



**RESEARCH PAPER**

**A Comparative Analysis of Women's Political Representation in Western and Eastern Europe**

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**ABSTRACT**

This article explores how various factors, such as history, social and cultural norms, and economic factors playing role in women's political representation by comparing Western and Eastern regions. The landscape of women's political representation is divergent across Western and Eastern Europe and is a significant indicator of democracy and gender equality. Women, in both regions, have experienced different and complex trajectories regarding access to political participation. The comparative analysis highlights the essential regional changes shaped by historical legacies, economic indicators, and the legal framework of institutions. The women's representation is quite high in the Western region in their national parliaments and institutions. Whereas the routes of women's political representation are more complex in Eastern Europe due to their historical legacies. After the collapse of the communist regime, several countries witnessed a decline in women's participation in parliamentary politics because of their democratic and economic changes.

**Keywords:** Women Representation, Communism, Feminism, Economy, Social, Gender Norms

**Introduction**

The existence of women in politics and their leadership roles has increased in recent decades, reflecting significant progress in achieving positions previously held by men. Despite this observed success, gender equality is far from being attained in these prominent positions in the global political arena. It is observed that the characteristics of women's leadership are more flexible, including multitasking ability, broader vision, effective communication skills, and inclusive approaches towards decision-making. However, regardless of these characteristics, women in leadership face many problems, such as the uneven demands and expectations imposed on them by society. They have to face more rigorous standards and difficult tasks than men in achieving leadership roles, gender discrimination, and stereotypes. Despite all these challenges, it's very crucial to recognize the optimistic impacts of women's leadership. The absence of women from political representation not only continues the gender inequality but also bounds the diversity of broad vision, perspective and ideas. The research will explore the women's political representation both in Western and Eastern Europe in the post-Cold War era. This comparative analysis delves into women's political representation in countries of Eastern and Western Europe; it investigates the root causes, outcomes, and effects of this phenomenon. The (WorldAtlas, 2024) describes that the Western region of Europe has emerged with the passage of time, and is home to 196 million people from diverse cultures, religions, and ethnicities. It was generally referred to the Allied powers and the neighboring neutral states during the two World Wars, except Germany as it was assumed enemy state and the same as Italy in WWII. But Europe was expanded in the Cold War era included

Former West Germany and Italy in opposing of Eastern bloc led by former Soviet Union. The fall of the Iron Curtain and demise of communism in Eastern Europe apparently broke the division between East and West on the European continent, but it's not unusual for people to talk of Western and Eastern Europe as defined in Cold War. According to the UN geoscheme, Austria, Germany, France, Luxembourg, Belgium, the Netherlands, Switzerland and Liechtenstein are the nine countries included in Western Europe.

The key aspects of Western culture are firmly based on individual freedom, human rights, and rich culture includes music, art, literature and various ethnic and linguistic traditions, secularism, education and innovation. The Western region contains a high-income economy with strong service sector, advanced technology, industrialization, capitalist markets and global trade network (EU, Eurozone), advanced transportation system and developed infrastructure. Meanwhile the history of Western Europe is rich such as Ancient civilization (Rome, Greece), empires and medieval kingdom (British and Holy Roman Empire) it also includes colonialism and imperialism, complex historic events of WWI-II, Cold-War, and emergence of European Union. The politics of the region having strong social and traditional democracy, democratic system followed both presidential and parliamentary models, liberalism, having complex ties between national and international governing bodies (EU, NATO and EFTA), enforcing human rights, social welfare, individualism, and rule of law.

According to the (WorldAtlas, 2024) the Eastern Europe is one of the most populated region holding approximately 292 million people. All the countries in Eastern Europe were part of the communist bloc led by the former USSR in Cold War period. Many countries of Eastern Europe were part of the Soviet Union itself and some other was satellite states. After the decline of the Soviet Union, many countries started to integrate with West and joined the European Union and NATO military alliance. The UN geoscheme includes the ten countries in the East region of Europe such as Hungary, Poland, Bulgaria, Belarus, Czech Republic, Romania, Ukraine, Moldova, Russia and Slovakia. Russian federation is the most populated and largest country in Eastern Europe. The history of the Eastern Europe is also rich in culture and heritage with Balkan, Baltic and Slavic traditions, impacted by Catholicism and Orthodox Christianity, family traditions and sense of community, folk culture, art and music, resilience and adaptability towards historical challenges. The history of Eastern region inspired of medieval empires and kingdoms (Ottoman, Habsburg and Byzantine), influenced by communism (1950s-1980s), WWI-II and Cold-War, nationalist and independence movements, and migrations, conflicts and cultural exchange. The economy of the East including transition phase, post-communist economic reforms, privatization, agriculture and natural resources (gas, oil and coal), growing IT sector, and the economic integration with EU and regional organizations. The political landscape containing authoritarian regimes, hybrid models and democracies, nationalism and populism, relationships with NATO and EU, challenges of corruption, human rights and rule of law. The representation of women in Europe is still matter of concern despite their efforts and commitments towards gender parity. They hold the large number of seats across national governments when it comes to global representation and participation of women in politics. However, in the European regions where woman holds only 31.6% seats (Zamfir, 2024) in national parliaments and assemblies which lag them behind men. The Western region of the Europe is historically rich, having developed and capitalist based economies and liberal approaches of democracy. The Western region is the land of almost 199.86 million (worldometer, 2024) people and women's made half of the number of population. The developed nations like Germany, France, Netherlands, Luxemburg, Belgium and Austria are considered the democratic ones and having female representation in politics. Yet their participation and influence is varying from country to country. They also having women in leadership position like head of state or government includes Angela Merkel and Ursula von der Leyen from Germany, Marine Le Pen and Simone Veil from France and Fedrica Morgherini from Italy are the famous ones. They have addressed the issues like foreign

policy, diplomacy, healthcare and social welfare and economic policy influence. They are also playing effective role through the European Union institutions and having gender quotas on decision making positions.

On the other hand the Eastern European region is consisting of 285 million people (worldometer, 2024) and female population is half in number. Previously the Eastern region was under the influence of the communism. After the decline of the USSR, many states become independent. They are the developing democracies now such as Romania, Poland, Hungary, Ukraine, Bulgaria, Slovakia, Czech Republic and Moldova. According to the latest data the women's ratio in Eastern European parliaments is 22-23% (Parline, 2024) and Poland has the highest women representatives in parliament about 28%. The role of the women in East region has evolved after the post-cold war era. The representation of women is still less as compared to the Western region. The political cultural is male dominated, gender stereotypes hinder women participation in politics and corruption is on peak. They have limited access to the economic resources that are important for their political activities. Despite the persistent challenges there are notable women on leading positions in Eastern Politics such as Vera Jourova and Katerine from Czech Republic, Ewa Kopacz former PM of Poland, Judit Varga from Hungary, Daciana Sarbu from Romania.

### **Literature Review**

"Women's participation in political power in Europe: An essay in east-west comparison" by (Janova, 1992) describes the various paths taken by the women seeking to get involved in politics in Western and Eastern European countries. In most of the Western countries women persistently marginalized in decision-making process where women in Eastern got these rights very easily, however Scandinavian females were way better of others in this regard. For this reason, emancipated communist women are being admired by Western feminists who believe that they are more integrated and stabled in politics more than that of in capitalist ones. The social rights and public commitments are equally greater for women in the East, but male and female role in home and workplace largely remained unchanged. This research article provides the difference of opinions among woman across the European regions but didn't explore the main roots of these problems so this research gap will be focus in this work. "Feminist Perspectives on Foreign Policy" by (Aoust, 2017) argues that there are two basic areas of feminism to inquire in foreign policy, the role of feminist perspective in power sharing and in decision making related to the foreign policy matters and more importantly the active role of gender stereotypes in adopting of foreign policy. Some developed democracies like Canada and Sweden embraced women oriented foreign policies and initiated towards gender parity in various dynamics like (aid, trade, defense, and diplomacy). The rationale behind such policies, promoting gender equality in foreign aid advances larger security and economic objectives. However, gender mainstreaming one of the most significant global trends in foreign policy making, takes a comprehensive approach to examining that how institutions have their own unique gendered cultures which affects the policy outcomes. This article provides the overview of gendered based foreign policy and its role in policy formation but didn't provide the deep insight, so this research gap will be focused. "Gender and the European Court of Human Rights" by (Elfving, 2025) reveals the several understandings of gender in his book. He offers a critical examination of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) case law through the prism of intersectional feminist legal scholarship and queer and trans theories. She explores how the Court handles intersectional and gender inequalities, and the notion of "vulnerability" in numerous human rights frameworks. It covers certain legal areas such as Article 14, the prohibition of gender discrimination, rights of asylum seekers, sexual orientation and gender identity, and non-conventional parenting rights and as well as family reunification rights in recent years. The work contributes to the literature on gender equality and intersectional issues. "Who's Afraid of Gender?" by (Butler, 2024) discusses the gender politics and root causes of the rise in anti-gender movements globally. She stated

that the concept of gender has been turned into “phantasma,” a terrifying and imaginary threat by right-wing and authoritarian movements to awaken fear in people and justify stripping away their rights. She discusses the conservative movements against abortion rights, feminism and other intersectional communities. She examines how various groups like the Vatican, certain governments such as (Putin or Orban), and some gender-critical feminist activists have unified under a joint “anti-gender” banner. She connects gender fear and reactionary forces those involved in Critical Race Theory and migration are often used to agitate the nationalism. “Feminist Approaches to International Relations Theory in the Post- Cold War Period” by (Zalewski, 2017) research work is also very important. She considered how feminist scholarship has evolved in the post-cold war era. It starts with the declaration of feminist determined before discussing how feminist scholarship was introduced into the field of IR, which is the academic study of global politics, after the end of the proxy war. Think again about the feminist intent statement in the opening, after discussing four globally important women. The writer shares her opinions on the importance of current relevance of feminist scholars in the perspective of global politics, both theoretically and practically. This article will provide a little information on this research work.

### **Research Methodology**

The theory of feminism was used to examine this research work. The feminist theoretical approach explores how different dynamics, such as social and cultural norms, historical legacies, and the economy, have impacted women’s political representation through a comparative analysis of Eastern and Western Europe. The concepts and results were explained and discussed qualitatively. Qualitative data offers a technique or tool to develop theory and allows the researcher to answer the research questions by choosing various analyses. The data related to this study were collected from secondary sources like books, journal articles, research reports, dissertations, official records, and newspapers, etc.

### **The various Comparative Trends and Determinants**

In post-cold war era, the significant advancement can be seen in Europe regarding women’s rights especially their representation in politics. The feminist movements in Eastern and Western Europe developed differently. In Western Europe the movements were started in early 1960-70s got momentum to continue their struggles on various issues like equal-pay, anti-discriminatory laws, reproductive rights, gender parity in politics and decision-making process. In late 1990s the feminism orientations were diversified towards intersectionality of race, identity and ethnicity and they exert more influence on Western politics and policies. Whereas in Western Europe the feminist movements were re-evolving and focusing on the women’s basic rights and political participation, gender-based violence, challenges to patriarchal norms, primary healthcare and education right. The Western feminist also influenced the Eastern ones to strive for their rights. They also tried to adopt the local context of the historical legacy of communism, transition of new economies and the growing influence of nationalism. The economy is an essential factor in influencing women's political participation. Many scholars of liberal feminism argue that women's access to education, economic means, and employment opportunities increased their ability to participate in politics. The relationship between the economy and political representation is quite different in the European context. Both regions have various kinds of social, economic policies, labour market systems, welfare policies, and political developments. Exploring these multiple indicators, it shows how the economic structure is crucial and plays a key role in women's access to politics. Men undertake a leading role in economic and political life and subjugate women to the private sphere, which hampers women’s economic liberation and affects their political career indirectly. Feminist scholars argue that economic autonomy helps women in politics. The famous theorist Nancy Fraser claims that women's economic freedom and equal access to resources are significant for attaining their role in politics and gender equality. Her theory has three different dimensional conceptions of

justice, such as economic justice as a redistribution action, cultural justice as recognition actions, and political justice as representation action. Her work emphasizes that gender work must be constructed as a justice work at all levels. In short, she vows that equality of participation in politics requires redistribution of economic resources (Trish McCulloch, 2020). The Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2014-2017 has set its primary agenda to fight against gender stereotypes and sexism. Because women who consider themselves strong candidates, but citizens might not see them as politicians. Women's political participation and work in the labour force are not directly interlinked as a social indicator. Study shows that income is related to men; the various work types women do undermine their capabilities when it comes to executive offices (Europe, 2017). Typical cultural norms negatively affect women's role in the economy and workforce, which ultimately forces them to refrain from the political process due to fewer resources. UNDP data shows that women's participation in the labour force is less than that of men, and their wage gap is wide, like 77% male income in Moldova and 50% in Georgia. The image below of EU data indicates that the wider gender pay gap and gender inequality have been found in Eastern Europe, especially in Hungary and Poland. Their economic market and growth rate stimulated the gender disparity in various sectors. The gender wage gap began to improve after the 2010s. The average wage gap was 12% back in 2023. The gender pay gap is wider across the EU, Hungary 17.8%, Romani 3.8%, Italy 2.2%, Slovenia 5.4%, and compared to Germany 17.6%, whereas Luxembourg closed the pay gap in 2023. The gender pay gap with age may be the result of a career break by women (Union, 2025).

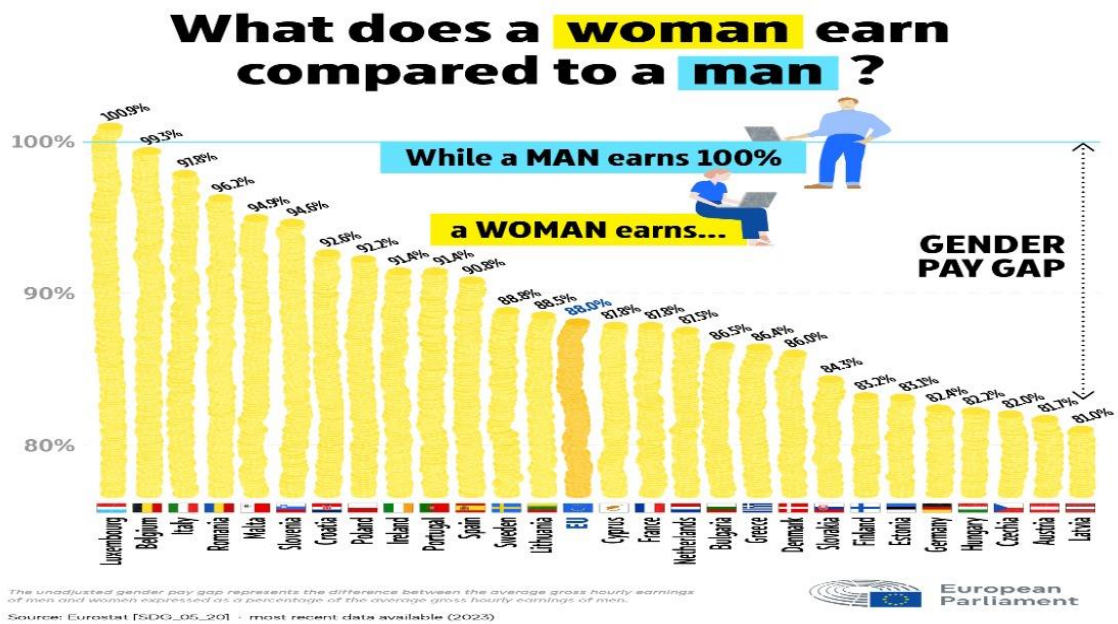


Figure 1: Gender Pay Gap Western vs Eastern Europe Source of Data: (European Parliament)

Western nations benefit more from the advanced and gender-balanced policies of government, whereas Eastern countries are still navigating their economic and political institutional challenges in the post-transition phase. The institutional mechanisms are essential in forming women's political representation. The electoral system, party practices, and gender quota policies decide women's access to political institutions across Europe. Both regions have diverse institutions approach with affect the women in various ways. Feminist scholars vow that both formal and informal structural norms lie within political institutions that bring gender inequalities. Mona Krook, in his influential work "Quotas for Women in Politics: Gender and Candidate Selection Reform Worldwide," claims that gender quotas are a global phenomenon. She contributes that gender quotas (reserved seats),

electoral quotas, and legislative quotas are the three main pillars that act as a resistance to male-dominated gatekeeping in politics. She compared the parties' quotas of eastern and western countries on theoretical and methodological grounds and found that Western parties are more progressive, using the case study of Croatia and Sweden (Gray, 2010). In early 2006, Belgium and France were the only countries to introduce legislative gender quotas. Gradually, other European nations such as Spain, Greece, Ireland, Poland, and Balkan states introduced the gender quotas. The descriptive representation of quota provisions helped women in political institutions (Sgier, 2015).

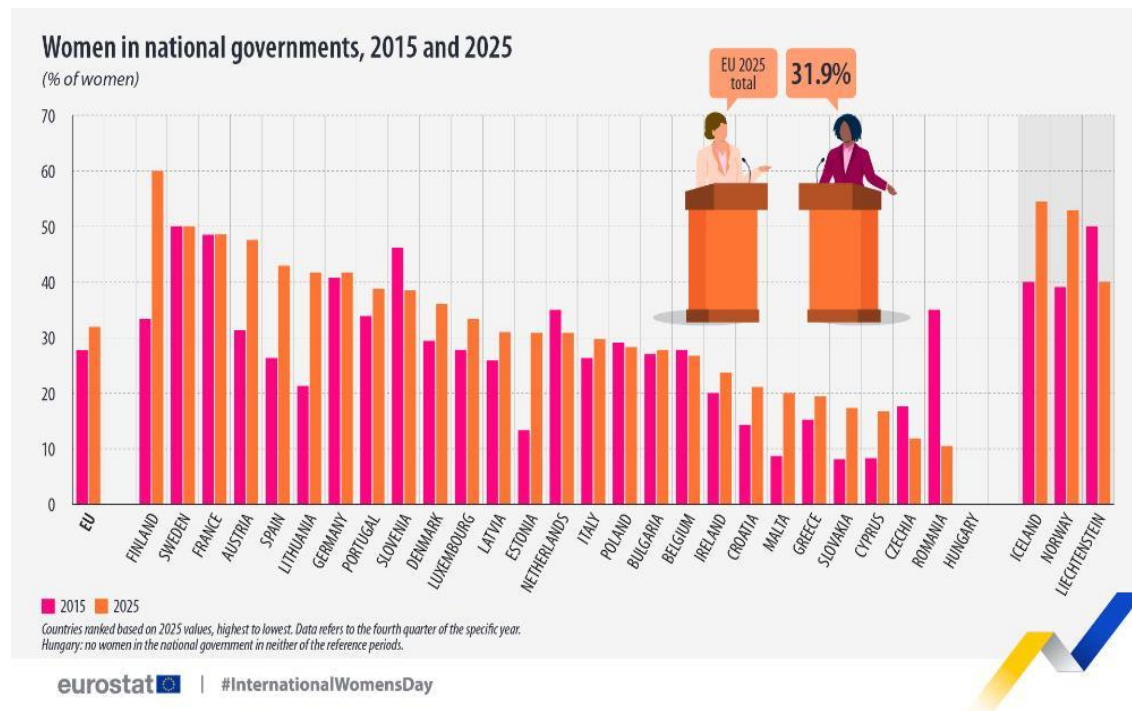


Figure 2: Women in National Governments (2015-2025) Source of Data: (EIGE)

The image above shows that the share of women in EU member states declined from 33.6% to 31.9% till 2025. France, Finland, and Sweden share the highest number, approximately 48.6%. Meanwhile, Hungary had no women in its national government, and Romania had only 10.5% women. The number has reduced from 2015 to 2025 in different EU countries: Poland -0.8%, Romania -24.5%, Belgium -1.1%. respectively (EuroState, 2026). The EU has been playing a significant role in advancing gender parity across Europe by supporting women's representation and gender policies. The European Committee of the Regions (CoR) shows its commitment to women's political participation through its policy initiatives. It stated that the local and regional administrations play a main role in promoting equal representation and policies through working on assemblies and control over their spending. The more women in politics means the more gender balance in all political institutions. In the EU assembly's (CoR), there are 31.6% members are female from all 27 states (EU, 2025). Overall, the quotas provision and institutional mechanisms are diverse in Eastern and Western Europe. Western countries have attained a greater number of women's representation due to their gender friendly quotas and gender equality policies, whereas Eastern Europe still has a lot to achieve; it has a dire need to address its structural obstacles to get gender parity in its political institutions. Socio-cultural norms and beliefs towards gender parity play a core role in shaping women's political agency. whereas institutional reforms are concerned, in representation, the informal stereotype culture and conservative patriarchy also exert pressure on women's political engagement. In the post-Cold War era, various perspectives have emerged across Europe. The feminist movement across Western Europe has altered public opinion towards women's roles in politics. They have been supported largely through social safety nets, gender equality, and education and health

policies in their legal mechanism. The modern and gender-based political culture has completely transformed the status of women in power politics because their institutions are influenced by feminist activism. The fall of the communist bloc and the fall of the Berlin Wall have benefited women in various European nations. They were allowed to work in male-dominated sectors, abortion law, and protection against conjugal violence in the 1990s. The women began to fight for equality in politics and to form laws to secure parity and quotas. In France, the Law of June 6, 2000, the struggles for LGBT rights and different intersections of feminism began to raise their voices (Briatte, 2020). The current era is known for post-feminism, where women have attained all rights, and the intersectionality of gender, class, race, and ethnicity. They appeared at the global level due to the globalization of neo-liberalism. The female migrants are an example of this exposed violence. The different groups have been forming across Europe in the age of digital media. The #MeToo has given a voice to women against the long-standing exploitation of them. Inglehart and Norris, in their influential work, "Rising Tide: Gender Equality and Cultural Change Around the World," claim that the 20<sup>th</sup> century has brought big changes in traditional gender roles. She stated that modernization has altered the social and cultural attitude towards gender parity. She compared almost seventy nations, from rich to poor and agrarian to postindustrial societies, and measured their perspectives towards gender equality (Cvajner, 2026). In recent years, gender equality has become a key idea of European societies in forming institutional mechanisms and public opinions. There is a strong association between economic development and democratic gender norms. Some scholars also argue that religion, generational shift, political beliefs, and cultural legacies have been influencing the gender norms across European societies. They also recognized that the Nordic countries, where egalitarian core values are fully embraced, have wide support for women's political, educational, and economic rights. They identified that the gender rights implementation in these states carries institutional legal reforms, raises women's access to work and education, which ultimately transform the gender roles progressively. Despite all the developments, women still face various barriers through media coverage that scrutinizes their private lives. The media continually to portray male as strong leadership figures in politics, which reflects the gender bias of cultural norms. The male political figures generally get more attention and media coverage for their leadership qualities. The gender biasness also found during the election campaigns, which resultantly in the underrepresentation of women in politics (Aaldering, 2018). Gender was the marginalized concern in Eastern Europe in the post-socialist era. Feminists argue that state-led policies form the gender relations; previously, the large number of women in employment helped in the splitting of gender norms in different professions. But suddenly, the governments in Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic cut the childcare provisions and access to economic means, which affects the women's public and family life (Steinhilber, 2005). The concept of intersectionality emerged with the activism of black feminism and the color of women. Because the power structure has been marginalizing them for ages, and the rising neo-liberal order is also depowering them (Rosenkranz, 2024). Various measures have been taken to enhance women's representation along with other marginalized groups. For this, the EU has introduced the framework of a new Gender Action Plan in 2015, and A Strategic Engagement for Gender Equality in 2016 to reduce the gender pay gap, pension gap, and fight poverty, combat gender-based violence, promoting gender equality and women's rights. The EU urges member states to achieve these targets as it's a key to European values and norms, more importantly, and the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which must be attained till 2030 (Commission, 2025). The EU has also launched a framework, Gender in the Era (ERA Roadmap) at nation level, where member countries are responsible for developing plans and strategies to address gender imbalance and decision-making level in various dimensions. The member states also initiated Research Funding Organizations (RFO) and Research Performing Organizations (RPO) to monitor the effectiveness of policies (Commission, 2020). The growing debates of cultural ethnicity have transformed the perspective of representation in political offices. The western Europe region's countries, such as France, Italy, United Kingdom, have received the largest number of immigrants,

which made those countries multicultural societies. The ethnic minority women often experience disadvantage in politics. Like France has complex ties between ethnicity and gender. The gender parity movement rejected ethnicity as a minority representation (Murray, 2016). In the homogeneous politics of France, they have been gradually achieving descriptive representation with the condition of acting as a figure of assimilation and secularity. But this act constrains the substantive representation of Muslim women in politics. In the case of Germany, where they recently reduced the number of women's seats, this ultimately affects the other gender. The women's share in the Bundestag is just 32.4%, and minorities have only 11.6% representation. The lack of diversity brings bias in the decision-making process. The symbolic representation questioned the efficacy of the Bundestag. The low-income and less educated are also underrepresented. The more accurate parliament required a representation from socio-demographic to run the smooth political process (Sommer, 2025). The intersection inequalities in political participation with young women are less than those of young men in institutions. The social barriers also hamper women's abilities to join other organizations and limit their political actions in democratic societies, too. The concept is related to individualism, where young men are more active than older women, although they have opportunities in their marginalized communities (Grasso, 2025). The Labour Party in the UK, the Left Party in Germany, the Green Party in Belgium and Sweden, have adopted the quota mandates to ensure the social, economic, and political rights of the intersectional groups. But the efforts are still demanding the implementation. The patriarchal structure and male-dominated leadership of power politics are the main hurdles to achieving these goals.

### **The Future Prospects**

The future of women's political representation hinges on the developments and credibility of political institutions, social and cultural norms, economic empowerment, and gender parity. It can be observed that diverse progress has been made in the post-Cold War era across Europe. The Council of Europe has adopted a new framework, the Gender Equality Strategy for 2024-2029, which is an example of future commitment towards gender parity (COP, 2025). The initiative will prevent and combat gender stereotypes and violence against women, domestic violence, ensure equal access to justice, attaining balance participation of women and men in the public and political sphere, and, more importantly, ensure gender equality with the demographic and global changes. Professor Nowak stated that the next parliament will not be elected by votes merely, but by care of logged on blockchains because the aging population and migration flaws will be increased due to climate change. EU data shows that the current shows that it will cost 1.2 trillion Ponds annually in Europe. So, they have to create the council quotas too because the number of labour women will also increase. Ensuring a high-quality life to EU citizens, the cost will increase to 30.5 million in 2050. The proposed strategy by the EU requires improving the care and work-life balance policies to address gender equality (Kuiper, 2022). Furthermore, the European Commission has recently presented its new Gender Equality Strategy for 2026 to 2030 to embed gender equality in all aspects of life, such as online and offline threats from work to education and cyberviolence, including Artificial Intelligence (AI) threats particularly affecting women (Union, 2026). The progress made has been examined by EIGE suggest that it might take approximately 50 years to reach the full goal of gender parity. Because gender inequalities already exist among member states. But the new roadmap adopted for women's rights will help to empower women, girls, and other marginalized sections of society. It also dynamically opposes the backtracking of fundamental rights and accelerates towards a gender-equal Europe.

The other significant prospect to increase women's political representation is to reinforce the institutional framework regarding gender quotas. Like Mona Krook in her works argues that gender quotas are a favorable action mechanism intended to safeguard that women have reserved and designated seats in national parliaments (Gray, 2010).

Several Western European countries, like Spain and France, have adopted gender quotas to enhance women's descriptive and substantive representation, whereas the Eastern region is still lagging due to its conservative social and political environment, but it can be learned from modernized neighboring states of the West. The other main strategy is to economically empower the women, as it is correlated to political representation. Western European countries like Sweden and Finland have introduced social safety nets and welfare policies, childcare and health facilities, which ultimately help them to pursue their career in politics, and they have the highest representation of women in parliaments, which stands at approximately 44% (OECD, Social Spendings, 2024). Leadership and education are other factors to enhance women's political representation.

The EIGE data shows that education is significant in strengthening their representation in political offices. Education plays a crucial role in fostering women's interest in politics and in having an egalitarian perspective regarding gender roles in society. Whereas education is an important instrument to mitigate gender disparity. Pippa Norris also agrees with the fact that progressive cultural values and norms on gender parity are more aligned to invest in the education of women and their support for political participation (Luna Bellani, 2025). The leadership training programs and women's mentorship initiatives can overcome the obstacles in women's political engagement and campaigns. The process of cultural transformation is another significant domain of future development. The persistent conservative and traditional gender roles are instilled, affecting the political leadership perspectives in different societies of Europe. Feminist scholars argue that women are still marginalized in leadership roles at higher levels because the power politics is characterized by the traits of masculinity. The gender digital theory of feminism "hashtag and clicktivism revolution" which mainly focuses on cyber activism, social media, and social violence claims that male is continue to dominate the leadership roles (Kark, 2024). The social media platforms, public campaigns, and egalitarian views of the young generation can help, as Western region have been doing this, whereas Eastern nations should learn from them. The EU policy frameworks, research data, and policy recommendations are also helping member states to bridge the gender gap and improve women's political representation in their national parliaments and political institutions. The EU data shows that women have to work fifteen months more than what men can earn in a year, and women only earn 77% what men can earn annually (EU, 2025). The EU "Women on Boards" directive data, listed the companies that have 40% of underrepresented genders in their non-executive directors and 33% in their directors in 2024, and this is a wake-up call for all member states of the EU to review their mechanisms and strictly implement them (EU, 2026). The challenges to intersectionality are still to be addressed because they are an important part of society and future progress. While women have attained a large number of representations in politics, marginalized communities are still behind, which hampers social and economic progress. The intersectional policy approaches have been initiated by the EU and member states to achieve gender mainstreaming and are inclined towards intersectional approaches in their policies and frameworks. The European Network against Racism (ENAR) has been working since 1998. To combat the racial inequality and facilitate the collaboration among all the anti-racism actors across Europe (ENAR, 2025). The globalization of technological advancement can foster women's representation through digital activism of women in politics and various platforms. The overall analysis of various indicators highlights that the future of women is optimistic. To achieve the long-term goals, it requires persistent efforts and commitments from every sphere of society and strict policy implementations to achieve the desired progress.

## **Conclusion**

This research work deals with the comparative analysis of women's political representation in Western and Eastern Europe. It analyses through the lens different factors like economy, political history, social and cultural norms, and intersectionality. The main crux is that economic empowerment is more important to enhance women's political engagement because it opens doors to many opportunities, which ultimately benefit women to pursue their careers according to their own choice. The other important finding is that the role of institutions is essential. The strengthen women's representation through a quota system in parties and electoral quotas. The other important finding is the role of social structure and conservative norms. It is observed that societies that have egalitarian views are more inclined towards gender parity, and the ratio of women in the public and private spheres is quite high. It also highlights the prospects of women's representation through policy recommendations.

## **Recommendations**

To address the underrepresentation challenges and gender inequality, a comprehensive framework is required that amalgamates the social transformation, institutional legal reforms, and economic assistance. The main strategy is to economically empower the women, as it is correlated to political representation. Enhancing women's participation in the economic market leads to achieving at work, home, and in society, largely, and to increase countries Growth Domestic Product (GDP). When both men and women participate in the economy, it assists them to contribute and to benefit from economic growth at large, to combat poverty, and to provide for their families together. The social media platforms, public campaigns, and egalitarian views of the young generation can help, as Western Europe has been doing this, whereas Eastern nations should learn from them. The EU policy frameworks, research data, and policy recommendations are also helping member states to bridge the gender gap and improve women's political representation in their national parliaments and political institutions.

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