

**ANALYZING GENDER GAP IN THE US CONGRESS DURING THE
DONALD TRUMP PRESIDENCY ERA (2017-2021)
UNDERGRADUATE THESIS**



**UNIVERSITAS
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Proposed to the Department of International Relations
Faculty of Psychology and Socio-Cultural Sciences
Universitas Islam Indonesia

As a partial fulfillment of requirement to earn

Bachelor Degree in International Relations



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AUTHORIZATION PAGE

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STATEMENT OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

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No other materials are used other than those contained. I have read and understood the university's rules and procedures regarding plagiarism.

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13 August, 2024



CHUSNUL SALSABILLA

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ABSTRACT

With the lower ranking of Political Participation resulting in a massive Gender Gap compared to other Western developed countries, and even its neighboring countries, the U.S., however, even as a resourceful country, seems to still be on a long slow journey to close the massive gender gap despite having a higher number of women being elected to Congress in 2018. This research analyzes how Social, Legal, and Economic Rights could affect the massive gender gap in the U.S. Congress. This thesis uses Liberal Feminism Theory as the liberation of women, through 3 approaches by Sally J. Scholz, which are Social, Legal, and Economic Rights. The results of this research show that the lack of Social, Legal, and Economic Rights could lead to a gender gap between men and women in the U.S. Congress, and the gender gap will not be closed as long as Social, Legal, and Economic Rights are not being fulfilled.

Keywords: Gender Gap, The US Congress, Social, Legal, Economic Rights.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

Based on the data of UN women, by September 1, 2021, “only around 26 women were serving as Heads of State and/or Government in 24 countries” (UN WOMEN, 2021). Due to this data, they also stated that “gender equality in the highest positions of power will not be reached for another 130 years”. Meanwhile, women's political participation and leadership are important to achieving gender equality as outlined in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. There is still a huge gap in a lot of countries between women's and men's participation in politics and leadership; this gap could also be called the gender gap. The gender gap in general, according to an article on the World Economic Forum website, is “the disparity between men and women in any field, across the spectrum of social, political, intellectual, cultural, or economic achievements or attitudes” (Harris 2017). The World Economic Forum first introduced the Global Gender Gap Index in 2006 with one of the purposes to measure the distance to full gender parity, and reviewing countries gender gap ranking originally covering four areas, such as economic, education, health, and political participation (The World Economic Forum 2023). However, in this research, the term gender gap will be used to define the gender parity score between men and women specifically in Political Participation within the US Congress.

The participation of women in politics began with the first wave of feminism that happened around 1848 - 1920, which focused on women’s right to vote in a political election (Grady, 2018). It has been almost a century since the

feminist movement started as a political movement, and since then the path for women's participation in US politics began, starting with Jeannette Rankin of Montana as the first woman to serve in Congress (Women in Congress, n.d.) to the controversial 2016 presidential election between Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton. The US is still yet to have a woman elected as president (Bhardwaj, 2019). The problem with this gender gap in the United States of America is that even the percentage of women in the national lower or single houses of congress is only around 27.3% based on the by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2021), despite the fact that women composed 51% of the U.S. Population, while article I Section 7 of the US Constitution, stated that, “the House of Representatives must introduce all bills aimed at increasing revenue, but the Senate is authorized to suggest or agree to changes just like it does with other bills” (Congress.gov, n.d.), therefore, Congress has the power to propose bills that could affect every American Citizen lives the United States Constitution .

The problem with women and the massive gender gap linked to the fact that women are still under-represented, even in the legislative branch that responsible for their lives, participation in politics and as policymakers has a crucial significance, not only for achieving gender equality and addressing “women's issues”, but also for ensuring an effective democracy. The question of why representation matters, especially in the legislative branch that aims to hearing the voice and understand the problems of the people they represents, according to an article by Ashley Sorensen, “having representatives who share

similar traits to the people, regarding gender, color, or life circumstances is one method to increase people's sense of inclusion and trust in the whole political process" (Sorensen 2021), while in another journal article by David Campbell and Christina Wolbrecht discusses on how female politicians could portray as a role model for young women to take an interest in the democratic system and willing to be more politically involved (Campbell and Wolbrecht 2006, 244).

Based on the United Nations website, "it is more challenging for younger women due to the lower representation among political leadership" and according to the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), around 2.2% of parliamentarians are under the age of 30, but fewer than 1% of them are young women (Call to Action: Young Women's Political Participation and Leadership, 2020). Given that young women tend to take action on issues like climate change, racial justice, and gender equality, their involvement in formal politics is crucial. They are strong proponents of multigenerational obligation and cooperation for a more open, sustainable, and equal world. More young women, in all their diversity, representing us when political decisions for the future are made will be to our mutual benefit.

Donald Trump's Presidency era is considered one of the most controversial, as there was an increasing amount of sexism happening within the office, despite the fact that women gained a record number of seats in Congress in the 2018 midterm elections to serve for 116th Congress. 117 women were elected to Congress that year bringing their total number to 127, marking an improvement from 2016 when only 89 women were elected. However, statistics are still grim. In both chambers, there are nearly three men for every woman. The division along

party lines is considerably greater, where 38% of Democratic lawmakers are female, compared to only 8% of Republicans. However, it is still considered as “not enough” to close the massive gender gap and create political balance between male and female representation in US politics. According to the International Standard, the United States of America ranks 76th of 193 countries in women’s representation, according to an analysis from Torsten Sløk, chief international economist at Deutsche Bank Securities in New York, who tracks the trend of the number of women running for office, gender equality in Congress could only be achieved by 2108 looking at the current rate (Zhou 2019).

According to one of the articles by Roll Call, a newspaper covers reports on political and legislative activity on the U.S. Capitol and provides political coverage of congressional elections nationwide, explained how more women in Congress could link to lower rate sexism for staffers, as California Rep. Katie Hill talked about, “the only way for such behaviors to be eradicated is by having more women as your peers in the Capitol, for the women to call out on sexism and recognizing such behaviors is not appropriate”, and Arizona Rep. Debbie Lesko’s statement on “how higher numbers of women in Congress, some of whom may have already been subjected to sexual misconduct, is a crucial step in the fight against inappropriate approaches” (Akin 2019), as the article above mentioned, on the other hand, massive gender gap in Congress could also lead to some sexism cases, for example can be seen in Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez's speech about how Representative Ted Yoho, accompanied by Representative Roger Williams, threw sexist comments towards her, calling her rude, disgusting, crazy, and even calling her a "bitch" (BBC, 2020). Another example is the speech

Rashida Tlaib delivered on "violence against women in politics" in the congressional record, labeling the violence against women as a global issue (Krook 2020). However, these two cases are just small examples of the many challenges that women in politics have to face, leading to women in politics being "underrepresented".

Even after Trump's presidency period, when Kamala Harris was elected as the first female vice president in January 2021, data collected from the Center for American Women and Politics at Rutgers University indicated that women only represented around 27% of the United States House of Representatives and even fewer being women of color (Rutgers University & Eagleton Institute of Politics, 2022). The several data points above show how small women's participation in politics is and how under-represented women are in politics. A lot of women also have lower ambitions than men to run for office due to several reasons. Women are less encouraged than men and the system fails to make them believe that they are even qualified compared to men. Systemic sexism from men in a patriarchal culture, as well as internalized sexism and misogyny from other women, make it more difficult for women to run for higher positions of leadership in any work field, particularly "male-dominated" industries like politics.

Several studies were conducted regarding women's participation in American politics during the controversial 2016 presidential election and under Trump's presidency. A study conducted by Jennifer Byrd-Craven, Jarrod Bock, and Melissa Burkley (2017) examined how sexism affects political attitudes towards women in the 2016 presidential election. Another paper by Meredith Conroy (2018) discussed Hillary Clinton's 2016 election performance, in

particular, the sexist remarks that she got about "not having the presidential look", and how women being more feminine could not fit the political notion that "leadership is masculine". Another study by Jonathan Knuckey (2018) examined the cruciality of modern and traditional sexism's effect on voting choices in the 2016 presidential election.

Although, a lot of scholars have conducted research on women's participation in American politics during and after the 2016 presidential election between Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump, however, none of them truly examined the lack of equality in granting human rights for women set as a normal practice in the social structure influences the low rate participation of women in American Politics during Donald Trump Presidential period (2017-2021). Therefore, this research thesis will be conducted using a qualitative method to deeper analyze the causes of "not enough" female representation number in American politics that is still causing the massive gender gap in US Congress, as well as how it affects the big challenges that women in politics have to face predominantly during the Donald Trump Presidency era (2017-2021).

1.2. Research Question

Based on the background above, the problem being addressed in this research thesis is:

- How does the lack of social, legal, and economic rights affect the gender gap in the US Congress during Donald Trump's presidency era (2017-2021)?

1.3. Research Objectives

1. Analyzing the phenomenon of the gender gap in the US Congress during Donald Trump's Presidency era, as the US still ranks lower in Political Participation specifically in Congress behind other developed countries even its neighboring countries (2017-2021).
2. To analyze the cause of the gender gap in the US congress during the Donald Trump Presidency era (2017-2021).

1.4. Research Scope

The author limits this research to the causes of gender gap in politics specifically in the US Congress between men and women leading to underrepresentation of women in politics including the lack of rights being provided for women through Social, Legal, and Economic Rights using the definition by Sally J. Scholtz in her book, "Feminism: A beginner's idea". The research has only been conducted on the female participation in politics during Donald Trump's administration, as in 2018, there was a record number for 117 women being elected makes up to 127 women in total for 116th Congress, higher from 2016 with only 89 women, however, this number is still considered as "not enough" to close the massive gender gap.

1.5. Literature Review

The author reviewed multiple pieces of literature that are relevant to the topic as differentiators and supporting material for the topic.

The first article was written by Brian F. Schaffner (2021) with the title “Optimizing the Measurement of Sexism in Political Surveys”, and conducted between 1,103 respondents regarding their take on men, women, and public affairs using three evaluation criteria: 1. Convergent validity; 2. Predictive validity; and 3. Political proximity (Schaffner, 2022, 379). Schaffner found five critical forms of sexism that influence discriminatory behavior; however, respondents believed that these discriminatory attitudes are unrelated to political factors. Therefore, in this research, the author analyzes the causes of women being underrepresented in American politics during the Donald Trump era (2017-2021).

The second article by Eric Hanley (2021) with the title “Sexism as a political force: The impact of gender-based attitudes on the presidential elections of 2012 and 2016”, examined how gender attitudes and sexism influenced white voters in the 2016 presidential election, measuring "traditional sexism" and "modern sexism" by the belief that sexual discrimination is fictive and holds harsh judgment on feminists. However, Hanley mainly discusses gender stereotypes from voters. Therefore, in this research, the author does not only focus on the gender stereotypes in social rights but also legal, and economic rights.

The third article by Susan Chira (2020) with the title “Donald Trump’s Gift to Feminism: The Resistance” analyzed how the 2016 presidential election brought a new era of the feminist movement in American politics. Women joined the grassroots movements; some came from executive-level institutions to provide women of all races a platform to speak up, and the feminist movement grew in size. However, Chira mainly explained that in the time of "oppression" under a sexist president, there is a light for the feminist

agenda. Therefore, in this research, the author analyzes the challenges that female politicians faced during the Donald Trump administration even though there was a slight increase in representation.

An article by Kathleen Dolan (Dolan, 2008) with the title “Is There a “Gender Affinity Effect” in American Politics?”, examined the impact of the "gender affinity effect" among candidates in U.S. elections and found that women voters are influenced by political party preference rather than the candidate's gender. This study, however, focused mainly on the way women voters perceive women candidates from the Democratic party as opposed to those from the Republican party. Therefore, this current research analyzes not based on one political party only, but counting experiences of women in the US Congress.

The last article by Conroy et al (2020) with the title “Gender, Sex, and the Role of Stereotypes in Evaluations of Hillary Clinton and the 2016 Presidential Candidates”, analyzed the phenomenon of gender, sex, and gender stereotypes affecting the election and voting decisions of 2016 Presidential Candidates (Conroy et al., 2020, 218). However, Conroy et al. mainly discusses high numbers of voters still sticking with the conception that presidential leadership is “masculine”. Therefore, this research discusses not only sexist stereotypes that affect women’s performance and other challenges in political participation.

According to multiple examples of literature on gender issues in the political system, female candidates are seen as incapable of fitting into the political system due to their feminine characteristics. However, the previous pieces of literature were mostly focused on analyzing and evaluating the issue of

sexism during the 2016 Presidential Election, not a deeper analysis of the gender gap in the United States Congress. Therefore, this research discusses the phenomenon of the gender gap in the US Congress through social rights, economic rights, and legal rights (2017-2021).

1.6. Research Framework

Liberal feminism is one of the earliest theories of feminism inspired heavily by the adaptations from classical liberal concepts of individual freedom being used as a framework to create the liberation of women. The principles of classical liberalism helped to acknowledge the lack of fundamental rights and the creation of equal opportunities for women. In chapter 3 of Sally J. Scholz's book, "Feminism: A Beginner's Guide", Scholz began answering the question of what is considered as being "human" and whether women are qualified to have the title. Women were considered inferior to men and not guaranteed fundamental human rights. This is evident in the statements of early western philosophers, such as "women are not human in the same way that men are human" (Scholz 2010, 41).

This book examines the urgency of answering the question of women being considered in the human spectrum in a culture or society knowing that only recently women began to be considered as "full citizens", rather than just a member of the family or a property to the partners and fathers. Liberal feminism argues that this question also means the acknowledgement of how women should be granted "human status" with all of the associated fundamental rights, which are legal, social, and economic rights that come with such status.

As liberalism in general focuses heavily on individual rights and the relation to social contract, liberal feminism exists to include women as a human

being where women are rational enough and free to make decisions for oneself in the social construct. Women should be given social, legal, and economic rights.

There are 3 approaches that correlate with liberal feminism will be used in this research framework, and are as follows:

1. Social Rights is used to analyze how society views women, the gender stereotypes, patriarchal perspective in the society, as well as sexism that women get, specifically in this case, that became challenges for women to run for office, or challenges for the female politicians in the U.S. Congress.

2. Legal Rights have been used by the author to analyze how reformation within the system can be a crucial step in achieving gender equality in political representation, as declared by liberal feminism. In regards to how policy reforms in the United States of America can affect the gender gap in the U.S. Congress, or eliminate the challenges for female politicians or female candidates to run for office. As Scholz stated, “but other laws and legal reform are also necessary to facilitate the liberation of women” (Scholz 2010, 50).

3. Economic Rights, is being used to analyze the lack of equal treatment in economic opportunities in The United States of America, such as the gender wage gap, lack of employment, and even glass ceiling, could affect the gender gap through the lack of campaign funding or support being provided for women.

1.7. Provisional Argument

The author declares that despite a slight increase in female representation under Donald Trump's administration in the 116th congress in 2018, where 117 women were elected showing improvement from the 89 in 2016, the gender gap in

the US political system is still wide and the country ranks 75th out of 193 based on the data from the Inter-Parliamentary Union by 2019 (Newburger 2019). This underrepresentation of women in politics is still considered “not enough” to close the massive gender gap as the representation of women in politics is still yet to reach 30%, and the fulfillment of 3 rights, Social, Legal, and Economic Rights are essential to close the massive gender gap.

1.8. Research Method

1.8.1. Type of the Research

This research uses qualitative methods to analyze the data that has been collected from journals, articles, books, or news in the form of words, but without closing the possibility of numeric data types, directed towards descriptive data, as according to The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research (Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln, 2017).

1.8.2. Subject and Object of the Research

The subject of this research refers to the former president of the United States of America, Donald Trump's administration, and the object is the gender gap during Donald Trump's administration as well as the causes of the gender gap (2017–2021).

1.8.3. Method of Data Collection

This research primarily uses secondary data gathered not directly by the researcher but through other sources, including records and documents that are useful for the research (Allen, 2017).

1.8.4. Process of the Research

The research process includes collecting data, data analysis, drawing the conclusion of the analysis as well as providing recommendations for future research.

1.9. Thesis Outline

The writing of this research has been carried out systematically as follows:

A. Chapter I: Introduction

This chapter contains the background, research question, research objective, research scope, literature review, research framework, provisional argument, research method, and thesis outline.

B. Chapter II: The United States Political Gender Gap In The Us Congress During Donald Trump's Presidency

Chapter II discusses the massive gender gap in the U.S. Political Participation, with 3 Sub-Chapters:

2.1 United States Gender Gap in Political Participation

2.2. Women's Experience in Politics during the Donald Trump Presidency era (2017-2021)

2.3. Higher Participation of Women in American Politics

C. Chapter III: Analysis Of The Gender Gap In United States Political Participation Through Social Rights, Legal Rights, And Economic Rights During Donald Trump's Presidency (2017-2021)

3.1. Social Rights

3.2. Legal Rights

3.3. Economic Rights

D. Chapter IV:

4.1. Conclusion

The author presents the final conclusion based on the analysis in the research that has been conducted.

4.2. Recommendations

In this part, the author gives recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER II

**THE UNITED STATES POLITICAL GENDER GAP IN THE US
CONGRESS DURING DONALD TRUMP'S PRESIDENCY (2017-2021)**

In this chapter, the gender gap will be discussed as well as the flaws in the system that have added to the gender gap and challenges for women's experiences in the American Political system during the same time period. The size of the gender gap in the United States of America's Political Representation is still wide despite an increasing number of women being elected to Congress in 2018. This chapter discusses the higher representation of women as an essential key for gender equality development as a target, and for the United States of America's democracy as when women can bring unique and new perspectives along with adding inclusivity in the system and making sure that women's concerns from every background can be heard.

2.1. The United States Gender Gap in Political Participation

Even after more than 40 years since the CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women) legalized as an international agreement and a tool to guide United Nations Women (UN Women) in achieving gender equality, with the purpose of eradicating all types of discrimination against women in both the public and private sectors (Khanna, Kimmel, and Karkara 2016) and more than 20 years after the United Nations World Conference on Women in Beijing, in which a balance in political participation between both genders as well as equal distribution of power in the

decision-making process was set as an international goal in The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the number of women participating in all national parliaments has not reached 30%. The majority of countries lack female representation in politics with between 10% and 29% of members of the parliaments being women across 114 countries. This gender gap in politics is caused by a lot of different factors including the challenges within the system that have planted discriminatory values, or traditional gender norms, and even policies.

UN Women stated that a balanced political representation and power sharing between both genders has been set as their target (United Nations Women 2023). A 50/50 gender balance in politics is the global target, and urgent action is required to achieve gender parity in political representation for every state. Based on International Knowledge Network of Women in Politics (iKNOWPOLITICS) as a collaborative medium of International IDEA (Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance), the Inter-parliamentary Union (IPU), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), in 2021 it was analyzed that, given the numbers of current progress of women participation in politics, the aim to close the gender gap in politics will not be achieved until around 2063 (iKNOW Politics 2021).

While the progress relating to the gender gap in politics for every country's progress varies, we cannot deny the fact that The United States of America, as one of the most influential countries, has had a very unique journey in terms of gender equality progress in politics throughout its history. It has been

more than a hundred years since the suffragette movement where the 19th amendment was legalized guaranteeing American women the right to vote, and even when women compose more than half of the population, they still represent fewer than one-third of all elected politicians at the local, state, and national levels collectively (Rose 2020). The political participation of women remains way behind in numbers compared to men, moreover, in the case of running for congress. On the other hand, an active participation of women in political representation benefits a lot of gender equality policies such as health care, economic opportunity, and even education for women.

While Liberal feminism believes in the reforms within the system, it is important for women to get into the political system and be involved directly in the policy-making process to reach such reformation. However, for this case of a country that upholds democracy and freedom of oneself as their foundation, the United States of America are proving that the gender parity issue in political participation is a very complex matter to solve. According to The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), “by establishing that the leaderships of governmental bodies represent the citizens they serve including the gender distribution within the system can promote the equality and efficiency of public administrations and parliaments” (The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) 2021). The organization also explained further that the matter of reaching gender equality in politics goes deeper than the issue of women and men obtaining an equal distribution in congressional and cabinet offices, but also demands a fair access for both genders from every background to such political roles to guarantee they are able to participate in an

active role in decision-making roles on the same basis. To make this goal a reality, an inclusive work field is crucial as well as equal opportunities to leadership positions, including the eradication of socioeconomic barriers in political engagement. They give examples of "gender-mainstreamed and targeted public policies" (The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development 2021), while also stating that a political balance in the congress and the cabinet is one of the major aspects to see a state's commitment towards gender equality goal.

The Global Gender Gap Report of 2017 provides the data and rankings of countries using the gaps between women and men in four dominant fields: health, education, economy, and politics as the measure will be used as a supporting data for the argument in this research. For this research, the Global Gender Gap index report, specifically in the Political Empowerment area by the World Economic Forum, is used to determine the index of the gender gap in US politics during President Donald Trump's administration as a comparison to the number of women who participated politically during President Trump's administration period. The Global Gender Gap Index itself was first published by The World Economic Forum in 2006 as an approach to assess the scope of gender-based inequality and monitor its development over time. In the Political Empowerment Subindex, there are 3 guidelines being used by the World Economic Forum: 1) the percentage of women to men in legislative posts at present, 2) the current percentage of women to men in ministerial positions; and 3) the the ratio of women to men in executive office positions (leadership position) for the past 50 years. The first two are sourced from the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the third

is from World Economic Forum (WEF) calculations by reviewing the situation each year.

Table 1. The Indicators used for the Political Empowerment Subindex by the World Economic Forum.

Ratio	Standard Deviation	Standard Deviation for 1% point change	weight
Females with seats in Parliament over male	0.166	0.060	0.310
Females at the ministerial level over male	0.208	0.048	0.247
Number of years with a female head of state (for the last 50 years) over male	0.116	0.086	0.443
Total	1		

*The indicators have been calculated using the principles in the Global Gender Gap Report 2006.

Source: (World Economic Forum 2017)

In 2017, the United States of America ranked 49 in Global Ranking of the Global Gender Gap by the World Economic Forum, where the data was accumulated from every indicator among health, education, economy, and politics. Meanwhile, for the Political Empowerment subindex rankings, the United States of America ranked 96 out of 144 countries, and remains far behind its neighboring countries in North America, with Canada in the 20th position and Mexico ahead of the US with 34th. In the same report, the WEF mentioned how there was a drop in the number of its political empowerment indicators driven by a significant decrease in equal representation of women in ministerial-level roles, marking the lowest it had been since 2007.

Table 2. Political Empowerment Rankings 2017 - 2021.

2017	2018	2020	2021
1. Iceland	1. Iceland	1. Iceland	1. Iceland
2. Nicaragua	2. Nicaragua	2. Norway	2. Finland
3. Rwanda	3. Norway	3. Nicaragua	3. Norway
20. Canada	21. Canada	14. Mexico	18. Mexico

34. Mexico	27. Mexico	25. Canada	29. Canada
96. United States of America	98. United States of America	86. United States of America	37. United States of America

(Source: World Economic Forum)

Even for the political participation index, the US ranks lower than the average in the same subindex area among the score line of 0.0 - 0.2. This shows how low the political empowerment and women representation in American Politics is, especially when being compared, not even globally, but even just on the regional level. Globally, Political Participation still remains the aspect that had the highest gender imbalance in 2018, according to the WEF Global Gender Gap Report, with around only 23% of the gap having been closed. And in 2018 for the United States, even with an increased number of women elected in Congress, which was repeatedly referred to as a record-breaking number of women in US politics by the US media, the United States still ranked 51 which was a decrease in ranking compared to the year before. This placed the US below Mexico in 2018. For the political empowerment aspect, in the same year, the United States of America still remained below the average global scores for the Political Empowerment indicator.

As for the political participation indicator ranking, the United States ranked 98, surprisingly even lower than the year before and again, was way behind countries of the same region as the US, with Canada at 21 and Mexico, after experiencing a big increase in political empowerment, at 27. In 2020, the

Political Empowerment field remains big, despite the progress in the sub indicator with only 25% of the gap in this field having been closed, with the United States ranking in Political Empowerment below the global not even reaching the 0.2 on the scale. As for the Political Participation Ranking, in 2020, the United States experienced an increase in its ranking number being placed in the 89th position; however, just like the years before, it still remained behind Canada at 25th, and Mexico at 14th. There was a slight increase in the ranking for women in parliament, from rank 88th to 67th, and women in ministerial positions from 85th to 76th. However, the number of females or male in leadership positions of the country decreased from ranking 71 to 73.

There is no notable meaning in this last indicator because the score remains the same with 0.000 as the United States never has never had a female president based on the United States Country Scorecard. In 2021, there was an improvement in the Political Empowerment Sub Indicator for the United States ranking as it reached the number above average in global rankings for this country, with above 0.2 score in the scale of 0.0-0.1. On the other hand, this also can be caused by the fact that there was a big decline in overall score for the Political Empowerment sub indicator by -2.4% compared to the previous year, and only 22.3% of the gap had been closed by 2021. In the 2021 report, the Political Empowerment rankings of the United States made a significant jump to ranking 37 with a score of 0.329, even though it still remained behind its neighboring countries, Mexico with a ranking of 18th in this sub indicator and Canada at 29th. However, seeing that 2021 was also an “awkward” year for Donald Trump’s presidency as his presidency period ended in January of 2021,

this number poses a some kind of dilemma if used to measure women's participation in politics towards the end of his presidency.

Despite the slight increasing number of females participating in politics during Donald Trump's era, especially the record-breaking number of 117 women being elected to congress in 2018, which was a significant jump from 89 in 2016 causing a lot of media coverage to say that history had finally repeated itself more than 20 years after the "year of the woman in politics" in 1992, on the other hand, the United States of America still lacks in women's political participation in comparison to other western democratic countries. Hence, despite the breaking record, women's political participation in the US is still considered low, and the 50/50 gender balance in politics as well as the journey to close the massive gender gap in political representation still has a long way to go. The US is still considered to be scoring awfully with no female to ever hold political leadership of the state, and even as recently as 2016 was the first year for voters to be able to cast a vote for a woman as a presidential candidate from a major political party.

All of the aspects in a governmental system, such as education, social construct, and legal system, supplements the number of women running for office or being involved in a decision-making process. In the context of a decision-making process, not so long ago early philosophers still considered women as not fully on the "human spectrum", and therefore not deserving of fundamental human rights in the way men were. Women were considered less human, not rational, not autonomous to make decisions by oneself. Before suffrage in the US, women were not considered as citizens, and even until now, they are still considered second class citizens in certain contexts, such as in

societal structure where women are still being treated poorly with inherent systemic sexism, and gender norms attached to them.

2.2. Women's experiences in Politics during Donald Trump Presidency (2017-2021)

Despite the record-breaking number and media coverage of how the 2018 female representation in politics mirrored the event in 1992, which was called by the media as the, “year of the women in politics”, the gender gap between women and men in political representation remains huge. However, despite the controversial presidency and openly sexism from the leadership position, coming from President Donald Trump, women did not stop women contributing to political participation. In fact, what happened was the opposite. Based on one of the articles that discussed whether 2018 would be another “year of the women in politics”, there are 2 crucial aspects to put into perspective when talking about whether women will run for the office: “structural opportunities and political ambition” (Shames 2018). In regards to structural opportunities, the key aspect of 1992 was the production of an unprecedented number of open seats in the elections, leading to the strategy of winning election to Congress through open seats rather than running against Congressional incumbents. While there were more seats available in 1992 than 2018, when Trump got elected was also the time of the #MeToo movements, which saw waves of men facing with sexual harassment allegations resigning from holding high office positions and also a higher number of retirements from Congress than usual.

In regards to the political desire aspect of the female candidates, studies have found that women in general have lower ambition to run for the office than men. In a book by Jennifer Lawless and Richard Fox, "It Still Takes A Candidate: Why Women Don't Run for Office", data are provided from the Citizen Political Ambition Panel Study, which surveyed 3,800 qualified applicants in 2001 then further surveyed 2,000 of these applicants again in 2008, finding that women, even those at the peaks of their field, are less likely compared to men to show ambition to run for office. In addition, they are less likely to be approached to run for office, and they are more unlikely to believe that they are qualified to run for government (Lawless and Fox 2010). However, it seems that there has been a wave of anger in the political condition during Donald Trump's era due to blatantly sexist remarks and treatments of a lot of feminist campaigns. Women marched showing their will to voice their political opinions and highlight women entering into government as one of the key themes in the 2018 women's march.

Women's experiences during the Donald Trump era could be considered as not such a fun ride, starting from the very first day of his inauguration, Millions of women protested in the street wearing pink-knitted hats symbolizing "refusal" to accept the presidency. Fast forward to one year after the incident, there was a #MeToo movement, which was one of the biggest feminist movements at the time along with talks about the restrictions on abortion regulations and contraception tools (Misiak 2018). A lot of men were taken down because of sexual harrasment allegations, but President Trump continued on regardless of his own sexual assault allegations from 17 women. He denied those claims whilst holding the highest position in the government (Nelson and Frostenson 2016).

In the case of his administration, the incidence of higher political participation of women instead of being caused by the increasing number of ranks in gender equality policies or freedom being given to women as rational decision-makers, but rather uniquely, it seems that it was due to the rage to fight against him evoked the political ambition of women to run for the congress, with the hope that the congress, as a decision-making unit, could put efforts into creating such gender equality policies and address regulations that could harm women's lives and their well-being in general. As Kaylie Hanson Long, a spokesperson for Naral Pro-Choice America, said "this administration is the worst we've ever seen for women and families" (Siddiqui 2018).

Measuring a gender equal political system cannot only be done with record-breaking numbers - it is much more complex than that. There is a need to dig deeper into the reasons behind the numbers, the experience of female politicians needs to be counted as a guideline to measure gender parity in a political system. As for Donald Trump, it can be seen in how he ignored the liberal (freedom) in women's experiences as fully human beings as well as citizens.

2.3. Higher Participation of Women in American Politics

As it has been established in the previous chapter and subchapter, the underrepresentation of women in American Politics along with the massive gender gap in American politics that created a disparity for centuries, even after 100 years of women having the right to vote being legalized in the constitution, and even after research and studies have shown how a state's development needs

greater women's participation in politics to as an essential key to achieving gender equality as an international target, still persist as problems. Studies indicate that having more women politicians in parliament or congress tends to result in more focus on issues affecting women. Gender parity and democracy are fundamentally reliant on the participation of females , which can lead to an easier way for women to directly participate in the decision-making process and provides a medium ensuring that women are accounted for with (UN Women, n.d.).

Increasing the percentage of women who are involved in the decision-making process of the state, might be the early step towards ensuring women's political accountability, but there are so many more layers in the spectrum after that early step. The UN Women views changes in "gender-sensitive governance" as an essential tool to improve the effectiveness of all elected politicians in advocating for gender parity and gender equality in the legislation system and maintaining its implementation. Hence, encouraging women to participate politically and the formation of an effective government constitutes one of the principles of UN Women's effort to create a decision-making process that is diverse, receptive, equal, and democratic. Specific attempts are made through planned points of entry which have the potential to improve the situation of women by sparking broad-reaching, persistent long-term effects (United Nations Women, n.d.) .

Support is provided by the UN Women through the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which has been ratified by most of the governments in the world, and has now been converted into a legal framework for gender equality. Another effort by the UN in

this case is through the numbers of stakeholders, including governance, the United Nations system, the private actors, organizations that support women's rights included in ways to increase the numbers of female politicians in the political system of every country, including the United States. In addition, projects are available that could help to train women for the leadership roles, and improve women's abilities to actively engage in elections as candidates and voters (UN Women).

According to another source by Women Deliver, which plays a role as a global advocate for gender equality and the health and rights of girls and women, argues that the "full and equitable participation of women in public is essential to building and sustaining strong, vibrant democracies" (Pepera 2018). This means the equal participation of women in all levels of a government, specifically in this case, the congress is a key target on the global development agenda. Kofi Annan, who served as the seventh secretary-general of the United Nations from 1997 to 2006, highlighted the vital point that, "studies have taught us that there is no tool for development more effective than the empowerment of women". In the same article he also stated further the cruciality of women's participation and also the understanding of the inclusivity of women, who have highly distinct life experiences depending on the age (young or old), where they live (rural or urban areas), as well as education (educated or illiterate), which could lead to quite various priorities and demands.

Other points of view of why it is highly crucial to have more women participating in politics is in the spectrum of representation, as currently women in all political levels, all local to national, and specifically in congress, are

underrepresented. This means there are not enough voices and experiences of women that are being heard, which is correlated with the point of how women are inclusive. The participation of women in the political system also needs inclusivity as it is harder for women of color to get into politics. Every woman from every background has a voice that needs to be counted and their concerns can be taken into account within the policy-making process. This results in a diverse policy that can cover everyone's experiences, or, in other words, inclusivity.

Greater women participation in politics can help in eradicating the notion of gender that has been rooted inherently in the social construct, as well as challenge the traditional gender norms and gender-based discrimination. It can challenge the notion that was taught long ago of how men and “masculinity” always come together and women who represent “femininity” which is not to be counted in the aspect of leadership positions. Proving that women are just as capable as men to lead, Scholtz stated that women are just as equally human and equally rational and autonomous as men in decision making. This concept also could lead to the creation of a more equal and a fair society (Scholz 2010, 42).

Studies show that higher women's political participation could lead to a more harmonious and stable society. An article by Daily Trust stated that states with higher women participation in the political system generally have lower numbers in war, conflict, and also have better stability. The same article further concluded that women in leadership positions, specifically in a governmental system, can promote human rights and social justice which leads to peace and security. One of the examples is the former prime minister of New Zealand who

handled the COVID-19 outbreak better than a lot of countries, and tireless battle against the climate change issue that got her honor and praise internationally, This demonstrates that, just like men, women can also perform well or even better in a political system if being provided and supported with equal opportunities (Daily Trust 2023).

It can be concluded that, there are quite a lot of reasons for women's political participation, and their representation can bring unique and new perspectives in such an area, while providing a medium in order to ensure women's voices are heard. Women's political participation can help to face and eliminate the gender bias in the patriarchal system and increase equality, and women's participation in the leadership position can help bring harmony, and create a fair and stable society in the world. Women's political participation here can be argued to be an essential tool for a healthier democracy which symbolizes how more women need to be encouraged to speak up and run for office, for their seat in the political system.

CHAPTER III
ANALYSIS OF THE GENDER GAP IN UNITED STATES POLITICAL
PARTICIPATION THROUGH SOCIAL RIGHTS, LEGAL RIGHTS, AND
ECONOMIC RIGHTS DURING DONALD TRUMP’S PRESIDENCY
(2017-2021)

In this chapter, there will be an analysis of the higher number of women participating in politics in the Donald Trump presidency era (2017-2021) that is still not in accordance with the standard of gender balance in political participation, which is 50/50, and women’s experiences under the Trump administration using liberal feminism theory: social, legal and economic rights. This chapter also includes the analysis of the causes of why despite the higher female participation in politics during Donald Trump administration, is still considered as not reaching the gender balance in the political system as outlined in the 3 aspects of Liberal feminism principles by Scholtz, which are social, legal, and economic rights.

3.1. Social Rights

The need for higher women participation in politics is indeed needed to achieve gender equality in a political system. As UN Women stated, to achieve the gender balance by 50/50 in a governmental system, the slight number of increase during Donald Trump’s period might have been one of the ways of women decided to fight back after centuries of oppression - liberal feminism principles believe that reform within the system will achieve the gender equality, especially

in politics. The gender balance by 50/50 in the US political system will continue to be a difficult issue to solve if the 3 fundamental rights for women are still neglected.

For centuries, early liberal feminists have been fighting for women's freedom, stating that women are fully human and therefore have the right to be granted with making decisions for themselves as well as the right to be involved with the decision-making system, which is politics or running for the office. Donald Trump's administration might have evoked women's political ambition to take back the system and address its problematic ways, but such ways would not be enough to close the massive gender gap, as long as women are still not being granted equal opportunities and rights as men.

First, in Social rights, according to Scholz, the family structure is important in helping shape the social construct. In this case, there are 2 methods in seeing how family structure affects who and what to respect and how society ought to be organized overall. The first method views the family as a portrayal of society, a smaller version of society which portrays the values in the society and affects the system of division for the family roles, in a family that holds patriarchal mindset, the father or the men in the family will always rule the household, like how in the society, putting gender stereotype attaching men with "masculine" traits and therefore could lead, meanwhile a women being seen as a caretaker not only in the family structure but being burdened with the gender stereotypes of women are more "sensitive", or "caring" in the society as well, according to a journal article by Leonie Huddy and Nayda Terkildsen found that voters' gender prejudices regarding the characteristics of male and female

candidates contribute to their propensity expecting male candidates to be more experienced in military affairs, while female candidates performing better on humanitarian issues with compassion, this could also be argued that this perceptions derives on how in family structure, when the father is being view to rule, and the mother is being view as with having more compassion (Hudy and Terkildsen 1993, 140). The second one argues that family is a completely different unity (Scholz 2010, 46). The word patriarchy means “rule by the father” in the Scholtz’s book and she details how Robert Filmer’s book portray a classic example of patriarchy in a way that women were treated as a property, with the descent of the king have political power over wives and children in the families (Scholz 2010, 46).

In this aspect, in social rights for women, it can be said that even after centuries since the first wave of feminism voiced women’s liberation, it still has not been achieved to a great extent. For example, during Donald Trump’s administration, he would throw sexist remarks during his speeches or on social media, degrading women of their capabilities just simply because they are women, or bringing up women’s physical appearance to downgrade them, fueling the fire centuries of women being seen as walking mannequins that have to fit in certain physical and beauty standards. In one of his remarks to his opponent in the 2016 presidential election, Hillary Clinton, he said “she doesn't have the look. She doesn't have the stamina, I said she doesn't have the stamina, and I don't believe she does have the stamina” (Prasad and McKelvey 2019). The increasing number of women participating in politics during 2018 after the presidential election of Donald Trump is not without any reason. In an article by Susan Chira (Chira

2020, 72), it is mentioned that Donald Trump's gift to feminism is resistance, the awakening of the fight from specifically female politicians of the democratic party against his presidency.

An article by the CNN cover the interview with Hillary Clinton on "double-standard" issue, as she gave a statement on how she believes we are still living in a society with a double standard and how she also uses her campaign to advantage on the topic about gender equality, gender stereotypes, and double standard between men and women, however, on the other hand, some Republicans women are unaffected by Trump's misogyny as written in an article the Guardian, as Kim Stone, a Trump supporter from Minnesota stated, "I really believe he will fight for this country", and Marie, another Trump supporter gave a statement in the same article, "Hillary Clinton has done far worse towards women than Donald Trump ever has (Goyette, O'Malley, and Puglise 2016). An article by Jasmine Taylor-Coleman, however, highlighted the opinion by Jennifer Mercieca, a historian of American political rhetoric that she saw both side being attacked, based on their characteristics, decisions, even appearances, but one thing that differentiate one from the other, is that Trump rarely attacked for being a guy, while Clinton is being criticized for being a woman (Taylor 2016).

According to a paper by political scientists Brian Schaffner, Matthew MacWilliams, and Tatishe Nteta concluded in their paper, racism and sexism explains the majority of Trump's significant electoral advantage among white Americans with no college degrees, which is a group that may have helped him win the election. They measured the sexism aspect through hostile sentiments sexism towards women by asking a series of questions taking the data from

national survey data from the online polling firm called YouGov, in which remarks “Many women are actually seeking special favors, including employment regulations which benefit women over men, underneath the cover of demanding “equality”, were among the questions used by the researchers to gauge respondents level of agreement. They then evaluated the responses with the result scores, stating that voters with more sexist perspectives in this research, mostly coming from whites with no college degree, were more likely to vote for Trump in the 2016 election. In their research, they also noted that there is emerging evidence that the 2016 presidential election was distinct from previous ones due to the greater influence of racism and sexism. Based on this, although sexism is not the only element of Trump’s victory in the 2016 Presidential election, his voters, in this case mostly white people without college degrees, share the same sexist perspectives.

Another paper by Margaret Edwards and Brian Schaffner of “sexism among American adults”, used the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory to measure two categories of sexism, hostile and benevolent, evaluating a representative nationwide survey of 993 American adults on July 31 and August 1, 2019. The survey was adjusted for demographics to ensure weighted to ensure that it could represent the American adult population on variables involving factors such as ethnicity, age, gender, or level of education, and then highlighted that “a significant number of Americans remain in agreement with remarks intended to represent both hostile and benevolent sexism, even in 2020” (Edwards and Schaffner 2020, 73). Hostile means openly discriminatory conduct toward another gender, in this case women, includes gender discrimination, the use of sexist

remarks, or inappropriate behaviors behaviors, while benevolent sexism in which putting conventional gender stereotypes towards women, such as viewing a woman's value as an extension of men in her life rather than as a separate individual, or having the perspectives that women should not engage with certain tasks that as they associate "masculinity" with, such as holding a higher leadership position (Leonard 2021). It can be seen from the article that, large percentages of adult americans do have gender bias, and even sexist mindset, although not all americans obviously, but this shown that there are numbers of adult americans, even coming from different backgrounds still believes in the patriarchal mindset just like Trump did.

The victory of Trump in the presidential election in 2016, is one of the evidence that, even if not all americans share the same sexist mindset as him, but somehow showed that a lot of his supporters and voters are fine having the head of the state who uses degrading language towards people from different gender as him. Trump also talked about the women in the context of his family, in such a derogatory way, by stating "she does have a very nice figure", commenting on his daughter appearance, and later adding, "if Ivanka weren't my daughter perhaps I'd be dating her" (Prasad and McKelvey 2019). For some people, these might be just little comments, but throwing out these kinds of statements, especially when you are a in a leadership position, just adds another incredible amount of fuel to the fire of inherent systemic sexism that is contained in patriarchal gender norms, gender bias, and the notion of women being second class citizens and treated as secondary roles in a family structure. As Scholtz wrote, "the social roles that

involve political decision making or ruling of any sort would likely fall to men” (Scholz 2010, 47).

According to the same article by the BBC explaining why the “derogatory languages” that he uses matters is because women have been “marked” for centuries. This phenomenon is known as “gendered language”, and Professor LaFrance has stated that “One of the things that's interesting about women and language is that women are marked”. Meanwhile men are less likely to be referred to as a “male person”, and when being used as a tool in “marking” a person, it digs into the universe of putting “stereotypes” (Prasad and McKelvey 2019). In this social rights, Scholtz also explains that in the spectrum of social rights another part is revealed, which is “citizenship”. As she later explained, even when certain women might be included into the status of “citizenship” or even rules, but in a lot of cases they still remain seen as “the exceptions” rather than “the rule”.

Women would not be granted social rights under this patriarchal notion. Inherent systemic sexism is still rising, even in the political system, President Trump’s gender bias and patriarchal mindset toward women is just one of thousands of challenges women in politics have to face. This demonstrates in a way that the notion of the system of patriarchy in the United States of America assumes that a man’s identity is traditionally dependent, as the head of household, and holds power over sexuality and of women. Such a system has been normalized by the media and Hollywood pop culture views masculinity value in men as appropriate for higher leadership positions and political authority compared to the femininity value associated with women.

3.2. Legal Rights

Based on the Merriam Webster dictionary, legal rights is defined as “the interest in a claim that is acknowledged and thus protected by the laws enforced by the government, enabling an individual to own property, carry out certain transactions or behaviors, or force another person to do so as well as abstain from certain behaviors under particular conditions, and for which the state offers a remedy in its justice system if the claim is violated” (Merriam Webster, n.d.). As Scholtz mentions, legal reform is one of the most publicized feminist efforts, and among the most common of the rights are the freedoms of speech in public, voting, and pursuing positions of power, as well as the liberty of personal safety, Scholz mentions how the targets for this reformation of the law are the regulations towards redefining the way society perceives women, certain reforms that need to be provided for women to participate in the political and economic field being equal to men (Scholz 2010, 51).

Scholz highlighted the reformation in law that is the most prominent among the others in which she considers voting rights. She stated that this brought a huge change in society’s expectations surrounding women in social or political aspects. Scholz made a further statement, “with voting rights, women are more empowered to achieve the emancipation of women and other oppressed groups and bring women's concerns to social and policy-making discussions”. She later demonstrated that the women’s suffrage movement in the United States back in the day helped to recognize women’s rights as the starting point for women having a political and economic life that is equal to their counterpart (Scholz 2010, 52). Legal (Civil Rights) in this case refers to how women have the rights to

be granted equal opportunities and protection under the law, regardless of their race, or background. This, however, sadly still lacks a lot with a lot of women going without their basic legal rights.

During the Donald Trump administration, during 2018, prior to the #MeToo movement, the Congress ratified the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995 (CAA Reform Act) with the purpose of making an easier process for staff members to file claims of sexual harassment, aiming to hold legislators accountable, and enhancing the level of transparency to resolve potential complaints. However, even when it took more than 20 years for them to improve it, this bill seems as “not enough” to protect employees in the capitol, the reasons including; 1. It does not hold legislators from committing discrimination or in this case mostly verbal discrimination, as the lines between discrimination and harassment is a gray area, and they did not define specifically on that, 2. Legal assistance for victims is not provided by the bill, members would receive legal guidance, however, staffers would be responsible for hiring their own attorneys (Zhou 2018).

The notion of an abortion ban rose high, with restrictions on contraception, in which he later declared on that will forbid organizations that offer abortion services from getting federal family planning funding; a move that may have robbed Planned Parenthood of millions of dollars and channeled this money towards organizations with a religious basis opposed to abortion. Clinics were limited on how they could supervise women on all options of reproductive care, in this case including abortion (Belluck 2019) even though since 1973, the U.S. Court in *Roe v. Wade* has established the individual liberty being guaranteed in

the Fourteenth Amendment Section 1 that stated “nor shall any state deprive any person of life, liberty” (Cornell Law School, n.d.)

Fundamental rights such as the right to live free from violence for women is still not being attained, even though with Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) being legalised since 1994, however, the problems of violence against women still continue to persists, as according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), sexual violence against women is common that, “over half of women and almost 1 in 3 men have experienced sexual violence involving physical contact during their lifetimes, and 1 in 4 women and about 1 in 26 men have experienced completed or attempted rape” (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention). As mentioned in Chapter 2 in Shirley Graham’s take on this issue, a professor and director of the Gender Equality Initiative in International Affairs at George Washington University, women’s equal representation in politics is a key for inclusive and equal democracies, specifically in the way of it improving policy development along with raising the public’s confidence in the system that women politicians represents (Hubbard 2021).

That being said, there are policies in the political system, such as Single-Member-District-System (SMD) that is being included by the Uniform Congressional District Act (Unite America Institute 2023) and mentioned in Article I Section 2, stated that “The House of Representatives shall be composed of Members chosen every second Year by the People of the several States, and the Electors in each State shall have the Qualifications requisite for Electors of the most numerous Branch of the State Legislature” (Congress.gov, n.d.). However, there is still a flaw that this system considers not beneficial to women in the

United States of America with a First-Past-The-Post (FPTP), which is when the candidate who earns the largest number of ballots in the particular district is elected. It argues that men benefit more from this regulation as they are geographically and statistically more represented than women in each district, which could be one of the examples of why men hold greater power in the political as well as the electoral process, with its roots in the societal structure of political parties and elections also considered as a failure of the government's administration to encourage and support women in being treated equally and not based only on numbers (Binus University 2018).

In this case, the reformation of the legal system and policy regulations to provide women with more support to run for office is crucial in ensuring female candidates get the help they need. As Shirley Graham mentioned, making such a policy that ensures women the support they need to run for office is also crucial for reaching equality and inclusivity in the democracy system, giving the public a message to believe in the equal opportunity within the system (Hubbard 2021).

3.3. Economic Rights

In her book, Scholz mentions putting this as a major issue in creating equal economic opportunities for women. Here, Scholz also explains how lack of access and chances for women to obtain a job and advanced position arise easily. Scholz divided this into 3 steps; 1) to acknowledge the barriers keeping women from getting certain jobs and eliminate such barriers, such as employers discriminating based on gender during the hiring or promoting process, 2) "milder" ways of discrimination, for example the jobs description that has certain appearances

requirements that are implied more so for women and, 3), and the last step is the reformation of the mindset or culture of the workplace, this means women's chances of success and even of applying for promotions may be hampered by sexist or harassing behavior from employers and coworkers. Comparably, coworkers may assume that a recently employed colleague is less competent to perform the job if they see them as “affirmative action hires”. Even if this is a false distinction, it nonetheless highlights an oppressive workplace culture that must be altered before women can experience complete equality at work. (Scholz 2010, 53-54).

In her book, Scholz also mentions the glass ceiling which are invisible unwritten limitations holding women back from pursuing higher positions in their field, mostly in business, politics, or other male dominated fields. This phrase was coined by Marilyn Loden in her speech in 1978, when she was portraying the struggle for women rights in the economic field. In this chapter, Scholz mentioned how the glass ceiling is created by both implicit regulations that prevent women from pursuing positions or career paths where progress is possible and not being achieved. This is a subtle suggestion that legislative changes would guarantee equal access to well-paying occupations and opportunities for promotion within such positions. A Marxist feminist would advocate for an end to the capitalist class system that depends on women's underpayment or unemployment. A socialist feminist would argue that harmful dualisms serve as a kind of unifying theory of oppression and are the foundation upon which the relationships between race, class, and gender are based. Other feminists would investigate further reasons for the injustice and provide different approaches to women's

emancipation. However, despite these distinctions, emancipation is a common objective for feminists. (Scholz 2010, 58)

Meanwhile, the opposite of this phenomenon is true for men who are working in the female dominated fields, and this is referred to as the glass escalator. While one phenomenon is detrimental and prohibits women from succeeding through obstacles that are “invisible”, unwritten limitations, the glass escalator, on the other hand, is quite beneficial for men. Christine L. Williams talked about the hidden advantages for men who work in the female dominated fields, such as teaching, nursing, beauty industry, customer services, etc. Williams mentions in her article that this phenomenon is usually most beneficial for heterosexual white men and it is thought “they are being put on a fast track to pursue higher positions when working in female dominated fields” (Williams 1992, 253).

The issues in this case are economic policies, a lack of employment for women, the glass ceiling or glass escalator that can produce gender wage gaps, and unfair treatment towards women in the workforce, particularly relating to the political system. Based on the data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, in 2018 full-time female workers earned 81 percent of the weekly earnings of full-time male workers. In closer detail, among employees 35 years of age and older in 2018, women made between 87% and 92% of what males did, and for those under 35 women got paid between 75 and 80 percent of men's earnings (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2019). The Pew Research Center, an independent American think tank concluded after seeing these numbers, that the gender pay gap in the US has not changed significantly for the last almost 20 years, as

“female workers in the US get paid around 82 cents for every dollar that the male workers got, the number has not increased significantly since 2002, when women earned income around 80 cents to a dollar that men earn” (Kochhar 2023).

The cause of the gender wage gap could be varied. According to the same article by The Pew Research Center, one of the variables could be from parenthood, the types of careers that men and women pursue may also be influenced by family demands, which contributes to the gender gap in the workforce. Mothers with the age of between the ages of 25 to 44 are less inclined to engage in working than a women with no kids from the same age group, and most mothers when they work, they typically take less time a week which could affect the wage of mothers, while on the other hand, study shows that fathers have a greater probability of putting more hours a week, the age also matter for women as the data shows younger women from the age group of 25 - 34 are more closely to earning the same as men, however, the income difference tends widen as women ages, another reason is also can caused diversity in education level, experiences, professions, that control the gender pay gap for women. The Pew Research Center stated that by having higher level of education, could lead to professions with higher wage, and more experiences is proven to help suppress the gender pay gap for women, however, even when women despite the fact that women have continued to earn higher level of education, the pay disparity seems to be stuck in a pattern, varying between 80 - 85 cents to the dollar (Kochhar 2023).

As for the matter of why the gender pay gap matters when encouraging women to run for office or participating in politics, this is due to the US system

where political campaigns cost large amounts of money, and an article by Shames of The University of Minnesota explained that “the combination of the expensive amount that running for office could cost with high numbers of re-election rates of current office holder - who in this case are usually white men - has made it difficult for the system reform”. With what has been established before due to inherent gender stereotypes among voters, media, party leaders, or donors, women often face double standards in raising funding for political campaigns whereas men do not (Shames 2018).

As there is no public funding for campaign help in the United States, unlike other western states like Australia, Canada, France, Germany, and New Zealand, political candidates mostly have to invest their own funds in political campaigns. The issue here is for women is that when political campaigning is costly, in most cases women will either restraint themselves, end up losing votes, wind up on the losing side since they earn less than males for a variety of reasons, including the gender wage gap, gender segregation in workplace, and unequal unpaid family care, or the glass ceiling. Due to unfair social treatments caused by the patriarchal system, women are also likely to not be seen as having leadership traits which makes it difficult to gain donors, or support among voters and media, which leads to the difficulty of gaining the resources that are needed for political campaigns (Binus University 2018).

The gender wage gap in the United States has a greater impact on women politicians and candidates, particularly in the absence of a public funding system for campaign assistance. This is particularly challenging for women of color, who typically have fewer career opportunities than white women and are categorized

as low-wage workers. As a result, the state must intervene to improve working conditions so that all women of color receive salaries that are on par with those of men, enabling women to run for office independently. Hence, the government's policy on supporting this change and creating a structure or method that can share benefits is essential in providing bigger opportunities for women candidates (Kogan 2021).

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

4.1 Conclusion

Despite the slight increase in the level of women's participation in politics, which was considered the record-breaking moment since politics in 1992, during the Donald Trump Presidency era (2017-2021), the gender balance standard of 50/50 in the political system, as an International target set by United Nations Women, has not yet been obtained in The United States of America. The gender gap remains massive, persisting at under 30% for female representation in politics, specifically in Congress.

This research shows that with low representation of women in politics women's experiences are still being excluded from politics. As a society that has connected men to masculinity and leadership, while women are associated with femininity and not being involved in decision-making or leadership positions, the patriarchal notion that male experiences and perspectives can be counted for both genders still persists and that higher representation for women in politics is not needed.

This research concludes that closing the massive gender gap by reaching the 50/50 standard will not be obtained unless 3 fundamental rights based on Liberal Feminism Principles are being implemented. These are:

1. Social rights to acknowledge the gender bias and stereotypes in the society in which family structure has a big role in society with 2 methods of viewing how family structure affects or is being affected by social construct as a

whole. In this case, former president Donald Trump threw countless sexist remarks during his speeches and on social media, degrading women of their capabilities. He also commented on their physical appearance to downgrade them and even to his opponent in the 2016 presidential election, Hillary Clinton (Prasad and McKelvey 2019). This is a portrayal of the gender stereotypes implied in the society towards female politicians .

2. Legal rights to realize the rights that women have or are supposed to have, and the reform within the legal political system to provide women more resources and tools to encourage women from every background to increase their political participation. There is a need to eradicate certain challenges in their political experience for women politicians, which, in this case, is the voting rights for women and the support being provided for them within the political system to provide female candidates with the help they need to run for office, which still included as a big problem during Donald Trump's Presidency.

3. Economic rights are the tool to provide women with equal economic opportunities to men, to eradicate a lot of problems regarding women rights in economic field, such as lack of employment, glass ceiling, and gender pay gap, to provide women with the resources and encouragement needed to participate in the American Political system during Donald Trump's presidency as well as helping in reformation of the system.

4.2 Recommendation

Considering the fast development of technology and knowledge as well as awareness that has developed swiftly in line with the development of the mass media and social media, the discussion of gender equality in political participation in a governmental system and involving women in a decision-making process is an interesting and important topic to talk about. It brings the conversation not only equality but also inclusivity if we see how diverse women, with various backgrounds and races with differing priorities, especially in a country with “melting pot” identity like the United States of America. Therefore, there is a hope that the future research will discuss more deeply the topic of gender equality in political participation from different perspectives, including the diversity of women’s races and their background, not just in as a broad term, but also by employing other types of feminism theory or even other theories in International Relations.

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