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# Where are all the Women in Diplomacy? A Study on the European Union Panorama

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*"There seems to be enough room in the world for mediocre men, but not for mediocre women, and we really have to work very, very hard ... No matter what message you are about to deliver somewhere, whether it is holding out a hand of friendship, or making clear that you disapprove of something, is the fact that the person sitting across the table is a human being, so the goal is to always establish common ground"*

Madeleine Albright*

*Madeleine Albright has served from 1997 to 2001 as Secretary of State under the president Bill Clinton, becoming the first female in the American history enrolled in this position.

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# ABSTRACT

L'ingresso della donna nel panorama delle relazioni internazionali è un fenomeno piuttosto recente. Solo verso la fine del XX secolo le donne hanno ottenuto il diritto di accedere alla carriera diplomatica; prima di allora esse erano considerate solamente come mogli, madri e figlie e dovevano occuparsi esclusivamente della vita domestica. Nonostante ci siano testimonianze del loro coinvolgimento in veste di diplomatiche e ambasciatrici, fin dal 1500, le donne erano prevalentemente escluse dalla vita politica.

La diplomazia, come molte altre carriere professionali, era materia esclusiva di un élite di uomini aristocratici che grazie alla loro istruzione e competenze potevano raggiungere posizioni altolocate e incarichi di prestigio. Era pertanto un campo prettamente sessista e di stampo patriarcale a cui solo l'uomo poteva accedere: tutto ciò che era vita pubblica o stato doveva essere di "appartenenza" maschile. L'unica possibilità che avevano le donne di sperimentare la vita politica era attraverso i propri mariti, come mogli di diplomatici. Ecco così che il loro ruolo divenne fondamentale in quanto incaricate di procurarsi contatti, socializzare e creare l'atmosfera adatta per permettere agli ufficiali di incontrarsi e parlare di politica. Rappresentavano quindi una "presenza non-ufficiale" in diplomazia e pertanto non riconosciute al pari degli uomini. Solo dopo innumerevoli battaglie e manifestazioni le donne sono riuscite ad ottenere qualche riconoscimento in materia di diritti. La possibilità di ricevere un'istruzione superiore ha cambiato le prospettive e le ambizioni delle donne, le quali hanno iniziato a riunirsi in movimenti femministi con lo scopo di ottenere il riconoscimento della parità dei diritti fra uomo e donna.

Le prime battaglie per la parità di genere risalgono all'Illuminismo e alla Rivoluzione Francese, ma è solo tra il XIX e XX secolo che nascono i primi movimenti femministi. Il più famoso, ovviamente, è quello delle *Suffragette*, le quali protestarono principalmente per il loro diritto di voto. Ma fu la Prima Guerra Mondiale che segnò un punto di svolta per l'emancipazione femminile: mentre gli uomini erano impegnati al fronte, le donne venivano assunte come forza lavoro nei loro paesi. Fu proprio da questo momento che ebbe inizio la lotta per la parità di genere. Ci sono voluti più di

cento anni prima di raggiungere una quasi completa parità politica tra uomo e donna, e in alcuni paesi è addirittura un recente avvenimento. Fondamentale fu quindi il riconoscimento del diritto di voto il quale ha permesso alla donna di essere parte attiva del proprio paese con la possibilità, successivamente, di essere elette. La Finlandia fu il primo paese europeo ad estendere il diritto di voto alle donne nel 1906, seguito da Norvegia a Islanda nel 1913. In Danimarca il voto venne riconosciuto nel 1915, in Inghilterra e in Austria nel 1918, in Germania e in Olanda nel 1919, in Svezia nel 1921, in Spagna nel 1931, in Francia nel 1944 e in Italia nel 1946. Il primo paese al mondo invece fu la Nuova Zelanda nel 1893, mentre negli Stati Uniti avvenne nel 1920; al contrario l'ultimo paese ad estendere il voto alle donne fu l'Arabia Saudita nel 2011. Per quanto riguarda invece l'accesso alla magistratura e alla carriera diplomatica le donne dovranno aspettare il 1963 in Italia, il 1946 per l'Inghilterra, mentre gli Stati Uniti il 1922.

L'attivismo femminile creatosi negli anni deve la sua ascesa all'emergere di una consapevolezza e percezione di una propria identità di genere, un concetto molto complesso e articolato. L'identità di genere corrisponde alla percezione che un individuo ha di stesso come uomo o donna, indipendentemente dalle caratteristiche biologiche, ma anche e soprattutto dall'ambiente sociale in cui si vive. La società svolge un ruolo fondamentale nell'identificazione del genere, poiché ha contribuito a creare alcune aspettative sui ruoli che uomini e donne dovrebbero ricoprire; aspettative che hanno influenzato le interazioni quotidiane tra uomini e donne e le reazioni dell'ambiente nei confronti delle donne. Da ciò scaturisce la percezione della posizione della donna all'interno dell'ambiente lavorativo, individuata principalmente come figura secondaria e meno capace rispetto all'uomo. Il processo per il raggiungimento della parità di genere è molto delicato e tortuoso e purtroppo non ancora del tutto raggiunto. Numerose risoluzioni e convenzioni sono state adottate per il raggiungimento di tale diritto, come ad esempio l'adozione della *Dichiarazione Universale dei Diritti Umani* del 1948; la *Convenzione sull'Eliminazione di Tutte le Forme di Discriminazione nei Confronti della Donna* del 1979; la *Risoluzione del Consiglio di Sicurezza delle Nazioni Unite n. 1325 (2000)* o le *Conferenze Mondiali sulle Donne*. Tuttavia, la presenza femminile in posizioni apicali della diplomazia rimane numericamente inferiore a quella maschile.

A questo proposito sono state analizzate una serie di statistiche pubblicate da fonti certificate come l'Istituto europeo per l'uguaglianza di genere (EIGE), l'Ufficio statistico dell'Unione europea (Eurostat), l'Unione interparlamentare, e l'Entità delle Nazioni Unite per l'uguaglianza di genere e l'empowerment delle donne. I dati indagano dapprima la situazione globale della rappresentanza femminile in politica e successivamente volgono l'attenzione specificamente agli incarichi diplomatici di un certo prestigio. Il risultato è una preferenza nel riservare determinati incarichi di governo agli uomini e affidare compiti prevalentemente di ufficio e amministrazione alle donne. Non solo, ma anche nel momento in cui le donne riescono a raggiungere posizioni senior vengono spesso incaricate con tematiche a sfondo sociale e culturale. Una possibile spiegazione per questo trend è riscontrabile nella costruzione dell'attività diplomatica, la quale nasce principalmente come una istituzione di genere con norme, pratiche e connessioni basate su una egemonia maschile. Di conseguenza trovare donne che si inseriscano in un contesto altamente maschilista e avere l'opportunità di emergere risulta altamente complicato. Questo crea quindi un ambiente "ostile" alle donne caratterizzato da costanti pregiudizi e discriminazioni.

Tuttavia, i nuovi studi condotti in materia di diplomazia e genere hanno dimostrato che avere una leadership femminile può rappresentare un vantaggio per la governance mondiale. Pertanto una più equa rappresentazione politica non è solo fondamentale per un miglioramento nella natura rappresentativa e per la responsabilità della pratica politica, ma anche perché comporta una maggiore qualità a livello di governo che si riflette conseguentemente nella leadership mondiale.

Pertanto, la decisione di affrontare questo argomento nasce dalla volontà di fare chiarezza sul perché l'ambiente politico e soprattutto quello diplomatico presenta tutt'oggi una scarsità di donne a livello decisionale e manageriale e a livello di rappresentanza esterna. Nel XXI secolo ci si aspetterebbe che la parità di genere fosse un obiettivo quasi completamente raggiunto in tutti gli ambiti lavorativi, ma purtroppo la realtà è molto diversa. Solo recentemente il famoso fenomeno del "glass ceiling", ovvero la metafora utilizzata per descrivere una barriera invisibile che impedisce alla donna di accedere a posizioni altolocate in ambienti di lavoro, ha iniziato lentamente

a sgretolarsi. L'obiettivo di questo elaborato è quindi quello di tracciare una breve analisi riguardo la percezione della disparità di genere nel mondo diplomatico e l'impatto che esso ha sulla carriera lavorativa femminile. Una maggiore attenzione verrà posta in particolare all'Unione Europea, alle sue istituzioni e ai suoi attori politici. Inoltre, una sezione specifica sarà volta all'analisi di un caso di studio, individuando due personaggi politici femminili che si sono imposte a livello europeo nonostante le critiche e difficoltà che hanno dovuto subire.

Il progetto è suddiviso in quattro capitoli, ciascuno dei quali affronta uno specifico aspetto della diplomazia. Il primo capitolo illustra la letteratura in materia di genere e diplomazia e il rapporto in continua evoluzione che ha portato alla nascita di una attività accademica femminista. Il secondo capitolo rappresenta un'analisi sulla questione dell'identità di genere e, conseguentemente, sulla disparità di genere all'interno del panorama diplomatico. Si analizza l'influenza femminile in tale ambito concentrandosi sul ruolo delle mogli e spose dei diplomatici, rivelatesi determinanti nella ridefinizione dell'alta politica. Termina infine con l'individuare i punti di svolta che hanno permesso alle donne di entrare a far parte di questo ambiente riportando le principali risoluzioni, trattati e convenzioni adottati per l'integrazione della donna in politica. Il terzo capitolo spiega il problema del "gender gap" tracciando una panoramica mondiale circa la presenza femminile delle donne in luoghi decisionali e apicali nel servizio diplomatico tramite l'analisi di dati statistici. La tesi si conclude con un quarto capitolo che raccoglie tutte le informazioni discusse in precedenza riportandole in effettivo sulla scena politica europea. Ovvero si prende in esame la rappresentanza esterna dell'Unione Europea e gli attori responsabili, in quanto ambasciatori, negoziatori e capi delegazione. L'ultima parte si focalizza su un caso di studio, ovvero la figura dell'Alto Rappresentate dell'Unione per gli Affari Esteri e la Politica di Sicurezza la cui carica è stata ricoperta da due donne: Catherine Ashton e Federica Mogherini. Tramite un'indagine del loro percorso politico e del loro ruolo come alto rappresentate, si cerca di individuare se anche la loro carriera è stata soggetta a discriminazioni e pregiudizi, e se l'identità di genere ha in qualche modo influito sulla loro nomina e ascesa politica.

La diversità di genere ha subito dei netti miglioramenti in ambito di rappresentanza politica, tuttavia rimane ancora oggi uno dei principali problemi che il mondo si trova ad affrontare. Se da un lato la legislazione ha avuto un impatto positivo sulla rappresentanza delle donne nei consigli di amministrazione e nei luoghi di potere politici, dall'altro invece sembra che non ci siano grandi miglioramenti sulle posizioni che le donne rivestono, allargando così la disparità di genere. In apparenza le donne impegnate in ambito politico sono sempre più frequenti, ma la presenza effettiva di quest'ultime in posizioni decisionali è ancora rara. A questo proposito l'Unione Europea ha introdotto un'ampia gamma di strumenti per la promozione dell'identità di genere come le quote legislative; tuttavia la generale mancanza di strategie a lungo termine spiega come i progressi in merito alla rappresentazione femminile siano ancora limitati.[1] Pertanto, non solo si cerca di garantire una partecipazione effettiva e pari opportunità di leadership ad ogni livello decisionale in tutti i settori professionali, ma anche creare un mondo migliore in cui la violenza, l'abuso e lo sfruttamento della donna siano del tutto eradicati. L'uguaglianza uomo-donna è pertanto un diritto fondamentale e uno dei diciassette obiettivi dell'agenda ONU per lo sviluppo sostenibile da raggiungere entro il 2030.[2]

[1] European Commission, *2019 Report on equality between women and men in the EU.* Available at https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/news-media/news/2019-report-equality-between-women-and-men-workers-group-summary.

[2] See: https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/development-agenda/. The 17 Sustainable Developments Goals of the United Nations are: no poverty; zero hunger; good health and well-being; quality education; gender equality; clean water and sanitation; affordable and clean energy; decent work and economic growth; industry, innovation and infrastructure; reduced inequalities; sustainable cities and communities; responsible production and consumption; climate action, life bellow water; life on land; peace, justice and strong institutions; partnerships for the goals.

# INTRODUCTION

> *"Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status."*[3]
>
> *(Article 2, Universal Declaration of Human Rights)*

Article 2 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* stabilizes equal rights and freedoms without discrimination of any kind, included gender. Nevertheless, history has proved to be contrary on the enrollment of women within the political field but above all in the diplomatic one. For a long time, women have been in fact excluded and banned from accessing diplomatic positions and missions, and only in recent times they have been able to establish themselves diplomatically. The relationship created between gender and diplomacy immediately proved to be complicated and in a certain sense even conflictual, and therefore a reason for analysis for many scholars. Unfortunately, the literature closely related to gender dynamics in diplomacy is not very thorough. Only later and more precisely in the last ten years, the academic activity experienced a considerable increase, also thanks to the participation of women, who have contributed to the birth of a feminist literature focused on a redefinition and reorganization of diplomacy according to female interests.

In this regard, a text considered interesting and perfectly inherent to the theme of the thesis is the text by Herbert Wright, *Can a Woman Be a Diplomat?*[4], as it makes people reflect on the nature of diplomacy. From his point of view, asking the question "can a woman be a diplomat?" is contradictory because, as he states, women have always been diplomats. Since the birth of diplomacy and international relations, political and diplomatic activities have also been managed by women. Certainly, these were exceptional cases since only noblewomen could be engaged in such activities. But Wright reflects on a broad theme in his text, that is on the peculiarities and

[3] United Nations General Assembly, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, 10 December 1948, Paris, Article 2.
[4] Wright, H. "Can a Woman Be a Diplomat?", *The North American Review*, (1939) vol. 248, no. 1, pp. 100-108.

properties of the female gender in relation to the diplomatic occupation. However, if the question posed by Wright seemed to have found an answer, on the contrary diplomatic history has always questioned women's abilities and rights in matters of diplomacy. Not only did they have the opportunity to be considered diplomatic actors only very late, but they have always encountered obstacles to their careers as discriminations and prejudices that undermined their rise to important occupations. To their disadvantage there was also a masculine culture of diplomacy, which considered male being as the only person in charge of managing the activity of government and external representation. The diplomatic world has always been considered the place of masculinity, in which the same political practices, norms and infrastructures have been constructed on the basis of a male hegemony.[5] This has consequently influenced the exclusion of women from the diplomatic world precisely because having women assigned to positions considered of masculine character would break diplomatic norms.[6] For this reason, in trying to understand the motives why women are numerically inferior in this particular field compared to other professional sectors, greater attention will be paid to the dominant norms and gender expressions that guide diplomatic practices, and to what extent diplomatic culture can constitute a structural obstacle for women.[7]

As previously said, diplomacy, like many other professional careers, was the exclusive field of an élite of aristocratic men who, thanks to their education and skills, could reach prestigious and high-ranking positions. Women were not allowed in taking part into this environment, but they could only experience political life as "transversal actors"[8] and always considered within a purely domestic environment. The exercise of their 'unofficial presence', can be seen as a slow approach to the world of diplomacy. As such, they were able to influence the realm of high politics by, initially, creating their own epistolary activity and feminine salon in which they maintained relationships and talked about personal issues and of political nature, too. Subsequently, they have

[5] Aggestam, K. and Towns, A. *Gendering Diplomacy and International Negotiation,* Palgrave Macmillan, 2018.
[6] Ibidem.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Domett, T. "Soft Power in Global Politics? Diplomatic Partners as Transversal Actors", *Australian Journal of Political Science,* (2005) vol. 40, no. 2, pp. 289-306.

become fundamental actors in the management of foreign affairs as spouses of diplomatic officers. As wives they had to create their own range of contacts, entertain guests and "create the perfect atmosphere in the residence where diplomats from different states could get to know each other and talk about business"[9]. Besides, they have managed to carve out their own space in which to exert their power, and finally redefine the political agenda according to their own interests. All these achievements have been possible thanks to birth of the first feminist movements, which fought and claimed for the recognition of equal rights between men and women. First of all, the greatest achievements are designated by the right to receive a higher education, the right to vote and subsequently to be eligible. Besides, a decisive factor was the awareness of a personal identity distinct and independent from that of the husband or father. And it is exactly from this need for independence that the notion of gender identity emerged. As a concept, it appeared only in the mid-nineties as an entity separated from the biological sex and as a binary system in which male gender occupied a privileged position compared to the female.[10] From this postulation, comes the idea that the woman has to be seen in opposition to the man, thus defining not only the way of building society, but also the management of the labor market, creating a social hierarchy mainly based on male superiority.

Moreover, to become aware of the own identity it is no longer possible to think of gender as an isolated category, but it is necessary to refer to a broader concept, *intersectionality*. The author Stephanie Shields explained that intersectionality consists on "the mutually constitutive relations among social identities"[11], meaning that the individual's gender must be understood "in the context of power relations embedded in social identities"[12]. However, the theory of intersectionality (1989) is to be attributed to the American activist Kimberlé Crenshaw[13], according to which

[9] Rahman-Figueroa, T. "Celebrating the Rise of Women in Diplomacy", *Diplomatic Courier,* March 8, 2012. Available at https://www.diplomaticourier.com/posts/celebrating-the-rise-of-women-in-diplomacy.
[10] Rubin, G. *The traffic of Women: Notes on the "Political Economy of Sex",* New York, Ryana Reiter, 1975.
[11] Shields, S.A. "Gender: An Intersectionality Perspective", *Sex Roles*, (2008) p. 301.
[12] Ibidem.
[13] Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw is an American civil rights advocate and at the UCLA School of Law Colombia Law School. She is known for the introduction and development of the intersectional theory.

gender is an intertwined reality with other social categories; it is necessary to think to every element or trait of a person as inextricably linked to all the other elements in order to fully understand his identity. But Crenshaw was only the first to introduce the term and elaborate the theory. In fact, the debates over intersectionality were introduced with the feminist movements of the '60s, which were mainly focused on the intersection of gender, race and social class. Crenshaw has therefore taken up and deepened these discourses addressing on the oppression of black women within the society. She argued that the discrimination affects these women at three levels: structural intersectionality, political intersectionality, and representational intersectionality. The structural intersectionality analyzes the way in which black women experience discrimination qualitatively different from white women; the political intersectionality addresses how individuals might face different challenges depending on the influences of political discourse; the representational intersectionality addresses intersectionality through the examination of other discourses than power relations.[14]

Today instead, the analysis has expanded until include more aspects of social identity: gender, race, social class, ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation, religion, age, mental and physical disability, mental illness and other forms of identity can intersect to create a whole that is different from the component identities. The same abuse mentioned by Crenshaw of black women is now seen in reference to all the other social categories; as such, from the study of how intersecting social identities, emerged that these intersections refer to systems and structures of oppression, domination and discrimination. Intersectionality provides a useful instrument in understanding how social categories are constructed and how their interaction leads to the creation of a social hierarchy. This picture shows that the injustice and inequality that is created does not manifest only through the independent action of the oppressive concepts of society (such as racism, sexism, etc.), but acts on a multidimensional basis, through the intersection of multiple forms of discrimination.[15]

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[14] Crenshaw, K.W. *Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color*, 1991.
[15] Crenshaw, K.W. "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics", *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, (1989) pp.139-167.

although the concept refers mainly to a discrimination against those social groups excluded because of different gender, sex, ethnicity, social status, the concept of intersectionality can be applied in a certain sense also to the world of diplomacy, as women are victims of exclusion and oppression in the diplomatic world. The various forms of social stratification have in fact created a diplomatic social hierarchy that has manifested itself in discriminatory behavior and oppression towards those who are marginalized (women, minorities, etc.). In general, diplomacy has always preferred men, especially seniors, white and heterosexuals,[16] thus creating a gender construction that has generated a "hostile" environment for the female world in which prejudice and discrimination are constant behaviors. These obstacles translate into a female underrepresentation in the seats of power and in decision-making positions, and in several difficulties women have had to face, and continue to, once they have been officially admitted to public offices. They are going through direct and indirect discrimination like for example the 'marriage bar', a mechanism of exclusion for all married women throughout the 1900s, and the 'glass ceiling', an invisible barrier that prevent women from advancing in their professional career. Not only, but when they manage to, they are assigned to marginal posts and forced to submit to masculine and discriminatory behavior and constant prejudices. In fact, only few women are able to achieve leadership roles creating a gap that today is still far from being filled. To compensate the gender-gap, several resolutions and plans of actions have been adopted, but the integration of women at political level and in all other sectors still remains a global issue. In trying to correct the imbalances of power in diplomacy it becomes fundamental to take into account intersectionality. It is no longer possible to focus only on the number of women in command positions, but the discussion on female representation calls for a much richer picture of women in all their intersectionality. Its purpose is to verify that the forms of discrimination oppressing social categories are related to each other, and paying regard to these relationships when working to promote social and political equality.

[16] Alver, J. and Stephenson, E. "Is diversity disrupting diplomacy - and are we doing enough to ensure it is?", King's College London, December 5, 2018. Available at https://www.kcl.ac.uk/news/is-diversity-disrupting-diplomacy-and-are-we-doing-enough-to-ensure-it-is.

The entire project, in addition to presenting a brief global overview of the topic, will mainly examine the gender inequality within the European Union. This decision involves a problem of sources, that is as a research area, gender and diplomacy are still undiscovered, particularly in the matter of the intersection between women and diplomacy. Having women assigned in top positions of the diplomatic service is a recent event, as only starting from the 21st century women have increased their presence among the seats of power. Also the studies on gender inequality have developed only recently, therefore the sources that are found mostly provide a global overview of state diplomatic realities. As a consequence, there are few references relating to individual entities such as those concerning the European Union. And it is precisely from the need to deepen the research on gender disparity in diplomacy in minor realities, it has been decided to focus on the European Union and its institutions. Moreover, since the Union is a great advocate in the field of gender equality, it is interesting to clarify how the union addresses the problem and how it is mobilized in helping women to emerge in the diplomatic career. The objective of the EU is in fact to reach at least 40% of participation of both genders in decision-making positions at both political and public level. According to the 2016 research report of the Council of Europe[17] on the participation of women and men in decision-making positions, male presence is still prevalent. Among the elected representatives, women represent only 25.6% of the average for both lower houses and regional parliaments. Within the diplomatic service, only 13% of ambassadors are female and the diplomatic corps is increasingly dominated by male staff as the office becomes higher. Data clearly demonstrate how the diplomatic service reflects less gender equality than other positions.[18]

The thesis is structured in four chapters: the first chapter presents a brief analysis of the academic literature on gender and diplomacy; how the relationship between these two entities has evolved over the years; and how scholarship has created a new branch focused on the feminine contribution in diplomacy. The second chapter

[17] Council of Europe, "Balanced participation of women and men in decision-making. Analytical report – 2016 data", Gender Equality Commission. Available at https://rm.coe.int/analytical-report-data-2016-/1680751a3e.
[18] Ibidem.

analyzes the concept of gender identity and its connection with world diplomacy. In retracing the evolution of the relationship between women and diplomacy, the strategic role of diplomatic wives in the management of international relations will be analyzed. In conclusion, the section contains the most important regulations and conventions introduced for the integration of women in global governance. The third chapter focuses on the role of female diplomats at world level and their displacement once they are hired. In this regard, references and data on the presence of women in workplaces and in government rooms will be presented. The fourth and final chapter will specifically present the European framework and the women in the European institutions in top positions. To conclude, a case study will be proposed on the figure of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, one of the most important institutional tasks among the senior European jobs. The experiences of the two women who held the office, Catherine Ashton and Federica Mogherini, represent an example of women who have been in charge of prestigious offices within European diplomacy and a progressive attempt to integrate women in the diplomatic field.

In sum, several reasons have always limited the presence of women not only in the political and diplomatic sphere, but in all professional sectors and even today there are numerous obstacles women have to face. Although in this study gender diversity refers mainly to the equal opportunities of women within the diplomatic domain, equality is a problem that involves all those people who are in conditions of oppression and discrimination and to whom the same rights are not equally recognized. Bridging the gender gap is therefore crucial not only for managing a better world, but above all because, despite the interventions for the promotion of equality, even today in the twenty-first century, gender inequality is one of the biggest problems that the world must face. The European Union has introduced a wide range of tools to promote gender identity such as legislative quotas; however, the general lack of long-term strategies explains how progress in women's representation is still limited.[19]

[19] European Commission, *2019 Report on equality between women and men in the EU.* Available at https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/news-media/news/2019-report-equality-between-women-and-men-workers-group-summary.

# CHAPTER 1

# SCHOLARSHIP ON GENDER AND DIPLOMACY

This first short chapter focuses on the research agenda that was examined for the development of the entire thesis. In particular, it attempts to trace an analysis of the literature collected regarding gender and its relation to diplomacy, and how the academic study has faced the both issues over the years.

## 1.1 A NEW RESEARCH AGENDA

Diplomacy, as we know it today as 'the set of political-institutional procedures through which States maintain reciprocal relations', becomes a real profession distinct from the political one, with legal value only in 1815, after the Congress of Vienna. Since then, diplomatic activity has always been perceived as an exclusive subject of man. Only since the twentieth century have international political actors begun to open their doors to women as well. However, a century later men still remain the main diplomatic exponents.

The history of diplomacy admissibility has a long evolution: at first it was focused on the role of the male within international political relations, subsequently it expanded until including women in its organization. Yet, despite the overtime changes such as the rise of feminist movements, and the several resolutions in favor of female integration in politics, the academic work on gender dynamics in diplomacy is underdeveloped.[20] In fact, the study of diplomacy and gender and the intersection of these two components still remains precarious and little studied. Only in the last decade, when the problem of the gender issue has become a highly resonant and widely discussed subject, the literature has undergone a remarkable increase on the subject.

Initially, literature did not directly examine the concept of gender intersected with diplomacy, since at that time there was no clear distinction between the public

[20] Aggestam, K. and Towns, A. "The gender turn in diplomacy: a new research agenda", International Feminist Journal of Politics, (2019) vol. 21, issue 1, pp. 9-28.

and the private, the spheres in which political activity took place, neither a net exclusion of women, which in fact were involved in the political diplomatic sphere already at the time. In fact, connections and family ties were much more important than sex to manage relationships. The academic interest for gender and diplomacy has started to emerge mainly at the end of the twentieth century, in conjunction with the emergence of gender studies and the claim for women's rights. With the rise of more women in diplomacy, there has been a development in gender research as well.

Therefore, a first corpus of academic studies analyzes the birth of the concept of gender and its interaction with the diplomatic sphere. The formulation of the concept appears in the United States around 1950, but only subsequently spreads to Europe. In this regard, the literature examined relies on the major exponents of gender studies, in particular the work of Ann Oakley[21] and Gayle Rubin[22], which for the first time refer to the gender as a separate entity from the biological sex.

First of all, scholars recognized diplomacy as a gender institution, with highly entrenched forms, norms and practices of masculinity. As a consequence, the contribution of women in the diplomatic sphere has led to a re-definition and re-organization of diplomacy itself, with new practices and new approaches. As such, "gender and feminist scholars strive to broaden, transform and rethink the understanding of diplomacy"[23], creating a real feminist literature on diplomacy. In this regard, the works of Karin Aggestam and Ann Towns, Nancy McGlen and Meredith Sarkees, Mary Meyer and Elisabeth Prügl, and J. Ann Tickner, have been fundamental in the knowledge of the re-defined diplomacy.[24] "Feminist institutionalist scholarship provides insightful accounts by showing how gender operate in institutional structures,

[21] Oakley A. R., *Sex, gender and society,* Gower Publishing, 1972.
[22] Rubin G. *The traffic of Women: Notes on the "Political Economy of Sex",* New York, Ryana Reiter, 1975.
[23] Aggestam, K. and Towns, A. "The gender turn in diplomacy: a new research agenda", International Feminist Journal of Politics, (2019) vol. 21, issue 1, p. 11.
[24] Aggestam, K. and Towns, A. *Gendering Diplomacy and International Negotiation,* Palgrave Macmillan, 2018. McGlen, N. E. and Sarkees, M. R. *Women in Foreign Policy: The Insiders*, London: Routledge, 1993. Meyer, M. and Prügl, E. *Gender Politics in Global Governance,* Rowman and Littlefield, 1999. Tickner, J. A. *Gendering World Politics,* New York: Columbia University Press, 2001.

processes, practices and how femininity and masculinity are produced and reproduced"[25].

With regard to the diplomatic literature, the most developed is that within diplomatic history. This corpus of texts represented by the works of James Daybell, Katie Hickman, Rhodri Jeffreys-Jones, Jane Jensen, Helen McCarthy, Vicky Randall, Glenda Sluga and Carolyn James, Ann Towns, and Molly Wood, mainly analyze the active exercise of women in diplomacy who have perpetuated for centuries in Europe.[26] Some of these studies take the form of biographies, analyzing the lives and efforts of individual women and their diplomatic activities, while others analyze the progresses and changes that have occurred over time. Since women were excluded from formal political positions, the story took for granted that diplomacy was characterized by the total absence of women. On the contrary, Towns has demonstrated the involvement of women as diplomats or ambassadors before the twentieth century, while Sluga, has outlined portraits of women involved in politics since the 1500s; as well Daybell has talked about the influence of women in the Elizabethan era as intelligence informers.

A third set of texts points attention on more recent studies, especially on the role of women in diplomacy during the twentieth century (Jean-Marc Delaunay and Yves Denechère, Jennifer Cassidy)[27] and the opening of the diplomatic profession to women focusing on the history of individual foreign services (Homer Calkin, Helen

[25] Aggestam, K. and Towns, A. "The gender turn in diplomacy: a new research agenda", International Feminist Journal of Politics, (2019) vol. 21, issue 1, p. 20.

[26] Daybell, J. *Women Letter-Writers in Tudor England*, Oxford University Press, 2006. Hickman, K. *Daughters of Britannia: The Lives and Times of Diplomatic Wives*, London: HarperCollins, 1999. Jeffreys-Jones, R. *Changing Differences: Women and the Shaping of American Foreign Policy, 1917–1994*, New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1997. Jensen, J. S. *Women Political Leaders. Breaking the Highest Glass Ceiling,* Palgrave Macmillan, 2008. McCarthy, H. *Women of the world: the rise of the female diplomat*, Bloomsbury, London, 2014. Randall, V. *Women and Politics: An International Perspective*, Macmillan Education LTD, 1987. Sluga, G. and James, C. *Women, diplomacy and international politics since 1500*, London, NY: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2015. Towns, A. *Women and States. Norms and Hierarchies in International Society*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010. Wood, M. M. "Diplomatic Wives: The Politics of Domesticity and the 'Social Game' in the US Foreign Service, 1905–1941.", *Journal of Women's History,* (2005) vol. 17, no. 2, pp. 142-165; and "Wives, Clerks, and 'Lady Diplomats': The Gendered Politics of Diplomacy and Representation in the US Foreign Service, 1900-1940", *European Journal of American Studies,* (2015) 10-1.

[27] Delaunay, J. et Denéchère, Y. *Femmes et relations internationales au XXe siècle,* Presses Sorbonne nouvelle, 2006. Denéchère, Y. *Femmes et diplomatie : France, XXe siècle*, Peter Lang, 2004. Cassidy, J. *Gender and Diplomacy*, London and New York: Routledge, 2017.

McCarthy, Nancy McGlen and Meredith Sarkees, Iver Neumann)[28]. Among them, the role of the diplomatic wife is extensively analyzed, as it was considered fundamental for the success of diplomatic interactions (Hugo Dobson, Cynthia Enloe, Helen McCarthy, Molly Wood)[29]. From the verification of all these contributions, the scholarship on gender in the formal institutions of diplomacy remains unfortunately limited mainly to a few diplomatic groups. In fact, most of the studies focus mainly on the European and North American diplomatic context, while with regard to other international realities there is very little or almost no material. The only volume that examines other realities such as Brazil, Japan, Sweden, Turkey and America is the very recent text of Aggestam and Towns[30].

In this case, gender research has also examined more specific studies on the roles played by men and women in diplomacy. The text of Ann Towns and Birgitta Niklasson[31] reports information about women's positions as ambassadors or in senior negotiating positions. The result is that female diplomats enrolled as ambassadors or negotiators are always lower than men enrolled in the same positions. Not only that, but similar male overrepresentation criteria are also reported by Aggestam and Towns regarding international organizations. Moreover, this specific corpus also identifies how the appointments are diversified also at regional level and according to the types of assignments.

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[28] Calkin, H. *Women in American Foreign Affairs*, Washington, DC:
Department of State, 1977. McCarthy, H. "Petticoat Diplomacy: The Admission of Women to the British Foreign Service, c. 191-1946", *Twentieth Century British History*, (2009) vol. 20, no. 3, pp. 285-321; and *Women of the world: the rise of the female diplomat*, Bloomsbury, London, 2014. McGlen, N. E. and Reid Sarkees, M. *Women in Foreign Policy: The Insiders*, London: Routledge, 1993. Neumann, I. *At Home With the Diplomats: Inside a European Foreign Ministry*, Cornell University Press, 2012.

[29] Dobson, H. "Where are the Women in Global Governance? Leaders, Wives and Hegemonic Masculinity in the G8 and G20 Summits", *Global Society*, (2012) vol. 26, no. 4, pp. 429-449. Enloe, C. *Bananas, Beaches, and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989. McCarthy, H. *Women of the world: the rise of the female diplomat*, Bloomsbury, London, 2014. Wood, M. M. "Diplomatic Wives: The Politics of Domesticity and the 'Social Game' in the US Foreign Service, 1905–1941.", *Journal of Women's History,* (2005) vol. 17, no. 2, pp. 142-165; and "Wives, Clerks, and 'Lady Diplomats': The Gendered Politics of Diplomacy and Representation in the US Foreign Service, 1900-1940", *European Journal of American Studies,* (2015) 10-1.

[30] Aggestam, K. and Towns, A. *Gendering Diplomacy and International Negotiation,* Palgrave Macmillan, 2018.

[31] Towns, A. and Niklasson, B. "Gender, International Status, and Ambassador Appointments", *Foreign Policy Analysis*, (2016) pp. 1-20.

In conjunction with the development of gender studies and diplomacy, interesting studies have emerged concerning the interaction between representation and outcome of diplomatic practices, understood as negotiations and peace agreements. The authors Christine Bell, Alice Eagly and Linda Carli analyze and have shown that often having female leadership or having female members within diplomatic institutions could lead to positive and lasting results over time in the field of negotiations and peace agreements.[32] However, all these demonstrations turn out to be purely descriptive, as there are no in-depth and substantial studies about these statements.

Existing studies tend to take the form of the case study, with rather limited time and space analyzes. The trend is that of a general narrative on the history of women and gender in diplomacy that rarely involves a comparison with other realities. In fact, it would be necessary to broaden the research agenda to non-Eurocentric contexts in order to build a more global and complete narrative. As Aggestam and Towns observe: "There is simultaneously a need for ethnographic studies of gender and diplomacy, richer scholarship contributed by analysts that enter the institutions to examine the life world, social interactions, understandings and practices of diplomats and negotiators"[33].

In sum, numerous sources have been taken into consideration for the structuring of this project. What emerges from the various studies is that men have always dominated the political and diplomatic world with women involved only marginally or almost completely absent, and that diplomacy itself has been built around a male hegemony. This marked male presence has led scholars to be interested in the female situation and their involvement in diplomacy. The result is that only recently, and particularly in the last decade, the academy has developed a specific literature on the subject. Indeed, most of the sources date back to the 2000s, the rest comes from the twentieth century and very little from the nineteenth.

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[32] Bell, C. *Text and Context: Evaluating Peace Agreements for Their 'Gender Perspectives'*, New York: UN Women, 2015. Eagly, A. H., Carli, L. L. "The female leadership advantage: An evaluation of the evidence", *The Leadership Quarterly*, (2003) vol. 14, issue 6, pp. 807-834.

[33] Aggestam, K. and Towns, A. "The gender turn in diplomacy: a new research agenda", International Feminist Journal of Politics, (2019) vol. 21, issue 1, p. 22.

# CHAPTER 2

# GENDER IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

The second chapter represents an historical perspective, from the birth of the concept of gender and gender identity, and its intrinsic link with the international diplomatic domain. With regard to this specific field, gender issue will be interpreted on the account of gender inequality, a very widespread problem that particularly affects female condition. The section focuses on the appearance of struggles for gender equality among all professional sectors and, specifically, on the relationship between female identity and diplomacy, and on the contribution women brought to the diplomatic activity, tracing the historical evolution and the turning points that allowed women to actively participate in the diplomatic career. It analyzes women's movements as crucial for the recognition of women as fundamental actors in this field and deals with women's involvement into foreign affairs since 1500. It then concludes with a general excursus on the fundamental Regulations and Conventions introduced for the integration of women in diplomacy. Furthermore, it is important to point out that the entire work will be an analysis mainly focused on the European Union, with some reference also to international realities such as the United Nations.

## 2.1 IDENTIFYING GENDER ISSUE

Gender identity refers to the perception and awareness an individual has of himself as man or woman; it therefore corresponds to the gender with which a person identifies himself primarily. It doesn't only depend on biological differences, but also the social environment within which people live and grow, influences the personal identification of gender. Gender can be defined as the social meaning assumed by sexual differences. It designs the several characteristics and behaviors that are associated to men and women and therefore expected by them within a particular society. In other words, gender defines masculinity and femininity concepts and their respective real or assumed differences.[34] At the core of the concept of identity, stands

[34] Burr, V. *Psicologia delle differenze di genere,* Bologna, Il Mulino, 2000.

the diversification between *sex* and *gender.* As Joan Scott has argued, gender refers to some bodily and behavioral aspects inherent in a person as cultural products and therefore transformable, as opposed to other aspects that are fixed because belonging to the natural.[35] Whereas sex, understood as male-female differences, refers to both the physical-bodily characteristics and the behavioral forms to which we have been accustomed to identify as belonging to a specific gender from the society.[36] In a most recent usage, American female scholars insisted on the social distinctions based on sex: "The word denoted a rejection of the biological determinism implicit in the use of such terms as "sex" or "sexual difference"[37]. Thus, according to Charli Carpenter, "sex exists independently of our representations of it whereas gender requires social representation for its existence"[38].

The formulation of gender as a concept diversified by sex appeared in the United States in 1950s among sociological analysis. But only in the 1970s and 80s these studies spread all over Europe, reflecting on a principally cultural and political condition. The first attempt of debating a gender theory was conducted by Ann Oakley in 1972. According to her, sex refers to the biological and anatomical difference between woman and man, while gender refers to a cultural and social matter.[39] But, it is only through the work of Gayle Rubin that gender-sex dichotomy it is transformed into an asymmetrical binary system, where the male character occupies a privileged position with respect to the female.[40] Hence, gender studies started to emerge, investigating on female condition as object of inferiority and subordination. The more it is deepened, the more new implications linked to gender emerged, that is biological differences can also be resulted into social and political inequalities.

A further issue related to the awareness of gender identity is stereotyping behaviors according to the gender. As the third chapter will analyze, gender

[35] Scott, J. W. *Gender and the Politics of History,* New York: Columbia university Press, 1999.
[36] Ibidem.
[37] Scott, J. W. "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis", *The American Historical Review*, (1986) vol. 91, no. 5, p. 1054.
[38] Carpenter, C. in Carver, T. et al. "Gender and International Relations", *International Studies Review,* (2003) vol. 5, no. 2, p. 296.
[39] Oakley A. R., *Sex, gender and society,* Gower Publishing, 1972.
[40] Rubin G. *The traffic of Women: Notes on the "Political Economy of Sex",* New York, Ryana Reiter, 1975.

stereotypes are the main tool through which discrimination take place, in particular towards women, and even more particularly, on the work field. Included in the political and diplomatic field. A research made in 2013 by the National Institute of Statistics, evidenced the wide dissemination of stereotypes within the work environment. The 57.7% of the citizens interviewed believed that the situation of men is more favorable than women and for four out of ten citizens, women are victims of discrimination more than men.[41] Stereotype is a preconceived idea over a thing, a person or an attitude, developed according an 'economization' of thought. It is the expression or a word in which prejudices and opinions are reflected and are referred to social, ethnic or professional groups. So, it is the way of seeing reality through a diversification between feminine and masculine gender imposed by a society that has always imposed this differentiation as truth. Therefore, if historically it has always been believed that women were inappropriate to participate to the public life as emotional, non-rational, and above all opposed to man and thus to be avoided, it is because society has always been based on a purely stereotyped preconception: "The denigration and stereotyping of female M.P.s at all times, is a shameful indicator of the extent and survival of institutionalized sexism in contemporary culture"[42].

Therefore, the labor market has always been the prerogative of a chauvinist culture that expected man as the only holder of a professional career. On the contrary, the female gender was left to the management of the house and caring for children, since it did not fall within her competences and duties to have a life other than the private one. Like any professional career, even the political one has been permeated by this gender differentiation. A further evolution stabilizes that gender and sex are related, in turn, to the concepts of power and politics, as through them "we understand and order our knowledge and experience as well as identify problems and imagine solutions, the struggle over their meanings is inextricably political"[43].

[41] ISTAT, *Stereotipi, rinunce e discriminazioni di genere,* 2013. Available at https://www.istat.it/it/archivio/106599.
[42] Thane, P. M. "What difference did the vote make? Women in public and private life in Britain since 1918*", *Historical Research,* (2003) vol. 76, no. 192, p. 276.
[43] Carver, T. et al. "Gender and International Relations", *International Studies Review,* (2003) vol. 5, no. 2, p. 296.

As it has been analyzed, gender is made up of numerous implications and it results complicated and controversial. Due to this complex nature, gender conflicts are recurring topics and are often expressed through a sexist hierarchy that still see patriarch and chauvinism dominating in several spheres of public and private life.

## 2.2 GENDERING WORLD POLITICS

As stated previously, gender issue has also contributed to a transformation within the world politics. First of all, it has to be recognized the impact of gender into the discipline of international relations, since the marginalization of women in the arena of foreign policy-making suggests that international politics has always been a gendered activity.[44] In fact, historically, the field of politics and diplomacy was mainly reserved to men, specifically aristocratic men. Only those who had the possibility to attend a high level education could afford a career in international affairs. This area was "extremely patriarchal, state-centered and heavily male-dominated"[45]. The patriarchal ideology represented men as the dominant actors, the legitimate political leaders, and the shapers of the political arena. Inevitably, this form of "isolation" denied anyone, besides men, to enter the political sphere.[46] The construction of diplomacy has always been linked to gender, in the sense that exist social and institutional structures, and political practices and processes built according to masculinity, as well as the various fields of world politics. Each of these sectors have then operated a policy of exclusion towards women. For example, the issue of arms control has created its own exclusive community using metaphors of power and military toughness. In doing so, political roles therefore assume a gendered connotation, making it even more difficult for women to integrate into an environment that is indeed permeated by strong masculinity.[47] Not only gender has influenced institutional structures and political processes, but also the roles assigned to political

[44] Murphy, C. N. "Seeing Women, Recognizing Gender, Recasting International Relations", *International Organization*, (1996) vol. 50, no. 3, pp. 513-538.
[45] Taskovska, N. *Diplomacy and Feminism: Where are all the Women in Political Affairs?* (2014) Nampress, p.22.
[46] Ibidem.
[47] Murphy, "Seeing Women, Recognizing Gender, Recasting International Relations".

actors.

"International relations has never been just about relations between states. […] International politics cannot be restricted to politics between states; politics is involved in relationships between international organizations, social movements and other nonstate actors, transnational corporations and international finance, and human rights organizations"[48]. Hence, the awareness of gender identity has changed dynamics and approaches within the international panorama. The attention to gender connected to global governance is relatively new, and only in the twentieth century political debates over the Gender-Global Governance implication emerged. "Namely, the debates about the role of women in society and about political authority in a world that increasingly connects agents from different continents, states, regions, cities, and neighborhoods"[49]. The approach of gender into global affairs allowed women to carved out niches for themselves and becoming part of political and diplomatic corps. As agents, they "introduced into global governance women-centered ways of framing issues, and advance feminist agendas"[50]. J. Ann Tickner observed that since politics has always been a male issue, also approaches were stereotyped on masculine characteristics. War, power, supremacy, economy, were the main interests of politics. With the appearance of feminist scholars, different focus arose: economic inequality, populations, growing of poverty, ethnical conflicts, civil struggles and gender identity itself.[51]

The academic study of international relations has been typically part of masculine elite, and only recently has allowed a feminist analysis. This discipline includes a patriarchal discourse, which has rendered women invisible form the high politics ranks. "Feminists in IR explain the exclusion of women from foreign policy decision making by pointing to the "extent to which international politics is such a thoroughly masculinized sphere of activity that women's voices are considered inauthentic""[52]. As a consequence, considering men as the only true actors, it is not

[48] Tickner, J. A. *Gendering World Politics,* New York: Columbia University Press, 2001.
[49] Meyer, M. and Prügl, E. *Gender Politics in Global Governance,* Rowman and Littlefield, 1999, p. 4.
[50] Ibidem, p. 5.
[51] Ibid.
[52] Blanchard, M. E. "Gender, International Relations, and the Development of Feminist Security

difficult to think the female situation in politics has also been influenced by a division between domestic and international life, which in turn is based on a division between public and private that relegates women outside of politics.[53] Despite the overall thinking, women's movements of the nineteen-twenties and thirties led to an impressive number of legislative changes. In fact, women have always been crucial members within the political and diplomatic domain, but the identification with a female culture and perspective has remained marginal. To worsen female condition, injustices at social level hierarchies increased even more. Therefore, the evolution of female situation up to its integration has contributed to a re-thinking of policy and to a consequently change in themes and approaches, always redefined according to gender and institutional roles. Moreover, the awareness of female issue has led to the emergence of social movements for the claim of equal opportunities between men and women, a long and slow path that began a long time ago. The final result of these countless struggles is to have made possible the rise of women within politics, but above all the recognition of equal rights. What emerges is the increasingly number of women on the diplomatic scene, up to the achievement of high-ranking positions. However, the statistics reported in chapter 3 show that the majority of women are still relegated to inferior positions and of little prestige, precisely because the belief for which women are not suitable for holding managerial roles, is still very widespread. For instance, "positions of status and influence continue to be associated with alleged traits of masculinity and, in extension, with men, whereas femininity is more often linked with positions of subordination and lesser status"[54]. These hierarchy models are due according to Aggestam and Towns, to a series of cumulative factors, such as "individuals' career choices, distorted recruitment schemes, male homosocial networks, direct or subtle discrimination, gender division of unpaid work or combination of these factors"[55]. Therefore, only increasing the number of women is not enough to improve the condition of equality, but it is necessary to pay attention to

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Theory", *Signs,* (2003) vol. 28, no. 4, p. 1292. In Tickner, J. A. *Gender in International Relations: Feminist Perspectives on Achieving International Security*, (1992) New York: Columbia University Press.

[53] Blanchard, M. E. "Gender, International Relations, and the Development of Feminist Security Theory", *Signs,* (2003) Vol. 28, No. 4, pp. 1289-1312.

[54] Aggestam, K. and Towns, A. *Gendering Diplomacy and International Negotiation,* Palgrave Macmillan, 2018, p. 13.

[55] Ibidem.

the dominant norms and gendered expressions that guide diplomatic practices and intervene on those settings.

## 2.3 HISTORICAL EVOLUTION: THE RELATION BETWEEN WOMEN AND DIPLOMACY

> "Women have been employed in the Foreign Office since its creation in 1782. But it was not until 1946 that women were given the opportunity to be employed as diplomats. Since then, in spite of this post-war breakthrough, women still remain an under-represented component of the FCO's work force"[56].

According to the statement, women have had the opportunity of being involved into the British Foreign Office since its creation, but they have been enrolled mostly in administrative positions with hard chance of reaching high level ranks.[57] The story of the admission of women diplomats is "not a consequence of modernity"[58], but it has been and still be characterized by several conflicts and struggles. Women intervened in political practices "since the origins of diplomacy, as agents of cross-state and cross-cultural information-gathering, alliance-building and networking and as political negotiators, even if this was sometimes controversial"[59]. Although academic studies on European women have demonstrated female involvement in diplomacy as formal diplomats or ambassadors prior to the nineteenth century, their greatest contribution in influencing diplomacy took place mainly at informal level. The acceptance of women in the international order appeared therefore to be more difficult to be accepted. Initially, women admitted to diplomacy were those who held positions of heads of states, like queens and princesses. Moreover, only court women could have that possibility, since their connections and family ties to royal courts were more relevant

[56] Foreign and Commonwealth Office, *Women in Diplomacy 1782-1994*, History Notes, (1994) issue 6.
[57] Foreign and Commonwealth Office, *Women and the Foreign Office*, History Notes, (2018) issue 20.
[58] Sluga, G. James, C. *Women, diplomacy and international politics since 1500*, (2015) London, NY: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, p.1.
[59] Ibidem.

than sex for diplomatic interactions.[60] As such, "for many centuries elite women have participated extensively in diplomacy"[61]. But beyond these exceptional cases, women's access to the status of official representative of the state was a cultural threshold difficult to overcome for male political powers. It will only be exceptionally in the first twentieth century and more frequently in the last third of the twentieth century that women will officially begin to be part of political and diplomatic life.

As stated by McCarthy, "modern diplomacy evolved in the nineteenth century as a profession for men, but it was only a small, privileged minority of men who could hope to join its ranks"[62]. Political career could only be accessed through a patronage system, which survived into the early twentieth century, "ensuring that only those with the right connections stood any chance of entering the Service"[63]. As an example, in Britain's diplomacy the majority of appointments made in those years were of men belonging to the aristocracy or gentry, while the Austrian diplomatic service, "only admitted the sons of titled families"[64]. Russia "explicitly excluded merchants, peasants, and anyone who paid taxes, and many British diplomats profited professionally by marrying foreign-born wives with titles"[65] or, even, through direct blood-ties. An exception to the common political enrollment was represented by the widows and daughters of diplomatic leaders.[66] As was the case for men who wanted to enter politics, even in this case having the right connections and family ties linked, it was the only possibility that women had to experience politics. Sirimavo Bandaranaike[67] was the first woman to head a government after her husband, the prime minister of Sri Lanka, was assassinated; Khaleda Zia[68] became the prime minister of Bangladesh after her husband's murder. Like them, many other women held political tasks because of their husband's involvement into politics. Besides widows,

[60] Aggestam, K. and Towns, A. "The gender turn in diplomacy: a new research agenda", *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, (2019) vol. 21, no. 1, pp. 9-28.
[61] Ibidem, p. 13.
[62] McCarthy, H. *Women of the world: the rise of the female diplomat*, Bloomsbury, London, 2014, p. 8.
[63] Ibidem, p. 14.
[64] Ibid., p. 12.
[65] Ibid., p. 12.
[66] Jensen, J. S. *Women Political Leaders. Breaking the Highest Glass Ceiling,* Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.
[67] Ibidem, p. 15.
[68] Ibid., p. 17.

"daughters of politically prominent men were urged to enter the political arena in the expectation that they would be able to garner support for their political parties"[69]. Despite their lack of political experience, they were enrolled because of the advantages they would have brought to the party through the relationships and trust of other politicians. Because of their influence, "diplomacy continued to be carried out through dynastic networking and lobbying by mainly aristocratic actors, including women, whose credentials consisted of their physical proximity to those who exercised power"[70]. In carrying out these functions in 'support' of husbands, women were given the title of *Ambassadrice*, who had no reference with the actual role of ambassador, but served only to denote woman as the wife of an officer.[71] But despite these first attempts of approaching politics, generally women have been officially excluded until the late nineties. The idea that women had to be responsible only for the private sphere and not for the public one comes from the ancient philosophy. Philosophers from Aristotle to Confucius have taught that the public life and the state should be governed by men, whereas household should be a female responsibility. "The conceptualization of the state was based on the idea that women's labor within the family was subordinated to allow men concentrating on increasing wealth"[72]. Female involvement was therefore censored; women were considered only as mothers, wives, and daughters, and had to dedicate themselves exclusively to the private life: "a woman's place was in the home"[73]. Women had no more role in government than infants, with the only exception that children 'were impotent to rule' while women were 'not accustomed' to do so.[74]

However, evidences taken from Britain's political history prove that women were in some way involved into political affairs, starting from early Tudor England

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[69] Jensen, J. S. *Women Political Leaders. Breaking the Highest Glass Ceiling,* Palgrave Macmillan, 2008, p. 26.
[70] Sluga, G. and James, C. *Women, diplomacy and international politics since 1500*, London, NY: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2015.
[71] Ibidem.
[72] Bloch, J. C. "Women and Diplomacy", *The Ambassadors REVIEW*, (2004). Available at https://www.americanambassadors.org/publications/ambassadors-review/fall-2004/women-and-diplomacy.
[73] Levine, M. "The place of women in Tudor government", p. 114, in Guth, D. J. and McKenna, J. W. *Tudor Rule and Revolution: Essays for G. R. Elton from His American Friends,* Cambridge University Press, 1982.
[74] Ibidem, pp. 109-123.

until the creation of the Foreign Office itself. In fact, during Tudor period women were involved in activities of government that have often been assumed were exclusively male.[75] Of course women did not participate with the same role as men, but through their own activity have influenced politics. Since the exercise of power during that period took place outside formal institutions, in particular within the household and at court, and because there was a little distinction between the personal and the political, and the public and the private, women had the possibility of experience such activity.[76] Though, only those women who belonged to a certain social class could exploit their friendships and connections to create their own political activity. In particular, court women were those who gained the privilege of influence high politics on their own behalf**.** They made used of connections and marriage to create and strengthen relations with aristocratic families, which were at the center of Tudor politics: "Women are part of a vital system of communications through which messages are transmitted, channels opened up; they investigate possibilities through talking to the right people, before men, by now confident of success, make more direct overtures"[77]. In any case, what emerges from all these testimonies is the fact that even at that time women were restricted to a purely informal role. Since they could not intervene through formal channels but with unconventional means like marriage or birth, networks, letters and other forms of sociability, they represented the "unofficial presence" of politics. In their own way they influenced high politics but, indeed, gender shaped Tudor politics in a way that women were given circumscribed, though real, roles in political life.[78]

Another documentation of female political involvement comes from the Elizabethan Era, which reported women's informal participation in diplomatic and intelligence activities. At that time, they were not present on the diplomatic scene as ambassadors or officers but they operated and exercised influences through informal and familiar channels. Through letters-writing, women were involved in the

[75] Harris, B. J. "Women and Politics in Early Tudor England", *The Historical Journal*, (1990) vol. 33, no. 2, pp. 259-281.
[76] Ibidem.
[77] Hufton, O. "Reflections on the Role of Women in the Early Modern Court", *The Court Historian*, (2000) p. 1.
[78] Gunn, S. J. "The Structures of Politics in Early Tudor England", *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, (1995) vol. 5, pp. 59-90.

circulation of news and information, creating a perfect channel of communication.[79] Epistolary activity was ideal for concealing information of national interest with news of family and household, as well as maintaining political relations. Hence, "Women were able to operate through networks of family and other social contacts, and were often integral to the lubricating of socio-political relations through a range of secondary patronage activities related to sociability"[80]. A remarkable example of this kind of activity is the correspondence of Lady Elizabeth Russell with her family members. Her letters shown how her familial connections have been exploited for political ends.[81] Mixing the personal and private with the public and political was a common practice among Elizabethan women. Another example of this kind of correspondence dates back to the 18th century Europe, when the Princesse des Ursins, a French aristocrat, played a crucial political role at the Spanish royal court during the first years of Philip V's reign.[82] Thanks to her wide range of connections, she has managed to exert her political influence in the diplomatic affairs in the early modern period. Thus, the longstanding belief of diplomacy as a male-dominated field, has been turned over by the discover of this informal diplomacy. Nevertheless, both examples are considered exceptional cases, as these women hold positions within the court that "gave them access to the inner circle around the ruler and allowed them to establish confidential relationships with those who exercised power"[83]. The handling of power occurred according a coexistence of gender rules: men were responsible for the official diplomacy as ambassadors, officials, diplomats, while women were responsible for establishing relationships and exercising political influence. In this way women represented fundamental actors in the exercise of power, despite taking on secondary ranks. Moreover, a further analysis of female letter-writing indicate that the sixteenth century epistolary activity represented a much extensive area of women's engagement activity: "marriage arrangement, the household economy and estate management,

[79] Daybell, J. "Gender, politics and diplomacy: women, news and intelligence networks in Elizabethan England.", *Diplomacy and early modern culture*, (2011) Palgrave Macmillan, London, pp. 101-119.
[80] Ibidem, p. 102.
[81] Ibid. p. 105.
[82] Bastian, C. "Paper Negotiation. Women and diplomacy in the early eighteenth century". In Sluga and G. James, C. *Women, diplomacy and international politics since 1500*, London, NY: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2015.
[83] Ibidem, p. 109.

domestic and religious patronage, medicine and education, local, national, and European politics"[84].

The governance of international relations is not a static activity but reflects the changing of time and it is inflated by history events, therefore also the female political engagement has changed over the years. The "feminine salon" was another tool that women had to shape diplomacy: "the means of political intervention favored by aristocratic women in the Enlightenment environment of the eighteenth century, remained a staple of informal diplomatic sociability"[85]. Despite its French origins, le salon was an international reality of an aristocratic diplomatic culture in which women made use of these gatherings as an informal forum to create contacts and influence over state policy: "Women form networks associating themselves with other women and through them build bridges to other men to achieve specific ends"[86].

With specific reference to foreign affairs, also the history of the British Foreign Office shows how women were in some way involved into and have influenced the filed since its creation. The FCO referred to typewriters[87] as a first female engagement in politics. Originally they were used for non-confidential copying work, but progressively they were writing drafts and despatches. Subsequently, with the world wars women were enrolled into the office as temporary staff with clerical and assistance tasks. The Sex Disqualification Removal Act of 1919 represented the very first opportunity for British women to be admitted into the field, but still in administrative grade; consular and diplomatic services were in fact still reserved to men only as women were not seen as able of handling politics. As this belief was extremely widespread among the community, the huge debate on women's unsuitable capacity in managing foreign affairs was another element of female political preclusion and the reason why they could access the diplomatic career very late. Only at the end of the twentieth century historians started to talk of 'women diplomats'.

[84] Daybell, J. *Women Letter-Writers in Tudor England*, Oxford University Press, 2006, p. 43.
[85] Sluga, G. and James, C. *Women, diplomacy and international politics since 1500*, London, NY: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2015, p. 6.
[86] Hufton, O. "Reflections on the Role of Women in the Early Modern Court", *The Court Historian*, (2000) p. 1.
[87] Foreign and Commonwealth Office, *Women and the Foreign Office*, History Notes, (2018) issue 20.

Fundamentally, somehow women have always been involved in the European diplomatic life both formally, albeit rarely, and informally. However, when the foreign service became a bureaucratic and formalized profession, women were expressly and officially excluded from holding state offices. "The representation of national interests abroad is the only career for which women are totally unsuited"[88] – stated Sir Reader Bullard, Britain's Ambassador to Persia in expressing the conventional belief for which women were denied the opportunity of representing the home country abroad despite their inclusion into the Britain Home Civil Service. As a result, women have suffered from several exclusion barriers to their professional careers. Beside a 'sex bar', who denied women form access to all those professions that were considered as masculine activities, a 'marriage bar' was later enforced together with a ten per cent cap on female recruitment"[89]. These policies were enforced in western countries throughout the 1900s in order to restrain married women from employment. Initially justified by an economic motivation as an excellent way of controlling government wage bill[90], in the '60s it then turned into a discriminatory practice towards female condition, as they were required to resign from their service at the moment they got married.

Additionally, a further impediment to female advancement career was represented by the phenomenon of "glass ceiling". The expression has been used for the first time in 1986 by *The Wall Street Journal* to describe the invisible barrier that prevent women to get access to high-level positions in professional sectors.[91]

> "The infamous glass ceiling phenomenon has curtailed women with regard to their hiring, promotion and retention. It has impacted the hiring and promotion of women in many different professions

[88] McCarthy, H. "Petticoat Diplomacy: The Admission of Women to the British Foreign Service, c. 191-1946", *Twentieth Century British History*, (2009) vol. 20, no. 3, p. 286.
[89] Ibidem, p. 285.
[90] McCarthy, H. *Women of the world: the rise of the female diplomat*, Bloomsbury, London, 2014, p. 89.
[91] Cancedda, A. "Leadership femminile e azione sociale: implicazioni per la ricerca e per lo sviluppo delle carriere femminili", *ASDO – Commissione Europea DG Occupazione e Affari Sociali,* (2002).

including those in the public sector and those serving diplomatic missions"[92].

The definition has been employed as a metaphor to explain the lack of women in upper positions. The Webster's College Dictionary, defined it as "an upper limit to professional advancement, especially as imposed upon women, that is not readily perceived or openly acknowledged"[93]. It underlines the fact that these limitations imposed mostly on women are not always perceived and recognized. The authors Beulah Coyne, Edward Coyne and Monica Lee individualized four possible explanations for the exclusion of women from higher positions: job discrimination, perceptions of personal achievement, the role of in-house training and development, and home-based issues.[94] These four areas intersect and influence each other, thus influencing the different allocation of work according gender. Being a man or a woman has a clear influence on the assignment of tasks, compensation, priorities and aspirations, which affect even more the glass ceiling and the gender disparity. So, both the marriage bar and the glass ceiling were real obstacle to career mobility, and were just a few examples of the difficulties and obstructions women had to face in achieving remarkable posts, responsibilities and power.

As a consequence, because of the several obstacles imposed on women, the only possibility they had to experience diplomacy was in relation to the informal institution of the diplomatic wife.[95] Wives mostly supported their husbands' political career by bridging solid and durable relationships with their colleagues and creating their personal range of contacts. Indeed, the diplomatic assistance was carried out by the wives of diplomats since men relied on women's capacities in maintaining relations with their political counterparts.[96] "With the official role of diplomat reserved for men,

[92] Linse, C. "Challenges Facing Women in Overseas Diplomatic Positions", *Intercultural Communication and Diplomacy,* (2004) cap. 5, p. 253.
[93] *Webster's College Dictionary* (1991). New York: Random House.
[94] Coyne, B. S., Coyne, E. J., Lee, M. *Human Resources, Care Giving, Career Progression, and Gender: A Gender Neutral Glass Ceiling,* Routledge, 2004.
[95] Aggestam, K. and Towns, A. "The gender turn in diplomacy: a new research agenda", International Feminist Journal of Politics, (2019) vol. 21, issue 1, pp. 9-28.
[96] Rahman-Figueroa, T. "Celebrating the Rise of Women in Diplomacy", *Diplomatic Courier,* March 8, 2012. Available at https://www.diplomaticourier.com/posts/celebrating-the-rise-of-women-in-diplomacy.

the diplomatic wife came to fill important functions as facilitators of diplomatic interactions"[97].

Hence, the circulation of official and unofficial information took place thanks to the wives, who managed to influence the conduct of diplomacy.[98] Apart from helping husbands in creating connections and relationships, spouses mainly represented a sort of "companion" for their partners. As such, while men were entrusted with the exercise of masculine activities, women's agenda included highly feminized roles, like hostesses of dinners, volunteering, and social portfolios such as food, education and health care, "thereby replicating and in fact reinforcing the existing power structures"[99]. They soon realized that "their political influence came much more subtly through their social, domestic, and representational duties and responsibilities".[100] Thus, the private sphere and the social arena were the only place in which exercising their control, conducting political activities and perceiving political messages so as to influence upon the public one. Being a wife within the diplomatic field was part of an international strategy: male diplomats needed their wives and cooperation for the success of their tasks. Marriage represented a barrier for women because they were banned from foreign policy, but at the same time it was also an instrument of government, since international relations relied on women and in their role as wives: "Marriage is domestic, but it is also national and international. The gendered politics of marriage inform the gendered politics of international relations"[101].

As regard to the foreign service, marriage has represented a turning point in the diplomatic career as it has improved it. The wives performed representative roles in the diplomatic missions of their husbands, shared the same status as their husbands

[97] Aggestam, K. and Towns, A. "The gender turn in diplomacy: a new research agenda", International Feminist Journal of Politics, (2019) vol. 21, issue 1, p. 14.
[98] Hochschild, A. "The Role of the Ambassador's Wife: An Explanatory Study", *Journal of Marriage and Family,* (1969) vol. 31, no.1, pp. 73-87.
[99] Dobson, H. "Where are the Women in Global Governance? Leaders, Wives and Hegemonic Masculinity in the G8 and G20 Summits", *Global Society*, (2012) vol. 26, no. 4, p. 444.
[100] Wood, M. M. "Diplomatic Wives: The Politics of Domesticity and the "Social Game" in the U.S. Foreign Service, 1905-1941", *Journal of Women's History*, Johns Hopkins University Press, (2005) vol. 17, no. 2, p. 153.
[101] Enloe, C. *Bananas, Beaches, and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989, p. 178.

and were as responsible as the husband of the success of their country's representation abroad.[102] Hence, since the role of the diplomatic wife became of fundamental importance for the government itself, women started to demand recognition, services, compensation and pensions.[103]

However, in the exercise of these activities, wives have regularly participated in international relations and contributed to the atmosphere as 'transversal actors'.[104] The expression, coined by Tania Domett, refers to the diplomatic partners, which exert influence in a less visible way, with the result of shaping in the end foreign policy[105]: they are the "key actors operating on every level – the personal, the social, the political and the international – furthering the interests of their official partners, and the state"[106]. Domett describes the way of action of partners as a sort of "soft power", whose exercise is engaged in transversal politics that not occurs in the international site but involves other actors and spheres: "Diplomatic partners engage in politics that originates in the private sphere, but becomes part of the public sphere due to the nature of diplomatic relations"[107]. The concept has not to be confused with the formulation of the concept of Joseph Nye used in international relations theory expressing "the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments. It arises from the attractiveness of a country's culture, political ideals, and policies"[108].

The political involvement of partner leaders is analyzed specifically in Hugo Dobson's essay[109] on female presence during the G8 and G20 summits and on the contribution they made to diplomacy. It has to be observed that these summits, like every other political forum, constitute the most masculinized realm of diplomacy and

[102] Wood, M. M. "Wives, Clerks, and 'Lady Diplomats': The Gendered Politics of Diplomacy and Representation in the U.S. Foreign Service, 1900-1940", *European journal of American studies,* (2015) 10-1.
[103] Aggestam, K. and Towns, A. "The gender turn in diplomacy: a new research agenda", International Feminist Journal of Politics, (2019) vol. 21, issue 1, p. 14.
[104] Dobson, H. "Where are the Women in Global Governance? Leaders, Wives and Hegemonic Masculinity in the G8 and G20 Summits", *Global Society*, (2012) vol. 26, no. 4, p. 444.
[105] Domett, T. "Soft Power in Global Politics? Diplomatic Partners as Transversal Actors", *Australian Journal of Political Science,* (2005) vol. 40, no. 2, pp. 289-306.
[106] Ibidem, p.289.
[107] Ibid. p. 290.
[108] Nye, J. S. *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, New York: Public Affairs, 2004.
[109] Dobson, "Where are the Women in Global Governance?", pp. 429-449.

have been controlled throughout the history by white and middle-class men.[110] So, the success of women contribution within this reality represent a fundamental step for gender equality within the professional sector.

During the summits male diplomats were entrusted in several political activities, but at the same time also spouses attempted to be players in their own right and in shaping their personal agenda. Once again, the contribution of the wives was though limited exclusively to an informal level, and their efforts were not always rewarded nor recognized.[111] Their program often involved social occupations, like charitable and cultural activities, highly feminized duties that reinforce the masculinity of politics. Furthermore, the gender-specific division of labor has been strengthened by the presence of male spouses, who mostly avoided any activity with the other spouses because of the female dominated environment of the spouse program.[112] The agenda setting suffered a redefinition of issues according women's needs starting from the mid-1990s. The change occurred after the Beijing UN Conference on Women in 1995[113], which aimed at a profound attention on human and women rights in terms of gender. Nevertheless, the commitment of these summits and meetings towards women has revealed to be quite irrelevant since it has not been able to sensitize nor to create a sustained approach in this respect.[114] From the mid-90s, on the other hand, the importance of women's rights became the main goal of the world diplomacy. The 2018 G20 summit payed closed attention on the valorization of women, on gender equality, and on the female involvement in the world economy, as well as considering women and their contribution as fundamental for handling government.

The relationship between women and diplomacy has suffered from a long and slow process of changing. While initially women were officially banned from political and consular services, now in the twenty-first century they are perceived as crucial actors within the diplomatic field. According to McCarthy, the involvement of

[110] Dobson, H. "Where are the Women in Global Governance? Leaders, Wives and Hegemonic Masculinity in the G8 and G20 Summits", *Global Society*, (2012) vol. 26, no. 4, p. 444.
[111] Jensen, J. S. *Women Political Leaders. Breaking the Highest Glass Ceiling,* Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.
[112] Ibidem.
[113] *World Conference on Women*, Beijing 1995.
[114] Dobson, "Where are the Women in Global Governance?".

women's admission into foreign policy, and in particular in the Britain's foreign service, involved the interplay of three dynamics processes.[115] First of all, women struggled for their employments rights: scholars believed that female fight for foreign affairs was part of a bigger involvement in every sphere of the public life, from local to international government. Secondly, the Civil Service modernized throughout the years: only in 1943 the consular services were merged into one single service and represented a small branch of the government. And lastly, the diplomatic profession transformed: work opportunities changed for both sexes. Not anymore the man is the only actor responsible for managing politics, but also women expect to pursue a career for their own.[116]

## 2.4 RECOGNITION OF FEMALE RIGHTS

For a long time women have stayed in the shadows of the hegemonic masculinity which presided over several public spheres of society. The process that brought to the recognition of gender equality within all professional sectors, included the political and the diplomatic ones, has been, and it still be, very long and hard. But before women could access the political and diplomatic field, they had to fight first of all for their right to education. Like every other professional sectors, knowledge was influenced by the patriarchal structure which privileged only male education. Moreover, allow women to access it meant the recognition of the same rights as men, which was not possible until the first attempts of female emancipation. Only in the nineteenth century women were granted the possibility to access a higher education: "The first public high schools to admit girls appeared in the 1820's, and the first normal schools (which were either for women or were coeducational) were founded in the late 1830's"[117]. Barely few women could access education as it was a privileged field for aristocratic elite, and only in the late nineteenth century some European countries extended this right to women. However, once the qualification was achieved, women

[115] McCarthy, H. "Petticoat Diplomacy: The Admission of Women to the British Foreign Service, c. 191-1946", *Twentieth Century British History*, (2009) vol. 20, no. 3, p. 318.
[116] Ibidem, p. 320.
[117] Green, N. "Female Education and School Competition: 1820-1850", *History of Education Quarterly*, (1978) vol. 18, no. 2, p. 130.

could not in any case access to professional sectors, until the 1900s. At the beginning of twentieth century, women started to embrace their gender identity and fight for their civil and political rights, starting from voting rights.

Two centuries after the beginning of women's battle for the conquest of rights, formal equality between men and women, despite being sanctioned by law, does not correspond to substantial equality in facts. With the emergence of modern democracies, the old political order centered on the differences between men is replaced with the new order based on equality between men. It is not enough to say that the principle of equality is initially unfair because it does not include women, because this exclusion is not accidental, but primary: the distinction remains between the male public sphere and the female domestic sphere that makes women non-active subjects from a political point of view.[118] Female emancipation was hence fundamental. In the meantime, two ideologies started to act in favor of women's rights, the liberalist approach and the socialist approach. Liberalist thought had as its ultimate goal the equality between man and woman, so women should have granted with the same civil rights and political rights of men. While, socialist thought was based on the labor exploitation of both genders within the capitalist system. For this reason, the emancipation would have happened only with the subordination to capitalism: "Feminism must therefore acknowledge that most women are working women whose fate, and that of their families, are shaped both by gender oppression and class exploitation"[119]. It is on the wave of liberal ideology that feminist movements developed for the recognition of their rights. Campaigning for the vote was just the beginning of a further battle for the concession of other prerogatives. Through voting, women saw "the key of much wider changes in gender relations and in the public and personal lives of women"[120]. After acquiring the right to vote, many women take advantage from the situation to struggling for other goals, like the improvement for education, health care, housing, and much more.[121]

[118] Restaino, F., Cavarero A. *Le filosofie femministe,* Paravia Scriptorium, Torino, 1999.
[119] Gimenez, M. E. "Capitalism and the Oppression of Women: Marx Revisited", *Science & Society,* (2005) vol. 69, no. 1, pp. 11-32.
[120] Thane, P. M. "What difference did the vote make? Women in public and private life in Britain since 1918*", *Historical Research,* (2003) vol. 76, no. 192, p. 269.
[121] Ibidem.

With the awareness of their own gender identity, the first feminist movements began to organize themselves to fight male supremacy. Before the twentieth century female activism "was part of the political struggles of middle- and upper-class women in Europe, North America, and Latin America for suffrage, equal rights and peace"[122]. Subsequently, such activism has expanded to include economic and social struggles of women affected by different forms of oppression throughout the world including the voices of different social classes.

Improving women's legal and civil rights was fundamental for the recognition of gender equality. In the 1920s and '30s, suffragists organized to pressure governments to integrate into legal systems binding resolutions and conventions for the incorporation of women's rights. Since feminism sought to shape international relations panorama, also global governance has undergone through changes, and has evolved on the basis of women rights.[123] The importance of women rights has been marked by numerous conventions and resolutions, which have been the result of copious battles for female subjectivity. The most important ones, referring particularly on political rights, will be analyzed in the following section.

## 2.5 SIGNIFICANT RESOLUTIONS AND REGULATIONS

"Since the mid-nineteenth century women have strived for equality"[124]; women hardly fought, manifested, worked and went on strikes for numerous decades before having their rights recognized. But, the very first attempt of 'rebellion' to the female condition is designated by the legal text the *Declaration of the Rights of Woman and the Female Citizen*[125], published at the end of XVIII century by the French author and activist Olympe de Gouges. It represented a critical response to the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen* of 1789, in which are listed only the rights referred

[122] Meyer, M. and Prügl, E. *Gender Politics in Global Governance,* Rowman and Littlefield, 1999, p. 3.
[123] Ibidem.
[124] Paludi, M. A. and Coates, B. E. *Women as transformational leaders*, Praeger Pub Text, 2011, p. 2.
[125] De Gouges, O. *Declaration of the Rights of Woman and the Female Citizen,* September 1791, France

to the male figure. In her work, de Gouges appealed for the first time to the legal equality between women and men, and symbolized the awareness of female subordinated condition. About sixty years later, four women drafted a document that will represent a pillar for American feminism. *The Seneca Falls Convention*[126] of 1848 is considered the fundamental act of the movement to claim women's rights under equality conditions. Elisabeth Stanton, one of the maker of the convention, claimed the text as the real beginning of the suffragist movement, defending at legal level the abolition of the laws that subordinated women to their husbands and planning the battle for access to education, especially to university, traditionally forbidden to women.

Among women civil rights, one fundamental right is the possibility to vote, and lately to be eligible. The first fights for gender equality date back to the Enlightenment age and French Revolution. But it is only between XIX and XX centuries that the first feminist movements were organized. The most leading figures were the *Suffragettes*, which protested specifically in favor of their right to vote. It took more than a century for women to achieve political equality in almost all countries, and in some this is a recent result. The first European country to recognize woman's right to vote was Finland in 1906, followed by Norway and Iceland in 1913. In Denmark occurred in 1915, Britain and Austria in 1918, Germany and the Netherlands in 1919, Sweden in 1921, Spain in 1931, France in 1944, Italy in 1946. The very first world country was New Zealand in 1893. Between 1940 and 1970 women's right to vote has sensibly increased; the last country was Saudi Arabia in 2011. In the United States women were granted the right to vote in 1920, only after the ratification of the XIX amendment to the American Constitution: *"The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex."*[127] Internationally, women's right to vote was introduced into the legislation in 1948, when United Nations adopted the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*[128].

[126] *Seneca Falls Convention*, July 1848.
[127] *XIX Amendment of the Constitution of the United States*.
[128] United Nations General Assembly, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights,* 10 December 1948, Paris.

Article 21 states:

> *(1) Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.*
> *(2) Everyone has the right of equal access to public service in his country.*
> *(3) The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.*[129]

Controversially, the First World War represented a turning point for women's emancipation: while men were committed to war, women were employed as workforce for their countries. While the Second World War "transformed the debate by extending the opportunities available to women to serve the state overseas and by renewing pressure on the Foreign Office to modernize its working practices"[130]. Indeed, the right to access the diplomatic career happened in 1922 for America, in 1946 for Britain and only in 1963 for Italian women.

| Admission of Women Diplomats Around the World | |
|---|---|
| Bulgaria | 1920 |
| United States | 1922 |
| Chile | 1927 |
| Netherlands | 1927 |
| Norway | 1939 |
| Australia | 1943 |
| France | 1945 |
| United Kingdom | 1946 |
| Canada | 1947 |
| Austria | 1947 |
| Brazil | 1954 |
| Japan | 1958 |

[131]

Table 1. Admission of women diplomats around the world

[129] United Nations General Assembly, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights,* 10 December 1948, Paris, Article 21.
[130] McCarthy, H. "Petticoat Diplomacy: The Admission of Women to the British Foreign Service, c. 191-1946", *Twentieth Century British History*, (2009) vol. 20, no. 3, p. 285.
[131] Table 1. "Admission of Women Diplomats Around the World", taken from Foreign and Commonwealth Office, *Women and the Foreign Office*, History Notes, (2018) issue 20.

These huge progresses were possible thanks to the several resolutions and conventions drafted over the years. But the milestone document in the history of human rights and consequently of women rights is the proclamation of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* of 1948.

The Preamble states:

> *The General Assembly,*
> *Proclaims this Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction.*[132]

At national level, the European Union has taken huge steps forward towards gender equality. Starting from the *Treaty of Rome* of 1957, it is reaffirmed how equality among individuals is a founding value of the Union. For the first time since the Universal Declaration, the Treaty stabilized a fundamental economic principle for women, the equal pay, besides the elimination of discrimination between sexes: *"Each Member State shall during the first stage ensure and subsequently maintain the application of the principle that men and women should receive equal pay for equal work."*[133] The *Treaty of Amsterdam* of 1997 recognized since the preamble female rights as fundamental rights and reiterated with more force the principles related to equality. Successively, with the adoption of the *Treaty of Lisbon* of 2009, two treaties are introduced, the *Treaty on the European Union* and the *Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union*, both making reference to gender equality and the elimination of discrimination at all levels. In particular, Article 8 of the Treaty on the Functioning

[132] United Nations General Assembly, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights,* 10 December 1948, Paris, Preamble.
[133] Treaty of Rome, Article 119.

of the European Union states *"In all its activities, the Union shall aim to eliminate inequalities, and to promote equality, between men and women"*[134].

At the international level, since 1945, the year of its establishment, the United Nations has committed to the universal protection of women's rights, thus perceiving gender inequality as a social problem worthy of attention from the organization itself. The commitment for women's advancement started with the signing of the *UN Charter* in 1945. Article 8 claimed "*The United Nations shall place no restrictions on the eligibility of men and women to participate in any capacity and under conditions of equality in-its principal and subsidiary organs*"[135]. On the basis of this document many others have been introduced.

Referring particularly on the political rights of women, the United Nations General Assembly approved during the 409th plenary meeting of 1952 the *Convention on the Political Rights of Women*[136]. The purpose was to institute an international standard for women's political rights; in particular, the Preamble recalls the Article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on the "*right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives*"[137], emphasizing the same right for women. Key elements of the Convention are the three first articles, which precisely claim the principle of gender equality between men and women.

> *ARTICLE I*
>
> *Women shall be entitled to vote in all elections on equal terms with men, without any discrimination.*
>
> *ARTICLE II*
>
> *Women shall be eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies, established by national law, on equal terms with men, without any discrimination.*

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[134] EUR-Lex, *Consolidated Version of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union*, (2007), Article 8.
[135] United Nations, *Charter of the United Nations*, San Francisco, 1945.
[136] United Nations General Assembly, *Convention on the Political Rights of Women,* 20 December 1952, New York. At the end of the Second World War many countries still not granted a full political liberty to women. In fact, women's right to vote was granted in less than 100 countries in the world. The Convention was adopted in 1953 and entered into force in 1954.
[137] United Nations General Assembly, *Convention on the Political Rights of Women.*

*ARTICLE III*

*Women shall be entitled to hold public office and to exercise all public functions, established by national law, on equal terms with men, without any discrimination.*[138]

The importance of female condition and in particular the awareness of a gender discrimination and a gender violence, has led international doctrine to separate the defense of human rights referring to gender issue. A real branch of international law has indeed developed as a protection of "women's human rights". As such, the main instrument for this preservation is the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)* of 1979. Adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, it entered into force in 1981 as an international treaty. The Convention is committed to women protection from all forms of discrimination based on gender, which lead to the impossibility of women's realization. In addition, it stabilizes an action plan to end discriminations and safeguard of women addressed to all countries that have ratified the Convention.

Article 1 stated:

*"For the purposes of the present Convention, the term "discrimination against women" shall mean any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field."*[139]

The recognition of women's subordination in several fields became increasingly a matter of protection. Women are aware of their importance as peculiar figures in policy and pretend the recognition of the same male rights. From 1975 until

[138] United Nations General Assembly, *Convention on the Political Rights of Women,* 20 December 1952, New York, Articles 1; 2; 3.
[139] United Nations General Assembly, *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women*, 18 December 1979, New York. Article 1. Available at https://www.ohchr.org/documents/professionalinterest/cedaw.pdf.

the most recent of 2015, several *World Conferences on Women*[140] started to take place. These UN Conferences aim at the individualization of common objectives and the creation of an action plan for the improvement of female condition; they are at the core of the world agenda for gender equality and represent an essential instrument of international diplomacy. But, the decisive conference was that of Beijing of 1995, which stressed the importance of gender identity, focusing on man-woman relations within the society. *Empowerment* and *mainstreaming*[141] were the new concept introduced, asserting the principle of equal opportunities between gender as the universal value. Empowerment refers to the acquisition of major responsibilities and powers in decision-making positions; while mainstreaming refers to the women integration in all sectors under a gender perspective. Furthermore, twelve critical areas were individualized as the main obstacles for the improvement of female condition and concretized in the adoption of the *Platform for Action*[142]: women and poverty; education and training of women; women and health; violence against women; women and armed conflict; women and the economy; women in power and decision-making; institutional mechanism for the advancement of women; human rights of women; women and the media; women and the environment; the girl child.

The *Resolution of Security Council 1325 (2000)* on "Women, Peace, and Security" is the very first resolution explicitly mentioning the impact of war on women and their contribution in the resolution of conflicts for a durable peace. Four basic objectives are fixed: the recognition of women essential role in prevention and resolution of conflicts; a greater participation in peace-keeping and national security processes; adoption of a "gender perspective; and education on women rights. The awareness of gender equality has thus become a central theme for many contemporary policy discourses, precisely because of the implementation of the Resolution 1325 as

[140] *World Conferences on Women,* Mexico City 1975, Copenhagen 1980, Nairobi 1985, Beijing 1995, New York 2005, Milan 2015.
[141] *World Conference on Women*, Beijing 1995.
[142] Ibidem.

it has "put a new threshold of action on gender representation, equality and main-streaming in international politics"[143].

If human rights in general were the main reference, the female political potential is now almost completely recognized. "Although more women are entering Foreign Service fields, their increase is concentrated in lower positions. Women remain largely underrepresented in the top administrative and policy decision-making positions"[144]. A focus on women underrepresentation in seats of power is set in the *Recommendation Rec (2003) 3* on "Balanced Participation of women and men in political and public decision-making". The Preamble points the fact that a balanced participation is "a matter of the full enjoyment of human rights and of social justice, and a necessary condition for the better functioning of a democratic society"[145]. The need for political priorities and assurance of a Europe constructed on equality, solidarity and respect for human rights will lead to a better and more efficient policy making.[146]

The awareness of female condition brought to the creation of several organisms for the protection and promotion of gender equality: the European Parliament, the European Commission, Community Agencies and non-governmental organizations have their own commissions, institutions and committees responsible for this specific topic. Other remarkable interventions were the Security Council Seminar on Women in Diplomacy of 2004, the Speech of the Executive Director of UN Women of 2017, many Reports of the Security Council, the National Organization for Women Foundation, the *United Nations Commission on the Status of Women*. All of these interventions in favor of women condition represent the first attempts of creating a situation of equality and encouraging such situation in all professional sectors.

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[143] Aggestam, K. and Towns, A. *Gendering Diplomacy and International Negotiation*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2018, p. 5.
[144] Bloch, J. C. "Women and Diplomacy", *The Ambassadors REVIEW*, (2004). Available at https://www.americanambassadors.org/publications/ambassadors-review/fall-2004/women-and-diplomacy.
[145] Recommendation Rec (2003) 3 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision making. Available at https://www.coe.int/en/web/human-rights-rule-of-law/home.
[146] Ibidem.

# CHAPTER 3

# WHERE ARE THE WOMEN IN DIPLOMACY?

The third chapter is a more detailed research on the role of women and their enrollment in diplomacy, since female representation within the political-diplomatic field has considerably lower rates than other professional sectors. To this respect, it will be interesting to verify which positions are generally assigned to women and with what tasks; and demonstrate how discrimination has a negative effect on their condition. Moreover, since it has been proved that female working distribution is often influenced by gender constructions of diplomacy, "with masculine norms and scripts giving shape to diplomatic interactions and practices"[147], it will be stimulating to show how women managed to influence global governance and contributed to a reorganization and redefinition of politics according to female interests and goals. Here that social issues such as gender inequality, climate change, health care, and many others, have become fundamental topics for the management of a better global leadership.[148] Unfortunately, women's contribution to the subject is still too limited to achieve gender equality. As a support for the imbalances among women's representation and political participation, a series of statistical data are reported concerning the female and male presence in national parliaments, ministerial positions, ambassadorial appointments and negotiating roles. The data collected are taken from reliable sources and certified as the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality, and the Empowerment of Women and from the Eurostat Database. The research area is mostly based on the main global places of power such as the United Nations, and a more in-depth focus on the European Union and European institutions. In addition, a special attention will be placed on the European Commission and its executive agencies.

[147] Aggestam, K. and Towns, A. *Gendering Diplomacy and International Negotiation*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2018, p. 283.
[148] Dobson, H. "Where are the Women in Global Governance? Leaders, Wives and Hegemonic Masculinity in the G8 and G20 Summits", *Global Society*, (2012) vol. 26, no. 4, pp. 429-449.

## 3.1 EXPLAINING GENDER-GAP

Since the first chapters, attention has been paid on the fact that diplomacy believed in the only responsibility of man of handling political activity. This, because the world of diplomacy is characterized by norms, institutional practices, and political hierarchies based predominantly on gender patterns, which have always identified the male gender as the only one with the right to manage and represent the political practice. Although, several authors have proved female presence in diplomatic activity since 1500 and with quite influential roles, the general tendency of this profession has been to prefer a hegemonic male component. As a consequence, the structural pattern and the discrimination against women have brought to a discrepancy between men and women in matters of political representation, which finds its greatest intensification in the diplomatic field.

"One of the most dramatic developments in the 20th century was the entry of women into economic and political spheres previously occupied almost exclusively by men. Although women are making progress in eliminating gender disparities, they still lag men in the workplace and in the halls of government. These gaps are found throughout the world but are particularly pronounced in developing economies."[149] The gender-gap is made up of all those disparities observed at economic conditions, access to work, social and education that influence the lives of human beings, based on their gender. Traditionally, when it comes to the gender-gap, there is the tendency of observing greater penalties for women than men, as a consequence of the patriarchal belief. The *Global Gender Gap Report* is entailed of analyzing such differences. Introduced for the first time in 2006 and established by the World Economic Forum, it proposes to calculate gender inequality every year, quantifying all the progresses made by women in all sectors over time. Each country is evaluated individually based on an index, which is the result of four benchmarks. The report mainly investigates four macro-areas, namely economy, education, health and politics.[150] Respectively, the first subindex involves the opportunity and the economic participation highlighting

[149] Stotsky, J. G. "Women at Work", Finance and Development, June 2013.
[150] World Economic Forum, *The Global Gender Gap Report 2016*. Available at: https://www.weforum.org/reports/the-global-gender-gap-report-2016.

the possibilities of access to the labor market, the career advancement, and the remuneration gap; the second refers to the educational attainment showing the gap in the access to all levels of education and the rate of literacy; the third subindex describes health and survival analyzing the relationship between men and women according to birth and life expectancy; the fourth calculates the political empowerment and measures the relationship between men and women in Parliament and in ministerial positions, as well as the number of years a woman has been appointed in executive offices.

On the basis of these elements, each country is assigned a score that goes from 0 (gender inequality) to 1 (gender equality). The benchmarks referring equality and inequality remain fixed over time allowing indexes to be compared year by year with ideal standards. In addition, the report provides the option to roughly interpret the final index scores as a percentage value, which reveals how a country has reduced the gender gap. The account is not about a comparison in absolute terms between states, but a continuous monitoring of positive or negative developments in each country; in this way it is possible to create a ranking at the top of which are the countries that overall are closer to gender equality.

What emerges from the comparison of the *Global Gender Gap Report* of 2016, 2017 and 2018 is a rather discouraging situation. The global index ranking sees Western European countries in the top spots, in particular the Nordic countries who occupy the top three positions both in 2016, in 2017 and in 2018; also Rwanda remained in the top spots. UK reached the 20$^{th}$ position, Italy reached only the 50$^{th}$ position, whereas United States the 45$^{th}$ in 2016. A year later the situation remained rather stable: top positions are held by Iceland, Norway, Finland, Rwanda and Sweden. Only Italy fell down to the 82$^{nd}$ position. Also 2018 presented a stable situation, with the Nordic countries still at the top and UK and US respectively at 15$^{th}$ and 51$^{st}$ position. On the contrary, "compared to the world average, the leaders of the Index perform particularly strongly on Political Empowerment, with all ranking in the top 15 on this subindex. All but three countries in the overall Index top 10 have now

crossed the threshold of closing more than 80% of their overall gender gap—up from five both last year and in 2015"[151].

In particular, looking at the 2018 report it can be noticed that progresses in filling the gender-gap has remained almost unchanged. The overall index score stands at 68%, the economy subindex stands at 59%, the education at 95%, health at 96% and politics at 22%. This means that no country has achieved a complete equality, but the top seven countries were able to close the gap of at least 80%. It emerges that the situation in terms of education and health involves an almost complete gender equality. While gaps persist on economic participation and political empowerment.

According to the economic participation data, only fourteen countries have close the gap beyond 80%. In fact, women encounter significant barriers in accessing to the workplace. Considering managerial roles, only 34% of global managers are women, while as regard senior officials the world gap still counts more than 68%. As for technical roles, however, more than half of the gap has been filled. This contrast shows how women encounter more difficulties in taking on managerial roles, both in the private and public sectors. Not only that, but in addition to the disparity at professional level, the differences in income between men and women are also marked. As a result, these gaps show once again how economic power is a male responsibility.[152] Also Eurofound, the European Union for improvement of living and working conditions, argued that there have been few improvements as regard the employment gap, "the EU average female employment rate in 2014 in the 20–64 age group was 63.5%, 11 percentage points below the male employment rate"[153].

As a consequence of the lack in job opportunities for women, a strong gap arises with regard political empowerment. As mentioned above, the lowest gap level is in fact reached by the political field, which achieved only 22%. This share principally refers to the low representation of women in all political and diplomatic roles and their sporadic presence among heads of state. The only country that has

[151] World Economic Forum*, The Global Gender Gap Report,* 2016, 2017, 2018.
[152] World Economic Forum*, The Global Gender Gap Report 2018.*
Available at https://www.weforum.org/reports/the-global-gender-gap-report-2018.
[153] Eurofound (2016), *The gender employment gap: Challenges and solutions*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, p. 3.

attained almost a complete gender parity is Iceland, with 77%; six countries have close at least 50% of the gap; a quarter of states less than 10%; while the poorest countries like Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman and Yemen, have achieved only 3%. This trend is then reflected into a low female representation in places of power and among heads of state. Out of 149 countries, 19% gap was filled with only 17 women appointed as heads of state or prime ministers.[154] For example, looking at the international organizations and institutions there are little traces of women in senior diplomatic positions: "the United Nations appointed its first-ever female mediator Mary Robinson only in 2013"[155] and almost 85% of the world ambassadors are men.

Further data regarding gender diversity belonging to different geographical realities prove the same tendency of reserving women less prestigious positions than men, although the number of women has increased dramatically. For example, the Lowy Institute reported an increase in women in various Australian departments such as foreign affairs, trade, defense and home affairs, but at the same time also encountered a progressive obstacle to women's leadership paths. In January 2019, senior leadership positions in DFAT were occupied by 39.5% of women, while 41.4% were employed as heads of embassies and high commissions. A lower percentage (19%) was instead made up of women engaged in international defense roles.[156] The American picture presents the same trends. The proportions of women remained relatively low in positions that required greater impact, cachet and remuneration (as an elite ambassador and secretary of state posts) than those with less influence, prestige and pay (such as office work). With the succession of the various presidencies, there has been a growing increase of women in the diplomatic sphere, although the numbers at the highest levels still remain far below par. In 2003, women constituted a quarter of the senior foreign service, while a year later they constituted 16% of the roles of head of mission. In 2011, the percentage of heads of mission rose to 29%, while the

[154] World Economic Forum*, The Global Gender Gap Report 2018.* Available at https://www.weforum.org/reports/the-global-gender-gap-report-2018.
[155] Aggestam, K. and Towns, A. *Gendering Diplomacy and International Negotiation*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2018, p. 2.
[156] *The Conversation*, **"**Diplomacy and defence remain a boys' club, but women are making inroads", July 9, 2019. Available at https://theconversation.com/diplomacy-and-defence-remain-a-boys-club-but-women-are-making-inroads-119984**.**

top level posts were occupied by 22% of women.[157] A reality that has seen a radical change in the involvement of diplomatic women is Sweden, which has gone from being the country with the lowest percentage of women (4%) to have a majority with 56%. Although female Swedish diplomats now occupy about half of the diplomatic occupations, men still hold most of the managerial and ambassadorial positions, in addition to possessing the monopoly of some prestigious positions and tasks.[158] On the other hand, a surprisingly positive situation is constituted by Brazil, which has increased female participation and their ability to access command posts and missions abroad. The Brazilian reality is therefore promising for women, so that they themselves confirm a diplomatic career very close to equality and meritocracy.[159] To conclude, another significant example is the Japanese foreign service. Also in this case leadership roles within the MOFA are reserved for career diplomats. In recent years the number of women has increased significantly, both in terms of diplomatic missions and as foreign service officials: in the 2000s the percentage of women stationed in UN delegations in Japan reached 60% for the first time; in 2014 it grew up to 64%.[160]

All these data show that all over the world the diplomatic reality is predominantly the same for most countries, except for a few exceptions. Women continue to encounter huge obstacles at the working level. Not only they are forced to undergo continuous discriminatory treatments, but they do not have the same opportunities nor resources, which are guaranteed to men. Therefore, female gender within the professional sector are often underrepresented or enrolled in sectors and positions that do not allow a rightful advancement career. Although progresses have been made in smoothing the divergences between men and women, gender gap is still unfortunately a widespread phenomenon. For this reason, gender equality is one of the world's fundamental values and of European Union. The EU is dedicated not only in

[157]Bashevkin, S. "The Taking of Foggy Bottom? Representation in US Diplomacy", pp. 45-64 in Aggestam, K. and Towns, A. *Gendering Diplomacy and International Negotiation*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2018.
[158] Niklasson, B. and Robertson, F. "The Swedish MFA: Ready to Live Up to Expectations?", pp. 65-85, in Aggestam, K. and Towns, A. *Gendering Diplomacy and International Negotiation*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2018.
[159] De Souza Farias, R. and Do Carmo, G. F. "Brazilian Female Diplomats and the Struggle for Gender Equality", pp. 107-124, in Aggestam, K. and Towns, A. *Gendering Diplomacy and International Negotiation*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2018.
[160] Flowers, P. R. "Women's in Japan Ministry of Foreign Affairs", pp. 125-146, in in Aggestam, K. and Towns, A. *Gendering Diplomacy and International Negotiation*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2018.

defending this right, but also to promote it within the Member States. The European Commission proposed in this respect a Strategic engagement for gender equality 2016-2019[161], through which members commit to promote initiatives on five areas: equal economic independence of women and men; equal pay for work of equal value; equality in decision-making; ending gender-based violence; and promoting gender equality beyond the EU. "To further strengthen societies, the EU has decided to join forces with various international stakeholders and build alliances on gender equality with international organizations such as the OECD, UN Women, the Council of Europe and the WTO"[162].

## 3.2 POLICY OF WOMEN

As for female diplomatic representation, the gap is still dramatically high, in fact women are largely underrepresented and bad distributed. But why women are still a minority in most professional sectors? An attempt to explain the underrepresentation within the labor market and specifically concerning female diplomatic representation consists on a direct or indirect discrimination that takes the form of stereotypes and prejudices mainly referred to women. Gender stereotypes, even if are still used in some working fields, represent an obsolete and close mind tricks typical of past times and no more compatible and acceptable with progress and modernization of the last centuries. The European Union has indeed expressed its deep concern on female condition and their sufferance for significant disadvantages in relation to men, as a result of discriminatory practices and laws based on patriarchal stereotyping and power imbalances. The Security Council Resolution 1325 and the Human Rights Council working group represented a millstone towards women's equality with men and for the awareness of a significant negative situation for female gender in the diplomatic field. In the last two decades there has been a huge international mobilization of

[161] European Commission, *Strategic engagement for gender equality 2016-2019*. Available at https://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/sites/antitrafficking/files/strategic_engagement_for_gender_equality_en.pdf.
[162] European Commission, *2018 Report on equality between women and men in the EU*, p. 56. Available at https://publications.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/950dce57-6222-11e8-ab9c-01aa75ed71a1.

support for women, politics and security and a redefinition of diplomatic norms and appointment procedures. As such, more and more women are now entering the diplomatic arena but the achievement of a gender equality is still lacking and they are still a minority.

Being high politics the field of an exclusive masculinity, the features associated with this specific career are indeed of masculine nature: "toughness, courage, power, strength, and even the use of force, are seen as qualities more appropriate and relevant to the successful management of the state"[163]. On the contrary, women are often described through conventional stereotypes. According to Paul Smith et al., women are unable to sustain leadership positions because 'unreliable' and 'lacking of the right qualities'.[164] Not only that, but also society has contributed to the identification of the female gender according to some patterns; taking as a reference the Eurobarometer Report[165] of 2017 on gender equality, the 44% of interviewed agree on the assumption that the most important role for a woman is to take care of the family. While for the 43% the main role for a man is to earn money, with men more likely to think in such a way than women (47% vs. 41%). Also the behavior reserved to women is relevant to this respect: a research conducted on 588 career women in male dominated areas has pointed out a high spread of sexist attitudes towards women. For example, the 56.2% of interviewees reported misogynous jokes during meetings; the 39.4% hostility exhibition towards women in decision-making positions; the 30.8% the tendency of ignoring women during gatherings; the 29.2% tendency of non-consulting women leaders; and the 21.4% the conduct of non-introduce female staff to guests or speakers[166].

These examples show that the obstacles to women's professional careers are

[163] Bloch, J. C. "Women and Diplomacy", *The Ambassadors REVIEW*, (2004), p. 95. Available at https://www.americanambassadors.org/publications/ambassadors-review/fall-2004/women-and-diplomacy.
[164] Smith, P. et al. "A maze of metaphors around glass ceilings", *Gender in Management: an international journal*, (2012) Vol. 27, No. 7, pp. 436–448.
[165] European Commission, *Special Eurobarometer 465 (2017), Gender Equality 2017*. Available at http://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/Survey/getSurveyDetail/instruments/SPECIAL/surveyKy/2154.
[166] Cancedda, A. "Leadership femminile e azione sociale: implicazioni per la ricerca e per lo sviluppo delle carriere femminili"*, ASDO – Commissione Europea DG Occupazione e Affari Sociali,* (2002), p. 12.

real and deeply affecting female underrepresentation. A further study on the issue is provided by the authors Michelle Ryan and Alexander Haslam, which assert that women are mainly appointed for those leadership roles associated with a higher risk of possible negative consequences.[167] Because of this, they perform more precarious positions than men. First of all, the circumstances under which the candidates are selected differ weather they are male or female. The nature of the position is crucial; women managers tend to hold more support and training positions or in the services sector than carrying out commercial functions or industrial activities. Second, they are subjected to greater scrutiny and criticism: their leadership appointments are made in problematic organizational circumstances, meaning that women are more likely to be chosen for leadership positions "in circumstances of general financial downturn and downturn in company performance"[168]. This is because at the time of failure it is easier to attribute the guilt and humiliation of failure to a woman. Therefore, it is always a question of lack of confidence in women's skills, not to mention the sexist behavior that unfortunately persists in the high ranks of power.

The same difficulties can be applied to women who embark on a diplomatic career. As the study of Caroline Linse shows, there are higher and greater expectations for women engaged in overseas missions than male diplomats, and have to work much harder regardless of their position.[169] Also in this case, the gender norms that constitute diplomacy are "power-laden in terms of distributing social power and prestige between different gender roles"[170]. Thinking at the prestige of the ambassador's acquisition, which represents the apex of the diplomatic career, "it is in turn in large part a function of international military and economic hierarchies, hierarchies that are fundamentally international in nature"[171]. Thus, in holding this office, men and women will be channeled into these hierarchies. And is exactly for this reason that women still struggle to carve out their space and emerge like their male colleagues. Towards the

[167] Ryan, M. K. and Haslam, A. "The Glass Cliff: Evidence that Women Are Over-represented in Precarious Leadership Positions", *British Journal of Management*, (2005) vol. 16, no. 2, pp. 81-90.
[168] Ibidem, p. 87.
[169] Linse, C. "Challenges Facing Women in Overseas Diplomatic Positions", *Intercultural Communication and Diplomacy,* (2004) cap. 5, pp. 253-263.
[170] Aggestam, K. and Towns, A. *Gendering Diplomacy and International Negotiation*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2018, p. 26.
[171] Ibidem.

end of the 1900 women constituted 24.3% of American FSOs while, in the senior ranks, only 6.9% of the officers were women.[172]

Always referring to the hierarchical masculinity of diplomacy, the author Dobson, in his essay, insisted on the assumption that the political meetings are constituted by a male hegemony. The summits of G8 and G20 are a clear example of the elevated male presence including the meetings of leaders, foreign ministers, financial ministers, and sherpas. The years between 1975 and 2011 counted the presence of 76 leaders including prime ministers, presidents and chancellors in the G8 meetings. Among them, only 3.9% of the leaders were women. At ministerial level, foreign ministers counted 102 male representatives and 12 female ministers, for a 10.5% of women's representation. On the contrary, only one woman has ever assisted financial meetings during the same period. Also the role of sherpas has been considered of quite relevance since they are the assistants of the leaders. Even in this case, sherpas have predominantly been men. During 1975 and 2011 the appointed assistants were 129; only 3.8% have been women. As far as the situation of world leader is concerned, the G20 summits between 2008 and 2010 only 3 were participating women on 30 members.[173] The period between 2011 and 2018 saw a very slight increase in women presence at the world summit, going from a total of 4/5 women and then returning to the paltry number of only two women heads of government.

A further obstacle to the female diplomatic career is the gender construction of diplomacy. So far, it has been debated that governance has always been the place of a hegemonic masculinity in which women "have been either marginalised in favour of men or dismissed as unrelated to the concerns of high politics on an international stage"[174]. Several studies on female participation in the central political mechanisms like the United Nations, the World Bank, the European Union, and on summits meetings have, indeed, confirmed a masculinized pattern and a gender division of

[172] Aggestam, K. and Towns, A. *Gendering Diplomacy and International Negotiation*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2018.
[173] Dobson, H. "Where are the Women in Global Governance? Leaders, Wives and Hegemonic Masculinity in the G8 and G20 Summits", *Global Society*, (2012) vol. 26, no. 4, pp. 429-449.
[174] Ibidem.

labor of diplomacy.[175] This masculinity determined the way of conducting foreign relations but also impacted the space and style of political agenda setting. In fact, even when women participated at official level as political leaders, their agenda was affected by masculine characters. Female leaders have been stereotyped and forced into feminized roles. Dobson individualized few examples in this respect: "In the case of Thatcher, her first participation in the summit as a female leader in 1979 was portrayed stereotypically. During the summit she was the subject of an advertising campaign for a Japanese cosmetics firm that stressed her role as "wife and mother" as well as "a woman who is capable of a vigorously productive social life without forfeiting her innate feminine charms"[176]. Regarding Merkel, her contribution to the summits "has tended to be in areas traditionally regarded as feminized. For example, when hosting the G8 in Heiligendamm in 2007, she was able to promote consensus on climate change, encourage US willingness to participate in talks and promote a pledge to aim to at least halve global CO2 emissions by 2050"[177]. Though, global governance has been controlled by social hierarchies fixed on the gender of belonging, through which we identify the meanings of femininity and masculinity.[178]

Women with leadership and executive positions are therefore barely recognizable. The analysis of Eagly et al.[179] showed that the main causes are to be identified in discriminatory practices, cultural norms and gender stereotyping, which affect women's career advancement. But, also the training path could weight on the future success: some women started their career in parliament, in cabinet or with advisory tasks; others were involved at local or social level; and others acquired positions by taking on father's or husband's legacy.[180] Hence, according to Jensen, the fact of not having significant ministerial experiences might be a possible reason for which few women were able to get to the top. Albeit some political experiences of

[175] Dobson, H. "Where are the Women in Global Governance? Leaders, Wives and Hegemonic Masculinity in the G8 and G20 Summits", *Global Society*, (2012) vol. 26, no. 4, pp. 429-449.
[176] Ibidem.
[177] Ibid.
[178] Rai, S. M. "Analysing Global Governance", pp. 19-42, in Rai, S. M. and Waylen, G. *Global Governance. Feminine Perspectives,* Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.
[179] Eagly, A. H., Carli, L. L. "The female leadership advantage: An evaluation of the evidence", *The Leadership Quarterly*, (2003) vol. 14, issue 6, pp. 807-834.
[180] Jensen, J. S. *Women Political Leaders. Breaking the Highest Glass Ceiling,* Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.

women like Margaret Thatcher or Angela Merkel have proved the success of handling campaigns, they continue to be disadvantaged when it comes to seeking public office. As said previously, at the core of the paucity of women stand prejudices. Women do not look like a leader and physically do not match with the idea of a politician: they are smaller, with a nice voice… They have to demonstrate to be competent and able to face the complexity of the office; and they have to prove to be tough and strong in choosing strategies and attacks plans. The prejudice, reveals Eagly[181], emerges when the role of female gender is judged on the basis of perceived expectations of the role of leader; in other words, it comes from the incongruity people perceive between women's characteristics and the qualities perceived as necessary to be efficient as a leader. The theory stabilizes that female gender suffer from two disadvantages: they are evaluated as less capable for leadership positions because the role is stereotyped according male criteria; and women are less effective as leaders because such behavior is perceived as less desirable in women than men.[182] The first disadvantage is based on the belief that women do not possess the right characteristics for leadership since it has always been considered a strictly male occupation. While the second, is based on the perception of female behavior, which is negatively perceived if it is not compliant with the idea of the common behavior. Also here, gender stereotypes are involved, since according to the gender the social role of men and women is defined. Women "possess less agency and therefore are less qualified for leadership, especially for executive roles"[183]; at the same time the behavior perpetuated by women as leaders is incoherent with people's beliefs about desirable female behavior. So even if women have positive effects as top executives, they are perceived negatively because it is not a common belief to see a woman in a male position. Consequently, these limitations negatively affect the perception of women as potential leaders on three levels: people reserve more positive attitudes if the leaders are men; women encounter more difficulties in accessing top positions; and encounter greater difficulty in being recognized as effective in these roles.[184]

[181] Eagly, A.H. and Karau, S.J. "Role Congruity Theory of Prejudice Toward Female Leader", *Psychological Review,* (2002) vol. 109, no. 3, pp. 573-598.
[182] Ibidem.
[183] Ibid. p. 589.
[184] Ibid.

Generally, because of difficulties and obstacles women are forced to face, they are engaged especially in social movements and non-governmental organizations than in direct policy. Notwithstanding, more and more women are enrolled in leadership positions within the diplomatic fields, but they are assigned to low-ranked roles and still represent a little share. In general, there is a scarce recognition of women capacities and possibilities, and male preference over women is still requested. To this respect the author Randall has examined the motives for the scarcity of women in politics and has identified factors such as 'situational constraints' and 'institutional barriers', besides of course discrimination.[185] He argued that one of the possible reason for women paucity is motherhood because of the effect it has on the political career. Reconciling being a mother and a career woman is not easy: diplomatic career implicates a lot of work, competences, and above all, full availability. The diplomatic officer is regularly engaged in consular missions so the time dedicated to the work is very demanding and unlikely incompatible with mothers' duties. Randall individualized how the majority of female MEPs are over 45 years with grown up and autonomous children. Consequently, undertaking a professional career at late age means less chances for career advancement, since before achieving a high political involvement, experience and training are needed. A further relevant aspect is the organizational structure of political activities, which reflect the style of male character. The role of institutional barriers is then displayed, according to Randall, by the involvement of widows, who take over the office after husbands' death. As a result, women are often appointed to precarious leadership positions and "tend to occupy social portfolios rather than the responsibilities of high politics"[186].

All this talk about the gender nature of diplomacy and the rules that regulate it and define the way in which this practice works wants to demonstrate that achieving gender equality is not exercised only by increasing the number women in diplomacy, but it is necessary to engage deeply in order to completely eliminate these gender models. Involving women in diplomacy is important not only for a matter of justice and rights, but also reveals added value to the practice. Firstly, Aggestam and Towns

[185] Randall, V. *Women and Politics: An International Perspective*, Macmillan Education LTD, 1987.
[186] Dobson, H. "Where are the Women in Global Governance? Leaders, Wives and Hegemonic Masculinity in the G8 and G20 Summits", *Global Society*, (2012) vol. 26, no. 4, p. 434.

individualize a "right-based approach", as women have the right to participate in diplomacy, global forums and international organizations: "Women constitute 50% of the population, and this should be reflected more fairly on the international scene"[187]. A second argument is based on instrumental reasoning, which believes that the female presence brings better results to diplomacy through successful negotiation and sustainable results.[188] Female officers are in fact decisive in the processes of peace consolidation and implementation of agreements. Not only that, but a greater inclusion of women in the diplomatic sphere would bring advantages also in terms of efficiency. Numerous studies concerning the interaction between representation and outcome of negotiations and agreements, have identified a growing tendency to include gender provisions in negotiations and peace agreements; a strong female influence in the processes and provisions; and have demonstrated a certain longevity of such agreements if perpetuated by women.[189] Feminist scholarship strongly supports that in decisive situations women turn out to be better negotiators than men and exert a strong influence in political results, revealing themselves positively; although stereotyped women are more "trustworthy and public-spirited"[190], and support a more peaceful government. Some authors individualize in women's leadership different skills in the exercise of power, such as interaction and collaboration between colleagues and empowerment, while men rely on the accumulation of power in a command-and-control leadership.[191] Consequently, women's participation in political domain could have positive and functional implications for the world progress.

As the *UN Security Council Resolution 1325*[192] states, women's role in the international community is really important as they represent fundamental actors in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and peace-building processes. "Women bring particular values to the negotiation table given their unique life and socialization

[187] Aggestam, K. and Towns, A. *Gendering Diplomacy and International Negotiation*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2018, p. 6.
[188] Ibidem.
[189] Ibid. p. 19.
[190] Nilges, T. "Gender Inequality in Politics", *Human Rights: A Gender Perspective,* September 11, 2005, p. 6. Available at http://sociology.morrisville.edu/readings/SOCI201/GenderInqualityInPolitics-Thorsten-2005.pdf.
[191] Eagly, A. H., Carli, L. L. "The female leadership advantage: An evaluation of the evidence", *The Leadership Quarterly*, (2003) vol. 14, issue 6, pp. 807-834.
[192] *UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000),* on Women, Peace and Security.

experiences"[193]. According to a survey on the interaction between gender and the outcome of international negotiations, scholars noted that women's attitude is different than their male counterparts. Female conceptualization of themes like war, peace and security affect the way in which they make future decisions and interact with the world around them[194]. The experiment has been conducted on groups of middle and high school students (age from 10 to 18) involved in simulated negotiations. Students were divided into all-male, all-female and mixed-gender groups in order to observe whether gender has a significant role in influencing outcomes. Looking at behaviors and attitudes of single groups, it emerged that boys are more likely to use conflict tactics, while female and mixed groups prefer adopt peaceful and cooperative solutions. Furthermore, putting women in a group of men alter the way men act. In fact, women are more attentive to the process of negotiating and to social interaction, thus leading to a change in the group's strategy. The implication of these results suggest that having more women involved in the decision-making level is fundamental as through a different perspective both the process and the types of interactions might change. Gender diversity will thus bring to a diversification of viewpoints, and to a diversification in the way of handling issues.[195]

Yet, the acceptance of women at the "big table" is still strongly hindered. "Having an equal representation of women in politics and in decision-making positions has a positive impact on gender mainstreaming and on the world governance"[196]. As such, for the UN Women and the European Union, the political participation is a fundamental value for a genuine democracy. Since 1995, as a result of the IV World Conference on Women, significant progress has been made in the promotion of gender equality and in the elimination of discrimination. However, changes lingered to occur as "the slow evolution appeared to reflect a culture of resistance to the appointment of

[193] Boyer, M.A. et al. "Gender and Negotiation: Some Experimental Findings from an International Negotiation Simulation", *International Studies Quarterly*, (2009) vol. 53, Issue 1, pp. 23–47.
[194] Ibidem.
[195] Ibid.
[196] European Parliamentary Research Service | EPRS, *Women in Politics: A Global Perspective*, march 2019. Available at http://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/search.html?word=women+in+politics%3A+a+global+perspective.

women to the organization's most senior roles"[197]. To face the obstacles in letting women enter the diplomatic career, the United Nations adopted in 2015 the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which includes seventeen goals, among which gender equality and empower of women, to be achieved by 2030.

## 3.3 WOMEN'S LOCATION IN DIPLOMACY

The gradual opening of diplomacy to women goes hand in hand with the spread of feminist movements in favor of gender equality.[198] "Women campaigned for these changes not only because they extended the range of careers open to them but in order to end the exclusion of women from institutions, such as the legal system, to which they were subject, as men were, but in which, unlike men, women had no authority"[199]. Despite women have obtained the right to actively participate in the diplomatic career, the general tendency is that of a diplomatic world highly "governed" by men with few female exceptions.

What is interesting from the research conducted is not focusing on the number of women operating in the diplomatic exercise, but rather analyzing which roles they occupy and at what level. In fact, from this analysis we realize how much the masculinity of the job has influenced the assignment and distribution of female staff. Looking at the global situation it can be observed that women are still largely excluded from the executive branches of government. Among the leaders of major political parties within EU member states, 18% are women. At the beginning of 2019, European situation counts three women prime ministers, four women presidents and two queens among fifty-five heads of government. In particular, heads of government are 14.3% in the European Union and 7.3% worldwide; while the heads of state count for 21.4% in the Union and 6.6% worldwide. Within the European Parliament, 36% are female members. At the global level, only Rwanda has the highest share of female

[197] Foreign and Commonwealth Office, *Women and the Foreign Office*, History Notes, (2018) issue 20.
[198] Aggestam, K. and Towns, A. "The gender turn in diplomacy: a new research agenda", *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, (2019) vol.21, no. 1, pp. 9-28.
[199] Thane, P. M. "What difference did the vote make? Women in public and private life in Britain since 1918*", *Historical Research,* (2003) vol. 76, no. 192, p. 272.

parliamentarians (56%); the other two countries to have more than 50% are Cuba and Bolivia.[200]

To better define the world situation regarding the positions enrolled by women in the diplomatic and political sphere, a series of data will be presented below, initially concerning the post of ambassadors and negotiators, and subsequently the occupations at ministerial and parliamentarian level. Considering the fact that there is a predisposition for a male overrepresentation in prestigious occupations, it would not be surprising to find a general male overrepresentation even in matters strictly related to the diplomatic sphere. In fact, the distribution of female diplomatic staff is still rather poorly distributed. In this respect, the book of Aggestam and Towns[201] is enlightening, as it provides a detailed global picture about the distribution of ambassadors and senior negotiators in the world. The survey shows the appointments of the ambassadors of about 50 countries, chosen from those with the highest GDP rate in 2014. The final result is the same as in the other professional careers: that is, there is a female overrepresentation in less prestigious positions and an underrepresentation in the prestigious ones. This variation is due not only to the ambassador's place of application, which can be in a country more or less powerful, but it is also based on the status of the ambassador.

The collected data revealed that 85% of the world ambassadors are men, while only 15% are women. This does not mean that women cannot reach the top, but the prospects they have are worse and lower than male colleagues. The real problem involves the famous ‘glass ceiling’, as in general women are enrolled in lower status posts. Independently from the economic and military status of the hosting country, women have less opportunity of being assigned to those countries economically and militarily strong, hence in leading positions. Statistically, the Nordic countries have the higher share of female appointed ambassadors (35%), 10% of share for Asia, while

[200] European Parliamentary Research Service | EPRS, *Women in Politics: A Global Perspective*, march 2019. Available at http://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/search.html?word=women+in+politics%3A+a+global+perspective.
[201] Aggestam, K. and Towns, A. *Gendering Diplomacy and International Negotiation*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2018.

Middle East is the country with the lowest percentage, about 6%.[202] The situation is similar for the place in which ambassadors are sent: it exists a sort of reciprocity in the exchange of ambassadors. Countries are more likely to send female ambassadors to those countries from which they have the possibility of receiving more women.[203] Implicitly, the research reveals that women are expected to be placed in ambassadorial positions in those countries with the highest levels of gender equality. Indeed, the Nordic countries receive the highest percentage of women, around 22%. Similarly, fewer women are sent to the Middle East (10%) or to Asia (11%).

A very similar or even worse situation is represented by those women involved in international negotiations appointments. "Peace negotiations are particularly ingrained with masculinized norms of power, as they are strongly associated with security interests and military affairs"[204]. As such, women constitute only 9% of peace negotiators and 8% of mediators. In international organizations only 19% of UN permanent representatives were women out of a total of 193 members. Moreover, the UN ambassadors in the Security Council has poor track record of only one or no woman at all.[205] Also in this case the lack of women is due in large part to the barriers and obstacles they encounter when they try to advance towards a higher diplomatic position. It is therefore clear that the norms and gender structures of diplomacy influence the distribution and assignment of the post of ambassador or negotiator to more or less high standing positions.

According to the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the data collected at the end of 2008 on women's presence in the diplomatic environment showed that in a total of 959 officials, 148 are women. The 52.5% of female diplomats are at the lower positions for a total of 82 women. In particular, on a total of 24 Ambassadors, only one is a woman; on a total of 216 Plenipotentiary Ministers women are 19; on a total of 256 Embassy Consuls, 23 are women; on a total of 148 Councilors Legation, 23 are

[202] Towns, A. and Niklasson, B. "Where Are the Female Ambassadors? Gender and Status Hierarchies in Ambassador Postings", in Aggestam, K. and Towns, A. *Gendering Diplomacy and International Negotiation*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2018.
[203] Ibidem.
[204] Aggestam, K. and Towns, A. *Gendering Diplomacy and International Negotiation*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2018, p. 287.
[205] Ibidem.

women; and on a total of 290 Secretaries Legation, 73 are represented by women. As regards the situation abroad, the percentage is more dramatic. Women in charge of an Embassy are only 8, in a total of 123 Embassies; 2 diplomats held the position of Chief of a Consulate General; and only one woman is in charge of a multilateral delegation in 9[206]. Almost ten years later the situation in the diplomatic career is rather stable, whereas women in managerial career are growing. In high ranking roles only 4 women held the post of Ambassador in Italian diplomacy in 2017; in the others level of diplomacy female presence was considerable: 20 Plenipotentiary Ministers, 40 Embassy Consuls, 47 Councilors Legation, and 104 Secretaries Legation[207]. Nevertheless, statistics show how during years the entrance of women in the diplomatic field is progressively growing, even if the higher concentration is collocated into lower-level positions.

Other interesting data for the purpose of the research concern women's representation at ministerial and parliamentarian level. Globally, women's representation in parliaments rose to 24% at the end of 2018. The number of women presiding over houses of parliaments was 55 out of 279 posts worldwide, while 18% of appointed ministers are women. The OECD, the organization for economic co-operation and development, has collected a series of data on women parliamentarians and women ministers in the world. By 2017, female ministers were more than 50% only in four countries: France (52.9%), Sweden (52.2%), Canada (51.7%) e Slovenia (50%). Women parliamentarians, on the other hand, did not even reach 50%, only Iceland approached the share with 47.6%.[208] Referring to this last category, the Inter-Parliamentary Union has noted that the share of women appointed in parliaments it is constantly increasing. Analyzing data from 1995 to 1 January 2019, it appears that at the global level the percentage was initially at 11.3%, whereas in 2019 rises to 24.3%. Studying the trends of single geographical areas, it can be noted that the Americas experienced the greatest increase, reaching 30.7% (+18%) in 2019. The second area

[206] Ministero degli Affari Esteri e della Cooperazione Internazionale, "Dati sulla presenza delle donne nella carriera diplomatica", 31/12/2008. Available at https://www.esteri.it/mae/it/ministero/associazioni/donneitaliane/dati.html.
[207] Ministero degli Affari Esteri e della Cooperazione Internazionale, "Annuario statistico 2018", 2018. Available at https://www.esteri.it/mae/it/ministero/pubblicazioni/annuario-statistico.html.
[208] OECD Data, "Women in Politics", edition 2014. Available at https://data.oecd.org/inequality/women-in-politics.htm.

with the bigger improvement is Europe with a rise of 15.3% (28.5% of total share). The ranking continues with Africa with 23.7% (+13.9%); Asia with 19.6% (+6.4%); and concludes with the Pacific area with 18.4% (+12.1%).[209] Focusing on the European status, Eurostat shows how the situation is constantly improving. The percentage of seats held by women in national parliaments rose from 21.5% in 2005 to 30.7% in 2019 for the EU. At the top of the ranking is Sweden with 46.4% in 2019, followed by Finland with 41.5%. Italy has reached 35.4% of women parliamentarians, while the UK follows with 29%. The last position is fulfilled by Hungary with a rate of 12.6%.[210]

To conclude, as last evidence of female representation in seats of power, the Inter-Parliamentary Union in association with the UN Women published a survey (Table 2) concerning women's participation in the decision-making positions within governments.[211] The publication contains a national ranking of ministerial and parliamentary representation, as well as a series of statistics about women in political leadership roles – like head of state or government, women speakers of parliament, and ministerial portfolios handled by women. Since 2017, improvements have been a few and they continue to grow slowly. The data collected show that as of 1 January 2019, the percentage of ministerial women is at the historical maximum of 20.7% - 812 ministers out of 3922. Also the analysis of portfolios assigned to women are diversifying: even if the main issues of female occupation are still social affairs, family and education, environment and women's affairs, reaffirming a clear gender discrimination, increasingly more women are allocating portfolios traditionally handled by men, like defense, finance and foreign affairs.[212] Growing power and responsibilities in decision-making positions, female presence in that specific field decreases. It is, thus, evident that female attendance is concentrated in lower positions and continue to be underrepresented in decisional positions in all sectors.

[209] Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), 2019 - ISSN 1993-5196, *Women in Parliament in 2018: The year in review.* Available at https://www.ipu.org/resources/publications/reports/2019-03/women-in-parliament-in-2018-year-in-review.
[210] Eurostat, *European Statistics on seats held by women in national parliaments*. Available at https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/sdi/gender-equality.
[211] UN Women, *Women in Politics: 2019.* Available at http://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2019/03/women-in-politics-2019-map#view.
[212] Ibidem.

The analysis of women in parliaments showed that the global share of women deputes reached 24.3%, one point more than 2017. In contrast, the representation of high-level leadership positions has decreased to 6.6% for the heads of state, and to 5.2% for the heads of government.[213] Taking a closer look to the women in ministerial positions, only nine countries report more than 50% of female ministries. Spain is at the top rank with a 64% share. Italy has 27.8% of women, with five ministries for a total of eighteen. The United Kingdom and the United States are respectively at the 88th and 89th position with both 21.7% share, five ministerial women out of twenty-three.[214] Whereas, as far as the situation of women in parliament is concerned, only three countries (Rwanda, Cuba and Bolivia) exceed 50% of parliamentarians. Italy is in 30th position with 35.7% for women enrolled in the Chamber of Deputies and 34.4% for the Senate. UK presents 32% for the House of Representatives and 26.4% for the House of Lords; while USA reached the 79th position with 23.5% and 25% for the House of Representatives and the Senate.[215]

[213] Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), 2019 - ISSN 1993-5196, *Women in Parliament in 2018: The year in review.* Available at https://www.ipu.org/resources/publications/reports/2019-03/women-in-parliament-in-2018-year-in-review.
[214] UN Women, *Women in Politics: 2019.* Available at http://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2019/03/women-in-politics-2019-map#view.
[215] Ibidem.

# Women in Politics: 2019

Situation on 1 January 2019

Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.

UN WOMEN
United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

## Women in ministerial positions

The countries are ranked according to the percentage of women in ministerial positions, reflecting appointments upto 1 January 2019.

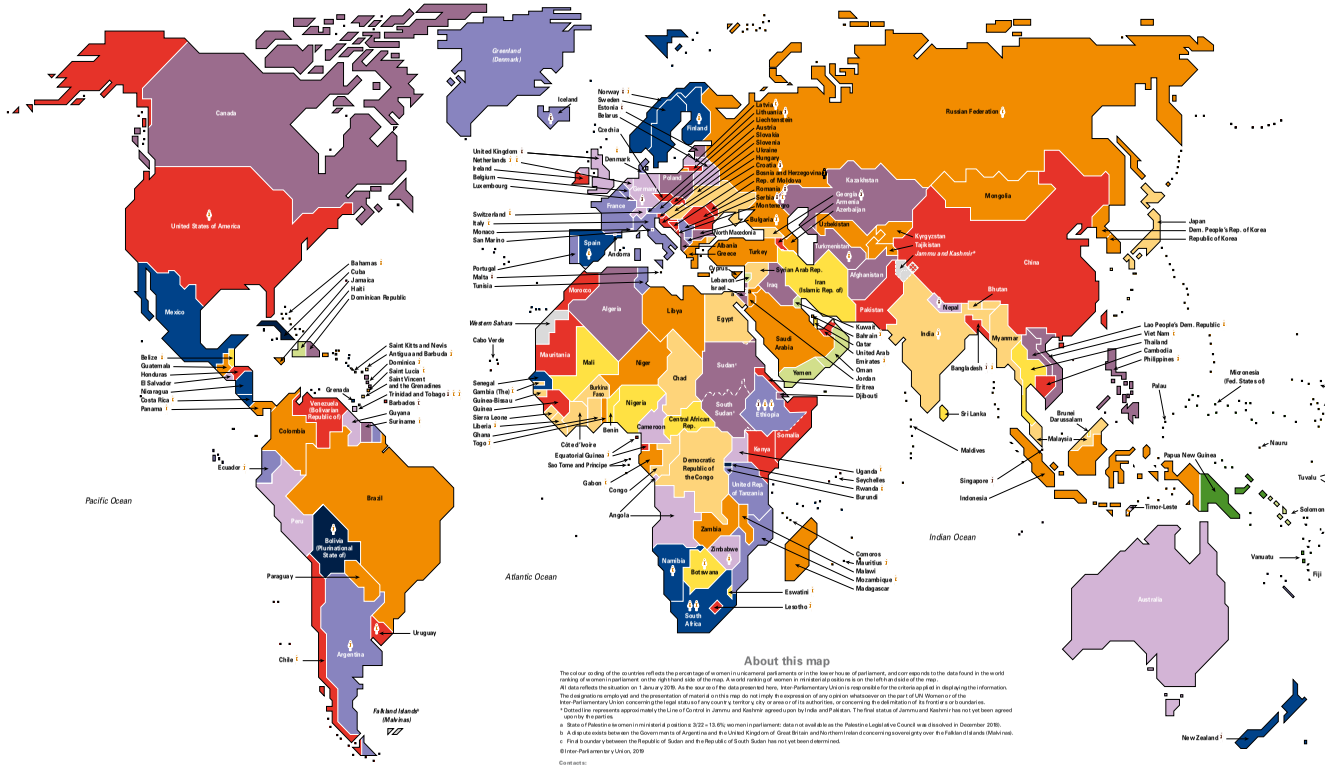
| Rank | Country | % Women | Women | Total ministers |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | |
| 1 | Spain | 66.7 | 10 | 15 |
| | | | | |
| 2 | Nicaragua | 55.6 | 10 | 18 |
| 3 | Sweden* | 54.5 | 12 | 22 |
| 4 | Albania | 52.2 | 12 | 23 |
| 5 | Costa Rica | 52.0 | 13 | 25 |
| 6 | Rwanda | 51.9 | 14 | 27 |
| 7 | Canada | 51.9 | 14 | 27 |
| 8 | Cuba | 50.0 | 11 | 22 |
| | | | | |
| 9 | South Africa | 48.6 | 17 | 35 |
| 10 | Ethiopia | 47.6 | 10 | 21 |
| 11 | Seychelles | 47.4 | 9 | 19 |
| 12 | Denmark | 47.4 | 9 | 19 |
| 13 | Switzerland | 42.9 | 3 | 7 |
| 14 | Uruguay* | 42.9 | 6 | 14 |
| 15 | Mexico | 42.1 | 8 | 19 |
| 16 | Slovenia* | 41.7 | 5 | 12 |
| 17 | Grenada* | 41.7 | 5 | 12 |
| 18 | Germany | 40.0 | 6 | 15 |
| 19 | Iceland | 40.0 | 6 | 15 |
| 20 | Liechtenstein | 40.0 | 4 | 10 |
| | | | | |
| 21 | Austria | 38.5 | 5 | 13 |
| 22 | Finland | 37.5 | 6 | 16 |
| 23 | Portugal | 36.4 | 4 | 11 |
| 24 | Andorra | 36.4 | 4 | 11 |
| | Republic of Moldova | 36.4 | 4 | 11 |
| 25 | Estonia | 35.7 | 5 | 14 |
| * | Slovakia | 35.7 | 5 | 14 |
| 26 | Netherlands | 35.3 | 6 | 17 |
| | | | | |
| 27 | Chile | 34.8 | 8 | 23 |
| 28 | Angola* | 34.4 | 11 | 32 |
| 29 | Malta | 34.4 | 11 | 32 |
| 30 | El Salvador | 33.3 | 4 | 12 |
| | Sao Tome and Principe* | 33.3 | 4 | 12 |
| | Trinidad and Tobago | 33.3 | 7 | 21 |
| 31 | Dominica* | 33.3 | 5 | 15 |
| 32 | Mauritania | 31.8 | 7 | 22 |
| 33 | Bulgaria | 31.6 | 6 | 19 |
| 34 | Lesotho | 31.6 | 6 | 19 |
| 35 | Latvia* | 30.8 | 4 | 13 |
| | New Zealand | 30.8 | 4 | 13 |
| 36 | Zambia* | 30.8 | 4 | 13 |
| | | | | |
| 37 | Dominica* | 29.4 | 5 | 17 |
| * | Luxembourg | 29.4 | 5 | 17 |
| * | Peru | 29.4 | 5 | 17 |
| * | Suriname* | 29.4 | 5 | 17 |
| * | Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) | 29.4 | 10 | 34 |
| 38 | United Arab Emirates | 29.0 | 2 | 7 |
| 39 | Czechia | 28.6 | 6 | 21 |
| * | Dominican Republic | 28.6 | 6 | 21 |
| 40 | Moldova | 28.0 | 7 | 25 |
| * | Romania | 28.0 | 7 | 25 |
| 41 | Italy | 27.8 | 5 | 18 |
| * | Iraq | 27.8 | 5 | 18 |
| * | Peru | 27.8 | 5 | 18 |
| 42 | Georgia | 27.3 | 6 | 22 |
| * | Madagascar* | 27.3 | 6 | 22 |
| * | Togo* | 27.3 | 6 | 22 |
| * | Zimbabwe | 27.3 | 6 | 22 |
| 43 | Ireland | 26.7 | 4 | 15 |
| * | Panama* | 26.7 | 4 | 15 |
| 44 | Burundi | 26.1 | 6 | 23 |
| * | Fiji | 26.1 | 6 | 23 |
| 45 | Argentina | 25.0 | 3 | 12 |
| * | Belgium | 25.0 | 3 | 12 |
| * | Chad | 25.0 | 3 | 12 |
| * | Ghana | 25.0 | 5 | 20 |
| * | Greece | 25.0 | 5 | 20 |
| * | Kenya | 25.0 | 6 | 24 |
| * | Niger | 25.0 | 3 | 12 |
| * | Slovenia | 25.0 | 3 | 12 |
| | | | | |
| 46 | Egypt | 24.2 | 8 | 33 |
| 47 | Barbados | 23.8 | 5 | 21 |
| * | Cuba | 23.8 | 5 | 21 |
| * | Indonesia | 23.8 | 5 | 21 |
| * | Jamaica | 23.8 | 5 | 21 |
| 48 | Iraq | 23.1 | 3 | 13 |
| * | Qatar | 23.1 | 3 | 13 |
| * | Saint Lucia* | 23.1 | 3 | 13 |
| 49 | Senegal* | 22.7 | 5 | 22 |
| 50 | United Republic of Tanzania | 22.7 | 5 | 22 |
| 51 | Bosnia and Herzegovina | 22.2 | 4 | 18 |
| * | Ecuador | 22.2 | 4 | 18 |
| * | Guyana | 22.2 | 4 | 18 |
| * | Micronesia (Federated States of) | 22.2 | 4 | 18 |
| * | Republic of Korea | 22.2 | 4 | 18 |
| 52 | Sierra Leone | 21.7 | 5 | 23 |
| * | United States of America* | 21.7 | 5 | 23 |
| 53 | Australia | 21.4 | 6 | 28 |
| * | Cabo Verde* | 21.4 | 3 | 14 |
| * | Paraguay* | 21.4 | 3 | 14 |
| * | Turkey | 21.4 | 3 | 14 |
| 54 | Montenegro | 21.1 | 4 | 19 |
| 55 | Jordan | 20.8 | 5 | 24 |
| * | Malawi | 20.8 | 5 | 24 |
| 56 | Monaco | 20.0 | 4 | 20 |
| * | Namibia | 20.0 | 5 | 25 |
| * | Nauru | 20.0 | 3 | 15 |
| | | | | |
| 57 | Israel | 19.0 | 4 | 21 |
| * | Serbia | 19.0 | 4 | 21 |
| 58 | South Sudan* | 18.8 | 6 | 32 |
| 59 | Cameroon | 18.5 | 5 | 27 |
| 60 | Malaysia | 18.5 | 5 | 27 |
| * | Sierra Leone | 18.5 | 5 | 27 |
| 61 | Benin* | 18.2 | 6 | 33 |
| * | Central African Republic* | 18.2 | 6 | 33 |
| * | Djibouti | 18.2 | 6 | 33 |
| * | Timor-Leste | 18.2 | 6 | 33 |
| 62 | Liberia | 18.0 | 5 | 28 |
| 63 | Dominican Republic | 16.7 | 4 | 24 |
| * | Guinea-Bissau | 16.7 | 3 | 18 |
| * | Kuwait | 16.7 | 3 | 18 |
| * | Singapore | 16.7 | 3 | 18 |
| * | Togo* | 16.7 | 4 | 24 |
| 64 | Afghanistan | 16.1 | 5 | 31 |
| 65 | North Macedonia | 16.0 | 4 | 25 |
| 66 | Antigua and Barbuda | 15.4 | 2 | 13 |
| * | Antigua and Barbuda | 15.4 | 2 | 13 |
| 67 | Côte d'Ivoire | 15.0 | 3 | 20 |
| | | | | |
| 68 | Lesotho* | 14.8 | 4 | 27 |
| 69 | Mozambique* | 14.8 | 4 | 27 |
| 70 | Bolivia (Plurinational State of) | 14.3 | 3 | 21 |
| * | Burkina Faso | 14.3 | 4 | 28 |
| * | Guinea | 14.3 | 3 | 21 |
| * | Malta | 14.3 | 3 | 21 |
| * | Nepal | 14.3 | 3 | 21 |
| * | San Marino | 14.3 | 3 | 21 |
| 71 | Niger | 13.5 | 5 | 37 |
| 72 | Kuwait | 13.3 | 2 | 15 |
| * | Mongolia | 13.3 | 2 | 15 |
| * | Syrian Arab Republic | 13.3 | 2 | 15 |
| 73 | Russian Federation | 13.0 | 4 | 31 |
| 74 | Haiti | 12.5 | 1 | 8 |
| 75 | Pakistan | 12.0 | 3 | 25 |
| 76 | Guinea* | 11.8 | 4 | 34 |
| 77 | Lao People's Democratic Republic | 11.5 | 3 | 26 |
| 78 | Gambia (The) | 11.1 | 2 | 18 |
| * | Saint Kitts and Nevis* | 11.1 | 1 | 9 |
| 79 | Philippines* | 10.3 | 3 | 29 |
| 80 | Japan* | 10.0 | 3 | 30 |
| * | Djibouti | 10.0 | 3 | 30 |
| * | Marshall Islands* | 10.0 | 1 | 10 |
| * | Tunisia | 10.0 | 3 | 30 |
| | | | | |
| 81 | Gabon | 9.5 | 2 | 21 |
| 82 | Cambodia | 9.4 | 3 | 32 |
| 83 | Brazil* | 9.1 | 2 | 22 |
| 84 | Mauritius | 9.1 | 2 | 22 |
| 85 | Comoros* | 9.1 | 1 | 11 |
| * | Iran (Islamic Republic of)* | 9.1 | 2 | 22 |
| 86 | Bangladesh* | 8.8 | 2 | 23 |
| * | Nigeria | 8.8 | 2 | 23 |
| * | Solomon Islands | 8.8 | 2 | 23 |
| * | Morocco | 8.6 | 3 | 35 |
| 87 | Japan | 8.3 | 1 | 12 |
| | | | | |
| 88 | Bahrain* | 4.3 | 1 | 23 |
| * | Solomon Islands* | 4.3 | 1 | 23 |
| 89 | Viet Nam* | 4.0 | 1 | 25 |
| 90 | Myanmar | 3.7 | 1 | 27 |
| 91 | Belarus | 3.4 | 1 | 29 |
| * | Lebanon | 3.4 | 1 | 29 |
| | | | | |
| 92 | Azerbaijan* | 0.0 | 0 | 22 |
| * | Belize* | 0.0 | 0 | 14 |
| * | Brunei Darussalam | 0.0 | 0 | 14 |
| * | Holy See | 0.0 | 0 | 14 |
| * | Kiribati | 0.0 | 0 | 14 |
| * | Lithuania | 0.0 | 0 | 13 |
| * | Papua New Guinea* | 0.0 | 0 | 24 |
| * | Saint Vincent and the Grenadines* | 0.0 | 0 | 14 |
| * | Saudi Arabia* | 0.0 | 0 | 22 |
| * | Thailand | 0.0 | 0 | 35 |
| * | Vanuatu* | 0.0 | 0 | 14 |

Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, Liberia, Libya

1 The ministerial duty statements and numbers are those ministers head of government were also included when they held formal and part time. They are also counted head of governments or public agencies with ministerial rank.

* Total women and men format in January 2019 following elections before 2018.

Source: IPU Questionnaire on women governments permanent missions to the United Nations and Twitter accounts of ministers.




### About this map

The colour coding of the countries reflects the percentage of women in unicameral parliaments or in the lower house of parliament, and corresponds to the data found in the world ranking of women in parliament on the right-hand side of the map. A separate ranking of women in ministerial positions is on the left-hand side of the map.
All data reflects the situation on 1 January 2019. As the sour ce of the data presented here, Inter-Parliamentary Union is responsible for the criteria applied in displaying the information.
The designations employed and the presentation of material on this map do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of UN Women or of the Inter-Parliamentary Union concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.
* Dotted line represents approximately the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir agreed upon by India and Pakistan. The final status of Jammu and Kashmir has not yet been agreed upon by the parties.
a. Status of Palestine as women in ministerial positions: 3/22 = 13.6%; women in parliament: data not available as the Palestine Legislative Council was dissolved in December 2018).
b. A dispute exists between the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland concerning sovereignty over the Falkland Islands (Malvinas).
c. Final boundary between the Republic of Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan has not yet been determined.

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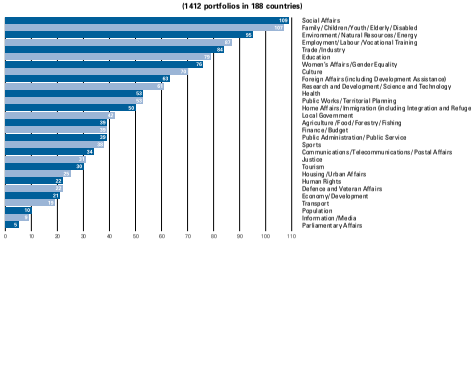
## Portfolios held by Women Ministers

(1412 portfolios in 188 countries)




## Women in the highest positions of State

**Women heads of state[1] (10/152 = 6.6%)**
**and women heads of government (10/193 =5.2%)**

Bangladesh (HG), Barbados (HG), Croatia (HS), Estonia (HS), Ethiopia (HS), Georgia (HS), Germany (HG), Iceland (HG), Lithuania (HS), Malta (HS), Marshall Islands (HS/HG), Nepal (HS), New Zealand (HG), Norway (HG), Romania (HG), Serbia (HG), Singapore (HS), Trinidad and Tobago (HS) and United Kingdom (HG)

**Women speakers of parliament[1] (55/279 = 19.7%)**

Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belize, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Bulgaria, Chile, Costa Rica, Denmark, Dominica, Ecuador, Equatorial Guinea, Eswatini, Ethiopia (2 chambers), Finland, Gabon, Gambia (The), India, Italy, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lesotho, Liberia, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Netherlands (2 chambers), Norway, Panama, Philippines, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Lucia, Serbia, South Africa (2 chambers), Spain, Suriname, Switzerland, Togo[1], Trinidad and Tobago (2 chambers), Turkmenistan, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United States of America[1], Uruguay, Viet Nam and Zimbabwe.

**Women deputy speakers of parliament (180/638 = 28.2%)**

Of the 217 chambers in 186 countries for which information is available, 113 chambers at least one woman deputy speaker.

Note: HS/HG = The head of state is also the head of government.
1 Only elected heads of state have been taken into account.
* Out of a total of 270 parliamentary chambers, two have 2 additional speakers and three have 1 additional speaker, for a total of 279 speakers.
** Elected Speaker as a result of the December 2018 elections. She was formally elected on 23 January 2019 by the newly elected Parliament.
*** Elected Speaker as a result of the November 2018 elections. Her formal election was held on 3 January 2019, when the newly elected Congress first convened.

## World and regional averages of women in parliament

| | Single house or lower house | Upper house or Senate | Both houses combined |
|---|---|---|---|
| **World average** | **24.3%** | 24.1% | 24.3% |
| **Regional averages** | | | |
| Regions* are classified by descending order of the percentage of women in unicameral parliaments or the lower house of parliament. | | | |
| **Nordic countries** | **42.5%** | — | — |
| **Americas** | **30.6%** | 31.3% | 30.7% |
| **Europe** (Nordic countries included) | **28.6%** | 28.0% | 28.5% |
| **Europe** (Nordic countries not included) | **27.2%** | 28.0% | 27.4% |
| **Sub-Saharan Africa** | **23.9%** | 22.2% | 23.7% |
| **Asia** | **19.9%** | 17.4% | 19.6% |
| **Middle East and North Africa** | **19.0%** | 12.5% | 18.1% |
| **Pacific** | **16.3%** | 36.0% | 18.4% |

* The composition of IPU regional groupings may be consulted at www.ipu.org/wmn-e/world.htm.

## Women in parliament

The countries are ranked and colour-coded according to the percentage of women in unicameral parliaments or the lower house of parliament, reflecting elections/appointments up to 1 January 2019.

| Rank | Country | Lower or single house: % Women | Lower or single house: Women | Lower or single house: Women / Seats | Upper house or Senate: % Women | Upper house or Senate: Women | Upper house or Senate: Women / Seats |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | |
| 1 | Rwanda | 61.3 | 49 / 80 | | 38.5 | 10 / 26 | |
| 2 | Cuba | 53.2 | 322 / 605 | | — | — | — |
| 3 | Bolivia (Plurinational State of) | 53.1 | 68 / 128 | | 47.3 | 26 / 55 | |
| | | | | | | | |
| 4 | Mexico | 48.2 | 241 / 500 | | 49.2 | 63 / 128 | |
| 5 | Nicaragua | 46.9 | 46 / 92 | | — | — | — |
| 6 | Grenada | 46.7 | 7 / 15 | | 53.8 | 7 / 13 | |
| 7 | Namibia | 46.2 | 46 / 104 | | 23.8 | 10 / 42 | |
| 8 | Costa Rica | 45.6 | 26 / 57 | | — | — | — |
| 9 | Nicaragua | 44.9 | 41 / 91 | | — | — | — |
| 10 | Sweden (4)* | 44.7 | 162 / 363 | | 39.3 | 110 / 64 | |
| 11 | Senegal | 41.8 | 69 / 165 | | — | — | — |
| 12 | Finland | 41.5 | 83 / 200 | | — | — | — |
| 13 | Spain | 41.1 | 164 / 350 | | 36.8 | 98 / 266 | |
| 14 | Norway | 41.0 | 69 / 169 | | — | — | — |
| 15 | New Zealand | 40.8 | 49 / 120 | | — | — | — |
| | | | | | | | |
| 16 | France | 39.7 | 229 / 577 | | 32.2 | 112 / 348 | |
| 17 | Andorra | 39.5 | 15 / 38 | | — | — | — |
| 18 | Argentina | 38.9 | 99 / 255 | | 41.1 | 30 / 73 | |
| * | Ethiopia | 38.8 | 212 / 547 | | 22.0 | 49 / 153 | |
| 19 | North Macedonia | 38.3 | 46 / 120 | | — | — | — |
| 20 | Iceland | 38.1 | 24 / 63 | | — | — | — |
| 21 | Mozambique | 39.2 | 99 / 252 | | 43.3 | 26 / 60 | |
| * | Ecuador | 38.0 | 52 / 137 | | — | — | — |
| 22 | Serbia | 37.7 | 93 / 247 | | — | — | — |
| 23 | Denmark | 37.4 | 67 / 179 | | — | — | — |
| 24 | Austria | 37.3 | 69 / 183 | | 38.1 | 33 / 61 | |
| 25 | United Republic of Tanzania | 36.9 | 142 / 384 | | 43.2 | 25 / 58 | |
| 26 | Burundi | 36.4 | 46 / 126 | | 46.2 | 18 / 39 | |
| 27 | Tunisia | 35.9 | 31 / 217 | | — | — | — |
| 28 | Iraq | 35.7 | 83 / 329 | | 34.4 | 110 / 320 | |
| * | Portugal | 35.7 | 82 / 230 | | — | — | — |
| | | | | | | | |
| 29 | Uganda | 34.9 | 118 / 453 | | — | — | — |
| 30 | Belarus | 34.5 | 36 / 110 | | 30.4 | 17 / 56 | |
| 31 | Timor-Leste | 34.2 | 25 / 73 | | — | — | — |
| 32 | Morocco | 33.3 | 81 / 395 | | — | — | — |
| 33 | Nepal | 33.1 | 90 / 275 | | 37.5 | 33 / 88 | |
| 34 | Switzerland | 32.5 | 65 / 200 | | 15.3 | 7 / 46 | |
| 35 | Andorra | 32.1 | 9 / 28 | | — | — | — |
| 36 | United Kingdom | 32.0 | 208 / 650 | | 26.4 | 206 / 780 | |
| 40 | Guyana | 31.9 | 22 / 69 | | — | — | — |
| 38 | Zimbabwe | 31.9 | 86 / 270 | | 43.8 | 35 / 80 | |
| 39 | Netherlands | 31.3 | 47 / 150 | | 24.0 | 21 / 75 | |
| 40 | Cameroon | 31.1 | 56 / 180 | | 26.0 | 26 / 100 | |
| 41 | Ecuador | 31.0 | 53 / 124 | | — | — | — |
| * | Latvia | 31.0 | 31 / 100 | | — | — | — |
| 42 | Trinidad and Tobago | 31.0 | 13 / 42 | | 25.5 | 11 / 31 | |
| 43 | Mozambique | 30.8 | 100 / 250 | | 39.1 | 27 / 69 | |
| 44 | Angola | 30.5 | 84 / 220 | | — | — | — |
| * | Australia | 30.0 | 45 / 150 | | 38.5 | 30 / 76 | |
| * | Peru | 30.0 | 39 / 130 | | — | — | — |
| | | | | | | | |
| 51 | Philippines | 29.5 | 80 / 253 | | 25.0 | 6 / 24 | |
| 52 | Suriname | 29.4 | 10 / 51 | | — | — | — |
| 53 | Albania | 29.3 | 41 / 140 | | — | — | — |
| 54 | Israel | 29.2 | 35 / 120 | | — | — | — |
| 55 | Poland | 29.1 | 136 / 460 | | 14.0 | 14 / 100 | |
| 56 | Ireland | 28.7 | 35 / 122 | | — | — | — |
| 57 | South Sudan | 28.5 | 109 / 383 | | 12.0 | 6 / 50 | |
| 58 | Sudan | 27.7 | 133 / 481 | | 28.8 | 19 / 71 | |
| 59 | Lao People's Dem. Republic | 27.5 | 44 / 160 | | — | — | — |
| 60 | Afghanistan[2] | 27.3 | 66 / 249 | | 23.5 | 16 / 68 | |
| 61 | Kazakhstan | 27.1 | 25 / 92 | | 18.9 | 13 / 67 | |
| 62 | Canada | 26.9 | 91 / 334 | | 44.7 | 45 / 105 | |
| 63 | Dominican Republic | 26.8 | 51 / 190 | | 9.4 | 3 / 32 | |
| 64 | Rwanda | 26.2 | 45 / 172 | | — | — | — |
| 65 | Djibouti | 26.2 | 17 / 65 | | — | — | — |
| 66 | Algeria | 25.8 | 119 / 462 | | 6.8 | 9 / 132 | |
| * | Bulgaria | 25.8 | 52 / 240 | | — | — | — |
| 68 | Iraq | 25.3 | 83 / 325 | | — | — | — |
| 69 | Slovenia | 25.0 | 23 / 90 | | — | — | — |
| * | Luxembourg | 25.0 | 15 / 60 | | — | — | — |
| * | San Marino | 25.0 | 10 / 40 | | — | — | — |
| * | Turkmenistan | 25.0 | 33 / 132 | | — | — | — |
| | | | | | | | |
| 73 | China | 24.9 | 742 / 2 980 | | — | — | — |
| 74 | Slovenia | 24.4 | 22 / 90 | | 10.0 | 4 / 40 | |
| * | Somalia | 24.4 | 67 / 275 | | 24.1 | 13 / 54 | |
| 76 | Sweden | 24.3 | 90 / 370 | | — | — | — |
| 77 | Cabo Verde | 23.8 | 17 / 72 | | — | — | — |
| 78 | Montenegro | 23.5 | 19 / 81 | | — | — | — |
| * | United States of America[3] | 23.5 | 102 / 434 | | 23.0 | 25 / 100 | |
| 80 | Lesotho | 23.3 | 28 / 120 | | 21.9 | 7 / 32 | |
| 81 | Malawi | 23.3 | 42 / 180 | | — | — | — |
| 82 | Guinea | 21.8 | 27 / 114 | | — | — | — |
| * | Republic of Moldova | 23.8 | 23 / 101 | | — | — | — |
| 84 | Chile | 22.6 | 35 / 155 | | 23.3 | 10 / 43 | |
| 85 | Czechia | 22.5 | 45 / 200 | | 16.0 | 13 / 81 | |
| * | United Arab Emirates | 22.5 | 27 / 120 | | — | — | — |
| 87 | Ireland | 22.2 | 32 / 144 | | 30.0 | 16 / 53 | |
| * | Uruguay | 22.2 | 22 / 99 | | 25.8 | 8 / 31 | |
| 89 | Venezuela (Bolivarian Rep. of) | 22.2 | 32 / 144 | | — | — | — |
| 90 | Africa | 22.2 | 22 / 99 | | — | — | — |
| 91 | Kenya | 21.8 | 76 / 349 | | 33.9 | 21 / 62 | |
| 92 | Bosnia and Herzegovina | 21.4 | 8 / 42 | | 15.2 | 5 / 33 | |
| 93 | Lithuania | 21.3 | 25 / 141 | | — | — | — |
| 94 | Viet Nam | 21.2 | 132 / 622 | | — | — | — |
| 95 | Honduras | 21.1 | 27 / 128 | | — | — | — |
| 96 | Romania | 20.7 | 68 / 329 | | 14.0 | 19 / 136 | |
| 97 | Bangladesh[4] | 20.6 | 72 / 350 | | — | — | — |
| 98 | Croatia | 20.5 | 31 / 151 | | — | — | — |
| 99 | Zambia | 20.3 | 27 / 133 | | 11.1 | 14 / 103 | |
| 100 | Mauritania | 20.3 | 31 / 153 | | — | — | — |
| 101 | Pakistan | 20.2 | 69 / 341 | | 18.2 | 20 / 104 | |
| 102 | Barbados | 20.0 | 5 / 25 | | 18.8 | 6 / 31 | |
| * | Cambodia | 20.0 | 25 / 125 | | 32.3 | 11 / 62 | |
| * | Equatorial Guinea | 20.0 | 20 / 100 | | 18.2 | 6 / 33 | |
| * | Slovakia | 20.0 | 30 / 150 | | — | — | — |
| | | | | | | | |
| 105 | Saudi Arabia | 19.9 | 30 / 151 | | — | — | — |
| 106 | Fiji | 19.5 | 10 / 51 | | — | — | — |
| 107 | Kyrgyzstan | 19.2 | 23 / 120 | | — | — | — |
| * | Madagascar | 19.2 | 26 / 135 | | 13.8 | 5 / 36 | |
| 110 | Guatemala | 19.0 | 30 / 158 | | — | — | — |
| * | Malta | 19.0 | 12 / 63 | | 21.9 | 7 / 32 | |
| 112 | Greece | 18.7 | 56 / 300 | | — | — | — |
| 113 | Panama | 18.3 | 13 / 71 | | — | — | — |
| 114 | Indonesia | 18.2 | 112 / 560 | | — | — | — |
| 115 | Colombia | 18.1 | 31 / 171 | | 20.4 | 22 / 108 | |
| 116 | Malta | 17.9 | 12 / 67 | | — | — | — |
| 117 | Cyprus | 17.9 | 10 / 56 | | — | — | — |
| * | Gabon | 17.9 | 24 / 134 | | 17.6 | 15 / 102 | |
| 119 | Kuwait | 17.8 | 21 / 118 | | 23.8 | 5 / 21 | |
| 120 | Turkey | 17.4 | 108 / 598 | | — | — | — |
| 121 | Mongolia | 17.1 | 17 / 76 | | — | — | — |
| * | Republic of Korea | 17.1 | 51 / 298 | | — | — | — |
| 123 | Niger | 17.0 | 26 / 171 | | — | — | — |
| 124 | Switzerland | 16.8 | 32 / 190 | | — | — | — |
| 125 | Malawi | 16.7 | 32 / 192 | | — | — | — |
| * | Saint Lucia | 16.7 | 3 / 18 | | 27.3 | 3 / 11 | |
| 127 | Togo | 16.5 | 16 / 97 | | — | — | — |
| 128 | Dem. People's Rep. of Korea | 16.3 | 10 / 61 | | — | — | — |
| 129 | Italy | 16.0 | 100 / 630 | | — | — | — |
| * | Uzbekistan | 16.0 | 36 / 150 | | 17.6 | 17 / 96 | |
| 131 | Russian Federation | 15.8 | 71 / 450 | | 18.2 | 31 / 170 | |
| 132 | Belgium | 15.7 | 29 / 185 | | 34.2 | 25 / 73 | |
| 133 | Kenya | 15.7 | 11 / 70 | | 22.5 | 9 / 40 | |
| * | Brazil | 15.0 | 77 / 513 | | 14.8 | 12 / 81 | |
| * | Paraguay | 15.0 | 12 / 80 | | 16.0 | 8 / 50 | |
| | | | | | | | |
| 136 | Bhutan | 14.9 | 7 / 47 | | 8.3 | 1 / 12 | |
| * | Chad | 14.5 | 25 / 172 | | — | — | — |
| * | Egypt | 14.9 | 69 / 596 | | — | — | — |
| 139 | Georgia | 14.8 | 22 / 149 | | — | — | — |
| 140 | Sao Tome and Principe | 14.5 | 8 / 55 | | — | — | — |
| 141 | Japan | 14.4 | 47 / 326 | | 20.4 | 19 / 67 | |
| 142 | Guinea-Bissau | 13.7 | 14 / 102 | | — | — | — |
| 143 | Burkina Faso | 13.4 | 17 / 127 | | — | — | — |
| 144 | Saint Kitts and Nevis | 13.3 | 2 / 15 | | — | — | — |
| 145 | Syrian Arab Republic | 13.2 | 31 / 235 | | — | — | — |
| 146 | Qatar | 13.1 | 9 / 69 | | — | — | — |
| 147 | Saint Vincent and the Grenadines | 13.0 | 2 / 15 | | 43.8 | 7 / 16 | |
| 148 | Bahamas | 12.8 | 5 / 39 | | — | — | — |
| 149 | Monaco | 12.5 | 20 / 160 | | 11.5 | 3 / 26 | |
| * | India | 12.2 | 66 / 534 | | 10.4 | 27 / 245 | |
| 151 | Palau | 12.5 | 2 / 16 | | 16.4 | 2 / 12 | |
| 152 | Liberia | 12.3 | 9 / 73 | | — | — | — |
| * | Sierra Leone | 12.3 | 19 / 146 | | — | — | — |
| 154 | Micronesia | 11.9 | 5 / 42 | | — | — | — |
| 155 | Malta | 11.8 | 7 / 59 | | — | — | — |
| 156 | Mauritius | 11.6 | 8 / 69 | | — | — | — |
| * | Ukraine | 11.6 | 47 / 423 | | — | — | — |
| 158 | Congo | 11.3 | 15 / 133 | | 18.8 | 13 / 69 | |
| 159 | Haiti | 11.1 | 10 / 90 | | 7.5 | 3 / 40 | |
| * | Antigua and Barbuda | 11.1 | 2 / 18 | | 23.1 | 3 / 13 | |
| 161 | Côte d'Ivoire | 11.0 | 26 / 255 | | 12.1 | 8 / 66 | |
| 162 | Oman | 10.8 | 7 / 65 | | — | — | — |
| 163 | Dem. Republic of the Congo | 10.5 | 62 / 484 | | 4.8 | 5 / 104 | |
| * | Gambia (The) | 10.3 | 6 / 58 | | — | — | — |
| 165 | Japan | 10.2 | 47 / 463 | | 20.7 | 50 / 241 | |
| 166 | Somalia | 10.0 | 5 / 50 | | — | — | — |
| | | | | | | | |
| 167 | Libya | 9.8 | 4 / 40 | | — | — | — |
| 168 | Botswana | 9.8 | 6 / 61 | | — | — | — |
| 169 | Belize | 9.4 | 3 / 32 | | 10.4 | 3 / 29 | |
| 170 | Brunei Darussalam | 9.1 | 3 / 33 | | — | — | — |
| * | Marshall Islands | 9.1 | 1 / 11 | | — | — | — |
| 172 | Mali | 8.8 | 15 / 171 | | — | — | — |
| 173 | Central African Republic | 8.6 | 12 / 140 | | — | — | — |
| 174 | Tonga | 8.6 | 3 / 35 | | — | — | — |
| 175 | Nigeria | 8.6 | 19 / 221 | | — | — | — |
| 176 | Mauritius | 11.6 | 8 / 69 | | — | — | — |
| * | Ukraine | 11.6 | 47 / 423 | | — | — | — |
| 178 | Congo | 11.3 | 15 / 133 | | 18.8 | 13 / 69 | |
| 179 | Haiti | 11.1 | 10 / 90 | | 7.5 | 3 / 40 | |
| * | Antigua and Barbuda | 11.1 | 2 / 18 | | 23.1 | 3 / 13 | |
| 181 | Côte d'Ivoire | 11.0 | 26 / 255 | | 12.1 | 8 / 66 | |
| 182 | Oman | 10.8 | 7 / 65 | | — | — | — |
| 183 | Dem. Republic of the Congo | 10.5 | 62 / 484 | | 4.8 | 5 / 104 | |
| * | Gambia (The) | 10.3 | 6 / 58 | | — | — | — |
| 185 | Japan | 10.2 | 47 / 463 | | 20.7 | 50 / 241 | |
| 186 | Somalia | 10.0 | 5 / 50 | | — | — | — |
| | | | | | | | |
| 187 | Libya | 9.8 | 4 / 40 | | — | — | — |
| 188 | Botswana | 9.8 | 6 / 61 | | — | — | — |
| 189 | Belize | 9.4 | 3 / 32 | | 10.4 | 3 / 29 | |
| 190 | Brunei Darussalam | 9.1 | 3 / 33 | | — | — | — |
| * | Marshall Islands | 9.1 | 1 / 11 | | — | — | — |
| 192 | Mali | 8.8 | 15 / 171 | | — | — | — |
| 193 | Central African Republic | 8.6 | 12 / 140 | | — | — | — |
| 194 | Tonga | 8.6 | 3 / 35 | | — | — | — |
| 195 | Nigeria | 8.6 | 19 / 221 | | — | — | — |
| 196 | Mauritius | 11.6 | 8 / 69 | | — | — | — |
| * | Ukraine | 11.6 | 47 / 423 | | — | — | — |
| 198 | Congo | 11.3 | 15 /

All the data and statistics previously reported entail the overall idea that many efforts are still needed for achieving an almost complete gender equality in the political and diplomatic domain. Despite this, the global situation shows a clear improvement both in purely diplomatic and political field. In particular, it has emerged that the countries with the highest female inclusion rate in all areas are the northern European countries – like Sweden, Finland and Norway[216] – which at the same time present the highest rate of gender equality. Nevertheless, the inclination in assigning high-level responsibilities and position to male officers still remain a widespread pattern within the international relations panorama.

The enhancements were made possible thanks to a growing acceptance of women in power and through the promotion of equality worldwide, but also because special measures have been adopted – like for example electoral quotas. Also named gender quotas, they are "positive measurement instruments aimed at accelerating the achievement of gender-balanced participation and representation by establishing a defined proportion (percentage) or number of places or seats to be filled by, or allocated to, women and/or men, generally under certain rules or criteria"[217]. Most of the quota systems aim at increasing female representation; the idea behind gender quotas is to try to put women in political positions and make sure they are in sufficient numbers to be able to count on the political scene. However, the experiences of each country have proved that not all quotas are equally effective, as they have failed in significantly increasing female parliamentary representation. Therefore, the implementation of quota systems is controversial. According to some scholars, electoral quotas have positive effects on political life, as they compensate for the obstacles that prevent women from fair share of seats; besides they diversify the types of women elected; female experiences are necessary for politics; and women are qualified as much as men.[218] At the same time, opponents affirm that these measures are contrary to the principle of equal opportunities since a greater preference is given

[216] Inter-Parliamentary Union, Women in National Parliaments. See: http://archive.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm
[217] European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE). Available at https://eige.europa.eu/thesaurus/terms/1203.
[218] Institutional Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), Gender Quotas Database. Available at https://www.idea.int/data-tools/data/gender-quotas/quotas.

to women than to men; they might imply that politicians are chosen on gender rather than on merit and qualification; and reinforce the stereotype of women as inferior political actors.[219] Despite the debate on the effectiveness of quotas, they have proved to be a useful instruments of action in the improvement of female political representation in, almost, all countries.

[219] Franceschet, S. et al. "Conceptualizing the Impact of Gender Quotas", in *The Impact of Gender Quotas*, (2012) Oxford University Press, pp. 3-20.

# CHAPTER 4

# AN ANALYSIS ON THE EUROPEAN DIPLOMATIC PANORAMA

The fourth and final chapter focuses on the European scene and in particular on the presence of women in senior positions within the European Union. A first section will focus on how the European Union deals with gender inequality by checking also in this case to which position ambassadors, negotiators or heads of mission are usually assigned. Subsequently, it will be the turn of the case study that sees as object the figure of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, a role that has so far been played by two women, Catherine Ashton and Federica Mogherini. The purpose of this last section is mainly to clarify two main issues. The first step is to understand the reasons that has led the member states to the appointment of two women for a high prestige assignment although the general tendency is to prefer men for the leadership of high diplomacy. Secondly, verifying how both women have been perceived and what was the mood that arose following their appointment. Before proceeding with this last analysis, a small part includes a research strategy that explains the research methodology.

## 4.1 HOW GENDER DIVERSITY IS FACED IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

The previous chapter has shown how the gender disparity at the global level is translated into a marked underrepresentation of women in positions of command and prestige at the diplomatic level, and on the contrary presents a certain preference in reserving specific tasks and responsibilities to men. Since gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment are fundamental values for the European Union, it is interesting to see how the Union addresses these issues.

First of all, a report published by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) has shown that gender gaps are still present in contemporary society and compared to a decade ago, they are increasing in some domains: gender inequality is

still elevated, with an average of 52.9%.[220] In the managerial sphere, the percentage of female board members has suffered a considerable improvement in Europe. In 2005 women in senior roles covered 9.8% share, while in 2017 they reached 25.3%. Taking a closer look to France and Italy, the situation experienced a huge advance: from 5% to 43.4% for France and from 2.7% in 2005 to 34% in 2017 for Italy.[221] This reveals that still today, women are scarcely present on the political scene concerning apical positions. As a fact, one of the most alarming feature of diplomacy is the huge underrepresentation of women in senior diplomatic and negotiation positions. In the 2017 report of EIGE, "the domain of power covers political, economic and social power in sports, media and research funding organisations. The deeply entrenched vertical segregation by gender found in research funding organisations, public broadcasters and major sports federations shows that women can only progress to a certain point in their careers before reaching a glass ceiling"[222]. The impediment of women's career advancement is a problem not just for the Union, but for the entire world. Even if in the last twenty years numbers have increased, only 23.6% of all members of parliament are women. Women currently account for 36.1% of the members of the European Parliament, slightly down compared to 2016 when reached the peak of 37.3%. On 27 member states, only nine include at least 40% of representatives for each gender, in all others countries the majority are men. The only exception is Finland, who has an average of 61.5% of women representatives. In single or lower houses of national parliaments of European Union the proportion of female members has increased from 22.1% in 2004 to 29.3% in 2017. Looking at single Member States, the variation of share is considerable. Sweden, Finland and Spain assured no less than 40% for each gender, while countries like Greece, Croatia and Hungary accounted for less than 20% of women[223].

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[220] European Institute for Gender Equality, *Gender Equality Index Report,* 2017. Available at https://eige.europa.eu/rdc/eige-publications/gender-equality-index-2017-measuring-gender-equality-european-union-2005-2015-report.

[221] Eurostat, *European Statistics on seats held by women in national parliaments* and *European Statistics on women in senior management positions*. Available at https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/sdi/gender-equality.

[222] European Institute for Gender Equality, *Gender Equality Index Report,* 2017. Available at https://eige.europa.eu/rdc/eige-publications/gender-equality-index-2017-measuring-gender-equality-european-union-2005-2015-report.

[223] Ibidem.

However, the reality of the European institutions is no exception as female presence remains below 50% of members: 36.1% of the Members of the European Parliament are women while in the Commission, out of 28 places only 9 are occupied by women.

Table 3. Women in decision-making roles in the European Union

| Average for all 28 Member States | Women (%) | Men (%) |
|---|---|---|
| National parliaments | 28 | 72 |
| Government (senior ministries only) | 28 | 72 |
| Senior positions in public administration (level 1) | 31 | 69 |
| Senior positions in public administration (level 2) | 40 | 60 |
| Positions in Member States' supreme courts | 39 | 61 |
| **EU Institutions** | | |
| European Parliament | 37 | 63 |
| Leadership in EU financial institutions | 10 | 90 |
| Positions in EU courts | 19 | 81 |
| Senior positions in administration (level 1) | 15 | 85 |
| Senior positions in administration (level 2) | 33 | 67 |

[224]

Table 3 shows that among national parliaments, public administrations and supreme courts, less than 50% are women. Whereas, in European institutions women represent less than 40% in the European Parliament, and less than 20% in financial institutions and European courts. Female presence in EU institutions until March 2017, has shown that the 37% of seats in the European Parliament was held by women, but in highly decision-making seats the percentage was decisively lower. In the European Commission the percentage dropped to 31%, the European Council had 14.29%, whereas in ECOFIN meetings, women were the 10,71% with only the 3.57% at foreign affairs. In Italy the Chamber of Deputies counted an average of 32.3% of female deputies but only the 19.23% were enrolled in key roles; in the Senate female senators were posted to the 25.58% of key roles in a total of 30% senators[225]. Even the situation at regional and local level is not exempt to gender disparity, as shown by 33.3% of

[224] Table 3. "Women in decision-making roles in the European Union", taken from International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), *Regional Organizations, Gender Equality and the Political Empowerment of Women*, 1 December 2017, p. 144. Available at https://www.idea.int/publications/catalogue/regional-organizations-gender-equality-and-political-empowerment-women.

[225] Openblog, "Trova l'Intrusa", *Openpolis*. Available at https://blog.openpolis.it/trova-lintrusa-linfografica-donne-ruoli-apicali.

women in regional assemblies.[226] In this case, the countries with a high level of national success are the best at the regional level, with Sweden (47.4%), Spain (47.2%) and Finland (45.8%) achieving a good gender balance. On the other hand, the opposite situation is covered by Slovakia, Turkey and Hungary who have less than 20% of women participating and with a high rate of inequality between men and women. Turkey has a gap of 83.8%, followed by Hungary with 75.8% and Slovakia with 71.6%.[227]

Same can be applied to the foreign policies of the Union; in December 2010 the women employed in the formulation of the union's foreign policy represented just over one third of the entire staff, around 28%; while in clerical work women covered around 73%. At the highest levels, only 17% were women. Since Europe is committed to promoting gender equality towards the outside world, it is important that equality is guaranteed both in recruitment for senior positions in the external service (EEAS) and in European delegations. Although there are significant improvements in terms of institutional and foreign policy regarding gender balance, we note the ongoing existence of the same obstacles, namely: a) the percentage of vacancies for female leadership in key EEAS posts fluctuates between 11.8% and 16.7% thus leaving the majority of positions open to men; b) it is true that between 2010 and 2014 the women hired as heads of delegation increased from 15% to 23%, but equality is still very far and c) they are rarely sent to positions considered of greater political power and sent in multilateral organizations with "weak power".[228] It is also interesting to note the distribution of ambassadors of the single countries. French ambassadors are more likely to access delegations; but contrary to expectations, the Scandinavian countries, which apparently have the highest numbers of female diplomats, have never had women leading delegations between 2010 and 2014. On the contrary, there is an

[226] European Parliamentary Research Service | EPRS, Women in politics in the EU, March 2019. Available at http://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/it/search.html?word=women+in+politics+in+the+EU.
[227] European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), Gender Statistics Database. Available at https://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/dgs/indicator/wmidm_pol_parl__wmid_regall_ass/bar/chart/year:2019/geo:EU28,BE,BG,CZ,DK,DE,IE,EL,ES,FR,HR,IT,LV,HU,NL,AT,PL,PT,RO,SI,SK,FI,SE,UK,NO,AL,RS,TR,BA/sex:M,W/UNIT:PC/POSITION:MEMB_PARL/EGROUP:REG_ALL.
[228] ISPI Analysis, "Where Have all the Women Gone? Women in EEAS and EU Delegations", March 10, 2014. Available at https://www.ispionline.it/it/pubblicazione/where-have-all-women-gone-women-eeas-and-eu-delegations-10003.

increase in female heads of delegations in the countries of Middle East and North Africa: in 2010 women accounted for 23%, in 2012 around 34.6%, and in 2014 it grew up to 42.9%.[229]

The distribution of delegation staff, ambassadors and negotiators is therefore erroneously distributed and reserves to men the majority of prestigious positions. Similar analogies can also be discovered with regard to the ambassadors enrolled as Permanent Representatives of the European Union.

The Permanent Representation is a diplomatic mission accredited by a member state to an international organization (European Union, NATO, ONU, international organizations etc.). According to the latest data of March 2019, among the 29 NATO member countries only 8 permanent representatives are women. The United Nations is made up of about 40 women out of a total of 193 members.[230] As regards to the European Union, the permanent representations are guided by Permanent Representatives of their respective States of membership having the rank of Ambassador. Their responsibilities also include meeting in the Permanent Representatives Committee, COREPER, a body that preliminarily examines the dossiers on the agenda of the Council of the European Union. In turn, COREPER meets in two different formations based on the issues to be addressed. COREPER I, composed of the adjunct permanent representatives, prepares the work of the Council with technical topics such as agriculture, competitiveness, education, etc.; while COREPER II, composed of permanent representatives, deals with institutional issues with greater political importance such as economics and finance, foreign affairs, general affairs, justice and home affairs.[231] Analyzing the composition of both COREPER the strong male presence emerges and also a predilection to assign more important portfolios to men. Of the 28 active ambassadors for the Part II, only 5 women are present and mainly belong to the countries of northern Europe, like Finland,

[229] Novotná, T. "Women in the EEAS and EU Delegations: Another Post-Westphalia Change?" pp. 392 - 402; in Spence, D. and Bátora, J., *The European External Action Service European Diplomacy Post-Westphalia*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.
[230] North Atlantic Treaty Organization, last updated data on March 26, 2019. Available at https://www.nato.int/cps/ra/natohq/who_is_who_39074.htm.
[231] EUR-Lex – Glossary of summaries – Coreper. Available at https://eur-lex.europa.eu/summary/glossary/coreper.html.

Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Romania. In Part I, on the other hand, women are slightly more numerous (8 women out of 28). Furthermore, the places reserved for office and coordination staff are often covered by female figures.[232] Therefore, also in the field of external representation, female participation remains below par. Yet, thanks also to the positive interventions aimed at a greater recruitment of female staff in external services and delegations, the concentration of women is increasing.

Among those who stood in favor of gender diversity there was the EU foreign policy chief, Catherine Ashton, who since the establishment of the EEAS has set as her goal the increase of the presence of women in the international arena. It is not just a question of balancing the numbers, but giving voice and space to women especially in a leadership position so that they can be an example for other foreign realities. Although the attempts of the High Representative were worthy, she herself did not have an easy life within her role as HR. As well, she has been the victim of many criticisms and discriminations but thanks to her appointment in one of the most influential places in the panorama of international relations, she represented a first attempt to balance the gender issue at the diplomatic level. In this regard, the following sections will examine the story of Ashton and Mogherini, her successor, who have been enrolled in strategic senior positions within European institutions.

## 4.2 RESEARCH STRATEGY

The previous chapters have shown that gender identity is often decisive in the assignment of government positions and in the distribution of diplomatic personnel in certain positions. Also the European Union is not exempt to this general trend, so that European leaders remain predominantly men. Focusing on the diplomatic aspect of the Union, it can be noted that the management of European foreign policy has been surprisingly entrusted to female figures for two terms. In this regard, it is interesting to understand the reason that prompted the European Council to appoint those women. Verifying if gender identity also in this case has influenced the choice, and how this

[232] Permanent Representatives Committee; available at https://publications.europa.eu/en/web/who-is-who/organization/-/organization/COREPER/COREPER.

choice was perceived by the diplomatic environment. To answer these questions, it was decided to conduct an analysis among the international and European press. Firstly, the research focused on a precise time period, or rather the years from 2009 to 2014, which represent the years of their respective governmental office. Secondly, the corpus of newspapers has been restricted to those that have greater distribution at the national level but that have also a great following at international level. Even if in the last years printed press suffered from a huge crisis as the online information became increasingly common, nevertheless, the main national headlines still maintain their record in terms of worldwide distribution. While conducting the research, it has been tried to choose newspapers belonging to different ideological addresses in order to have a more critical result possible. In this way it is possible to find national newspapers, conservative, progressive, and economic-financial papers. European press deals mainly with the British and Italian press, as they represent the countries of origin of Ashton and Mogherini. For the British press the selection was between *The Guardian*, *The Independent*, the *Financial Times, The Daily Mail* and *The Daily Telegraph,* while for the Italian press the choice fell upon *la Repubblica*, il *Corriere della Sera*, *Il Sole 24 Ore* and *La Stampa.* Besides, newspapers belonging to other countries have been consulted such as *El País* (Spain), *Le Monde* (France) and *Die Press* (Austria). Moreover, in addition to print media, other information channels have also been considered like magazines, blogs, and online sites: *The Economist*, a weekly magazine of political-economic information; the *Daily Express*, another British newspaper; the *Fatto Quotidiano*, an Italian daily newspaper; *il Post*, an online newspaper recently established; the *Espresso*, a weekly news magazine on politics, culture and economy; *Panorama*, Italian weekly magazine of current affairs, politics, society and economy; and the *Italian Journalist Agency*. Internationally, the research has provided sources from *the Huffington Post*, an American blog of news and opinions; and the *Brookings Institution*, an American research group on public policy.

Once the corpus of analysis has been decided, the investigation proceeded with the search of articles referring to the topic of interest, hence gender identity in diplomacy and in particular in the appointment of the high representative, and possible criticisms addressed to the appointees. To this end, specific keywords have been used such as: “alto rappresentante”; “Ashton high representative; “Federica Mogherini high

representative; “Lady Pesc”; “Lady Who?”; “nomination of HR”. However, it has proved to be of fundamental help the search through more targeted expressions at the google search engine like “Ashton gender identity”; “Catherine Ashton post”; comments on Federica Mogherini”; “criticism on Ashton”; “critiche su Ashton”; “critiche sull’alto rappresentante”; female Ashton”; “female Mogherini”; gender discrimination towards Ashton”; “Lady Ashton candidatura”; “Mogherini gender identity”; “Mogherini identità di genere” “on Catherine Ashton”, etc. The selected lexicon mainly refers to gender identity as recall in the expressions like ‘female’, ‘gender identity’, ‘woman’, ‘gender discrimination’. With reference to the appointment as high representative, words recalling the government office have been chosen like ‘Ashton/Mogherini designation process, ‘Ashton/Mogherini as high representative’, ‘lady Pesc’, ‘Ashton/Mogherini post’, ‘on high representative’. While in relation to the possible criticisms against them, it was opted for expressions like ‘criticism on …’, ‘comments on …’, ‘critics on …’, ‘on …’.

In trying to respond to the issues initially listed, the survey not only focuses on the designation process but also on their path during the term of office. It is important to specify that the proposed case study is not an analysis of how they performed the job, whether good or bad, but simply to analyze their role as high representative only from a gender perspective, and then identify all those references that can be discriminatory and negative for women. What it is hoped to obtain from this investigation is therefore to verify whether the press also presents discriminatory and prejudicial attitudes towards women in leadership positions, and therefore to certify whether gender identity is actually relevant in the perception of the diplomatic world. Obviously it will not be able to find an explicit discriminatory language protracted by the press because the examined newspapers should preserve a certain impartiality and respectability. Perhaps a possibility of finding a more accusatory/discriminatory tone could occur if consulted a more popular press in the form of tabloids, which are more prone to crime and gossip, characterized by a simple and direct language, great illustrations and aggressive titles.

## 4.3 HIGH REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNION FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND SECURITY POLICY

As already mentioned, being the issue of gender inequality in the political and diplomatic field a highly widespread topic and studied worldwide, numerous investigations and researches have been carried out in this regard but not in the specific of the European Union. Limiting the investigation to a specific area also made it possible to take advantage of a more detailed approach and concentrate on the topic of the thesis. Therefore, the decision to focus on the European Commission and in particular on the figure of the High Representative fell on the fact that many studies have been encountered about the presence of women as world leaders or high-level assignments, but few on senior European jobs within the major EU institutions.

The creation of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy represents one of the most important institutional changes introduced by the Lisbon Treaty. Its institution was the result of several discussions and adaptation process about the "need to give the Union's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) 'a face and a voice' alongside (and beyond) the six-month rotating Presidency started already shortly after the entry into force of the Maastricht Treaty"[233]. The European panorama was managed by too many different players at the time, which made the administration of foreign policy very difficult and confusing for all other countries in the world. Therefore, the decision to assign the post to one single figure was crucial. Currently, the character of the HR is responsible for the external action of the European Union, as it represents all 28 Member Sates internationally. It includes the Common Foreign and Security Policy and the Common Security Defense Policy, it performs as Vice President of the European Commission, and presides over the Foreign Affairs Council. Moreover, it is supported by the European External Action Service, whose work occurs to make foreign policy more coherent and effective maintaining diplomatic relationships with the other countries outside the European Union.

[233] Missiroli, A. *The EU and the World: Players and Policies Post-Lisbon*, European Union Institute for Security Studies, Parigi, 2016, p. 18.

Before analyzing the evolution and the functions of the High Representative, it is important to explain briefly the structure of the European Union itself. First of all, the European Union is a supranational international organization of 28 member states, who have entrusted part of their national sovereignty to institutional authorities in order that decisions on specific issues of general interest can be taken democratically at European level. From the outset, the structure of the Union revealed an institutional complexity of its functioning and decision-making process.[234] Initially, the European Union was built on three pillars, created in order to distinguish what was of economic interest (first pillar), from the objectives of defense and common security (second pillar) and from the tasks of justice and home affairs (third pillar). The tripartite division was however difficult to manage also due to the excessive number of political actors involved and for the tensions that existed between the pillars. Not only, but also the function of the high representative was limited in the management of the office, leading to a series of institutional problems.

Historically, the birth of the post of HR is rather new. It was created by the Treaty of Amsterdam in 1997, entered into force in 1999, as *High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy*. According to the old EU Treaty, the HR represented 'a bridge between the pillars' as he/she had to cooperate with the Council and maintaining good relationships with the Commission, both responsible for the management of foreign policy. As a consequence, the assignment of the same competences to several political actors brought to a difficult cooperation between the parties and in the arduous exercise of the post of HR itself. The task that drove from this position immediately turned out to be extremely difficult since it had to guarantee the external representation of the Union in addition to represent the Secretary-General of the Council of the European Union[235], and other duties. The very first High Representative was Jurgen Trumpf, which performed the role for a few months in 1999. His successor was Javier Solana, who hold the post for a decade, from 1999 to 2009, and whose performance "exceeded the blueprint and he managed to give the EU

[234] Płeszka, M. "High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy – Analysis of the Lisbon Treaty Provisions", *Yearbook of Polish European Studies,* (2010) vol. 13, pp. 81-106.
[235] Volpe, A. "L'alto rappresentante dell'Unione Europea: nascita ed evoluzione", *Geopolitica.info*, 4 settembre 2017. Available at https://www.geopolitica.info/lalto-rappresentante-dellunione-europea-nascita-ed-evoluzione/.

a ‘face’ through his diplomatic activities, which were also reflected in a growing administrative structure in Brussels”[236]. Despite his capacities and commitment to the Union, the first years of the post of High Representative failed to establish itself as a credible and alternative power center to the power of the most important Member States[237]. Furthermore, the apparent competences and functions assigned by the old treaty made it clear that the HR lacked a real authority.[238] According to Płeszka, “the function was not suitably adapted to the day-to-day management for which it had been designed. Thus, over time it became apparent that the system of external representation under the old EU Treaty was not sufficient to shape the Union’s foreign policy in an effective manner.”[239] In fact, European countries had to improve their performance on the global stage: “Lisbon came into being because it was seen by the Member States as necessary in order to increase the efficiency, effectiveness, and impact, both internal and external, of the EU itself”[240]. Therefore, the complexity of the institutional structure in the conduction of external policies resulted in the need of simplification and improvement.

Accordingly, after several reform proposals, the Treaty of Lisbon was a sort of a compromise between those who fear “the birth of a federation and the decline of European national differences in the evolution of the Union”[241]. From a juridical perspective, Lisbon is constituted by two treaties, one on the European Union (TUE) and one on the Functioning of the European Union (TFUE), but it stabilizes the Union as a one single legal personality. The purpose of Lisbon was, hence, to strengthen European foreign policy according three primary needs: the need for a greater coherence between EU external policies, a greater coordination between the Union and

[236] Helwig, N. and Rüger, C. “In Search of a Role for the High Representative: The Legacy of Catherine Ashton”, *The International Spectator*, (2014) vol. 49, no 4, p. 3.
[237] Volpe, A. “L’alto rappresentante dell’Unione Europea: nascita ed evoluzione”, *Geopolitica.info*, 4 settembre 2017. Available at https://www.geopolitica.info/lalto-rappresentante-dellunione-europea-nascita-ed-evoluzione/.
[238] Płeszka, M. “High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy – Analysis of the Lisbon Treaty Provisions”, *Yearbook of Polish European Studies,* (2010) vol. 13, pp. 81-106.
[239] Ibidem, p. 88.
[240] Howorth, J. “The ‘New Faces’ of Lisbon: Assessing the Performance of Catherine Ashton and Herman van Rompuy on the global stage”, (2011) 16, issue 3, p. 304.
[241] Płeszka, “High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy”, p. 92.

the external policies of Member States, and a stronger projection of unity.[242] The HR was therefore required to work on coordination and cooperation: his/her competence allowed to negotiate on behalf of the Union implementing the revision of a community policy. In the first years of existence, the position of HR turned out to be rather complex and demanding, both for the high number of tasks requested to one single person, and for the difficulties of the daily challenges encountered in developing CFSP and in increasing overall coherence.

Looking specifically at the competences of the HR, the treaty conferred several functions and responsibilities. As first thing, the name was changed into *High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy,* addressed to underline the importance of the figure as the only responsible for the external representation and coordinator of external policies of the Union. The new role demanded more competences and responsibilities, since it consisted in a "double-hatted" position: High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the Commission. These innovations came from the desire of a greater coordination and integration between foreign and security policy and the Member States, a more cooperation between Common Foreign Security Policy and Common Security Defense Policy, and lastly, the necessity of decision-shaping agencies for an effective international action, based in Brussels.[243] Contrary to the previous appointment, the new one proved to be more complicated and controversial creating a sort of a horizontal connection between foreign policy and the others Union external policies.[244] The renewed CFSP covers all areas of foreign policy and all matters relating to the security of the Union, including the progressive definition of a common defense policy, which can lead to a common defense. (Art. 24, TEU)[245] As High Representative, his/her competence was to guide foreign and security policy of the

[242] Kaddous, C. "Role and position of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy under the Lisbon Treaty", pp. 205-221, in Griller and Ziller (eds.), *The Lisbon Treaty. EU Constitutionalism without a Constitutional Treaty?*, Springer, Wien-New York, 2008.
[243] Howorth, J. "The 'New Faces' of Lisbon: Assessing the Performance of Catherine Ashton and Herman van Rompuy on the global stage", *European Foreign Affairs Review*, (2011) 16, issue 3, pp. 303-323.
[244] Kaddous, C. "Role and position of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy under the Lisbon Treaty".
[245] Comelli M. and Pirozzi, N. *La Politica estera dell'Unione europea dopo Lisbona*, Osservatorio di Politica internazionale, a cura di Istituto Affari Internazionali, febbraio 2013, no. 72.

Union as a sort of "foreign minister"; as Vice President of the Commission, was in charge of foreign relations with third countries and all the aspects of external action. In the exercise of both assignments, the HR/VP would have made use of the European External Action Service: "These new competences give the HR a stronger standing than the one envisaged by the old Treaty text, especially by making the HR the only person capable of overseeing the integrity of Union external policies."[246]

All the competences and duties of the renewed HR are listed in Articles 18 and 27 of the Treaty on the European Union. The High Representatives:

- leads the Union's common foreign and security policy;
- contributes with its proposals to the elaboration of said policy, it implements it as representative of the Board and ensures the implementation of the decisions taken on the subject;
- chairs the Foreign Affairs Council;
- is one of the vice-presidents of the Commission. It ensures the consistency of the Union's external action. Within the Commission, it is responsible for the responsibilities of this institution in the field of external relations and coordination of other aspects of the Union's external action;
- represents the Union for matters falling under the common foreign and security policy, conducts political dialogue with third parties on behalf of the Union and expresses the Union's position in international organizations and at international conferences;
- heads the European External Action Service and Union Delegations in Third Countries and International Organizations.[247]

Of relative importance were also the expectations of the renewed job; first of all, he/she had the possibility of strengthen the external representation of the union, contribute to the constant evolution of external policies, and create a more integrated institutional framework. Making the position of HR even more difficult was the

[246] Płeszka, M. "High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy – Analysis of the Lisbon Treaty Provisions", *Yearbook of Polish European Studies,* (2010) vol. 13, p. 96.
[247] EUR-Lex, *Consolidated Version of the Treaty on the European Union*, (2007), Article 18 and 27.

involvement of institutions like the Commission and the Council on similar issues and the duty of coordinating the work of both. But the core problem existed in the complexity of the external representation: not only had the treaty strengthened the figure of the HR but also other institutions involved in external affairs. At the same time, it has expanded and limited the competences. Moreover, the external action had to be coherent with the will of member states, aligned with the actions undertaken by the European Council, and with the interests of the Commission. Hence, he/she should have conciliated all the divergent interests and find a possible solution acceptable for all sides. Despite the good intentions of European leaders in improving Union foreign policy globally, the Lisbon Treaty proved to be a step in the right direction, albeit an incomplete one.[248] It provided no clarity on how the HR had to behave and deal with the other decision makers, and the structure of the External Action Service was left undefined in addition to the way to manage it and implement it with the other diplomatic services of member states[249]. Therefore, as a consequence of all these problems, concerns on the possible success of the position become apparent to scholars. "The future success of the HR depends too much on delicate negotiations, power struggles and personal choices, and too little on clear and precise legal structures."[250]

To this respect, the staging of the Union after the introduction of the Lisbon Treaty faced with several doubts on the consistency of the treaty itself and on the performance of the choices of the candidates: "The HR was faced with high expectations – and met with much disappointment"[251]. The unfolding of events induced scholars to talk of "EU foreign Policy and HR's capability-expectations gap". It means that European foreign policy was characterized by higher expectations compared to the capabilities assigned to the new post. The concept, formulated by Christopher Hill, regarded the fact that "the expectations towards the redesigned High Representative of the Union were high, with the hope of a single voice representative

[248] Płeszka, M. "High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy – Analysis of the Lisbon Treaty Provisions", *Yearbook of Polish European Studies,* (2010) vol. 13, pp. 81-106.
[249] Martin, G. "Europe Gets a "Diplomatic Service"", *The European Institute*, (2009) vol. 10, no. 3, art. 5.
[250] Płeszka, M. "High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy", p. 106.
[251] Helwig, N. and Rüger, C. "In Search of a Role for the High Representative: The Legacy of Catherine Ashton", *The International Spectator*, (2014) vol. 49, no 4, p. 2.

being able to shape and align the positions of the Member States and EU institutions. By contrast, the actual capabilities of the new post are limited, as it is confronted with the prerogatives of the European Commission in the field of integrated aspects of external action, while the framework of Common Foreign and Security Policy remains intergovernmental"[252]. So, the means and powers enrolled in the new task were not sufficient enough to deliver and carry out the designed purposes. Although scholars saw the figure of the High Representative as complex and unsuitable for running European foreign policy, it is difficult to assess the success or failure of the appointments in a continuous evolution of events. The position of HR/VP "is still in a state of relative flux. It continues to depend markedly on both the changing external strategic context and the evolving internal political and institutional landscape."[253] Moreover, its interpretation is also shaped on the conduct and implementation of the post held by the HR in charge according personal priorities and strategies in any given situation.

As can be seen from the previous analysis, the difficulties of the position of HR lie not only in the innumerable competences and responsibilities assigned to him/her, but also in the numerous political institutions involved on the same field. Precisely because of the difficulties of the new office and the new institutional structure, several criticism has been moved towards Ashton and Mogherini. In particular, Catherine Ashton, successor of Solana, was accused of not being able to effectively exercise all the tasks assigned to her, of not being very active and present on the international scene, and to remain in the shadow of other institutional actors such as the President of the European Council or the President of the Commission.[254] In her defense, it should be remembered that the High Representative is often unable to act autonomously and without a decision by the Council or the Commission. In addition, her functions of external representation of the EU are also coordinated and accompanied by those held by the President of the European Council, the President of

[252] Helwig, N. "EU Foreign Policy and the High Representative's Capability-Expectations Gap: A question of Political Will", *European Foreign Affairs Review,* (2013) 18, issue 2, p. 235.
[253] Missiroli, A. "The EU and the World: Players and Policies Post-Lisbon", *European Union Institute for Security Studies*, Parigi, (2016) p. 26.
[254] Hoquee, E. "Part-time Ashton? Challenges facing the EU's high representative", *the New Federalist*, October 18, 2011. Available at https://www.thenewfederalist.eu/Part-time-Ashton-Challenges-facing-the-EU-s-High-Representative,04527.

the Council, and at the level of Heads of State and Government. Therefore, Ashton's lack of action might be the consequence of a numerical abundance of actors in charge of the same tasks. The complexity of the office is also to be attributed to the fact that the position is still in search of a right redefinition and organization. If Solana has placed the first indispensable strategic bases, Catherine Ashton has worked on the construction of the institutional machine introduced with the Lisbon treaty, in particular with the settlement of the EEAS, Federica Mogherini had the arduous task of building a truly common and security policy.

With the adoption of the Treaty of Lisbon, the member states have expressed their intention in identifying with the European Union, but still retaining some control over their policies.[255] Accordingly, it is understandable that "the experiences of Catherine Ashton, the first EU High Representative under the 2009 Lisbon Treaty, showed the limited political willingness of Member States to commission leadership in the strategic dossiers of foreign policy of the EU"[256]. In fact, frequently states have preferred to act on their behalf and according to their national interests rather than relying on the diplomacy of the union. The lack of willingness on the part of member states to rely on an external figure underlines the somewhat contradictory character of the treaty. Lisbon reflected the desire of the countries for a stronger European Union at international level, but at the same time without transferring it too much power.[257]

So, the greatest difficulty of the role of the HR lies in a game of balance between the will of the Union and the interests of the individual countries.[258] And the skill and success of a good HR will thus depend a lot on the personality, perseverance and willpower of the character and on his/her ability to coordinate and cooperate at best with all the co-involved organizations in order to establish a Union's proper role.

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[255] Lehne, "EU—Actor or Toolbox? How Member States Perceive the EU's Foreign Policy", pp. 16-19; in: A. Hug (ed.), *Europe in the World: Can EU Foreign Policy Make an Impact*, (2013) Foreign Policy Center, London.
[256] Kaca, E. "The Labours of HR Federica Mogherini: Her Pursuit of a Strategy and Effectiveness", *The Polish Institute of International Affairs*, (2015) no 14.
[257] Regelsberger, E. "The High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy – Treaty Provisions in Theory and Practice 1999-2009", pp. 17-34; in Müller-Brandeck-Bocquet, G. and Rüger, C. [eds.], *The High Representative for the EU Foreign and Security Policy - Review and Prospects*, Nomos, 2011.
[258] Lehne, "EU—Actor or Toolbox? How Member States Perceive the EU's Foreign Policy".

## 4.4 CASE STUDY: CATHERINE ASHTON AND FEDERICA MOGHERINI

The new reformed position of the HR has raised a lot of criticism, both for a lack of clarity in the exercise of the duties, both for the high expectations that have been placed on it, and for the characters that have been designated. The following section will hence focus on this last specific issue. Starting from the assumption that both appointments have been the result of a gender choice, how come it was decided to entrust a task of this importance to women if the general tendency in diplomacy is to usually reserve men the most prestigious places? And how were both candidates perceived in the eyes of the world once they accepted the new assignment?

In trying to answer this question, the section firstly starts with a brief excursus on Catherine Ashton's political background; then moves on to the analysis of her designation process mainly understanding the reasons that led the member states to choose her as a new HR; and subsequently individualize which were the reactions to her appointment. With the same methodology the section passes through the analysis of the path of Federica Mogherini.

With the introduction of the Treaty of Lisbon the new post was assigned to the British Catherine Ashton, who has held the position for five years from 2009 to 2014. Her first years as new HR were very tough, not only for the criticisms she was suffering from, but also for the unawareness of how to manage the duties of the new post. At the moment of her settlement the European political panorama was not completely favorable for shaping EU foreign policies: being the European Union shaken by sovereign debt and economic crises, the world was more focused on dealing with internal crisis than building a global Europe[259]. Plus, "she had to cope with the expectation that she had to fulfill all the functions previously attributed to the concept of a union foreign minister"[260] and prove to be equal to her predecessor Solana, who succeeded in improving European visibility and integration.

[259] Helwig, N. and Rüger, C. "In Search of a Role for the High Representative: The Legacy of Catherine Ashton", *The International Spectator*, (2014) vol. 49, no 4, pp. 1-17.
[260] Regelsberger, E. "The High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy – Treaty Provisions in Theory and Practice 1999-2009", p. 30; in Müller-Brandeck-Bocquet, G. and Rüger, C. [eds.], *The High Representative for the EU Foreign and Security Policy - Review and Prospects*, Nomos, 2011.

Ashton, indeed, suffered huge disappointment during her office starting from her appointment: "Does Catherine Ashton have what it takes to interact and negotiate with high-profile counterparts from all around the world? What can be said about Ashton's performance to date and her fingerprints in shaping European external action?"[261] were the main questions asked by foreign policy experts. But before enter the "highest-profile political posts"[262], she had a long background in politics, although mostly in minor ministerial positions. Born in Upholland in 1956 from a working-class family, she was the first of her family to attend University. Her political career started as general vice-secretary for the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament until 1983. Later, she worked several years for human rights, equity and civil justice: she worked for the *Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work* and for *Business in the Community*. But only in 1999 she entered the diplomatic field when she was nominated "Baroness of Upholland" by Tony Blair and became Leader of the House of Lords. In 2008 she was nominated as EU trade Commissioner, becoming the first European woman commissioner of UK. In 2009 she became High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, with great surprise on her part, too. The astonishment of her assessment was so remarkable that even the same Ashton "made no secret of her genuine surprise at having been elevated to one of the most high-profile posts in global politics at such short notice"[263]. Before her appointment she was in fact a rather unknown figure to many, and this was certainly one of the reasons why she was often criticized. Yet, in the end Catherine Ashton triumphed.

Given the complexity and ambitiousness of the new position, Member states adopted some criteria for the appointment, such as state citizenship, coming from a northern or southern state, right-, center- or left-wing affiliation, and even gender.[264] Since the Presidency of the Commission was assigned to a right-of-center male from a small southern state, the new HR had to be, according to logic, a left-of-center

[261] Rüger, C. "A Position under Construction: Future Prospects of the High Representative after the Treaty of Lisbon", p. 202; in Müller-Brandeck-Bocquet, G. and Rüger, C. [eds.], *The High Representative for the EU Foreign and Security Policy - Review and Prospects*, Nomos, 2011.
[262] Barber, T. "The Appointments of Herman van Rompuy and Catherine Ashton", *Journal of Common Market Studies*, (2010) vol. 48, p. 55.
[263] Palmer, J. "Ashton underlines EU's significant moment", *The Guardian,* 2009. Available at https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2009/nov/20/cathy-ashton-european-union.
[264] Howorth, J. "Catherine Ashton's five years term: a difficult assessment", *Les Cahiers Européens de Sciences Po,* (2014) no 3.

affiliation from a northern state and, if possible, a *woman*. There were many high-profile possible candidates, better experienced and well-known, but European Union "wanted exactly her, since she fit perfectly into the top job package: centre-left political affiliation, woman, satisfying UK's wish for a top position"[265]. Some scholars stressed that the appointments followed the political logic of the European Union: "They may not be well qualified to represent the European Union in the sense of commanding attention, but they do brilliantly represent it in the sense of making visible or manifest its inner nature"[266]. Others argued that the choice has been more for convenience as heads of state have decided for a low-profile figure in order to be able to control her.[267] Others claimed that the circumstances of her candidacy were the result of an error, since the office was intended to be given to Tony Blair and that to remedy it was chosen another figure within the United Kingdom[268]: concerns were raised "that it has been inspired less by an appreciation of her abilities than by pressure from political party groups and by the need of EU leader to repay Britain's Labour government for its reluctant decision to sacrifice the ambitions of Tony Blair, the former prime minister, to become the first full-time European Council President"[269]. As a consequence, the belief that the choice had to do with a purely political move was supported by many: "She was chosen for the job not because of any foreign policy credentials, but because of a classic Brussels backroom political deal"[270], wrote the *Financial Times* on her appointment.

[265] Rüger, C. "A Position under Construction: Future Prospects of the High Representative after the Treaty of Lisbon", p. 218; in Müller-Brandeck-Bocquet, G. and Rüger, C. [eds.], *The High Representative for the EU Foreign and Security Policy - Review and Prospects*, Nomos, 2011.
[266] Ibidem, p. 219.
[267] Regelsberger, E. "The High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy – Treaty Provisions in Theory and Practice 1999-2009", p. 30; in Müller-Brandeck-Bocquet, G. and Rüger, C. [eds.], *The High Representative for the EU Foreign and Security Policy - Review and Prospects*, Nomos, 2011.
[268] Charlemagne, "Why Europe Ended Up with High Rep Ashton", *The Economist-Charlemagne's Notebook*, November 26, 2009. Available at https://www.economist.com/charlemagne/2009/11/26/why-europe-ended-up-with-high-rep-ashton.
[269] Barber, T. "The Appointments of Herman van Rompuy and Catherine Ashton", *Journal of Common Market Studies*, (2010) vol. 48, p. 56.
[270] Spiegel, P. "EU foreign policy chief Lady Ashton comes of age in Iran talks", *Financial Times*, November 26, 2013.Available at https://www.ft.com/content/2cb1bfec-56a3-11e3-ab12-00144feabdc0.

Besides a political strategy, another reason for her candidacy implies a purely gender choice.[271] In trying to demonstrate this thesis, decisive results have emerged in support of such postulation. Despite being a person with little qualification for the position, the fact of being a woman determined her appointment. In an environment where the main political leaders were men, the choice to include a woman was fundamental in order to obtain a more balanced leadership team. According Tony Barber's opinion, "the appointment of a woman was deemed necessary to strengthen female representation in the new Commission"[272]. In this case, the gender of the character has hence influenced the choice of the candidate. All European press was of the same opinion: The *Daily Mail* wrote that "she was put forward only because the European Commission wanted women candidates"[273]. The Spanish *El País* asserted: "leaders were pleased by the choice of a woman since Europe was involved in equality policies"[274]. *The Economist* expressed disappointment and dissatisfaction for the way in which appointments have been made: "not only were national leaders not ready to share the international scene, but at the same time they have sacrificed much more power than they thought to political parties in order to make the most of the chairs available"[275]. Furthermore, her election was not well seen even within her own country - "her appointment as the EU's high representative for foreign affairs was greeted with a mixture of male condescension and ill-concealed derision. Announcing her appointment, Gordon Brown mispronounced her name"[276].

There is no doubt that from the very beginning of her journey Ashton had to "fight" with a not-so-favorable environment. As it is reported in "*The High Representative for the EU Foreign and Security Policy – Review and Prospects*",

[271] Missiroli, A. *The EU and the World: Players and Policies Post-Lisbon*, European Union Institute for Security Studies, 2016.
[272] Barber, T. "The Appointments of Herman van Rompuy and Catherine Ashton", *Journal of Common Market Studies*, (2010) vol. 48, p. 62.
[273] Pierce, A. "Who earns more, Hillary Clinton or Baroness Nobody? Cathy Ashton... even though she's the laughing stock of the EU", *Daily Mail*, March 9, 2010. Available at https://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-1255840/How-Cathy-Ashton-laughing-stock-EU.html.
[274] *El País*, "Una UE demasiado gris", November 20, 2009. Available at https://elpais.com/diario/2009/11/20/opinion/1258671601_850215.html.
[275] *The Economist*, "Name a famous Belgian", November 19, 2009. Available at https://www.economist.com.
[276] *The Guardian,* "In praise of … Catherine Ashton", November 21, 2013. Available at https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/nov/24/in-praise-of-catherine-ashton.

criticisms on her perception ranged from "She is a no-name" to "She has never held an elected public office", "Her foreign policy experience is negligible" "She has no standing on international stage" "She is British". The entire world seemed not to appreciate British candidate up to call her appointment a "deliberate obstacle to a common European foreign policy". Italian press was not particularly positive regarding the choice of the candidates: "Two semi-unknown, for the low-profile choice of an EU that chooses compromise instead of protagonism" wrote *"la Repubblica"* in 2009. "Europe chooses the low profile" is the headline of *Il Corriere della Sera* the day after the election of Catherine Ashton as new HR. *Il Sole 24 Ore* dedicated harsh criticisms to EU new posts: "After mixing up the faces of about twenty candidates and staging chaos, in the end Europe (...) made a choice that was not really exciting: two illustrious strangers, two mediocre figures". The Austrian Newspaper *Die Presse* expressed astonishment and skepticism. Essentially, all the European press proved to be against the choice of the candidates.

But besides the criticisms concerning her lack of experience and anonymity, her role as HR was also harshly criticized. She was accused of being a silent diplomat, of conducting a silent diplomacy and not making enough noise in relation to several difficult situations she has been faced.[277] She gave the impression of not actually being very interested in European foreign policy[278] as she was not present in important events.[279]

Looking at the way she was perceived during her office, in particular to the presence of discriminatory attitudes towards Ashton, there are no explicit discriminations. The only data that can be taken into consideration as a proof of bias is that her designation was made for a matter of gender balance. As mentioned before, many have argued that her appointment first took place according a political strategy

[277] Lyon, G. "Lady Ashton: mistaking quiet diplomacy for silence", *The Guardian,* July 19, 2010. Available at https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2010/jul/19/lady-ashton-silence-quiet-diplomacy.
[278] Howorth, J. "Catherine Ashton's five years term: a difficult assessment", *Les Cahiers Européens de Sciences Po,* (2014) no 3.
[279] Waterfield, B. "Farewell, Lady Ashton: EU's 'absent' foreign minister prepares to leave for good", *The Telegraph,* July 16, 2014. Available at https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/eu/10971640/Farewell-Lady-Ashton-EUs-absent-foreign-minister-prepares-to-leave-for-good.html.

for the need for a better gender balance at the highest EU level,[280] and secondly, to leave more control in the hands of the member states: "member states (and particularly the large and powerful ones) have little intention of letting the HR-VP assume an *automatic* lead on policy issues, particularly sensitive ones."[281] This choice shows in part that the stereotype of the diplomatic world towards women remains. According to it, a female figure is more "easy" to handle than a man with a strong personality and ability to manage politics.

However, despite the numerous negative criticisms against her, many colleagues and scholars have also experienced appreciation. *The Telegraph* wrote of her "Lady Ashton has travelled the distance from being the nobody, that everybody loved to mock, to becoming the mediocrity, that everybody loves to hate"[282]; she passed from being appointed "as "Cathy Who?" or "Lady Who?", to being designated as "brilliant" and the EU's diplomatic secret weapon"[283]. Even she was given the credit for the success of important negotiations: "From 'zero' to hero" wrote *The Telegraph* in 2013 in glorifying her achievement.[284]

Ashton's path was thus not entirely positive, and at the end of the office many have placed great expectations on her successor. Once that Catherine Ashton got to the end of the mandate in 2014, the future of the HR was not particularly optimistic. The policies and strategies she adopted during her appointment were not always seen with good eyes. As her successor was nominated the Italian Federica Mogherini, who will remain in charge until 2019. Even if she was more experienced than Ashton in foreign policy, as she has been dealing with the diplomatic field for the last twenty years of her career through civil society, participation in non-governmental institutions

[280] Missiroli, A. *The EU and the World: Players and Policies Post-Lisbon*, European Union Institute for Security Studies, 2016, p. 23.
[281] Howorth, J. "Catherine Ashton's five years term: a difficult assessment", *Les Cahiers Européens de Sciences Po,* (2014) no 3.
[282] Waterfield, B. "Baroness Ashton, the fall guy of Europe", *The Telegraph,* February 28, 2010. Available at https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/belgium/7332870/Baroness-Ashton-the-fall-guy-of-Europe.html.
[283] Perkins, A. "Lady Ashton – once 'Lady who?', now the EU's diplomatic secret weapon", *The Guardian,* November 25, 2013. Available at https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2013/nov/25/lady-ashton-eu-secret-diplomatic-weapon.
[284] Blair, D. "Iran nuclear deal takes Catherine Ashton from 'zero to hero", *The Telegraph,* November 24, 2013. Available at https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/eu/10471355/Iran-nuclear-deal-takes-Catherine-Ashton-from-zero-to-hero.html.

and international campaigns, and later in Italian and European political party, also her enrollment and strategies met with criticisms and sometimes disappointment.

Born in Rome in 1973, since youth Mogherini has always been interested in politics; in 1996 she joined the Left Youth and in 2001 became a member of the National Council of Left Democrats. With the birth of Democratic Party, she became part of the executive, and then left office in April 2008: in that year she was elected MP in the Chamber for the Democratic Party in the Veneto district, before being appointed Secretary of the Defense Commission. In December 2013, with the election as Matteo Renzi's party secretary, she returned to the national secretariat as responsible for Europe. With the appointment of Renzi as Chairman of the Board, in February 2014, Federica Mogherini was appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs. Moreover, she was president of the parliamentary delegation at the NATO Parliamentary Assembly until the nominee of High Representative in 2014.

Nonetheless, critics were as severe as they have been towards Ashton. The research conducted has shown similarities with the previous assignment, as just like last time, her enrollment was "the result of a political, geographical, and gender balance deal between member states and political groups"[285]. Initially, at the time of the preliminary appointments the name of Mogherini caused clamor. Although she was definitely more experienced in the field, many have alluded to the fact that "if chosen, it would be for the same reasons that Britain's Catherine Ashton got the job five years ago. It would be the result of an elaborate bargain among member states in which every box is ticked – except the one marked "experience"".[286] And indeed what they feared happened. Even in the case of Mogherini, the choice was the result of both a political strategy and a question of gender equality. The political choice can be verified in the strong will, in this case, of the Italian government, to have their own personal international representative. In doing so, Italy would have had the hands on

[285] Missiroli, A. "The EU and the World: Players and Policies Post-Lisbon", Europ*ean Union Institute for Security Studies*, Parigi, (2016) p. 24.
[286] *Financial Times,* "Europe's next foreign policy chief", August 27, 2014. Available at https://www.ft.com/content/97311838-2dd3-11e4-b330-00144feabdc0.

those dossiers that could be of particular interest the ex-prime minister Renzi.[287] In fact, many candidates were proposed, some of which were most influential and far more experienced people, including another Italian minister. In the end, however, member states opted for a woman, making it a question of gender balance: "again, proportional representation was a factor; a social democrat, the Italian politician was chosen to give balance to the threefold EU leadership that includes Juncker and Tusk"[288]. Not only, but as Antonio Missiroli affirmed: "This was intended to ensure not only a political, geographical and gender balance in the EU leadership but also a balance of attitudes *vis-à-vis* the potentially most divisive issue at that time – namely relations with Russia, after the annexation of Crimea and the conflict in the Donbass region of Ukraine"[289]. Hence, also Mogherini's appointment was the outcome of a political agreement between member states. Even the Brookings Institution has exposed itself on the subject stating that "the selection of the new high representative, Federica Mogherini, was undignified, full of haggling, and more focused on her gender, party affiliation, and nationality than on her actual qualifications for the job"[290]. At the same time, however, she was the person whom the European leaders wanted as she fit in the required fees: "She is a woman, she is from the center-left, and she compensates the Italians for their recent losses in the international ranking of influential countries"[291]. Also in this occasion the states reaffirmed for the second appointment their lack of will to entrust foreign policy in the hands of the Union e preferred to choose a less powerful and "noisy" figure, as "she is unlikely to be able to challenge the member states' principal role in EU foreign policy"[292].

Once designated as a new HR the criticism about her were not long in coming. "Disappointing" defined her the *Financial Times*; her appointment has been "a sad day

[287] Mackinson, T. "Nomine Ue, cosa fa l'Alto rappresentante della diplomazia europea", *il Fatto Quotidiano,* August 30, 2014. Available at https://www.ilfattoquotidiano.it/2014/08/30/tanto-onore-e-pochi-poteri-cosi-lalto-rappresentante-e-in-cerca-di-un-ruolo/1103478/.
[288] Nünlist, C. "EU Foreign Policy: Mogherini Takes Over", *Center for Security Studies*, (2015) no. 167, Editor: Matthias Bieri.
[289] Missiroli, A. "The EU and the World: Players and Policies Post-Lisbon", Europ*ean Union Institute for Security Studies*, Parigi, (2016) p. 25.
[290] Alcaro, R. and Shapiro, J. "High Representative, High Expectations", *Brookings Institutions,* September 4, 2014. Available at https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/high-representative-high-expectations/.
[291] Ibidem.
[292] Ibid.

for Europe"[293], wrote instead *the Guardian*. Contrary to what happened with Ashton, which was harshly criticized for her entire path, the main criticisms made towards Mogherini had greater resonance only in the first months of recruitment as she was considered with too little experience and of Russian thread. Many instead appreciated the new HR, mainly recognizing her greater presence within the European institutions and involvement in the meetings of the ministry of foreign and defense, in addition with a greater coordination and participation with the European Parliament.[294] As a matter of fact, many observers have changed their minds on the role and skills of the new HR that even overseas press praised her with positive feedbacks: she was able to exploit her strength and prove herself to be the best in the field. In a world in which female presence in international affairs is still a minority, Federica Mogherini is a role model to look at: "She proved successful in reaching the ultimate goal for women leaders: she found her voice"[295], wrote *The Huffington Post*, another American news and opinion website, after her confirmation hearing in 2014. She proved to be very convincing and perfectly at ease on that particular occasion, and this was very much appreciated even by the most critical observers. Her main strength was, and still be, communication and how she performed on stage. Political communication, specifically in foreign policy, is a complex area to deal with. Like Ashton, she was able to change opinions towards her; all, including opponents, the same ones that stressed her lack of willingness in listening to different opinions, recognized a hard working attitude on every dossier she managed, ending up by conquering the esteem of ministers and commissioners[296] - reported *l'Espresso*.

In conclusion, the example of these two women has served to reaffirm the fact that the high ranges of diplomacy have always presented a strong male domination and

[293] Davies, L. "A portrait of Federica Mogherini, the EU's next foreign policy chief", *The Guardian*, August 30, 2014. Available at https://www.theguardian.com/global/2014/aug/30/portrait-federica-mogherini-eu-foreign-policy-chief.
[294] European Parliament, "Report on the Annual Report from the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy to the European Parliament", 2015.
[295] Bindi, F. "Women Leaders in Foreign Policy: When Federica Mogherini Found Her Voice", *The Huffington Post*, December 7, 2014. See https://www.huffingtonpost.com/federiga-bindi/women-leaders-in-foreign_b_5946668.html.
[296] Bianchi, F. "Federica Mogherini, la ministra che sta nell'ombra ma conquista spazio", *L'Espresso, La Repubblica*, August 17, 2016. Available at http://espresso.repubblica.it/attualita/2016/08/16/news/mogherini-la-ministra-che-sta-nell-ombra-ma-conquista-spazio-1.280470.

a reticence in allowing a female leadership and accepting it. From the research of how they were perceived, numerous denunciations emerged in particular with regard the lack of diplomatic experience of both candidates and for being almost unknown figures. From this last aspect, further criticisms arose as to why the countries chose exactly these leaders. Starting from the moment of the designation of the possible candidates, the member states pressured to have an officer representing the personal interests of the country or allowing them to move according to their own interests. As such, they often have opted for a gender balance decision by choosing a woman, but implicitly they have preferred an unknown person more easily manageable. Scholars have therefore argued that HR elections have to deal with a political choice of political parties to first, name someone more accommodating according to the interests of member countries and reluctant to entrust policies in the hands of a single person; second, they were more interested in perpetuating individual goals than building an integrated Europe; and third, try to compensate, even if in a small part, the issue of gender disproportionality given the commitment of the Union in this matter.

However, apart from the various reasons that led the member countries to choose these two women, seeing a female leadership leading prestigious positions represents a further achievement for the female gender. It is important to recognize that thanks to Ashton and Mogherini, women have seen the possibility of seeing realized those work aspirations that were once unattainable for female gender. Having carried out a positive or negative foreign policy is not relevant for the purpose of the project, but it is important to note that two women, initially unknown to many, have succeeded in imposing themselves at international level and in one of the highest positions among the European institutions. Certainly, on the one hand the fact of being women has influenced the choice of that specific character, above all for a question of gender equality, but on the other hand it has not to be considered the determining factor in the assignment, since before Ashton and Mogherini were invested with the responsibility of the post, other personalities with more experience were indicated. And yet, the commitment of the Union in trying to restore the gender gap in diplomacy can also be seen from the very recent appointments of the new European leaders held in July 2019. Among the five new candidates, two women preside over the main diplomatic offices: Ursula von der Leyen, appointed for president of the European

Commission; Christine Lagarde, as president of the European Central Bank; Charles Michel as president of the European Council; Josep Borrell as new High Representative; and David Sassoli as president of the EU Parliament.

# CONCLUSIONS

Throughout the above dissertation, an attempt was made to explain the scarcity of women in the diplomatic sphere and to the reason why female underrepresentation is strongly more accentuated in this field than in any other professional sectors. To this purpose, after a brief excursus on the relationship established between diplomacy and the female gender over the years, a series of statistical data concerning the political and diplomatic representation of women in the world and in the European Union have been taken into consideration. The survey was conducted using certified sources responsible for monitoring gender inequality at different levels: both from a cultural and social point of view and specifically at the political-diplomatic level.

Immediately it has emerged a discouraging and negative global situation in terms of gender inequality.[297] Although some sectors have positive rates, economic participation and political empowerment bring down the gender index drastically. This leads to the decisive result of the research, namely the fact that political representation and above all female representation, presents even lower rates. Not only with regards to parliamentarian and ministerial women, but above all within the diplomatic service, therefore as ambassadors, negotiators, and heads of delegations. From all the data collected, it appears that gender inequality differs both globally and regionally. Furthermore, gender discrimination is also mirrored by the allocation of government portfolios, in which men hold assignments that have to do with the masculine idea of power (strength, power, war, justice), while women are for most assigned to administrative and clerical positions or entrusted mostly with socio-cultural tasks. As responsibility and prestige increase, the possibility of finding women decreases dramatically.

Yet, thanks to the commitment of numerous organizations and social groups that promote and guarantee equality as a fundamental value for humanity, it is recognized that this trend in recent times is being abandoned in favor of a balanced diversity of gender. However, while on the one hand the legislation has had a positive

[297] See Chapter 3.

impact on the representation of women on boards of directors and in places of political power, on the other it seems that there are no great improvements in the positions that women hold within the councils of administration, and heads of government, thus widening even more the gender disparity. Apparently, women engaged in politics are increasingly frequent, but their actual presence in decision-making positions is still rare. In 2018, with the exception of some member states such as Germany, the United Kingdom and Romania, the majority of senior ministers were men. In 2019 there is a similar composition, with prime ministers in the countries of Romania, Germany, Denmark and Austria. As for heads of state in 2019, only five countries have women as leaders (Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, United Kingdom, Slovakia).[298]

In addition to demonstrating the still problematic situation of gender inequality, the data and the case study also wanted to provide a demonstration of how the European Union is committing itself to eradicate male hegemony from diplomatic representation. The women analyzed can represent a starting point for European diplomacy since it was decided to entrust one of the most prestigious positions of the foreign service to female figures.[299]

With the evolution of the gender-diplomacy relationship the feminist literature in diplomacy has helped to support women and their abilities in every working environment. Scholars have recognized the added value of the political practice carried out by women, not only focusing on a matter of law but also with instrumental implication. Allowing the exchange of ideas and visions between men and women has positive and better effects on the management of external relations and favorable feedbacks in the decisional processes.[300] Women and men have different ways of managing leadership and dealing with situations, therefore having two different points of view in the same group is effective for achieve greater quality at governmental level, which is consequently reflected in world leadership. Not only that, but "at the cultural

[298] European Commission, *2019 Report on equality between women and men in the EU*, p. 35. Available at https://publications.europa.eu/it/publication-detail/-/publication/f3dd1274-7788-11e9-9f05-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF/source-99452493.
[299] See Chapter 4.
[300] UN Women, "Facts and figures: Leadership and political participation", January 2019. Available at https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/leadership-and-political-participation/facts-and-figures#notes.

level, the appointments of women leaders have come to symbolize a progressive organizational change"[301]. Therefore, involving a female quota in leadership positions is crucial not only for a question of justice and equality, but also for the purpose of a better and lasting global governance.

Despite the positive demonstrations of having a more feminine leadership, the underrepresentation of women remains a fact for many European and non-European realities. An explanation for this phenomenon can be found in the continuous obstacles and barriers that women are forced to face every day.[302] The diplomatic career is a very demanding profession, it requires a certain flexibility in terms of time as the hours spent for this type of activity is very high, and it is difficult to reconcile a woman's life with it. If the woman is also a wife and a mother, the time available for private life and working life is drastically reduced. Moreover, being a woman and above all a career woman is complicated, not for lack of skills and will, but for the way in which the world has been accustomed to think about women and female position within the society. Society has contributed in creating certain expectations about the roles that men and women should hold; expectations that in the long run has influenced the daily interactions between men and women and the reactions of the environment towards women. Secondly, women are often forced to suffer direct or indirect discriminatory behaviors in the workplace. And finally, the prejudice that is perhaps the main reason for their exclusion. This attitude is essentially associated with the gender culture of diplomacy. Since its establishment the diplomatic practice has been based on rules and masculinized structures around which diplomatic interactions and practices have developed. Common thinking provides that to be a diplomat and a leader tenacity, courage, power and even the use of force are considered more appropriate and relevant qualities for the success of managing diplomatic relations. For this reason, it is difficult to visualize women in the main diplomatic positions because they would break gender norms and diplomatic circles dominated by men. Even in cases where women occupy senior positions, it may also be necessary to adapt to male norms and practices to advance diplomacy. These gender dynamics express a hegemonic masculinity and

[301] Eagly, A. H., Carli, L. L. "The female leadership advantage: An evaluation of the evidence", *The Leadership Quarterly*, (2003) vol. 14, issue 6, p. 826.
[302] See Chapter 3, Section 3.2.

partly explain the underrepresentation of women. The gender nature therefore tends to legitimize the diplomatic hierarchy as well as a division of relational and gender work, which struggles to accept the entry of women into the field.[303]

The statistics of the last ten years are the evidence of change, as more and more women are recognizable even in top positions. But this was possible also thanks to a change within the concept of leadership. The female rise to global governance has also been made possible by changes in theories and practices of leadership. Women have changed: they assumed specific characteristics appropriate for the success in these new roles. Furthermore, the opportunities achieved thanks to their education changed career aspirations. Also leadership roles are changed, meaning that women have adopted managerial skills that are more suitable to new leadership roles. And most importantly, culture has changed: "women have come to symbolize new types of leadership that connote greater effectiveness and synergy than leadership of the past"[304].

The road to achieve total gender equality is still quite far. According to the Gender Equality Forum, equality will be completed in 2133.[305] The European Union mobilized to try to promote gender equality in all sectors making it a founding value of its institution. Only in the last few centuries has the world made progress towards gender equality and women's empowerment, but there are still women and girls who continue to suffer discrimination and violence.

The proposed research does not want to give this tendency for all diplomatic situations for certain and true, but it presents the general path that women are used to find when they enter the diplomatic world. Since little is known about gender processes, institutional rules and diplomatic practices, the results obtained are limited to presenting the facts arising from the information gathered in the statistical forums. When more systematic empirical analyzes of gender intersection models and diplomacy will be conducted and further evidence will be provided concerning other

[303] Aggestam, K. and Towns, A. *Gendering Diplomacy and International Negotiation*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2018.
[304] Eagly, A. H., Carli, L. L. "The female leadership advantage: An evaluation of the evidence", *The Leadership Quarterly*, (2003) vol. 14, issue 6, p. 827.
[305] World Economic Forum; https://www.weforum.org.

realities outside of Eurocentrism, a complete and detailed analysis can be concluded.

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