference.

Possible reason two:



As noted earlier, the Commissioners are appointed by their national governments. In this section I will look especially at those who are elected in national elections. The reason for why I look especially at those elected, lies within the fact that more women are needed on board within national governments in order for them to get into the Commission. This is further listed in table 7.2.1.

Table 7.2.1.¹³⁷

The proportion of women members of the national/federal governments and the proportion of women members of the European Commission (Members of the national governments include senior and junior ministers)					
	1994/1995	1999	2004	2007	2008
National governments (EU-15 average)	16.2%	24.2%	23.1%	27.2%	28.8%
National governments (EU-27 average)	:	:	20.4%	24.1%	24.8%
European Commission	5.6%	25.0%	28.0%	29.6%	37.0%

According to these results, there is a need to increase women's participation within EU's Member States' national governments, in order for more women to get nominated as Commissioners. It is noticeable, that when more women become members of national governments, then the proportion of women within the Commission gets higher.¹³⁸ The reason for this may lie within the fact further discussed in the chapter on the Commission's presidency, regarding that men are unlikely to appoint women to top political positions.

How can women's proportion within national governments be increased?

As is argued by feminist theory, women have been less willing than men to put themselves forward for participation in political processes. Throughout the

¹³⁷ European Commission, *Women in European Politics, time for action*, 2009.

¹³⁸ Same reference.

history, politics, where decision-making and policy-making are in focus, have been men's work. But in Europe in the 21st century, when gender discrimination is generally seen as unacceptable by societies, the under-representation of women cannot be entirely explained by their lack of willingness or political interest. Today, women are only 1/3 among those who choose, or are elected, for work in politics within states. Why is that so?¹³⁹ Could it be that women are afraid of stepping into the male domain?

When women, and men, run for candidates in national elections they do so in hope of being elected. Data from across EU's Member States' elections show, that in general, more women candidates result in more women being elected. But this doesn't tell the whole story, because men, somehow, have a better chance of being elected. On average, an election with 50% women candidates results in a national parliament with just 39% women members. Therefore, there would need to be 63% women candidates to achieve parity in a final assembly.¹⁴⁰

The reason for this may lie within the, earlier mentioned, socialization of women's roles. Women are not considered to be interested in political matters. Therefore, it is possible that women are afraid of stepping into the male world of politics. It is often heard that when women get appointed to top positions, e.g. within corporations, that it is 'only because they are women'. It's because they are good looking, they charmed the boss or the corporation is working on tackling gender inequality. It is not often said that women get appointed to those positions on account of their knowledge or capabilities.

Some Member States, e.g. Slovenia, have responded to women's under-representation by imposing electoral gender quotas. These quotas can help bring about rapid change, but they are not a guarantee of success. Elections in Slovenia, in 2008, were actually the first ones at a national level, subject to a gender quota for candidates. All the political parties respected the quota, but just 12 women were elected to the 90 members assembly, or 13%, despite the fact that a third of the candidates were women. Lets imagine that women had been a third of those elected. It is not unlikely, if that had happened, that some had said

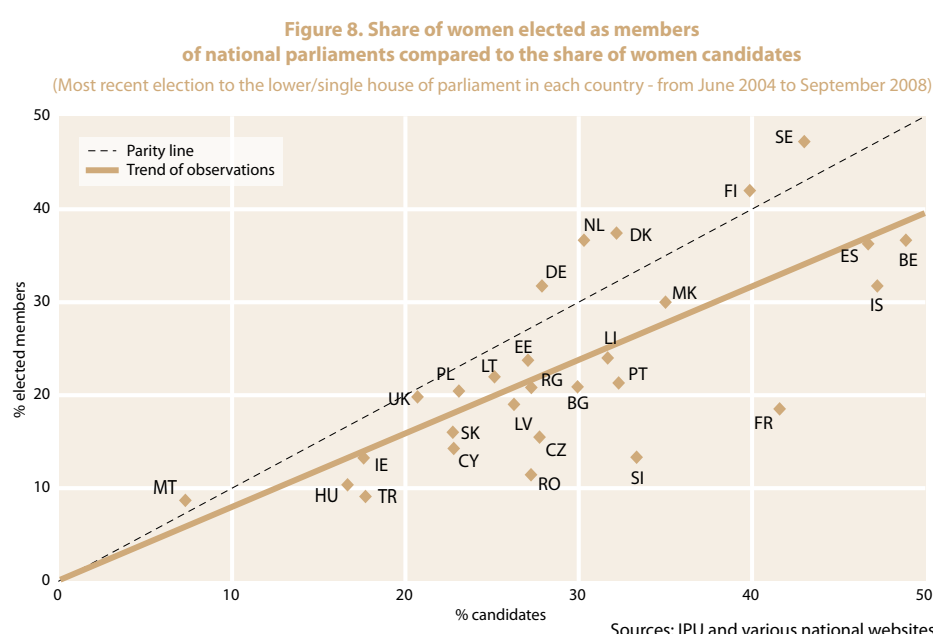
¹³⁹ European Commission, *Women in European Politics, time for action*, 2009.

¹⁴⁰ Same reference.

that they only got elected because they are women, or because of the electoral quota. It seems like women seldom get awarded based on their capabilities. Therefore gender electoral quotas can be both good and bad for women.

As noted earlier, the first step in promoting more female representation must be to promote more women candidates. Table 7.2.2. shows the relationship between the share of women candidates, and the share of women elected to Europe's national parliaments.

Table 7.2.2.¹⁴¹



As table 7.2.2. shows., more women candidates generally results in more women being elected. However, it is striking to see how far the line deviates from parity. It is obvious that the percentage of women running for candidates does not coincide with the number of women elected. Sweden (SE) and Finland (FI) are the two countries that score the highest, with women being more likely than men to be elected. However, numbers from Malta (MT), Hungary (HU) and Turkey (TR) show, that women are very few among those running for candidates and if they do so, it is unlikely they will get elected. Taking Turkey as an example, an

¹⁴¹ European Commission, *Women in European Politics, time for action*, 2009.

election with around 18% female candidates results in 9% female parliamentarians.¹⁴²

Why are men more likely to get voted for?¹⁴³

According to a survey, conducted in the United States, people often assume that good leadership, e.g. of states, is associated with masculine characteristics. According to Halford and Leonard:

The model of a successful manager in our culture is a masculine one. The good manager is aggressive, competitive, firm and just. He is not feminine, he is not soft and yielding or dependent or intuitive in a womanly sense. The very expression of emotion is widely viewed as a feminine weakness that would interfere with effective business processes.¹⁴⁴

Based on Halford's and Leonard's argument it can be assumed, that when voters are choosing how to cast their vote they are more likely to choose a man to govern their state, or to be a member of their parliament. Still, in the year 2012, many people consider it to be a man's role to govern and take difficult decisions, for instance regarding states' foreign policies. Because of this, it is maybe not surprising to see that men are, in some states, twice as likely than women to get voted to national parliaments within Europe.

Another reason for the under-representation of women within the political aim of EU's Member States, may lie within the concept of re-election. The change in gender inequality will be hard to reach while the re-election of incumbents severely restricts the rate of member turnover at each election. According to estimated numbers, around 2/3 of parliamentarians are re-elected on each occasion, therefore the opportunities for new faces, and more women, are limited. It is clear that if real progress is to be achieved, in terms of gender equality, more women candidates need to be found. More female Commissioners mean that they need to be voted for in national elections.¹⁴⁵ But, as noted earlier, men are more likely than women to get voted for. While voters still consider men

¹⁴² European Commission, *Women in European Politics, time for action*, 2009.

¹⁴³ Same reference.

¹⁴⁴ S. Halford and P. Leonard, *Gender, Power and Organizations* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 31.

¹⁴⁵ European Commission, *Women in European Politics, time for action*, 2009.

to be the appropriate sex for decision-making and governing, the under-representation of women as Commissioners is unlikely to change dramatically for the better.

Possible reason three:



The reason why only 16,5% of the Commissioners have been women, since EU's first days, lies therefore some part within the Member States. As has been noted, the national governments of each state appoint the Commissioners, and most often they come from within the political field. Also, more women in national governments results in more women appointed for work in the Commission. Therefore, there is a high need for increasing women's political participation within EU's member states in order for them to be appointed as Commissioners. Why men are unlikely to appoint women to top political positions will be further discussed in the following chapter on the Commission's presidency.

It may be that the reason behind women's under-representation throughout the years, as Commissioners, lies within EU's Member States. The socialization of women's roles has probably had influence on their desire for a political career. This may result in fewer women getting elected for national parliaments and governments, that further result in fewer women getting appointed as Commissioners.

As is noted in Halford's and Leonard's argument, women are not thought of as eligible for work within the political fields, since their feminine characteristics are not suitable for the toughness of the political life. Therefore, when appointing their Commissioners, the Member states' governments rather choose the masculine characteristics than the feminine ones. The Commission's roles and responsibilities, as the EU's executive power, are not thought of as of women's

interest. They might also, as is argued by feminist theory, not be thought of as interested in the work conducted by the Commission. Men have been socialized to think that they are the only ones capable of governing, making laws and taking decisions. Women are too weak and vulnerable. Hence, they are not let in or appointed for work in the Commission, by their masculine governments.

The societal structure is not women friendly and needs to be changed in order for real progress in tackling gender inequality. There is a high need for changing the structures of systems, at the regional and international level. The socialization of women's role needs to be altered in order for them to increase their proportion as Commissioners. That is done, for instance, by voting for women in national elections. The EU does that by further expanding its issue areas. The societies do that by valuing women's capabilities and potentials the same as men's.

Possible effects of women's under-representation as Commissioners:

While women are under-represented, the Commission is not complete in its work. Women are different from men and there is a high need for empowering women to participate in the political sector. For a long time, men have governed with their masculine characteristics. They have created the institutional structure, benefiting them. Whilst that is so, gender equality will not be tackled.

By getting more female participation, maybe the international sphere will become more women-friendly. By having more female Commissioners, then maybe the Commission's emphasis on women's issues, e.g. trafficking in human beings for the sex industry, will become clearer. By having more female Commissioners, women's voices will be heard at EU's top level. That is necessary in order to tackle gender inequality and in order for the directives on equality to be successful. Women need to be among those taking the decisions, and they need to be the ones that change the structures in order to fit women's needs and desires. That can't be done entirely by men.

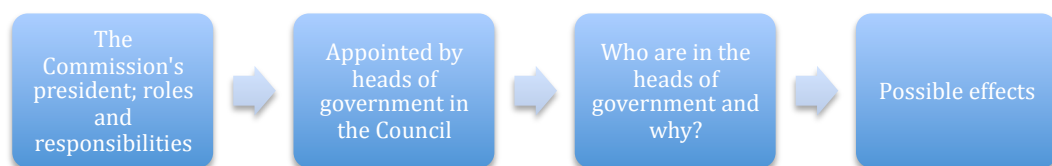
7.3 The Commission's presidency

The Commission's president sets the tone for the Commission's five-year, renewable, term in office. The president has various roles and responsibilities, besides from personifying the Commission and the EU itself. Among the roles and responsibilities are:

1. Forging agreement and mediating disputes within the Commission
2. Responsible for announcing to the European Parliament the Commission's annual work and legislative program
3. Launching major policy initiatives
4. Representing the Commission in meetings of the General Affairs and External Relations Council
5. Attend meetings in the European Council
6. Representing the Commission in key international forums, notably at G7/8 meetings and U.S.-E.U. meetings.

A president's performance depends on these duties and other political, personal and economic circumstances, such as individual experience, expertise and relations with other Commissioners and national government's leaders, along with current economic conditions.¹⁴⁶

Here is an outline of this chapter's discussion.



The heads of government of the Member States, that are members of the European Council, nominate the Commission's president. With the entry of the Nice Treaty in 2003, they do so by a qualified majority vote, before that they could only do that by unanimity.¹⁴⁷ After they have done so, their proposal is

¹⁴⁶ Dinan, 189.

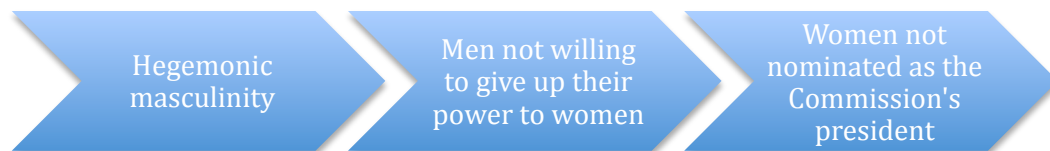
¹⁴⁷ Same reference.

sent to the Parliament that must approve or veto the Council's appointment. This will be further discussed later on.

As has been noted, Walter Hallstein was the first president of the Commission. His term was from 1958 until 1967. One of the best-known president, Jacques Delors, served from 1985 until 1995. He oversaw the enactment of both the SEA and the Treaty of Maastricht. Today's president is José Manuel Barroso who has served since 2004. He has for instance overseen the Lisbon Treaty and EU's enlargements in 2004 and 2007.

Among the 12 individuals that have served as presidents of EU's Commission, there is no woman.

Possible reason one:

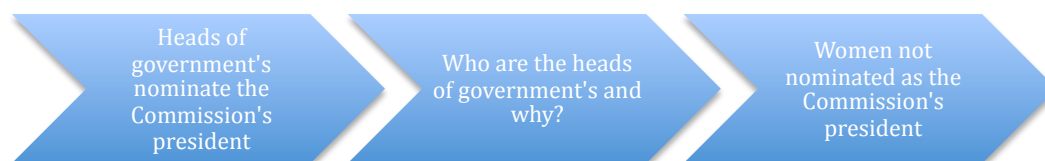


As noted earlier, Mike Donaldson has described hegemonic masculinity as a theory that is about the ways in which the dominant and ruling class, men, establishes and maintains its domination.¹⁴⁸

When taking a closer look at Mr. Donaldson's argument, the question arises whether the fact, that out of 12 presidents of EU's Commission there is no woman, has something to do with hegemonic masculinity? Have men won over their power positions and therefore try to hold on to it as possible? As is visible in EU' history, men have created the structures within the EU. Within those structures women are not off a great importance. They are not let in. This argument will be further discussed in reasons two.

¹⁴⁸ Hearn, 49-72.

Possible reason two:



As noted earlier, the heads of government, that make up the European Council, come up with a proposal for the Commission's president. Lets take a look at those who were heads of government in 1999, when Romano Prodi, an Italian minister, was elected as president of the Commission.

Table 7.3.1.

Country	Head of Government	Year
Austria	Viktor Klima	1999
Belgium	Guy Verhofstadt	1999
Denmark	Poul Nyrup Rasmussen	1999
Finland	Paavo Lipponen	1999
France	Jean-Pierre Raffarin	1999
Germany	Helmut Kohl	1999
Greece	Andreas Papandreou	1999
Ireland	Bertie Ahern	1999
Italy	Massimo D'Alema	1999
Luxembourg	Jean-Claude Juncker	1999
The Netherlands	Wim Kok	1999
Portugal	António Manuel de Oliveira Guterres	1999
Spain	José María Aznar López	1999
Sweden	Göran Persson	1999
United Kingdom	Tony Blair	1999

In 1999, Mr. Romano Prodi was elected the Commission's president. He was born in Italy in 1939, and had twice served as Italy's prime minister, from 1996-1998 and again from 2006-2008. His appointment as the Commission's president came after the earlier entire 20-member Commission was forced to resign, amid charges of widespread corruption and fraud. Mr. Prodi served as president until

2004. During his five-year term, the EU expanded beyond its western European roots, to include countries such as Malta and Cyprus, along with eight central and eastern European countries. When his term as president of the EU Commission came to an end in 2004, Mr. Prodi returned to Italian politics and became Italy's prime minister in 2006 and served until 2008.¹⁴⁹

As listed in table 7.3.1. no women were among those heads of governments, within the European Council, who nominated Mr. Prodi as the Commission's president. Therefore it is not so surprising, that a man was nominated, and further appointed by the Parliament. Lets look back at the arguments regarding hegemonic masculinity, mentioned in reason one. Men have been the dominant and ruling class within the EU, and therefore it may be in their own benefit to maintain their domination. They made the system in the 1950s and may not be so willing to give up their power to women, especially if they regard women as servants, or second-rated as is argued by feminist theory. It can be questioned whether these arguments can constitute for Mr. Prodi's election. Was there really ever a possibility that the heads of governments would nominate and elect a woman?

It looks like the heads of governments, within the European Council, wanted to hold on to the power invested in the male dominance. As noted earlier, according to radical feminist theory, the way in which society is organized supports patriarchy.¹⁵⁰ This argument may lead women to think that they don't have as much chance, as men do, when it comes to appointing individuals to top political positions. Also, women are not as likely as men to get voted as candidates, as has been noted, and that can also constitute to elections *within* the EU. It can be argued that the Commission's presidency is regarded as a top political position, and therefore considered to be a man's job. Women are, as has been noted with Halford's and Leonard's survey, not accompanied with the characteristics that are often connected with a person in leadership.¹⁵¹ Those characteristics are, for instance, aggressiveness and competitiveness, and according to feminist theory

¹⁴⁹ Britannica Online, "Romano Prodi," 2012.

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/477886/Romano-Prodi> (30.03.2012).

¹⁵⁰ Whitworth, 17.

¹⁵¹ Halford and Leonard, 31.

they are most often thought of as associated with masculinity. Based on that argument, the Council's members, proposing for a new president of the Commission, seem to favor more of masculine characteristics, within the presidency, than feminine ones.

According to Christina Hughes, a survey was conducted on gender equality within five large international corporations in the United States. Those companies had all been considered as front line regarding gender equality. The results showed clearly, that women who had a professional career all had similar backgrounds and attitudes, compared to men. They spent similar amount of time at work, their ambitions were likewise and they even had similar or same education and experience. What is interesting is the fact that there really was no difference between men and women that were in top positions within the companies. The only thing differentiating the sexes was the fact that women had postponed childbirth, while men had not. Based on that, it can be argued that women have to gain masculine behavior and attitudes in order to get a career, e.g. as politicians or bosses within large corporations.¹⁵²

Looking closer at the survey results, it can be assumed that women who desire to have children, will not seek a career that consists of working-hours that are not suitable with family-life. However, children and family do not seem to stop men from seeking a career. This may be a reason for why women are more reluctant than men to run for candidates within the political field, and are in the minority of those appointed as EU's Commissioners or as the Commission's president. Also, women are maybe more reluctant than men to give up their 'family roles', and take on masculine characteristics in order for a political career. The society has for centuries told women that they are supposed to be the main caretakers of home and children, and therefore, they are more reluctant than men to step out of the houses and into positions within an international organization.¹⁵³

¹⁵² Christina Hughes, "Women's contemporary lives: Within and beyond the mirror," (London: Routledge, 2002).

¹⁵³ Whitworth, 12-13.

There were 20 Commissioners, and vice presidents, working in Mr. Prodi's Commission during his five-year term. There was one from each Member State and two from the larger Member States, France, Germany, United Kingdom, Italy and Spain. Out of the 20, there were five women. Those were Mrs. Loyola de Palacio, from Spain, who served as vice president and a Commissioner for Inter-Institutional Relations and Administration, Transport and Energy. Mrs. Viviane Reding, from Luxembourg, who served as a Commissioner for Education and Culture. Mrs. Michaela Schreyer, from Germany, who served as a Commissioner for Budget. Mrs. Margot Wallstrom, from Sweden, who served as a Commissioner for the Environment, and Mrs. Anna Diamantopoulou, from Greece, who served as a Commissioner for Employment and Social Affairs.

Out of twenty Commissioners there are only five women. Could it be that the socialization of women within EU's Member States is making women think that they are not suited for policy-making positions?

Before going further, it may be helpful to look at what happened in 2004, when the current president, Mr. Barroso, was elected:

Table 7.3.2.

Country	Head of Government	Year
Austria	Wolfgang Schüssel	2004
Belgium	Guy Verhofstadt	2004
Cyprus	Tassos Papadopoulos	2004
Czech Republic	Stanislav Gross	2004
Denmark	Anders Fogh Rasmussen	2004
Estonia	Juhan Parts	2004
Finland	Matti Vanhanen	2004
France	Lionel Jospin	2004
Germany	Gerhard Schröder	2004
Greece	Kostas Karamanlis	2004
Hungary	Péter Medgyessy	2004
Ireland	Enda Kenny	2004
Italy	Silvio Berlusconi	2004
Latvia	Indulis Emsis	2004
Lithuania	Algirdas Brazauskas	2004
Luxembourg	Jean-Claude Juncker	2004
Malta	Lawrence Gonzi	2004
The Netherlands	Jan Peter Balkenende	2004
Poland	Marek Belka	2004
Portugal	Pedro Miguel de Santana Lopes	2004
Slovakia	Mikuláš Dzurinda	2004
Slovenia	Janez Janša,	2004
Spain	José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero	2004
Sweden	Göran Persson	2004
United Kingdom	Tony Blair	2004

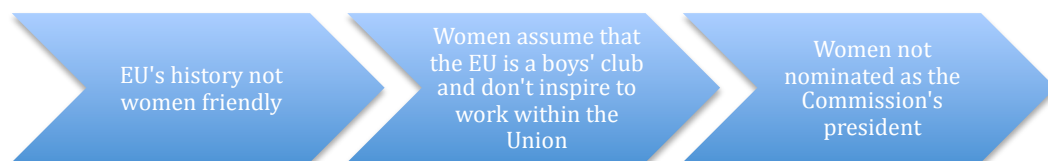
Looking at table 7.3.2. and those who were heads of governments within EU's Member States in 2004, when the current president was elected, it is visible that there were no women amongst, just like in 1999. It is also visible that the EU has

extended its borders since 1999, with an increased number of Member States.

Since the heads of governments of EU's Member States, within the European Council, come up with a suggestion for the Commission's president, it might not be surprising to see that they, again, suggested a man for the job. However, as noted earlier, the Council's nomination is subject to the Parliament's approval. What about the Parliament's role?

The Parliament is the main law making institution of the EU. Its members (MEP's) are directly voted by European citizens every 5 years. Women are, since the 2009 elections, around 35% of its members, and the number has been rising in the recent years.¹⁵⁴ That fact, since the Parliament is responsible for electing the Commission's president, could sound beneficial for women. However, never in EU's history has the Parliament gone against the nomination of the European Council when electing the president. The masculine majority within the Parliament has always agreed with the masculine Council. Hopefully, with ever more women being voted for the European Parliament, the Council's masculine proposals for the presidency will maybe, someday, be questioned by the female representatives.

Possible reason three:



As noted earlier, women are not visible in EU's history, at all. According to Christine Sylvester, men and women are social objects, that are collections of the stories that have been told them, and they behave in accordance to those stories.¹⁵⁵ Following that argument, it can be assumed that since EU's history is

¹⁵⁴ European Parliament, *Women in the European Parliament*, 2011.

¹⁵⁵ Laura J. Shepherd, "Sex or gender? Bodies in world politics and why gender matters," in *Gender Matters in Global Politics: A feminist introduction to international relations*, ed. Laura J. Shepherd, (New York: Routledge, 2010), 7.

not women friendly, women will not seek to take part in EU's work. Women have, in that sense, concluded from EU's history, that the EU is in fact a boys' club. Since the beginning of EU's history, men have been the clear majority of those who have been most influential. From the year 1957 until Mrs. Margaret Thatcher's entrance in 1979, no women were among those who set the path for EU's future. As already noted, it can be questioned whether the EU would be a different phenomenon today if women had been involved in the process from the beginning. Would the focus on 'hard power' issues, such as economical threats and coal and steel infrastructure, have been replaced in time by the Union's focus on equality, tolerance and better representation of women among those who lead the way. Thus, the history's effect on women's status within the Union cannot be overlooked.

Taking that argument further it can be assumed that since EU's history makes the Union unattractive to women, they don't seek to work within the Union. The environment is not women-friendly.

Possible reason four:



A Survey conducted in 2011 by the Robert Schuman foundation, on female ministers in EU's 27 Member States, shows that women are on average only 23,36% among those ministers in the governments of the Member States. Whilst so, women will be under-represented in EU's Commission (and other EU's institutions such as the Council of Ministers).¹⁵⁶ In both 1999 and 2004 there are no women among the heads of governments, so it can be assumed that it was unlikely that a woman would be pointed as the Commission's president. Each country's head of government is selected differently, usually following elections, so maybe the explanation lies within EU's Member States.

¹⁵⁶ Foundation Robert Schuman, *Women ministers in the 27 Governments*, 2011.

As previously mentioned, some Member States such as Slovenia, have responded to gender inequality by imposing electoral gender quotas. Those quotas can help bring about rapid change, but they are not a guarantee of success. One of the key observations, of a survey conducted by the European Parliament in 2008, is that although gender quotas have lead to a rapid improvement in women’s representation, in some cases, there are signs that their impact has been disappointing, as has been noted with the Slovenian elections in 2008.¹⁵⁷ In the EU, there are currently five Member States using legislative quotas in elections for national parliaments, fourteen Member States have adopted party quotas, so that political parties need to have equal representation of the sexes, and eight have no quota systems. This is outlined further in table 7.3.3.¹⁵⁸

Table 7.3.3.¹⁵⁹

Legislative quotas	Belgium, Spain, Portugal, France, Slovenia
Party quotas	Sweden, Netherlands, Austria, Germany, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Luxembourg, United Kingdom, Czech Republic, Greece, Romania, Hungary, Malta
No quotas	Finland, Denmark, Estonia, Bulgaria, Latvia, Slovakia, Cyprus, Ireland

Note: Countries with party quotas are those where at least one of the three largest political parties has adopted a gender quota system within the party statutes.

According to the opponents of gender electoral quotas, if a woman gets elected, it is only on the grounds of her sex. This is maybe one of the big flaws of the quotas. Despite the fact that the quotas can increase women’s participation in politics, it is not a good method for tackling the historical and societal views regarding the ‘appropriate’ roles for women. If gender inequality is to be tackled from its roots, there is a need to work on changing these ingrown attitudes and societal views, regarding the socialization of women’s role.

The root cause for women’s under-representation as the Commission’s president may lie within EU’s member states, and the fact that the minority of those elected in national elections are women. Therefore, no women have been among those who have nominated the Commission’s president in 1999 and 2004. However, the biggest responsibility has to be with those making up the European

¹⁵⁷ European Commission, *Women in European Politics, time for action*, 2009.

¹⁵⁸ Same reference.

¹⁵⁹ Same reference.

Council. They are the ones not nominating a woman as president. They are the ones that, clearly, believe that men are the only ones capable of doing the job. Women are not thought of as eligible for the leadership position. Therefore, it can be argued, that men appoint men to top political positions within the European Commission, based on their desirable masculine characteristics.

Possible effects of women's under-representation as the Commission's president:

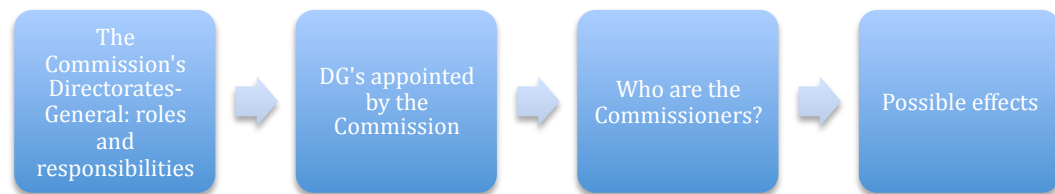
By excluding women from the top position within the Commission, the presidency, it is highly arguable that the Commission is a boys' club. The Commission's environment is unattractive to women, with men's clear over-representation as the Commission's president.

There is a high need for bringing women to the decision-making within the Union, and there is a high need for nominating a woman as the Commission's president. If a woman got to the top, and became the president of the Commission, then she would at least be a role model for women who have assumed that the EU is a boys' club. Other women could see that they too can get in, and they can have an impact. Their important voices can be heard. As with the Commissioners, there is a need to start within the Member States. Women need to be elected. But in order to get women to run for candidates in the first place, the environment has to become attractive to them.

7.4. The Commission's Directorates-General

The Commission is an organization itself, with around 25.000 employees within its operational departments, called directorates-general (DG's). Each DG is in charge of a specific policy area, e.g. agriculture, competition, economic and financial affairs and so on. The Commissioners appoint the DGs and they fall under the direct responsibility of one of the Commissioners.¹⁶⁰

Here is an outline of this chapter's discussion.



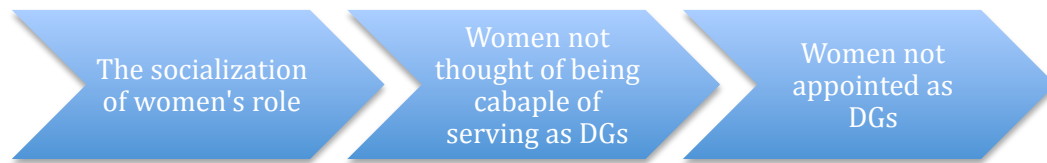
When looking at the official websites of the DGs, it is visible that women are not many among those who serve as Directorates-general. Out of the 33 DGs today, there are only 5 women serving as Directorates-General, as low as 15%. Those women are Mrs. Catherine Ashton who serves as head of the EEAS (Foreign Policy and Instruments Service), Mrs. Irene Souka who serves as head of the HR (Human Resources and Security), Mrs. Francoise Le Bail who serves as head of the JUST (Justice), Mrs. Lowri Evans who serves as head of the MARE (Maritime Affairs and Fisheries) and Mrs. Catherine Day who serves as head of the SG (Secretariat-general).¹⁶¹

Why, out of the 33 Directorates-General, are there only 5 women? Is Mr. Barroso's Commission not living out its gender-equality promises, noted earlier?

¹⁶⁰ European Union, *Serving the People of Europe, what the European Commission does for you*, 2005.

¹⁶¹ European Commission, "Departments (Directorates General) and services," 2012. http://ec.europa.eu/about/ds_en.htm (29.01.2012).

Possible reason one:



When the domestic role is seen in the wider context of women's socialization and education, it is clear that women are largely presented and encouraged to see themselves as the providers of care and comfort, rather than political decision-makers. This is thought to have its origins in early childhood. Girls are brought up in a way to regard themselves as soft, yielding and uncompetitive, supporting rather than challenging the male. On the other hand, boys are trained to be achieving, competitive, independent and self-sufficient. Girls with lower expectations, therefore, tend to acquire fewer qualifications and that means lower-status jobs.¹⁶² As noted in discussion on the Commission's presidency, these feminine characteristics are not thought of as eligible for a leadership position. Therefore, it is maybe not surprising that Mr. Barroso's Commission has chosen to yield more leadership roles to men than women. A strong leader is considered to be competitive and aggressive, and these characteristics are not associated with women. Based on that, it can be assumed that Mr. Barroso's Commission chooses its DGs on the basis of masculine characteristics.

The nature of politics itself is an important inhibitor of women's political participation. It surely is the archetype of a male pursuit – assertive, opinionated and requiring a high degree of self-confidence, toughness and competitiveness. While most men are brought up to aspire some of these qualities, for women they are much more ambivalent. Women's candidates are often stereotyped, maybe not surprisingly. Politics is, historically, a men's game. Political arrangements and roles, and the way they have proceeded, has been created by men, and the processes and structures of institutions are overwhelmingly male.¹⁶³ Based on these arguments a woman shouldn't be too optimistic of being

¹⁶² Elizabeth Vallance and Elizabeth Davies, *Women of Europe: Women MEP's and equality policy* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 4-5.

¹⁶³ Vallance and Davies, 5.

appointed as a DG within Barroso's Commission.

As noted earlier, one of the ambitions of this terms Commission is to increase the number of women who are visible in power positions. One of the core elements of EU's 'Gender Equality Strategy', adopted in 2010, is women in economic decision-making. Today, women are still under-represented in all major decision-making positions, in particular in economic decision-making, which is quite interesting since Mr. Barroso's Commission's aim is to increase women's participation in economic decision-making. Since only 9 out of the 27 Commissioners in Mr. Barroso's Commission are women, it is maybe not surprising that men are the clear majority of those who are appointed, by the Commissioners, as DGs.

7.4.1. The DG for Economic and Financial Affairs

Despite the elements put forward in the 2010 Strategy, noted earlier, the DG for economic growth (ECFIN) is a man. The emphasis on enhancing the role of women in economic decision-making is not carried out by appointing a woman as the ECFIN Directorate General. If that had been done, women would be actively taking part in changing the societal structures behind their under-representation. If a woman was the DG for economic growth, it can be assumed that the views within the issue area would gain some feminine perspectives. According to feminist theory, that would result in more women friendly policies.

By looking at the ECFIN organizational chart, it is noticeable that men are the clear majority of workers. To be exact, out of the 62 officers, mentioned in the organizational chart, only 11 are women.

Could this be affecting the slow progress of making women more visible in economic decision-making? Could the fact that only 17% of those mentioned in the ECFIN organizational chart are women, be slowing the progress towards gender equality? One of the main reasons why Mr. Barroso's Commission set out its elements in the 2010 Strategy, is the fact that women are under-represented in

the economical sector.

In most EU's Member States the unemployment rate remains higher for women than for men, and women continue to be more vulnerable when it comes to unemployment and economic inactivity. There is still a gender pay gap, arguably one of the most visible inequalities faced by women at work. European women earn on average only 84% of men's wages. Women are also up to 77% of the lowest paid workers on European job markets, and they are the majority of part-time workers. 34% of women work part-time, since women still do the majority of work in the homes and for the families. The fact that women are more reluctant to leave their societal duties at home, clearly has an impact on their work patterns, and limits their opportunities to participate and earn salaries that are comparable to the average salaries of men. Further on, mothers work 11-12 hours less than fathers. Fathers show 9,5% higher percentage on employment rates than men without children. This all happens despite the fact that, today, women are better educated than men, with women representing the majority of graduates in the EU (55%).¹⁶⁴

In 2010, when the Commission adopted its 'Strategy for Equality between Women and Men', it announced that it was considering using targeted initiatives to get more women into top jobs in decision-making. The goal being to increase women's presence in EU's corporate boards to 30% by 2015, and 40% by 2020, by means of actively recruiting qualified women to replace outgoing male members.¹⁶⁵ Obviously, the Commission is not doing so well on these matters, since in 2012, women are only about 17% of those working in ECFIN. But what is striking, reading through the Commission's Strategy for Equality, is the term 'qualified women.'

What is a qualified woman? Is that a woman that embraces masculine behavior and attitude? Is that a woman who doesn't have children or doesn't let them affect her professional career? According to the American survey results

¹⁶⁴ European Commission, *Equal Guide on Gender Mainstreaming, Employment and Social Affairs*, 2004.

¹⁶⁵ Same reference.

mentioned earlier, gathered by Hughes, a qualified woman is the one that acts like a man. The results further show, that women think that they need to say goodbye to their femininity and sexual appearance in order for a political career. The reason why they think so, is the fact that men don't take them seriously if they are, for instance, too attractive. Generally, being a boss means being a man. Therefore, gender equality seems to be built on the image of masculine behavior. According to Hughes, it is necessary for women to inhabit masculine values in order to get to top positions within companies and international organizations. Therefore, Hughes addresses the importance of not only letting women in. She emphasizes the importance of changing the societal structures that benefit men.¹⁶⁶ By doing that, the Commission would set a good example by promoting a woman as the DG for Economic and Financial Affairs.

7.4.2. The DG for Employment, Industrial Relations and Social Affairs

The Commission has the Equal Opportunities Unit based in the Directorate General for Employment, Industrial Relations and Social Affairs (EMPL), which is led by Mr. K. Richelle. The Unit is, for instance, responsible for ensuring compliance with EU directives on equal opportunities for men and women. The Commission's President, along with a number of Commissioners, comprise the Commissioners Group on Equality. They maintain an overview on equal opportunities between men and women at the European Commission level and discuss in particular the question of mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and services.¹⁶⁷

After going through the EMPL organizational chart, it is visible that out of the 48 officers mentioned, there are 4 women, about 8%.

In EMPL, the Commission is appointing men, instead of women, as officers working e.g. on reducing gender pay gap. Looking back at the arguments

¹⁶⁶ Hughes, 2002.

¹⁶⁷ Women: Gender Equality Creates Democracy, "Gender equality in the European Union," 2012. http://www.gender-equality.webinfo.lt/results/european_union.htm. (25.02.2012).

given by feminist theory, women's lesser social, political and spiritual status is a consequence of their link to nature and sensuality, while men are committed to authority and reason.¹⁶⁸ It can be assumed that this thought is evident within the EMPL.

One of the Commission's aims is to work on equality, regarding that women should get the same salaries as men, for the same work. Therefore it can be assumed that a step towards gender equality on the job market would be to include women in the decision-making regarding their employment and social affairs. If women are not let in, and if women don't get a chance to change the institutional structures behind their subordination, then changes regarding gender equality will very unlikely occur.

Could it be that at the EU level women are regarded as second-rate? As is visible in the Commission's two DG's discussed here, ECFIN and EMPL, it looks like women are regarded as second-rate compared to men. Men are given the authority, and it is very unlikely they will give it up, especially to the second-rated women. Since men are given the authority and decision-making power in those two important sectors, it can be questioned whether it is in the men's benefit to reduce gender inequality?

According to feminist theory the international system is made up of patriarchal practices that support, yet silent, the structural disadvantages that women face. Men are seen as the governors of the patriarchal family.¹⁶⁹ Taking that argument into account, it can be assumed that the fact that men make up only 8% of the officials in EMPL and 17% in ECFIN, is beneficial for the patriarchal system. When men are the clear majority amongst the policy-makers and are the ones that take all the decisions, can women really expect more gender equality? Taking the argument into account, that men look at women as second-rated, it is maybe not surprising that gender equality is not further along the path within the EU.

¹⁶⁸ Beasley, 6.

¹⁶⁹ Lene Hansen, "Ontologies, epistemologies, methodologies," in *Gender Matters in Global Politics: A feminist introduction to international relations*, ed. Laura J. Shepherd, (New York: Routledge, 2010), 21-22.

Possible effects of women's under-representation as DGs:

Women are a clear minority within the two DG's that especially work on gender equality. Therefore it can be assumed that the governing men are not working on gender equality. Men that have the authority and power in their hands, are maybe unlikely to give it up to women that they are supposed to regard as second-rate and vulnerable. The society instead sends out the message that men are considered to be the head and lead the way. The women are supposed to follow.

As noted earlier, women are rather discriminated against by men in authority who refuse to promote them, and by legislation that limits their opportunities for training, employment and so on. Those women who are successful must work hard to be taken seriously by their colleagues and even take on masculine behavior and attitudes. As has been noted within the chapter on the Commissioners and the Commission's president, women's under-representation needs to be altered in order to make the Commission's aims and promises a reality. While men are governing the two DGs regarding employment and economical affairs, women will not benefit directly from the work done.

8. Results

In this chapter, the analysis' results will be gathered and put forward. The aim of this thesis was to look at the European Union and see how the Union's Commission is handling the battle for gender equality. In order to come to a result and answer the research question, gender equality within the Commission was closely looked at.

Within the thesis, two types of research methods were used. The main part of the thesis was based on already existing materials, e.g. surveys, books, articles and materials published by the EU. To get a critical judgement on the collected materials I did an empirical analysis on the Commission's infrastructure, to get a deeper sense of how gender equality issues are evolving within the Commission. Although I have, in this analysis, only gone through its Commissioners, presidency and DGs, I think I can say that while the Commission is not working on tackling gender inequality within its own structure, then the Member States will neither. By not having equal representation of women and men within its infrastructure, the Member States will neither. That further results in women not finding the EU environment or the national political environment attractive, and therefore they don't run for candidates in national elections. Also, by not making women visible in top political offices e.g. as heads of governments or the Commission's presidency, men will continue to believe that they are the only ones that are capable of governing.

The most important thing that can be learned from my analysis is, that although things sometimes look good on the outside, they are not so good when you start to dig in and look at it from the inside. The Commission has many good directives and treaty provisions regarding gender equality. Its emphasis on gender mainstreaming is good. However, as has been noted, the status of gender equality within the Commission itself is far from good. Hence, it can be questioned whether all the good provisions of the Commission are going to make a real difference, since men are the majority of those making them? According to

feminist theory, women need to get in and change organization's infrastructures in order to tackle the gender inequality within the international system. Applying that to the Commission, more women need to get in.

My analysis can further intrigue other analysis on the matter. My results cannot be used to explain the whole status of gender equality within the Commission, but they can be used as a tool for further analysis. A better overview of the status of gender equality within the Union could be achieved by e.g. taking interviews with women working within the Commission. By doing that, researchers would get a better sense of how women like to work in the masculine environment. Further, the EU could get a better overview of the status of gender equality within its own structures and hopefully, in the future, re-examine its measures and the causes behind them, towards reaching gender equality.

In the following, the empirical analysis' results will be gathered and explained. The research question will be answered separately.

Men are the majority of those nominating the Commissioners, the Commission's president and the directorates-general. The responsibility lies within the Member States' elections as well as with the infrastructure of the Commission.

As has been noted, the European Council comes up with a proposal for the Commission's president, each term. The Council is made up of the Member States' heads of governments and, as noted, in the years of 1999 and 2003 they have been 'all men'. It is unlikely that men will suggest a woman as the Commission's president, since they think of themselves as above women and as their protectors.

The reasons behind the fact that members of the European Council are all men, are also vital. Since men are the Member States' heads of governments, it can be argued that the reasons for women's under-representation, within the Commission's presidency, the DGs and as Commissioners, can be traced back to the status of gender equality within the Member States. Men are more likely than women to get elected to national parliaments. That fact results in fewer women

being elected as heads of governments. Ergo, fewer women become Commissioners and even fewer women are amongst those who come up with a proposal for the presidency. Are women more reluctant to run for candidates in national parliaments or are voters more reluctant to vote for women?

Both of these questions can be answered by looking at the socialization of women's roles throughout the history. As noticeable in the chapter on EU's history, women have been excluded from the fields of international politics for centuries. Some say that the reason for women's under-representation lies within the biological difference between men and women. Women are born with more interest than men in matters of 'soft issues', such as housekeeping, childbirth and social welfare. Men, on the opposite, are born with interest in political matters e.g. wartime and governing matters. This further results in the difference between men's and women's interests in international political matters. Others argue that the reason for women's under-representation lies within the fact that societies have associated different characteristics to men and women. Therefore, it can be argued that societies' socialization of women's roles and characteristics has resulted in fewer women running for candidates within the political sphere. It can also be assumed that voters are more reluctant to vote for women since they are connected to the feminist characteristics. Voters tend to favour masculine characteristics when voting their national and international leaders. Feminine characteristics are not thought of as suitable for the political arena.

The changes put forward in the Lisbon Treaty, coming into affect in 2014 mean that the Commission's president will be directly appointed and selected by the European Parliament. With women's increasing participation within the Parliament, hopefully, someday soon, a woman will become the Commission's president. But for that to happen, women need to run for candidates and they need to be voted for.

The Commissioners, where men are the majority, are not assigning top positions to women.

The second reason for women's under-representation within EU's Commission lies within the fact that women are a clear minority of those who have served and are serving as directorates-general. This fact is especially noticeable when looking at the DGs working on gender equality within the economical sphere. It

is clear that men are appointing men as top level decision-makers within the Commission.

The Union's institutional structure has been made by men, based on masculine values and beliefs. Therefore, it can be argued, that women need to get into the core of the structural system, in order to make it more women-friendly. Whilst women are left outside, it is unlikely that gender inequality within the Union, its infrastructure and Member States, will change and be tackled.

The historical exclusion has an effect on women's subordination.

The third reason for women's subordination lies within the historical exclusion of women within the EU. It is obvious, as is argued by feminist theory, that women have clearly been excluded from the international system. When looking closely at EU's history, from its first days and until today, it is visible that women have in fact been excluded. From EU's first days, until the completion of the SEA, women's issues and gender equality seem to have been of a very little importance. It wasn't until the EWL lobbied its way in that a little attention was given to the status of women within the integration process. This is highly interesting, and maybe a reason for why EU's institutional environment is not women friendly. Based on that, it can be assumed, that men have established their power and hold on to it tight. EU's masculine norm has become institutionalized, and therefore women are having a hard time finding their way in. This can be interpreted as an expression of hegemonic masculinity. The lack of commitment towards policies of gender equality can be explained by the fact that masculine norms are the guiding light within the procedures of EU's institutions.

Patriarchy is affecting women's status within the Commission.

The fourth reason lies within the concept of patriarchy. Men have, for centuries, been seen as the governors and as the only sex qualified to serve as e.g. governments leaders. The patriarchal structure, within the international system, supports men's hold on power. They designed the system to begin with, they hold the power today and without drastic changes, it is unlikely that they will give it up, especially to women who have been regarded as second-rated.

Today, the Commission is not doing well on tackling the patriarchal system within its institutions. According to feminist theory, the international system is made up of patriarchal practices that support, yet silent, the structural disadvantages that women face. Men are seen as the governors of the patriarchal family.¹⁷⁰ Taking that argument into account, it can be assumed that men, and the patriarchal system, are benefitting from e.g. the fact that women make up only 8% of the officials in EMPL and 17% in ECFIN.

Research question: Does it matter who our representatives are?

It is clear that it matters who our representatives are. While men are the majority of policy-makers, and the ones taking the majority of the decisions within the EU, gender equality will not be fully reached, according to the results of the empirical analysis. Taking into account the argument that men look at women as second-rated, it is maybe not surprising that gender equality is not further along the path within the EU, or the European Commission.

EU's gender mainstreaming policy is not working while men are the majority of those responsible for applying it. It spreads out the responsibility for promoting gender equality to many different actors, without any of them really having the job to work on tackling the uneven status between the sexes. Someone needs to hold the key responsibility, someone needs to be actively working on promoting gender equality throughout the Union and its Member States. Whilst that is not so, it is unlikely that gender equality will be reached.

Although it will take a lot of time, the EU needs to make its institutional environment women friendly. Today, it is based on masculine norms and women should not need to accompany those norms in order to get in. Women should get in and be rewarded based on their own capabilities. The EU is missing out on a lot by not having its institutional environment attractive and friendly to women. While the majority of representatives are men, EU's institutional structure is unlikely to change. Men structured the system and unless women will get equally represented within the Union, it will probably stay women un-friendly.

¹⁷⁰ Hansen, 21-22.

How can we get more female representatives? It is not enough to legalize gender quotas in elections in order to get more women voted. We need to get the voters to vote for women, and we need to get women to believe that they can have a say in politics.

How can that be done? We can start by looking at ourselves and our own behavior and thoughts regarding gender equality. What do we think when we see e.g. a young, good-looking woman appointed as a minister? Do we think; ‘wow she must be clever?’ Or do we think: ‘She only got there because she is a good-looking woman?’ To be honest, I think the majority asks the latter question. This results in an unattractive, male dominant and women-rejecting environment. Societies don’t see women based on their qualities and capabilities, they rather see them based on their looks and appearance. If a woman is good looking it is harder for her to be taken seriously by the society than if she was a man.

It is not enough to come up with directives and proposals regarding gender equality. The EU needs to be actively working on getting more female representatives, in order for gender equality to be reached, and in order for the directives to really tackle women’s subordination.

The inequality can be traced back to each and every individual within the Member States. The Member States began the EU’s journey in the 1950s. Men came together and created the EU, according to their own beliefs and values. The issues covered were interesting to men. Now it’s time to reform the Union, with the help of the Member States, in order to encourage women for participation. There is a need for building a system that benefits everybody and rests on the idea of making everybody able to work on own capabilities. Everybody should have a chance to chase their dreams and become whatever they want. The system as it is today is maybe benefiting men, but it is not benefiting the entire Member States’ population, since everybody is not equally represented within the Union. It is affecting its work on reaching gender equality.

Does the invisibility of women affect the way international organizations such as the EU, work? Definitely. By getting more women to the front desk, to the decision-making and law-making areas, both within states and at the

international level, the world will become a more equal place. While men are the majority of workers within the European Commission, gender equality will clearly not be reached. Hence, when it comes to working on gender equality, it does matter who our representatives are.

9. Conclusion

International organizations are an important factor in the modern world. With these organizations states get a common ground when negotiating or discussing how to tackle problems that arise. Within these organizations it is important to give everybody a chance to have an impact. Regarding that, the European Union has, throughout the years, neglected women's capabilities and participation within its processes.

It goes without saying that by almost excluding half of the EU's Member States' citizens from the policy-making and decision-making within the Union, it will not become a Union for all. To be able to call the organization *a union*, it needs to step up its game and start to listen to everybody involved.

The reason for women's under-representation within the Union's Commission is manifold as has been noted. The root cause lying both within the Member States as well as within the Union's history and infrastructure. Therefore, it is necessary for everybody, EU's citizens, the Commissioners and those serving within national governments, to look inside and see what can be done better.

We need to start teaching our children to value men and women the same. We need to change our attitudes. Or as late Michael Jackson said; we all need to start with the 'man' in the mirror.

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Appendix: List of acronyms

DG: Directorate General

EC: The European Community

ECFIN: Directorate General for Economic and Financial Affairs

ECSC: The coal and steel community

EMPL: Directorate General for Employment, Industrial Relations and Social
Affairs

EIGE: European Institute for gender equality

EU: The European Union

GM: Gender mainstreaming

IR: International relations

LI: Liberal intergovernmentalism

MEP: Members of the European Parliament

NF: Neo functionalism

UN: United Nations