



Utrecht University



Universiteit Utrecht

SCHOOL OF GOVERNANCE

Dr. Ekaterina R. Rashkova

&

Masarykova Univerzita

DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND EUROPEAN STUDIES

Prof. Vít Hloušek Ph. D

Master Thesis

DO CLOTHES MAKE THE WOMAN?

The influence of clothing on voters' perception of female politicians

by

GEA ALESSI

g.alesi@students.uu.nl

Student ID: 6564550 (Utrecht)

Student ID: 468898 (Masaryk)

Abstract

Do clothes make the woman? This question is asked in the context of EU parliamentary elections, to understand if clothing influences voters' perception of female politicians. Their clothes seem to attract far more attention than men's apparel. As men and masculinity are the norm in politics, this study wants to understand if voters are affected in their decision by the degree of masculinity or femininity that an outfit possesses.

Before the collection of direct data, a review of the literature was carried out. Three main themes have been analysed: clothing and perception; leadership; construction of masculinity and femininity through clothing. After the literature review an online questionnaire was developed. The questionnaire consisted of showing to respondents a model wearing five different outfits and giving them the possibility to evaluate each of them throughout eight adjectives: four leadership traits (positive) and their antonyms. The collected data was analysed by considering the different age and the different nationality of the respondents. The focus group method was also implemented to gain deeper insights on the research by providing a qualitative perspective.

This study's conclusion lead to believe that there is indeed a link between voters' perception of politicians and what the latter wear.

Table of Contents

Abstract	2
List of Figures	5
List of Tables	5
Introduction	6
Research question and study's relevance	7
Chapter 1: Literature review and theoretical framework	9
The influence of clothing on perception	9
<i>Influence of clothing on women in culturally masculine work environments</i>	10
<i>Influence of clothing in politics</i>	11
Leadership traits	12
Construction of masculinity and femininity through clothing	14
<i>Historical focus on masculinity</i>	15
<i>Historical focus on femininity</i>	17
Theoretical framework and hypotheses	19
Chapter 2: Research design and methodology	21
Research methods	21
Case selection	22
Questionnaire's design	24
<i>Independent variables: five constructed outfits</i>	25
<i>Dependent variables: leadership traits</i>	27
<i>Respondents' characteristics and selection</i>	27
Methodological limitations	29
Chapter 3: Results and analysis	31
Questionnaire	31
<i>General results analysis by outfit</i>	32
<i>Results analysed by generation</i>	34
<i>Generations' comparison</i>	38
<i>Results analysed by country</i>	39
<i>Countries' comparison</i>	42
Focus group	43
<i>Outfit 1</i>	44
<i>Outfit 2</i>	45
<i>Outfit 3</i>	45
<i>Outfit 5</i>	46
Chapter 4: Discussion and conclusion	48
Results overview and hypotheses confirmation	48
Alternative Explanations	49
Implications and Perspectives for Future Research	50
Conclusion	51
Bibliography	52

<i>Appendix A</i>	59
1. Outfits.....	60
2. Questionnaire.....	62
3. Adjectives' table.....	64

List of Figures

Figure 1: Men and women’s fashion, 17th – 18th century. Source: Bloszka, 2019	15
Figure 2: Men’s fashion in the 19th century. Source: Bloszka, 2019.....	17
Figure 3: Women’s fashion in the 19th century. Source: Bloszka, 2019	18
Figure 4: Masculinity dimension in Italy, Netherlands, Spain. Source: Hofstede Insights, 2019	24
Figure 5: Total scores of the five outfits in absolute numbers	32
Figure 6: Total scores of the five outfits in absolute numbers (Boom Generation).....	35
Figure 7: Total scores of the five outfits in absolute numbers (Generation X)	36
Figure 8: Total scores of the five outfits in absolute numbers (Millennial Generation).....	37
Figure 9: Total scores of the five outfits in absolute numbers (Italy).....	40
Figure 10: Total scores of the five outfits in absolute numbers (Netherlands).....	41
Figure 11: Total scores of the five outfits in absolute numbers (Spain)	42

List of Tables

Table 1: Ten differences between feminine and masculine societies. Source: Hofstede, 2011, p. 1223	
Table 2: Masculinity and femininity in questionnaire’s outfits	26
Table 3: Sample’s composition in absolute numbers.....	31
Table 4: Total scores of the five outfits in percentages	32
Table 5: Ratio between positive and negative traits for the three generations	34
Table 6: Total scores of the five outfits in percentages (Boom Generation)	35
Table 7: Total scores of the five outfits in percentages (Generation X)	36
Table 8: Total scores of the five outfits in percentages (Millennial Generation)	37
Table 9: Ratio between positive and negative traits for the three countries	39
Table 10: Total scores of the five outfits in percentages (Italy)	40
Table 11: Total scores of the five outfits in percentages (Netherlands)	40
Table 12: Total scores of the five outfits in percentages (Spain).....	41
Table 13: Positive, negative, and neutral remark for each outfit in absolute numbers	44

Introduction

Fashion and politics may seem like two realms too distant to ever cross paths. And in effect, don't politicians always wear the same thing? The typical politician attire in the Western world is homologated, almost a uniform, and it rarely attracts attention. However, for women the situation is different. Since women's wardrobe offers a far greater choice than men's and considering that female politicians are a relatively new phenomenon, what they wear is often noticed and can be the source of judgement or discussion.

For instance, on this year's European Economic Congress, a Polish newspaper published a list of all the best-dressed female participants; the same thing was done for the men, although without sexist captions or observations on the person's body or taste (Petriczko, 2019). Journalist Ada Petriczko commented that the article "*strengthen gender roles and showcase women as objects to be looked at and judged*" and therefore contributed to the problem of gender inequality in politics. The gender gap in the political sphere is indeed extensive: women constitute just 24 per cent of national parliamentarians globally and, as of January 2019, only 21 are serving as head of state or government (United Nations, 2019). Even in the progressive European Union the situation does not seem to be very different. When observing the last available data for EU national parliaments composition, we see that women constitute just 29.3 per cent on average (European Commission, 2018).

Petriczko is not the only to believe that clothing in a professional environment can be a source of disadvantage to women. In her renowned book *The Beauty Myth*, Naomi Wolf (2002) investigates the preoccupation of both sexes regarding women's appearance. She emphasises the fact that clothing in the workplace is a commonly used tool to ostracise women. The matter could be dismissed by some as trivial, but throughout her book, Wolf shows that it has been commonly used as an excuse to deny promotions to employees, fire them, and even sexually harass them. She highlights:

"Aren't men, too, expected to maintain a professional appearance? Certainly: They must conform to a standard that is well groomed, often uniformly clothed, and appropriate to their context. But to pretend that since men have appearance standards it means that the genders are treated equally is to ignore the fact that in hiring and promotion, men's and women's appearances are judged differently; and that the beauty myth reaches far beyond dress codes into a different realm" (p. 48).

Anecdotal evidence seems to support Wolf's thesis that, even in politics, women have to carefully choose how to dress. For example, ex-French minister Cécile Duflot was "catcalled" by some colleagues while giving a speech to Parliament, just because she was wearing a dress (Poirier, 2012). While on her mandate as Prime Minister of Australia, Julia Gillard's appearance became an integral part of the political discourse and she was shamed for wearing an allegedly 'too revealing' top

(Jansens, 2019). Hillary Clinton, whose emphasised her femininity in her time as First Lady, wore just pantsuits during the 2016 United States presidential campaign. This was perhaps an attempt to blend in with the men. As a matter of fact, she wrote in her book: *“I ... thought it would be good to do what male politicians do and wear more or less the same thing every day”* and that she was seen as *“different from the men but also familiar”* (Gupta, 2018).

The point Ms. Clinton made is the pivot of this master thesis. Throughout history, it is not rare to find examples of women leaders dressed as men. From Egyptian queen Hatshepsut to Celtic warrior Boudicca, wearing typical male garments was a way to convey an aura of authority in a world where women in power were an anomaly (Young, 2011). It could be argued that this habit is still present in contemporary Western politics. What is most commonly worn by women in politics is indeed the suit, a garment borrowed from the men’s wardrobe. In the opinion of writer Robb Young (2011), a ‘masculine’ look is no longer necessary for women to show authority in politics; nevertheless, politicians still seem to believe so. Perhaps it is because displaying one’s femininity might cause controversies and undermine politicians, as seen in the anecdotes about Cécile Duflot and Julia Gillard. Thus, is femininity seen as conflicting with leadership? Some scholars (Eagly & Carli, 2007; Koenig et al., 2011) have argued that it is indeed the case: individuals usually relate leadership and its associated traits to men and not women.

Consequently, the custom of wearing traditionally masculine clothes could be connected to this widespread perception of leadership. How politicians are perceived is extremely important in this era. As a matter of fact, the majority of voters are rather inattentive to politics, so they may rely on simple information shortcuts to make political judgments; thus, the way contenders of an election look can affect how they are evaluated by citizens (Hayes et al. 2014, p. 1195). Additionally, this attitude seems to be more prominent in second-order elections, where citizens tend to dedicate little time to get to know the candidates (Praino et al., 2014, p. 1112). This can, therefore, influence the European Parliament’s elections, which are well known for being seen as less important than national ones (Willermain, 2015).

Research question and study’s relevance

The research question this master thesis seeks to answer is formulated as follow:

- does clothing influence voters’ perception of female politicians in EU elections?

Basing the research question on the premise that apparel’s masculinisation is used to deliver an idea of leadership could aid in the investigation of the issue. Thus, the sub-question is framed as:

- is there a difference in how voters perceive politicians who wear feminine attires and those who do not?

This research has the societal relevance of giving female politicians, especially those running for a position in the EP, awareness and advice on how different clothing styles could aid or undermine them. Furthermore, understanding the sex typing of leadership roles in politics could help to break these patterns of stereotypes and shape a new idea of the leader figure. Discarding the masculine perception of leadership can promote a more gender equal political field and push more women to pursue this career path and therefore increase their representation. Because research on the influence of clothing in politics is limited, this study aims to further expand the understanding of the subject. This master thesis will firstly address the theoretical foundation for this study. The three main themes will be: the influence of clothing on perception, the association of leadership and masculine character traits, and the portrayal of masculinity and femininity in fashion. The basis of this study will be formed by a qualitative and a quantitative analysis of data gathered through two instruments: the questionnaire and the focus group. In online questionnaire, respondents will be shown the picture of a model wearing five different outfits. They will evaluate her on the basis of eight adjectives, which will be four leadership traits (positive) and their antonyms (negative). The data will be analysed to test if the more masculine attires were more positively evaluated on the given leadership traits compared to the more feminine ones. This analysis will distinguish between the assessment by different age groups and by different nationality. Subsequently, three focus group discussions will be conducted. By testing two hypotheses, an answer to the research question and its sub-question will be given and implications of the results will be discussed.

Chapter 1: Literature review and theoretical framework

In this first chapter, I will review the literature that I deem necessary to answer the primary and secondary research questions. Because the literature does not directly address my research question, I chose to look at three topics that I believe, when combined, will help me in finding an answer: clothing and perception; leadership; masculinity and femininity in clothing. Therefore, this chapter will be divided into three sections: the first section will show how clothes can influence perception. The second one will address the concept of leadership, the traits associated with the idea of leader and its cultural relationship with masculinity. The last section will deal with the cultural and historical construction of masculinity and femininity through clothes in Western culture. Successively, I will build the theoretical framework for this study on the basis of the literature and formulate the relevant hypotheses.

The influence of clothing on perception

Fashion is embedded in the fabric of society, as it is a communication tool used in every culture to express individuality, character traits, social and economic status. It is common to form first impressions based upon the type of clothing people wear. Apparel often represents the first stimulus cue one notices about others and scholars argue that clothing stands as a set of non-verbal messages; therefore, they serve the same purpose as facial expressions in making judgments on people's character (Mills, 1994, p. 1). The research on communication through dress has been developing since the 1940s (Damhorst, 1990, p. 2) and it demonstrates that the popular saying "clothes make the man" is still a valid statement.

Clothing is a form of non-verbal communication and all sort of implications can be made about someone just by assessing their outfits. A study conducted by Johnson et al. (2002) showed that interviewees assumed to be able to determine character traits of a stranger only based on their physical appearance and clothing. The participants indicated to be aware of the inevitability of forming impressions based on appearance, as it is done at an unconscious level. Even those who claimed they tried not to judge others based on visual cues had to admit they often did so. Even apparel on its own can shape the opinion of respondents. In the work by Paul N. Hamid (1968), the scholar tried to minimise the impact of facial features and physical appearance by choosing female figures that resembled each other and only altering their clothes. The results demonstrated that apparel has a strong influence on perception because consistent stereotypes exist for different styles of clothing (p. 905). Satrapa et al. (1992) took a step further and deliberately hid the men's faces in the pictures they showed to the young university students selected for their experiment. The three men were clad in different styles of clothing – formal, informal, sportswear. Even only after a brief 10 seconds exposure

to the images, the opinions respondents had of the three men's character appeared to be similar. The same approach was taken in a study by Behling and Williams (1991). The experiment, involving high school students and teachers, demonstrated how perception of intelligence and academic achievements changes based on clothing style. More recent research by Howlett et al. (2012) reiterated that *"people make rapid judgments of others based on clothing alone, when facial features are obscured, from a time-limited image"* (p.6). The authors demonstrated how even minor changes in attire – in this case, the cut of a man's suit – shaped the views respondents had of the person shown in the image.

Influence of clothing on women in culturally masculine work environments

As it was previously shown, people use the information they gather via clothing to form impressions of others. Although it is not extensive, there is literature (Forsythe, 1987; Heke, 2010; Mavin, 2015) focusing specifically on understanding what impact clothes have on women in working environments that have been culturally masculine – like management and politics, although most of the research conducted refers to managerial jobs. However, findings in the literature are somewhat contradictory. Some point towards an alleged necessity for women to masculinise their clothing style in order to be seen as suited for the job, while other studies seem to believe accentuating femininity is what should be done by women to succeed in a white-collar setting.

A 1987 study by Sandra Forsythe manipulated the dressing style of a hypothetical applicant for a management position. The experiment was based on the assumption that the character traits a person needs for a management position are culturally masculine. The clothes were therefore adjusted to create four outfits, from the "most masculine" to the "least masculine" look. The subjects of the experiments were divided into four groups, one for each clothing style. After viewing a tape of the applicant being interviewed, they had to rate her on masculine and feminine managerial traits. From the study's results, Forsythe concluded that *"masculinity of clothing may be a viable avenue for communicating masculine managerial traits and promoting job acquisition among women applying for management positions"* (p. 533). She advised that looking "too feminine" might have a negative impact on female applicants while appearing "too masculine" was not damaging for their career. A similar experiment was conducted by Joanna Heke (2010). The author's findings were, however, different from those of Forsythe. The results showed that pictures of the model with a balance of masculine and feminine elements in her ensemble were given the highest score in the character traits associated with management (p. 89). Consequently, Heke concluded that styles that excessively enhance masculinity or femininity are to be avoided.

On the other hand, Mavin (2015) agrees with Forsythe's conclusions. She believes that, despite the steady increase of women in leadership roles in every aspect of Western society, women are still examined through gendering practices. They 'power dress' as honorary men with the aid of the suit (to be perceived as 'competent' and divert attention from feminine differences) or their competence is questioned when they present themselves in a manner that is perceived as 'too feminine' (p. 5).

Influence of clothing in politics

Matters of style and appearance have become fundamental in modern politics thanks to visual media like television and social networks and to the fact that the majority of citizens is no longer interested in ideology or loyalty to a specific party: they have become "*political consumers*" (Corner & Pels, 2003, p. 2). Therefore, voters mobilise for single issues and around single politicians. That is why, when it comes to using visual cues to make traits and character assessments, no exception is made for people who run for office. Studies have demonstrated that negative media coverage of a candidate's appearance can have a detrimental effect (Lake et al., 2013; Hayes et al., 2014; Jansens, 2019). Hence, if just criticism on the look of those running for office can influence voters, it is important for this study to understand how appearance itself guides citizens' decisions. However, it appears that there is little literature that links voters' perception of politicians to what the latter wear. In the 1980s Rosenberg et al. (1986) investigated the claim that "*style shapes image and image affects the vote*" (p. 108). The authors conducted two studies where they showed respondents pictures of possible male candidates. The overall result showed that what the researches considered to be the most "*nonverbally desirable candidate*" won the fabricated election with a highly significant margin – 60 per cent (p. 117). In the work by Lawson et al. (2010) it is confirmed that appearance is a powerful tool: people seem to vote based on candidate appearance both in experimental studies and in real life, as deductions based on candidates' appearance correlated well with actual election returns (p. 564). The authors also realised that judgments about appearance show to be consistent despite ethnic and cultural differences: voters from the USA, Mexico, India and Brazil were found to generally agree on which candidates were perceived as appealing (p. 588). A research conducted by Praino et al. (2014) showed that voters with limited political knowledge tend to choose the candidate they perceive to be better-looking. However, when such assessment is difficult, like in the case of a male candidate versus a female candidate, they select whom they perceive to be more competent (p. 1111). Nonetheless, the authors do not give further indications of what characteristics people look at when evaluating competence.

Leadership traits

Leadership and politics are unquestionably intertwined, especially in representative democracies; after all, what is a politician if not a leader chosen by the people to enact their will? Thus, he or she must appeal to voters and likely possesses (or conveys the impression of possessing) a set of characteristics that make them a viable leader. It is, however, undeniable that leadership has mostly been a men's prerogative in every sector of society, from political, to corporate, to military (Eagly & Karau, 2002, p. 573). This is not a surprising fact, seeing that for centuries the female was subordinated to the male in the human species. In most cultures, she was commonly relegated to only two acceptable roles, that of mother and that of wife; therefore, public life functions and leadership roles were precluded to her. As Simone de Beauvoir (2010) reminds us in her work *The Second Sex* "woman has always been, if not man's slave, at least his vassal" (p.26). However, even when De Beauvoir wrote her book in 1949, Western society had been shifting towards a more gender equal path. Women's inclusion in the workforce and education appeared as a trend that has now become the norm in Western culture. With schooling, financial independence, and the right to participate in political life thanks to the universal suffrage, figures of female politicians, entrepreneurs and professionals started to emerge.

Nonetheless, leadership positions in many fields remain male-dominated. As shown by United Nations' statistics, only 5.4 per cent of the female population worldwide covers a CEO role for any of the current Fortune 1000 company (2019). In the EU, data from the European Institute for Gender Equality indicates that women make up just a quarter (25.3 per cent) of board members in the largest publicly listed companies registered in the Member States (European Commission, 2018). The situation in politics is not different, as it was already highlighted in the introduction chapter. Scholars have found various explanations that unravel the reasons behind the lack of female leaders. As Eagly and Carli (2007) pointed out, there is no single factor that determines this deficiency common to our society, but the causes are various and complex, such that the authors named the path of women towards leadership a "labyrinth" (p. 2). Nevertheless, Eagly and Carli and other scholars (Powell & Butterfield, 1979; Schein et al., 1996; Koenig et al., 2011), seemed to believe that one reason for the difficulties that women face when they try to reach a leadership position is the biased idea individuals have of leadership itself. As summarised by Koenig et al. (2011): "*The characteristics that people commonly ascribe to women, men, and leaders contribute to the challenges that women face in obtaining leadership roles and performing well in them*" (p. 616).

The commonality of this compendium of theories is that they state that traits associated with leadership are culturally masculine. It can be noticed that this is the same assumption on which Forsythe's 1987 study, illustrated in the previous section, was based. Most of these theories focus on

the concept of 'manager' rather than on the broader notion of leader, but are nonetheless still valid when investigating leadership, as it is shown in Koenig et al. (2011). Virginia Schein was one of the firsts to empirically prove the idea of an association between masculinity and leader stereotypes with her work in 1973-75, and later in 1996 with the help of other scholars. Her paradigm, known as *think manager – think male*, revealed how management students across very culturally diverse countries (China, Japan, Germany, UK, USA) all showed a strong degree of managerial sex-typing (Schein et al., 1996, p. 36). Her analysis illustrated that a considerable part of the sample associated the same attributes to both the figure of the manager and men, but not to women (Schein et al., 1996, p. 36). Powell and Butterfield (1979) came across the same result when investigating if there had been a change in the sex-typing of managerial roles as masculine; although they had initially hypothesised so, their supposition was proved incorrect and the *think manager – think male* paradigm was reaffirmed. Koenig et al. (2011) reiterated that “*cultural stereotype of leadership is a large effect that is robust across variation in many aspects of leaders’ social contexts*” (p. 637). However, they also argued that there is evidence of a decrease over time of the masculine construct of leadership. This tendency was already noticed by Schein et al. (1996). This might signify that new generations have a less sex-typed idea of how a leader should be.

Having established that a cultural correlation between masculinity and leadership seems to exist, it has to be understood what traits are typically associated with men and masculinity and what traits are related to the realm of women and femininity. Eagly and Karau (2002) built their theory of *role congruity* exactly on this masculine/feminine perception of certain traits. They affirmed that qualities commonly recognised as requirements for a successful leader belong to the domain of *agentic* qualities (p. 574). The authors described these characteristics as attributed more strongly to men; they designate an assertive, controlling, and confident tendency — for instance, aggressive, ambitious, dominant, forceful, independent, self-sufficient, self-confident. In contrast, *communal* attributes, generally associate with women, primarily portray a concern with the wellbeing of other people — for example, affectionate, helpful, kind, sympathetic, sensitive, nurturant, and gentle. The scholars believed that prejudice may arise when “*social perceivers hold a stereotype about a social group that is incongruent with the attributes that are thought to be required for success in certain classes of social roles*” (p. 574). Therefore, their *role congruity* theory asserts that voters may perceive incongruity between women’s traits and the requirements of leader roles. Stereotyping women has a substantial negative impact: not only it makes it difficult for them to acquire leader roles, but it could also produce conflicting expectations about how female leaders should behave— agentic to fulfil the leader role but communal to match their gender role (Koenig et al., 2011, p. 637).

Construction of masculinity and femininity through clothing

It might be believed that identifying feminine and masculine features in apparel is relatively easy. For instance, when thinking about a skirt we will immediately associate the item of clothing with femininity. However, it might not be so obvious. The Scottish kilt can clearly illustrate why: although being indeed a skirt, it is known to be a traditional male garment. A less cultural-specific example can be made with trousers. For centuries, they appeared exclusively in the men's wardrobe and women were not allowed to wear them. It took two World Wars to slowly make trousers an acceptable feminine piece of clothing (Arvanitidou & Gasouka, 2013, p. 113). Some decorations, colours and details may differentiate a masculine garment from a feminine one, but no straightforward written rules exist. Both men and women can wear shirts, but what if the specific shirt has a floral print? Is that considered masculine or feminine? We may perhaps associate flowers with femininity; however, the so-called Hawaiian shirt, accepted as a men's article of clothing, is typically decorated with flower. Then how can we distinguish masculine from feminine in clothing? In order to answer this question, the first step that has to be taken is to outline the meaning of the two terms *masculinity* and *femininity*.

The Oxford dictionary (2019) defines the first noun as “*Qualities or attributes regarded as characteristic of men*”, while the second noun is understood as “*Qualities or attributes regarded as characteristic of women*”. However, men and women are not born with a premade set of masculine and feminine characteristics respectively: it is society that dictates what values and attributes are associated to each sex through gender. Gender is a social construction that starts with the assignment to a sex category (usually male or female, with some exceptions) at birth; it is a concept so pervasive in the human civilisation that we might mistakenly believe it is embedded in our genes (Lorber, 1994, p. 111). However, only sex is determined by biological and physical marks; gender, on the other hand, is the subject of social influences and incessantly reinforced through institutions and practices like law, education and gender stereotypes (Lucenford, 2010, p. 64). Like culture, gender teaches individuals what role they play in society, how they are expected to behave and how to interact with one another. One of the reasons the concept of gender exists is to serve as an organising tool. The thriving of a civilisation depends on the allocation of labour, goods, responsibility for children, and power. A society can assign its members certain duties based on their skills and achievements or based on them belonging to a specific category of people, for instance, man or woman (Lorber, 1994, p. 113). As it was already noted, gender, and therefore features of masculinity and femininity, is established through social practices. Clothing is one of them: boys and girls are treated differently and dressed accordingly, and this system is maintained into adulthood (Ehrich, 1994, p. 31). However, the representation of what is feminine and what is masculine is

translated into clothes differently in each culture and has also been altered throughout the centuries. Hence, in order to facilitate the purpose of this research, the following considerations on apparel will be restricted to the evolution of Western aesthetic in the last three centuries.

According to Kawamura (2005), “*fashion was not always a gendered phenomenon*” (p. 9). Before the nineteenth century, gender distinctions in garments were not as strong as they have later become. The principal function of clothes was to display differences in social status: the more decorated and elaborate the dress was, the higher the person’s class, therefore silk, lace, jewellery and ornated accessories were worn by the rich and powerful, indiscriminately of their sex (Kawamura, 2005, p. 10). It is in the nineteenth century, when men’s and women’s garments became extremely different in fabric, decoration, and shape (Hollander, 1980, p. 360), that we witness the construction of masculinity and femininity being truly established through clothing.



Figure 1: Men and women’s fashion, 17th – 18th century.

Source: Bloszka, 2019

Historical focus on masculinity

Dressing styles of Western men have historically changed slowly and less dramatically when compared to women’s mode and, especially since the late eighteenth-century, male fashion has offered few choices and imposed conformity. The path towards this simplification of what men are

supposed to wear started with the rise of civil society. “*The great masculine renunciation*”, as it is defined by Flügel (1930, p. 111), marks the moment when men’s fashion decided to leave behind the brightest, more colourful and intricate sartorial elements to turn to a functional model of masculinity. The late eighteenth century bourgeoisie was driven away from being “beautiful” and turned his purpose to be “useful” instead (Kawamura, 2005, p. 10). The emergence of civil society in European cultures has involved a fundamental uneasiness regarding male decoration. Author Jennifer Craik (2005) sustains this idea: she believes that what caused the abandonment of elaborated garments for men and the subsequent disquiet for it was the fall of the aristocracy (p. 174). Unlike the members of the court, who were clothed in extravagant and elaborated garments, what the middle class wore had to be functional. Therefore, the appearance of a defined man’s outfit can already be seen in the eighteenth century, with the adoption of jacket and breeches. These pieces of clothing were based on the working-class’ attire and will later form the elements of the modern suit (Craik, 2005, p. 190). Craik affirms that, as the bourgeoisie rose and started consolidating its social identity, it got caught in what can be defined as a “style war” with the aristocracy. To the latter display of decorations and excess, the middle-class responded with simplicity.

As minimalism and conformity became the norm, expressive male styles were restricted to particular groups, such as homosexuals, entertainers, ethnic groups, and popular subcultural groups – like goths, hippies, punks (Craik, 2005, p. 172). Unlike the white, heterosexual standard, these “other” masculinities do not represent what is mainstream and their distinction is embodied through clothing (Craik, 2005, p. 172). Although it was highlighted how simplicity has become the norm in male fashion, it is still not clear what is considered as the attire of normative masculinity. To understand that, one must go back to the mid-eighteen-hundreds. During those decades, the model for the following hundred years of men's fashion is defined, first of all by simplifying the man’s figure with the adoption of a *column shape* in clothing (Cole & Deihl, 2015, p. 45). The triad formed by shirt, jacket and trousers appears as the unchallenged norm. While women's clothing is characterised by an abundance of ornaments and a very wide palette, men tend to dress in darker colours, preferring black, dark blue and shades of brown and grey (Cole & Deihl, 2015, p. 45). Patterns and colours are worn only for sporting activities or in the countryside. According to Craik (2005), men’s apparel evolved to affirm male participation in the new industrial order: while they strived in the world of politics and economics, the ladies were assigned the role of decorating and matching the public status of their husband or male relatives through their clothes and demeanour (p. 173).



Figure 2: Men's fashion in the 19th century.

Source: Bloszka, 2019

A reassertion of Western male fashion can be observed in the post-1960s, as women's participation in the workplace and the public sphere started putting men's power into question (Craik, 2005, p. 171). Flamboyant elements and colours seemed to be making a comeback, as men were no longer the exclusive bearer of social power nor the only bread-winner in the family (Craik, 2005, p. 193). Nevertheless, the suit maintained its role as the only appropriate option for white-collar occupations, demonstrating the rigidity of the basic elements of the male wardrobe. Especially in this context, any attempt to introduce brighter colours or drastically new shapes has failed or, at best, has appealed to niche clienteles (Zelinsky, 2004, p. 119). A significant proportion of the population, both men and women, keeps opposing noticeable decoration of the male body (Craik, 2005, p. 196). It is shown that, apart from minor deviations and changes, professional Western men have been clothed in sombre shirt, trousers, and jacket for centuries (Craik, 2005, p. 183).

Historical focus on femininity

With the "great masculine renunciation", the task of presenting one's economic and social class fell entirely on women, who performed this function for both their husbands and themselves: "*through their clothes, women were subjugated into ornamental accompaniments to the social status of men*" (Craik, 2005, p. 120). Any rich and ostentatious fashion element was given to women's clothing, which turned into intentionally ornamental and noticeable. Although fashion changes constantly, it can be stated that, still today, the Western woman's wardrobe offers far more variety in colours, fabrics, patterns and accessories than the one of her male counterpart (Lunceford, 2010, p. 66). However, the apparent freedom given to women by fashion was limited by social etiquette. What they wore was less a display of their liberty of expression and more an indication of morality, manners, and social hierarchies (Craik, 2005, p. 50). Dress also served the function of accentuating the sexuality of the female body by enhancing precise areas, like the waist and the hips. Fashion for

nineteen-century ladies was not functional, as corsets and crinolines restricted their movements, but it depicted the notion of submissive femininity that was diffused in Western Europe (Craik, 2005, p. 121).



Figure 3: Women's fashion in the 19th century.

Source: Bloszka, 2019

However, already in the 19th-century opposition to the fashion of the period existed. Movements that supported the clothing reform focused on the negative effects some elements had on women's health and to their impracticality (Cole & Deihl, 2015, p. 43). A small group of professional and progressive women adopted masculine-cut pants underneath shorter skirts, more practical stockings and petticoats, and shoes with low heels. Nonetheless, these changes and those who embraced them were ridiculed and deemed unfeminine (Cole & Deihl, 2015, p. 43). Trousers were an especially difficult garment to introduce into the woman's wardrobe, as they were associated with men and masculinity (Arvanitidou & Gasouka, 2013, p. 113). Even when women started to join the manufacturing work, this garment was banned as because it could cause "*possible production hazard in distracting male employees*" (Boris, 2006, p. 124). This changed with World War II, but not outside factories: in white-collar environments, women's first standard outfit was the skirted suit (Mavin, 2015, p. 4). The first successful attempt to truly integrate pants and the masculine aesthetic into the figure of the white-collar working woman was made by Yves Saint Laurent in 1966 with his piece *Le Smoking*, a tuxedo for women and the precursor of the *power suit* (Seeling, 2010). From that decade on, the notion of what was considered feminine in apparel was, once again, redefined accordingly, and it kept changing rapidly. Some items like for example the skirt, are still being associated exclusively with femininity in mainstream Western culture. However, women's fashion is generally more fluid than men's, which makes it harder to form a precise idea of what elements can be generally considered feminine. This is even more true when it comes to white-collar jobs, where men are usually clad in uniforms (the suit), making it more likely for women to stand out.

Theoretical framework and hypotheses

The literature review has given a clear idea of how clothes play an important role in the impression people form of others. This notion affects several social contexts, among which we find women that work in culturally masculine environments. As it is explained by Kimle (1994): “*creating a professional image [...] is a challenge for women because the norms for professional women's appearance are nebulous, contradictory, and continue to change*” (p.7). It can still be established that the way these women are perceived through clothes is linked to the fact that garments can be a means to express masculinity and femininity. Thus, they are a reflection of culturally established social patterns and gender roles. A further notion that can be extrapolated from the literature is that politicians seem not to be immune to the way clothes can mould perception, because voters appear sensitive to candidates' appearance (Rosenberg et al., 1986; Lawson et al., 2010; Praino et al., 2014). Furthermore, in the section concerning leadership, it is explained that the ideal figure of the leader is constructed through culturally masculine character traits.

Therefore, by bringing together the information found in the literature, it can be assumed that the perception voters have of female politicians can be influenced by what they wear. The masculinity or femininity of their clothes could affect how they are viewed as leaders. That is because leadership traits are traditionally masculine characteristics; thus, a politician who dresses in a more masculine way may lead voters to associate these traits to the her. Thus, the first hypothesis is constructed:

H₁: Wearing masculine clothes has a larger positive effect on trait perceptions of voters compared to wearing feminine clothes.

However, the literature also demonstrates that there is evidence of a decrease over time of the masculine construct of leadership (Schein et al., 1996; Koenig et al., 2011). This may signify that younger generations hold a less sex-typed view of what traits a leader should possess and may not associate masculinity with leadership. This notion could likely be true considering that gender roles in Western civilizations have changed dramatically in less than fifty years, especially regarding the role of the woman in society (Inglehart, 2008). As a result, there might be significant differences in how distinct generations may view the concept of leadership, of the leader and the idea of what a woman should be like to fulfil her societal role. Based on this assumption, a second hypothesis is formulated:

H₂: Young voters' perception of leadership traits is more widespread and less concentrated on politicians wearing masculine clothes.

To test the two hypotheses, I will use a mixed methodology and two common research methods: the questionnaire and the focus group. For this purpose, firstly it has to be established what can be deemed

masculine and what can be defined as feminine in clothes. Determining this will help in choosing the pictures to show respondents in the questionnaire that will be used to gather relevant data for this research. However, from the section on construction of femininity and masculinity through fashion, it can be concluded that there is not a clear-cut classification of these two concepts in Western clothing. Nonetheless, it can be said that rules maintaining distinctions between genders exist and persist in mainstream fashion. Therefore, in order to answer the research question and its sub-question, a scale of what constitutes masculinity and femininity in apparel is needed. This scale will be constructed in the methodology.

Chapter 2: Research design and methodology

This chapter will describe the methods used to obtain the necessary data to test the two hypotheses and answer this master thesis's research question. Initially, I will describe what research methods were used to gather data – questionnaire and focus group – and the reason they were preferred. In the following section, three EU member states will be chosen as the case study for this thesis. Afterwards, I will describe in detail the design for both the survey and the focus groups. Lastly, the limitations that of the chosen methodology will be explored.

Research methods

The main research question that this master thesis seeks to answer is: does clothing influence voters' perception of female politicians in EU elections? To find an answer to this query, it is necessary to utilise more than one method, so that the data obtained is as unbiased as possible and is thus deemed reliable; this approach is indicated as *triangulation*. Thurmond (2001) defines triangulation as the “*combination of two or more data sources, investigators, methodologic approaches, theoretical perspectives or analytical methods within the same study*” (p. 253). The scholar affirms that triangulation increases the validity and the interpretative potential of a study, as it provides multiple perspectives. Different types of triangulation exist. This study will use both qualitative and quantitative data collection; therefore, it will utilise the so called *across-method triangulation* (Thurmond, 2001, p. 254) With regards to data acquisition, two research methods were selected to collect information that will help answering the thesis's main question: a questionnaire, which was put online in three languages, and the focus group method provide a qualitative perspective and deeper insights on the research.

According to the American Statistical Association (1997), pairing the focus group approach with the survey method can provide the researcher with exceptionally high quality information (p.10). Although limitations exist to the qualitative data that questionnaires can gather, they possess several strengths, as it is explained in McGuirk and O'Neill (2016). First of all, they can be cost-effective and permit extensive research over a geographically distributed population, as in the case of this research. In fact, the main research question's scope is the European Union; consequently, it will be necessary to reach people residing in different countries. Survey's cost-effectiveness is particularly true when it comes to web-based questionnaires, where printing and distribution costs can be almost completely removed. A second advantage is that this method can be easily combined with more in-depth forms of qualitative research, as in the case of focus groups, to provide a more thorough perspective on social processes. As for the focus group technique, it was chosen to give an in-depth qualitative insight to the data collected through the use of the survey. Unlike a one-on-one interview, focus

groups generate data through group discussion and, compared to interviews, are a quicker way to gather information. Furthermore, contrary to the questionnaire, focus groups present the possibility to explore issues related to the study that the researcher had not previously considered (American Statistical Association, 1997, p. 1). An additional advantage to focus groups is the socially oriented environment can help participants to feel safe to share information, thus raising the likelihood of obtaining more spontaneous responses (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2009). These two methods will be applied to a case study. The reason for selecting a case study is that this research focuses on voters and their perception of female politicians in the EU parliamentary elections; however, due to time constraints and lack of resources, it is not possible to analyse each of the twenty-eight countries that the European Union comprehends. Selecting an appropriate case is therefore necessary.

Case selection

The countries for the case study will be chosen based on the concept of cultural determinism. Cultural determinism explains how people's attitudes, behaviours and perceptions are moulded by their national culture (Neculaesei, 2015, p. 32). The differences between gender roles is an aspect of society that is shaped by culture: permissions, prohibitions – what a man/woman can do and what he/she cannot do – and the way actions have to be performed are transmitted to individuals and established as the norm within a certain culture (Neculaesei, 2015, p. 32). Thus, different countries' cultures are likely to influence the degree to which the masculinity or femininity in politicians' clothing shape the perception voters have of them. This would occur because of differences in the construction of gender roles that exist between countries might impact voters' perception. For the purpose of this study it was decided to choose three EU countries with different attitudes in the assignation of roles between men and women. In order to assess this, the paradigm created by Dutch social psychologist Geert Hofstede was used.

Hofstede (2011) defines culture as “*the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from others*” (p. 3). In the 1970s, he conceived a six-dimensional model of national culture, which turned into an exceptionally popular method for cross-cultural research in a wide range of disciplines (Minkov & Hofstede, 2011, p.10). The scholar initially developed four dimensions for his model – Power Distance, Uncertainty Avoidance, Individualism, Masculinity – later adding two more, Long Term Orientation and Indulgence. These dimensions refer not to individual but to societal characteristics ascribed to a country's culture. Each country has a score that can go from 1 to 100 in each dimension. The dimension that is of interest for the selection of the case for this research is the one labelled *Masculinity versus Femininity*, often simply referred

to as “Masculinity”. It is related to the division of stereotypical traits between the two traditional genders, male and female, and therefore to the construction of gender roles (Hofstede, 2011, p. 8).

Femininity	Masculinity
Minimum emotional and social role differentiation between the genders	Maximum emotional and social role differentiation between the genders
Men and women should be modest and caring	Men should be and women may be assertive and ambitious
Balance between family and work	Work prevails over family
Sympathy for the weak	Admiration for the strong
Both fathers and mothers deal with facts and feelings	Fathers deal with facts, mothers with feelings
Both boys and girls may cry but neither should fight	Girls cry, boys don't; boys should fight back, girls shouldn't fight
Mothers decide on number of children	Fathers decide on family size
Many women in elected political positions	Few women in elected political positions
Religion focuses on fellow human beings	Religion focuses on God or gods
Matter-of-fact attitudes about sexuality; sex is a way of relating	Moralistic attitudes about sexuality; sex is a way of performing

Table 1: Ten differences between feminine and masculine societies. Source: Hofstede, 2011, p. 12

As it is shown in the table above, in masculine societies stark differences exist between the genders in regard to both social and emotional roles. Men *must* be assertive and ambitious, while women *can* be, but these are not characteristics required to be perceived as a woman in this kind of society. Feelings and emotions are domains that only female individuals can discuss, whereas reason and critical thinking are masculine areas. These are some factors that lead to fewer women elected in political positions, because, as politics and leadership share the same traits, they are seen as traditionally masculine realms. On the other hand, feminine cultures will perceive men and women as equal rather than diametrically opposed. This attitude seems to foster a more gender-balanced political domain. Thus, this dimension was deemed appropriate to select the three EU member states for this thesis's case study.

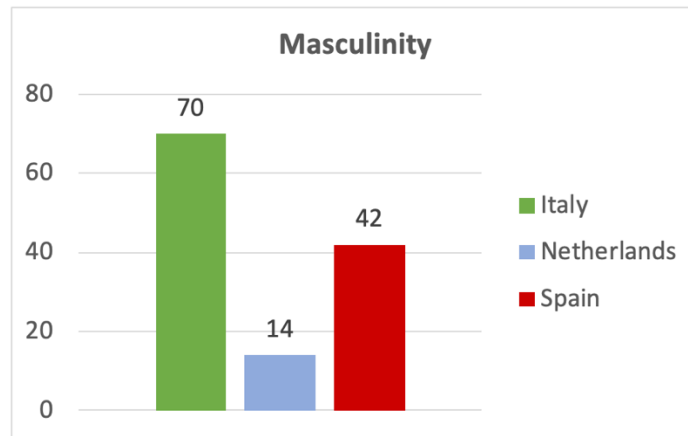


Figure 4: Masculinity dimension in Italy, Netherlands, Spain.

Source: Hofstede Insights, 2019

The countries chosen were Italy, the Netherlands, and Spain. As it is illustrated in the figure above, Italy is the one that scores the highest on the Masculinity dimension. A high score on this dimension indicates that the society is extremely Masculine. This entails that there is a gap between women's and men's values (Hofstede, 2011, p. 12). On the other hand, the Netherlands presents a low score of 14, making it a Feminine society. As a result, we can expect Dutch women to share goals and ideals with the men and to be given similar opportunities. The last country, Spain, exhibits an intermediate score of 42 on the Masculinity dimension, making it a middle ground between the two extremes of the dimension's scale. These three culturally different EU member states will therefore form the case study for this research.

Questionnaire's design

The questionnaire was structured with closed-ended questions. Close-ended questions are designed so that respondents are asked to select categories, rank items, or select a point on a scale to indicate the strength with which an opinion is held. A key advantage of closed questions is that it is easy to code and analyse answers, especially for online surveys, as a data file can be built automatically. An online questionnaire was therefore created with the aid of Survey Hero[®]. Survey Hero[®], is an online tool (www.surveyhero.com) that allow the researcher to create optimised questionnaires. It has an intuitive interface which helps in the structuring of a questionnaire and also in its analysis.

The questionnaire's respondents had to evaluate five pictures of a woman wearing different outfits. In the introduction they were informed that the goal of the study was to understand how our perception of others can change just based on what they wear. They were also told to imagine that the person shown was a politician of their country running for the European Parliament. The participants were exposed to one image at a time. For each one, they had to pick four adjectives out of the list of eight that they were given. Together with the pictures' evaluation, the respondents also had to specify their gender and the year they were born. According to Lumsden (2005), people are more likely to fill out

an online questionnaire if it is relatively short, takes less than 20 minutes to complete, is not complex and allows participants to maintain their anonymity. These requirements were thus used as guidance to design the survey. Answers were kept anonymous and the questionnaire was firstly tested to ensure it would be brief. As it took around 3 minutes to complete, its length was considered appropriate. The language utilised in the first draft was English. However, according to research conducted by EF Education (2018) in 88 countries, people from Italy and Spain do not have an excellent command of English. On the other hand, the Netherlands came second on EF's ranking, thus demonstrating that the majority of the country's population is fluent in the language. As this master thesis is written in English, it was deemed more appropriate to leave one of the surveys in this language rather than translating it into Dutch. Hence, the questionnaire was made in three different versions – English, Spanish, and Italian – to facilitate the respondents' comprehension. The complete questionnaire can be found in English in the Appendix.

Independent variables: five constructed outfits

The independent variables of the survey were full-body pictures of a woman wearing five different outfits. Five was considered an appropriate number, first of all, to keep the questionnaire brief, and second, because similar experiments conducted in literature show that respondents may not be comfortable with rating more than ten pictures (Hamid, 1968; Rosenberg et al., 1986; Forsythe, 1987; Angerosa, 2014). The outfits were fashioned so that each of them would show a different degree of masculinity, going from Outfit 1, the most masculine, to Outfit 5, the less masculine and therefore the most feminine one. All the five manipulated outfits can be found in the Appendix.

To compose the five different ensembles, a scale of masculinity/femininity was constructed. Four criteria were established for this purpose:

- Colour
- Cut
- Patterns
- Accessories

The first two criteria were derived from the findings of Jansens (2019) on what characteristics are indicative of 'feminine-distinctive' garments in the political sphere. In her work, she singles out two main elements that media were drawn to when condemning politicians' clothing: colour and cut. Colour appeared as a catalyst for critique in the news whenever it did not conform with the masculine aesthetic that is the rule in politics, even in cases where the garment was borrowed from the men's wardrobe e.g. a blazer (p. 8). Bright colours seemed denote femininity and were therefore judged

negatively. The element of colour and how brightness is linked with femininity has also already appeared in the section of Chapter 1 related to how clothes help in the construction of masculinity and femininity. Thus, it is established that brighter colours are associated with femininity. The second element that the media were addressing was the cut of the pieces of clothing. Jansens (2019) affirms that “*the dress code for women in positions of political and institutional power [...] involves constraining and concealing the body*” (p. 11). She makes the example of the harsh assessments of ex-Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard’s top that allegedly showed her cleavage. Words like ‘inappropriate’ and ‘disrespectful’ were used to describe the neckline. According to the author, Gillard’s neckline was seen as conflicting with hegemonic masculinity because it was an “*element of femininity that is visible within the patriarchal sphere of politics*” (p. 10). Jansens concludes that the dress code for politicians does not involve garments that highlight the diversities of the female body in comparison to the male one, which is the norm in politics. Therefore, showing legs, chest, or arms, body parts which are usually covered by the traditional suit male politicians wear, is an indication of femininity. The last two criteria – accessories, patterns – were again taken from the literature review. Minimal accessories or their absence is linked to masculinity. The same can be said for patterns: as their intricacy rises, so does their association with femininity. The table below illustrates the degree of masculinity and femininity that each outfit possesses. The two standard gender symbols were used to construct the table: “♂” to indicate male and masculinity, while “♀” to signify female and femininity.

CRITERIA	Outfit 1	Outfit 2	Outfit 3	Outfit 4	Outfit 5
Colour	♂	♂	♀	♀	♀
Cut	♂	♀	♂	♀	♀
Accessories	♂	♂	♀	♂	♀
Patterns	♂	♂	♂	♀	♀

Table 2: Masculinity and femininity in questionnaire’s outfits

More than one study (Johnson et al., 2002; Howlett et al., 2013) show how people can construct inferences on others based on apparel on its own when facial features are obscured. This information is fundamental for the research design, as respondents should be pushed to base the character evaluation of the person in the pictures solely on clothes and not on facial features or hairstyle. Therefore, the model’s face was omitted and she was photographed in a frontal pose, standing upright

and with her arms relaxed by her side. This was done to avoid any interference that body language could have caused in voters' perception. The background was kept as neutral as possible by making the model pose against a white wall.

Dependent variables: leadership traits

The dependent variables used were four couples of character traits, an adjective and its antonym, which are listed below:

- Rational – Emotional
- Confident – Insecure
- Assertive – Submissive
- Competent – Incompetent

In the context of this study, the adjectives rational, confident, assertive, and competent are considered positive, while their antonyms are regarded as negative and not fitting to be leadership traits. The selection of these character traits was based on the work of Schneider and Bos (2014). In their research, the scholars conducted a literature review of both masculine and feminine attributes commonly ascribed to politicians. Through the list of 36 traits created by the authors, it appears that some attributes are often repeated in various scientific publications. Among these, there were *assertive*, repeated four times, and *confident*, appearing in the authors' literature review two times; therefore, they were selected for this study. The attribute *rational* was also frequently present, although sometimes through synonyms like *emotional stability* or *emotionally suited for politics*. The antonym for this characteristic was chosen because Schneider and Bos (2014) demonstrated that it is an adjective often used to describe women, but not female politicians (p. 254). Therefore, it was assumed that it was a trait not deemed appropriate for a politician, thus for a leader. The fourth trait – *competent* – was indicated as one of the attributes that voters value the most (Schneider & Bos, 2014, p. 249). Competence was also mentioned once, and it appeared in this thesis's literature review: Praino et al. (2014) identified it as an attribute that citizens use in choosing between candidates whenever they find it difficult to assess the politicians' attractiveness (p. 1111). These four character traits were thus chosen to represent leadership specific traits. On the other hand, their antonyms stood for negative attributes that a candidate should not present in order to be considered a leader.

Respondents' characteristics and selection

The questionnaire's respondents must possess two key characteristics: be from one of the selected countries and belong to different age groups. It would be ideal to obtain an equal number of

respondents for the three different age groups and the three countries selected. In order to check whether hypothesis 2 is true or false, different age groups have to be included in the analysis. Consequently, three generations were selected to understand if voters' perception of female politicians through clothes may change with age. There is no single division or label when it comes to generations; instead, scholars have categorised them by different years and names. Thus, the classification chosen for this study was the one developed by Reeves and Oh (2013). The two authors delineated the Boom Generation as people born between 1946 and 1964, while Generation X as those born between 1965 and 1980. The last selected generation, the Millennial Generation, defines persons born between 1981 and 2000. Throughout this thesis I will sometimes refer to the Boom Generation and to the Millennial Generation as "Boomers" and "Millennials", two commonly used terms to define these age groups (Reeves and Oh, 2013, p. 299). Those younger than the Millennial Generation – from 2001 to the present – which are labelled by the scholars Generation Z, were not considered for this study. This choice was dictated by the practical consideration that a large portion of this population is not yet of voting age and thus is not relevant for the purpose of this study. To reach the study's participants, a nonprobability method of sampling was chosen. These methods of sampling are normally used in qualitative research and involve people who are available to or are purposely selected by the researcher (Naderifar et al., 2017, p. 2). In the case of this research, snowball sampling was applied as it was considered the most appropriate to reach the desired population. Snowball sampling is a method used when it is difficult to access subjects with the characteristics sought by the researcher. The existing study subjects are asked to find other subjects among their acquaintances, friends, and family, and sampling continues until the necessary volume of data is acquired (Naderifar et al., 2017, p. 2). This method was chosen because, due to geographical constraints, it was not possible to make direct contact with a large enough sample of participants. The respondents were thus initially chosen among my circle of friends and acquaintances belonging to the three countries selected for the case study. They were successively asked to spread the questionnaire to the largest number of people possible. As my network is most extended in Italy, it is to be expected that Italian respondents would form the largest country group.

Focus group's design

The focus group needed to comprehend at least one person for each generation and the participants had to belong to the countries selected for the case study. However, choosing just one person that represented both a generation and an EU member state would have resulted in a biased data set. Thus, the focus group had to be composed by at least nine individuals. Yet, groups that are too large lack

structure and may split into side conversations, or frustration may arise in the respondents if they have to wait their turn to reply or to get involved (American Statistical Association, 1997, p. 16).

A further key issue related to the focus group's design was language. As it was already mentioned in the questionnaire's section, English could not be used as the idiom of choice because not all the Italian and the Spanish respondents may be comfortable in having conversations about complex topics in this language. To solve both the issues that had arose, it was decided to conduct three separate focus group discussions in the three languages that were selected for the survey. Every group was composed by three individuals, one for each age cluster. This was deemed a suitable solution because such a small group would let each respondent be able to participate and express themselves easily.

Considering that this master thesis focuses on how voters' perception is shaped by what politicians wear, it was not possible to conduct this focus group without the five manipulated outfits that were used for the questionnaire. It was thus decided that participants would be shown the five outfits worn by the fictitious candidate and asked about their opinion on them.

Methodological limitations

The methodological choices made present some limitations, which the researcher has to recognise. First of all, a common concern related to case studies is that it is hard to generalise their results. However, Yin (2009) believes that case studies have the same limitation as experiments. According to the author, scientific facts are hardly based on single experiments, but are built on a set of experiments where the same phenomenon is replicated under different conditions (p.15). Yin (2019) believes that the same approach can be applied to case studies; therefore, the scholar concludes that, like experiments, case studies are "*generalizable to theoretical propositions and not to populations or universes*" (p. 15). A second issue is represented by the fact that closed questions are a limited tool as they assume that words, categories, and concepts have the same meaning for all respondents, but that is not always the case (McGuirk & O'Neill, 2016, p. 13). Thus, people answering the questionnaire may give a different connotation to the four couples of character traits selected by the researcher. Additionally, the questionnaire was drafted in three different languages. Although I was careful in selecting the most appropriate translation for the terms, the meaning of some of the character traits may be perceived differently in the Spanish and the Italian version of the questionnaire. Nonetheless, I believe that in order to make the questionnaire more easily accessible to Spanish and Italian nationals, translation was necessary. A third problem lies in the sampling method. By using the snowball sampling technique, it is difficult to generalise the results to the entire population. Furthermore, it is not possible to calculate the rate of error in the sampling (Naderifar et

al., 2017, p. 2). Yet, as it was already highlighted, when practical considerations were taken into account this sampling technique resulted as the most appropriate and cost effective.

Lastly, according to Angerosa (2014), if respondents are given a non-time limited exposure to a subject in a clothing study, their answers may be guided by other nonverbal cues (p. 4). However, time exposure to the questionnaire's images was a non-controllable element in this study, due to the absence of this feature in the tool utilised (the website Survey Hero). This issue could thus influence the reliability of the information gathered through the questionnaire. Nonetheless, precautions were taken to avoid the influence of other nonverbal cues (e.g. elimination of model face; neutral background and pose) and, as mentioned earlier, triangulating the results with the focus groups should result in a less biased data set.

Chapter 3: Results and analysis

In this chapter, the data gathered through the questionnaire and the focus group will be described and analysed. The results of the survey will be investigated throughout three sections. The first one will explore how each of the five outfit has scored on the four pairs of character traits, while the second one will focus on the three different age groups to understand if any relevant difference is present in how voters evaluated the ensembles based on their age. The last one will compare the three countries of the case studies to understand if culture is a relevant factor for the results of this study. This will be followed by the results and analysis of the three focus groups.

Questionnaire

The analysis of the obtained results has been done by utilising Excel[®]. Absolute data and percentage of votes given to the positive adjectives against the negative ones have been calculated for each country and generation. This made it possible to understand the trend of votes, and similarities and differences among the different generations and countries. Several diagrams have been developed to better show the obtained results, as it will be shown in the next paragraphs.

Answers for the questionnaire, which showed five pictures of the same model wearing different outfits, were gathered in the week between July 15th and July 21st, 2019. The outfits were put together based on four criteria (colour, cut, patterns, accessories) that helped create a scale of masculinity/femininity, going from the most masculine ensemble – Outfit 1 – to the most feminine one – Outfit 5. The survey was filled in by 269 respondents. However, only 234 completed the questionnaire. Therefore, the 35 people who did not answer all the questions were excluded from the results. The majority of the respondents were women, with 144 individuals, so they represented 61.5% of the total; men, on the other end, were only 90, making up 38.5% of the total.

	Boom Generation	Generation X	Millennial Generation	Total
Italy	49	36	80	165
Netherlands	6	6	28	40
Spain	6	12	11	29
Total	61	54	119	234

Table 3: Sample's composition in absolute numbers

In the table above the sample's composition is displayed. Regarding the three age groups, Millennials ended up being the largest one, with 119 individuals (51 per cent of the questionnaire's participants). The Boom Generation was the second largest, as it comprehended 61 people (26% of the

questionnaire’s participants). Generation X had a similar number of respondents – 54 – and made up 23% of the study’s subjects. As it was expected, the largest number of participants was gathered in Italy: 165 individuals completed the questionnaire, corresponding to 71% of the total number of respondents. Dutch participants were far less, 17% (40 people), together with the Spanish ones, which amounted to 29 people (12% of the total).

It has to be highlighted that the sample is not representative of the sub-populations constituted by the three generations and the three countries. The general percentages, which will be analysed by outfit, will therefore be influenced by the two largest groups of the sample: Millennials and Italian respondents. In order to minimise the impact that these two groups had on the results, the ratio between positive and negative traits was highlighted, for both generations and countries.

General results analysis by outfit

	Outfit 1	Outfit 2	Outfit 3	Outfit 4	Outfit 5
Competent	83%	76%	71%	75%	79%
Incompetent	17%	24%	29%	25%	21%
Assertive	76%	55%	52%	51%	73%
Submissive	24%	45%	48%	49%	27%
Confident	71%	55%	54%	59%	76%
Insecure	29%	45%	46%	41%	24%
Rational	75%	62%	41%	32%	62%
Emotional	25%	38%	59%	68%	38%

Table 4: Total scores of the five outfits in percentages

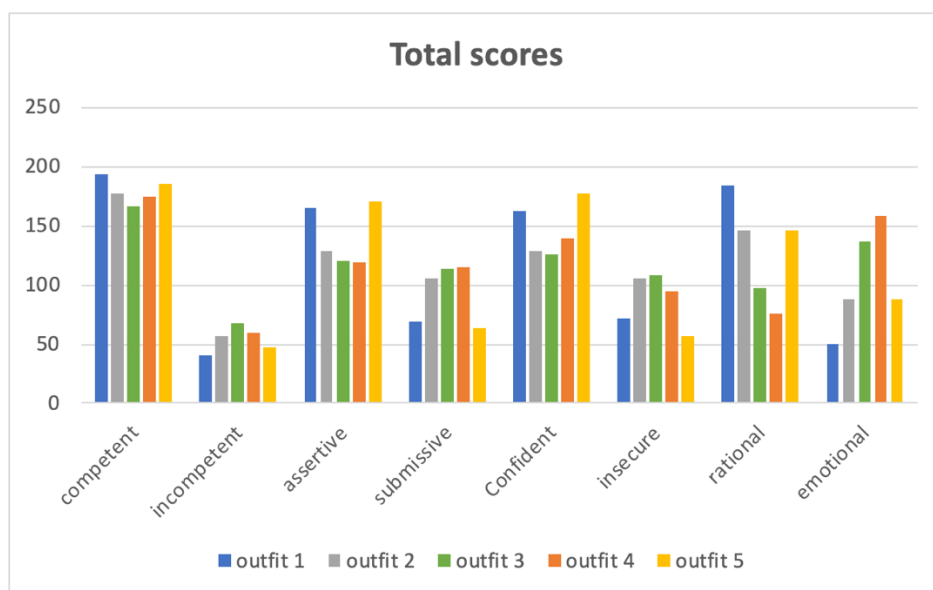


Figure 5: Total scores of the five outfits in absolute numbers

Overall, the table and figure above show that all the five outfits did relatively well in the leadership trait assessment, with all of them obtaining above 50% of the votes in almost each positive trait, except in rationality. By observing the results, it can immediately be noticed that the pictures that consistently received the highest number of votes in the positive leadership traits were the two which outfits were positioned at the extremes of the masculinity/femininity scale. Therefore, Outfit 1 and Outfit 5, the most masculine and the most feminine ones, resulted as the preferred choices of the voters. The differences they presented in the trait scores were minimal. In the trait *competent*, Outfit 1 obtained 83% of the votes, surpassing Outfit 5 by only 4%, as the latter gained 79% of the votes. When respondents were asked to assess assertiveness, the difference between the results was even smaller: 76% for Outfit 1 and 73% for Outfit 5. Outfit 5 scored higher than Outfit 1 on the trait *confident*, but once again the disparity was minimal, with Outfit 5 gaining 76% of the votes and Outfit 1 following suit with 71%. Thus, from these results it seems that both 'extreme' masculinity or femininity are valid solutions to shape a leader persona that appeals to voters. This finding invalidates hypothesis 1, in which it was assumed that wearing masculine clothes has a larger positive effect on trait perceptions of voters compared to wearing feminine clothes.

However, the study's participants are seen being divided when it comes to consider whether the person in the pictures is *rational* or *emotional*. In this case, rationality appears to be associated with masculinity, as it generally is in the classical division of gender roles (Hofstede, 2011, p. 12). In effect, Outfit 1 obtained 75% of the votes, while Outfit 5 was given just 62%. This shows that almost 40% of the respondents chose *emotional* over *rational* to describe the candidate when she is wearing Outfit 5. This result could lead to the assumption that the more feminine the outfit, the lower the score will be on this character trait. Yet, the figures do not confirm this assumption: when observing Outfit 2, it can be seen that it scored 62% of the votes on rationality. The score does decrease progressively in Outfit 3 (41%) and Outfit 4 (32%), but it rises again to 62% when it comes to Outfit 5. Consequently, it is challenging to draw conclusions regarding the behaviour of voters concerning this character trait. Once again, it could be assumed that Outfit 5, although having been constructed to be the most feminine, seems to score similarly to the two most masculine outfits. In the case of the attribute *rational*, it gained exactly the same as Outfit 2, and surpassed it on all the other traits.

Outfits number 2, 3 and 4 obtained results that were more balanced between positive and negative character traits. On the trait *assertive*, Outfit 2 received the highest number of votes, resulting in 55% of the respondent judging the wearer positively. Nonetheless, the percentage was only little above the majority, meaning that a still consistent share of voters – 45% – saw the candidate as *submissive* rather than *assertive*. Outfit 3 and Outfit 4 gained respectively 52% and 51% on this attribute, which meant they were evaluated positively only by an extremely narrow majority. A similar outcome is

evident for the trait *confident*, although with slightly higher percentages. Outfit 2 totalized 55% of the votes, followed by Outfit 3 with 54%. Outfit 4 gained a marginally higher percentage, 59%. A remarkable fact is that the trait pair *competent/incompetent* is the one where votes are less evenly distributed between the negative and the positive adjective. In effect, all the pictures scored high on competence, with percentages ranging from the highest for Outfit 1 (83%) to the lowest for Outfit 3 (71%). It could be assumed that competence is not a characteristic on which voters feel they can judge a candidate negatively only based on her appearance. It should therefore be checked if the same result is found in the generational and country analyses.

Results analysed by generation

To facilitate the analysis, the ratio between positive and negative traits for each outfit will be shown. It will help give an overview on how attitudes of the Boom Generation, Generation X and the Millennial Generation change depending on what the candidate wears.

	Boom Generation	Generation X	Millennial Generation
Outfit 1	2.1	3.9	3.4
Outfit 2	1.6	1.0	2.1
Outfit 3	0.9	1.2	1.4
Outfit 4	1.0	1.0	1.4
Outfit 5	2.4	2.4	2.9

Table 5: Ratio between positive and negative traits for the three generations

From the table above, it appears evident that Outfit 1 and Outfit 5 are those that strongly communicate the leadership traits utilised in the questionnaire. Boomers show a preference for Outfit 5, but the difference with Outfit 1 is minimal – 0.3 points. On the other hand, the Millennial Generation prefers the ensemble number 1 to number 5 with a marginally higher difference – 0.5 points. Generation X shows to be the most decisive in its choice, with the most masculine outfit ratio being 3.9, 1.5 points higher than the most feminine one’s. The remaining outfits present quite low ratios when evaluated by the Boom Generation and Generation X. In contrast, Millennials seem to express a less negative opinion on Outfit 2, 3 and 4. For example, their ratio for Outfit 2 is the same that Boomers have for Outfit 1, while their score for Outfit 3 and 4 was 1.4, which is higher than those given by the other age groups. Overall, their ratios are higher than those of the older generations’. These results will be analysed more in details in the following paragraphs.

	Outfit 1	Outfit 2	Outfit 3	Outfit 4	Outfit 5
Competent	79%	75%	59%	62%	80%
Incompetent	21%	25%	41%	38%	20%

Assertive	59%	52%	44%	44%	74%
Submissive	41%	48%	56%	56%	26%
Confident	61%	56%	49%	54%	75%
Insecure	39%	44%	51%	46%	25%
Rational	70%	64%	33%	36%	52%
Emotional	30%	36%	67%	64%	48%

Table 6: Total scores of the five outfits in percentages (Boom Generation)

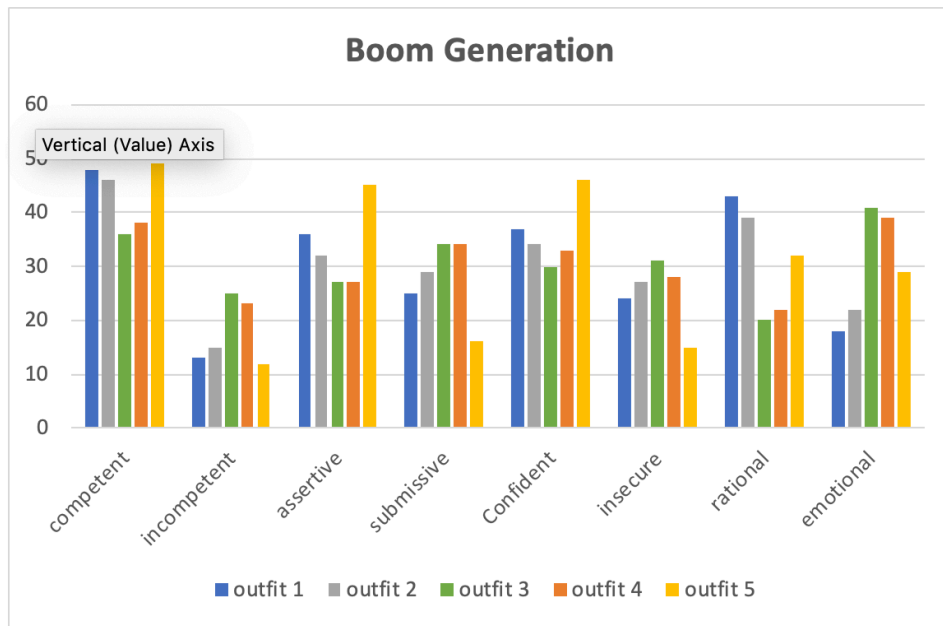


Figure 6: Total scores of the five outfits in absolute numbers (Boom Generation)

In line with the general results, every outfit scored a percentage higher than 60 in the trait *competent*, with the only outlier (Outfit 3) being below 60% just by one point. In the general results it was evident that the highest positive percentages were shown for Outfit 1 and 5, with the positive traits being slightly higher for Outfit 1. On the other hand, the Boom Generation seems to show a preference for the most feminine ensemble. Although the difference is minimal on the trait *competent* (79% for Outfit 1 and 80% for Outfit 5), it becomes obvious in *assertive* (59% for Outfit 1 and 74% for Outfit 5) and *confident* (61% for Outfit 1 and 75% for Outfit 5). The only attribute on which Outfit 1 scored a higher percentage of votes than Outfit 5 is *rational* (70% against 52%). It was already shown in the general results that this particular trait received a percentage substantially above 60% just for Outfit 1. However, Boomers evaluated both Outfit 1 (70%) and Outfit 2 (64%) better than Outfit 5 (52%) on this leadership trait. The other two ensembles were judged particularly negative on this attribute, with number 3 gaining 33% and number 4 obtaining 36%. People belonging to this age group were not at all convinced that the candidate possessed leadership abilities when she was wearing Outfit 3. It consistently scored below 50% on every character trait, except on competency.

	Outfit 1	Outfit 2	Outfit 3	Outfit 4	Outfit 5
Competent	87%	67%	69%	78%	80%
Incompetent	13%	33%	31%	22%	20%
Assertive	76%	44%	50%	41%	70%
Submissive	24%	56%	50%	59%	30%
Confident	80%	44%	48%	57%	80%
Insecure	20%	56%	52%	43%	20%
Rational	76%	46%	54%	28%	54%
Emotional	24%	54%	46%	72%	46%

Table 7: Total scores of the five outfits in percentages (Generation X)

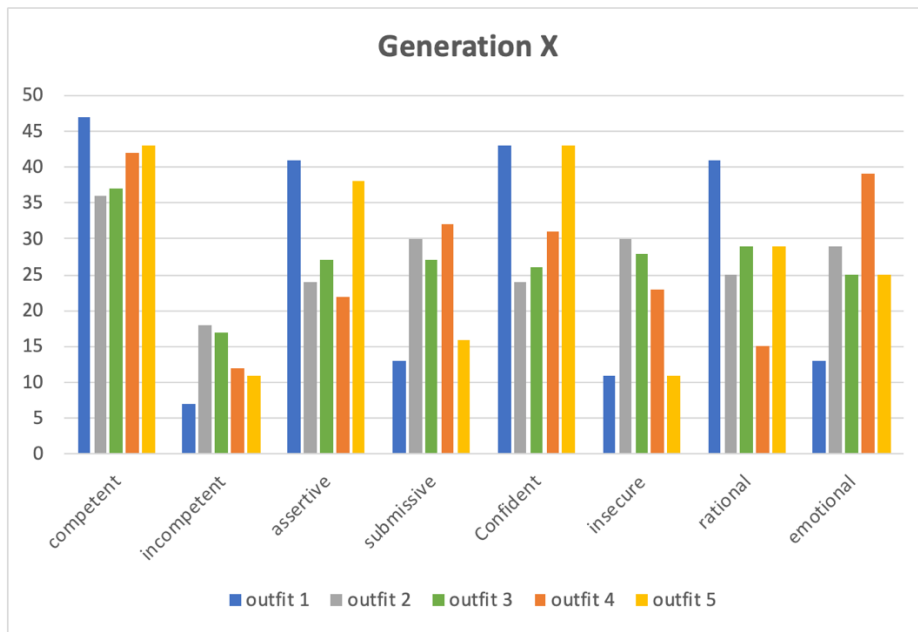


Figure 7: Total scores of the five outfits in absolute numbers (Generation X)

Once again, the trait *competent* resulted extremely positive for every outfit. Except on this trait, Outfit 2, 3 and 4 scored substantially poorly, with percentages at or below 50%, excluding number 4 on confidence. In line with the general results, Generation X appears to prefer Outfit 1 and Outfit 5, as their votes' percentages are high in almost every leadership trait, never below 70%. Nonetheless, Outfit 1 steadily shows marginally better results than number 5. The only striking difference is seen in the attribute *rational*, were Outfit 1 overshadows the remaining ensembles with 76% of the respondents' votes. Its antonym, *emotional*, also presents an outfit which percentage dominates the rest (Outfit 4).

	Outfit 1	Outfit 2	Outfit 3	Outfit 4	Outfit 5
Competent	83%	80%	79%	80%	79%
Incompetent	17%	20%	21%	20%	21%
Assertive	74%	61%	56%	59%	73%

Submissive	26%	39%	44%	41%	27%
Confident	69%	60%	59%	63%	74%
Insecure	31%	40%	41%	37%	26%
Rational	84%	69%	40%	33%	71%
Emotional	16%	31%	60%	67%	29%

Table 8: Total scores of the five outfits in percentages (Millennial Generation)

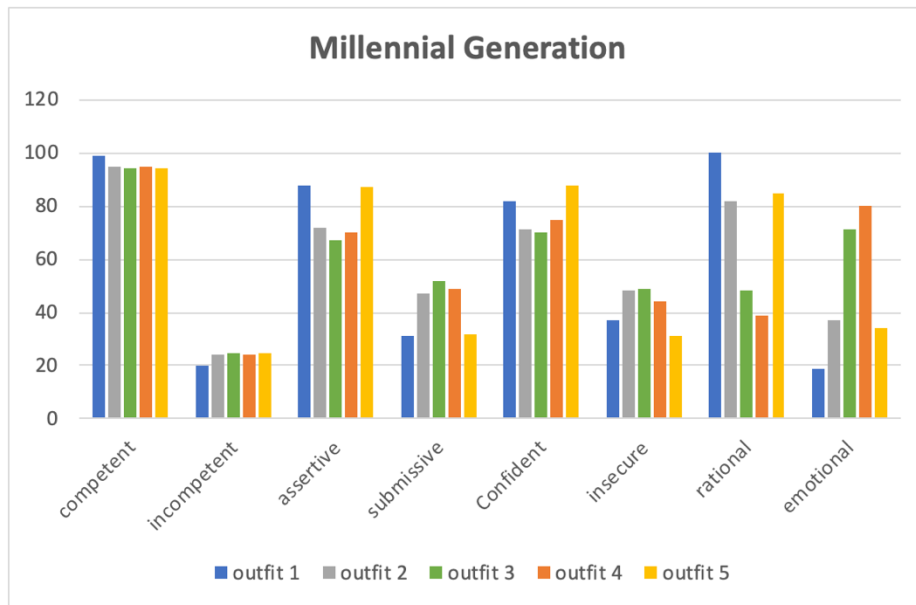


Figure 8: Total scores of the five outfits in absolute numbers (Millennial Generation)

A first noticeable element is that the Millennial Generation exhibits the highest and almost identical percentages for every outfit when assessing the attribute *competent*. Although Outfit 1 scored 83% of the votes on this trait, Outfit 2 is below it by only 3%, together with Outfit 4 (80% of the votes). This time, Outfit 5's score is not the second highest. Nonetheless, it is lower than Outfit 2 and 4 just by 1%: it gained 79% of the votes, as did Outfit 3. Hence, it can be presumed that Millennials categorically refuse to judge a political candidate's competence on what she wears. The scores in the two following traits realign themselves with what was observed in the previous analyses when considering Outfit 1 and 5. When evaluating assertiveness, these two ensembles' percentages of votes are shown to be the highest (74% and 73%). The remaining outfits are given votes that placed their percentages above the majority (61% for Outfit 2, 56% for Outfit 3, 59% for Outfit 4). The same pattern is repeated in the leadership trait *confident*, where Outfit 5 and 1 (74% and 69%) are significantly above the other ensembles. In fact, Outfit 4 was considered confident by 63% of the respondents, Outfit 2 by 60% and Outfit 3 by only 59%. Conforming to what the previous analyses demonstrate, rationality is strongly linked to the most masculine outfit of the five, which was judged *rational* 84% of the times.

Generations' comparison

A first noticeable detail is that, as it was already assumed in the general results, respondents tend to perceive candidates as competent if they can only base their judgement on apparel. In effect, scores for every generation and outfit were above 59% on this trait. *Competence* may thus not be a suitable attribute to measure when discussing how voters' leadership perception is shaped by clothes. To further prove this supposition, a specific question about this trait will be raised during the focus group discussions. A second element that emerges is related to the Millennial Generation. This age group judged the three outfits that were neither extremely masculine nor extremely feminine always more positively than the other two age groups. This appears evident when confronting tables 6, 7 and 8 or their corresponding graphs. This finding seems to confirm hypothesis 2, which states: "Young voters' perception of leadership traits is more widespread and less concentrated on politicians wearing masculine clothes". The only outlier is represented by the attribute *rational* for Outfit 2 and 3. In both cases, the candidate obtained less than 40% of the Millennials' approval, while she did notably better when evaluated by the Boomers Generation (64%) and Generation X (54%). Nonetheless, it was already shown that rationality seems to be a trait on which respondents are seen to be uncertain even when they rate the outfit positively on the other attributes. A possible explanation would be that its antonym, the trait *emotional*, is not perceived by all respondents as a negative characteristic.

First of all, although it was classified as the opposite of *rational* in this study, the word itself is not necessarily negative and possesses multiple meanings. When chosen for the questionnaire, the adjective was intended as "*having feelings that are easily excited and openly displayed*" (Oxford Dictionary, 2019), as a contradiction of rationality. Yet, the adjective also means "*relating to a person's emotions*" or "*arousing or characterized by intense feeling*" (Oxford Dictionary, 2019), which are definitions that per se do not negate rationality. In the context of this study, rationality was associated to a 'masculine' idea of the leader as someone who is not controlled by feelings, but mostly acts guided by logic and reasoning. But, as it was mentioned in the literature, there is evidence of a decrease over time of the masculine construct of leadership (Schein et al., 1996; Koenig et al., 2011). This fact does not only indicate that womanhood can fit into the idea the leader should be, but also that the presence of female leaders may be changing the concept itself. There is a wide literature confirming how leadership is being reshaped by women (Burke & Collins, 2001; Applebaum et al., 2003; Eagly, 2007; Eagly & Chin, 2010) Applebaum et al. (2003) explain that new values, in contrast with the competitive and authoritative approach usually associated with traditional masculine leadership, are now diffused in management contexts (p. 48). These are related to characteristics traditionally associated with women, like empathy and active concern for people and their needs communication, and general people skills like sensitivity to others, and ability to listen. The scholars

believe that “*consensually-driven organisational structures*” are more prevalent in today's world, thus leadership has been evolving accordingly (p. 49). Moreover, Eagly & Chin (2010) assert that leaders who belong to gender or ethnic groups that have been traditionally excluded from leadership roles shape their behavior guided by their dual identities as leaders and members of that specific group. It could therefore be assumed that women will bring new values and attitudes to leadership in comparison to men, emotionality being one of those. Thus, percentages for this trait may have often been low because of respondents interpretation of the word and the ongoing change in the idea of leadership.

Results analysed by country

To facilitate the analysis, the ratio between positive and negative traits for each outfit will be shown. It will help give an overview on how attitudes of Italian, Dutch and Spanish voters change depending on what the candidate wears.

	Italy	Netherlands	Spain
Outfit 1	2.7	3.6	6.3
Outfit 2	1.7	1.3	1.5
Outfit 3	1.1	2.2	2.3
Outfit 4	0.9	2.6	1.9
Outfit 5	1.9	3.0	4.3

Table 9: Ratio between positive and negative traits for the three countries

As it was demonstrated so far, Outfit 1 and Outfit 5 are the two preferred ones when it comes to embodying leadership traits. In particular, the ratios for Spanish respondents are very high on these two ensembles. Outfit 1’s ratio is 6.3, 2 points above Outfit 5, thus demonstrating an indisputable predilection for the most masculine ensemble when it comes to showing leadership. The remaining ratios are significantly lower than those of the most masculine and most feminine outfit. This finding is in contrast with the assumption related to Spain’s culture and femininity that was made in Chapter 2. On the other hand, Italian ratios are overall the lowest. Italian respondents are still shown to be more positive towards Outfit 1 and 5, but they seem cautious in giving their judgement. Finally, Dutch respondents’ ratios are more distributed, meaning that they see each outfit more positively than negatively. Respondents from the Netherlands still show a preference for Outfit 1; however, the difference between the latter and Outfit 5 is not extreme. Dutch ratios are overall higher than the Italian ones and less concentrated towards Outfit 1 and 5 like the Spanish ratios. These results will be analysed more in details in the following paragraphs.

	Outfit 1	Outfit 2	Outfit 3	Outfit 4	Outfit 5
Competent	80%	78%	69%	67%	74%
Incompetent	20%	22%	31%	33%	26%
Assertive	68%	57%	47%	42%	70%
Submissive	32%	43%	53%	58%	30%
Confident	67%	54%	50%	56%	79%
Insecure	33%	46%	50%	44%	21%
Rational	76%	63%	44%	25%	41%
Emotional	24%	37%	56%	75%	59%

Table 10: Total scores of the five outfits in percentages (Italy)

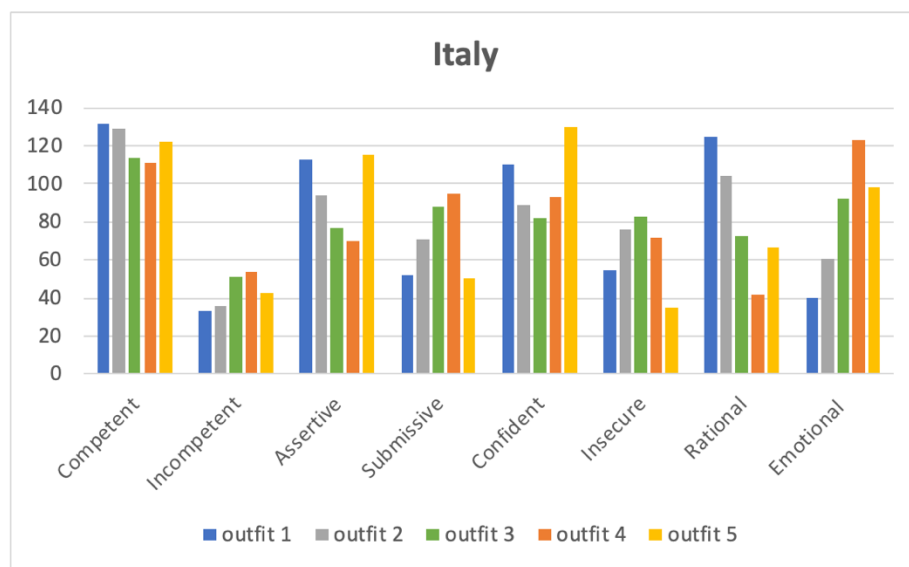


Figure 9: Total scores of the five outfits in absolute numbers (Italy)

By looking at the data, it can be seen that Italy shows a clear preference for Outfit 1, which lowest score is 67% on *confident* and highest one is 80% for *competent*, and Outfit 5. The latter outfit did Outfit 1 on assertiveness and especially on confidence, but its percentage was very low on the trait *rational* (41%). The candidate was not seen as *emotional* only when wearing Outfit 1 and Outfit 2, the most masculine ones. Outfit 2 scored relatively better than 3 and 4 on each trait, especially on rationality.

	Outfit 1	Outfit 2	Outfit 3	Outfit 4	Outfit 5
Competent	85%	68%	73%	90%	92%
Incompetent	15%	32%	27%	10%	8%
Assertive	70%	45%	80%	72%	78%
Submissive	30%	55%	20%	28%	22%
Confident	73%	48%	85%	75%	82%
Insecure	27%	52%	15%	25%	18%
Rational	85%	63%	38%	50%	47%
Emotional	15%	37%	62%	50%	53%

Table 11: Total scores of the five outfits in percentages (Netherlands)

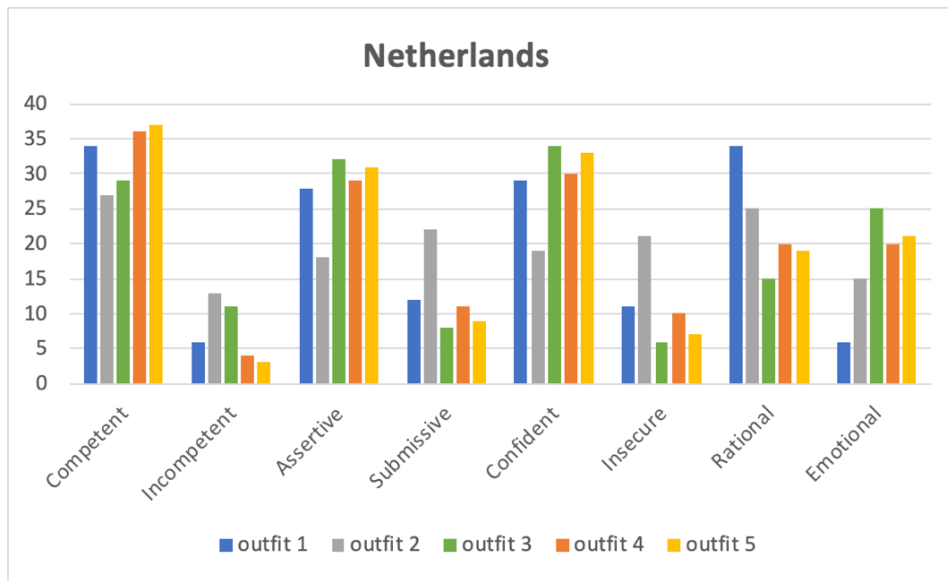


Figure 10: Total scores of the five outfits in absolute numbers (Netherlands)

The Netherlands exhibits a more diverse set of percentages when compared to what has been seen until now. It is immediately clear that Outfit 1 and 5 are not the uncontestedly positive ensembles. For example, on the trait *competent*, Outfit 4 scored more than Outfit 1, and just 2% less than Outfit 5. In the attribute *assertive* it is established again that the most masculine outfit is not the preferred one. On the contrary, Outfit 3 obtained the highest percentage on this trait (80%). It is seen to be closely followed by Outfit 5 and 4. Outfit 3 is once again the favourite when it comes to evaluating confidence, with Outfit 5's result being just 3% below. When analysing the ratios of positive and negative adjectives (Table 9), it is likely that Outfit 1 resulted the preferred one because, when compared to the other ensembles, it obtained a substantially higher score on the trait *rational*.

	Outfit 1	Outfit 2	Outfit 3	Outfit 4	Outfit 5
Competent	93%	72%	79%	90%	90%
Incompetent	7%	28%	21%	10%	10%
Assertive	86%	55%	76%	69%	83%
Submissive	14%	45%	24%	31%	17%
Confident	79%	52%	72%	55%	86%
Insecure	21%	48%	28%	45%	14%
Rational	86%	59%	52%	48%	66%
Emotional	14%	41%	48%	52%	34%

Table 12: Total scores of the five outfits in percentages (Spain)

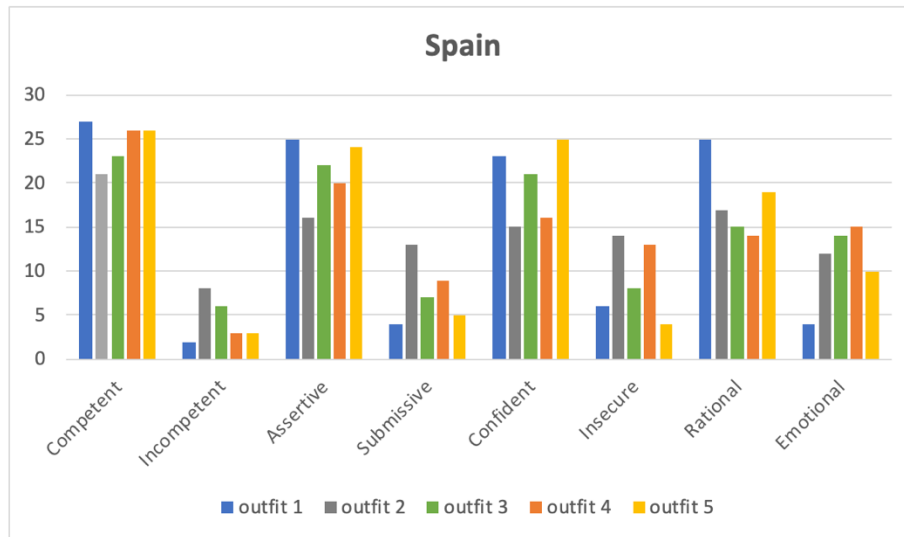


Figure 11: Total scores of the five outfits in absolute numbers (Spain)

When analysing the results obtained from Spanish respondents' answers, it is once again evident that Outfit 1 and 5 have been evaluated more positively on each trait than the rest. As shown previously, the perception of confidence is high for every outfit (above 70%). Assertiveness is instead lower for the three middle ensembles and above 80% for Outfit 1 and 5. On confidence, Outfit 5 did better than Outfit 1, as its votes for the trait were 7% above those of the most masculine outfit. The last attribute, *rational*, was high only for Outfit 1, as it could be expected from the analysis of previous data.

Countries' comparison

The questionnaire's results seem to assert that culture indeed has an influence on voters' perception of female politicians. However, the outcomes for each country was not what it was expected. Each EU member state was chosen based of its score on the Masculinity dimension of Hofstede's paradigm. Italy was the most masculine one, the Netherlands the most feminine, and Spain represented a middle ground between the two. Taking this into account, Italian respondents should have shown a clear preference for Outfit 1 and perhaps 2. For its part, Spain was supposed to exhibit a predilection for the masculine outfits, but less marked than what was seen for Italy's results. On the other hand, Dutch study's participants were expected to have a widespread positive perception of the model in the picture, no matter what she was wearing. Instead, all countries' results pointed towards a preference for Outfit 1, followed by Outfit 5. The strongest preference for Outfit 1 was shown by Spanish respondents which ratio between negative and positive votes was 6.3, the second highest being 4.3. Italy, on the contrary, did not exhibit such a strong preference towards Outfit 1, favouring Outfit 5 instead. These two ensembles were manipulated to be the most masculine and the most feminine, which invalidates the assumptions made. The one supposition that proved to be true referred to the

Netherlands. This country, although it still aligned itself with the general trend of preferring 1 and 5, did demonstrate a higher positive perception of the rest of the outfits compared to Italy and Spain.

Focus group

The focus group discussions were set after the closing of the questionnaire. To accommodate the needs of the respondents, they took place on different days: the 3rd, the 8th and the 11th of August. The Dutch and Spanish focus groups' participants were questioned via Skype, while those belonging to the Italian focus group were interviewed vis-à-vis. All the group discussions were recorded and transcribed in a Word® document. Each discussion lasted around 40 minutes. Initially, the participants of the three focus groups received a brief description of the topic of the discussion, as well as assurances that their anonymity would be protected. The members of the groups were people who did not participate in the survey, therefore had no previous knowledge of the five pictures they were asked to evaluate. The Italian focus group was composed by two men who belonged respectively to the Boom Generation and to the Millennial Generation, and a woman of the age group defined as Generation X. The members of the Dutch focus group were two women who belonged respectively to the Millennial Generation and to the Boom Generation, and a man of Generation X. The last focus group, formed by Spanish interviewees, was constituted by a man belonging to the Millennial Generation and two women, one of Generation X and one of the Boom Generation. At the end of each focus group, the subjects were given the opportunity to make additional remarks.

The data obtained from the discussions was analysed using the framework analysis described by Krueger. The benefit of this approach is that it shows a clear succession of steps, which could help first-time researchers to manage the complex nature of qualitative data easily (Rabiee, 2004, p. 657). To analyse in detail the text collected throughout the focus group, an Excel® file was created, with a sheet for each outfit. The answers of each participant were listed in these five sheets. The goal of this analysis was to better understand how many positive and negative opinions have been used to evaluate each ensemble. Therefore, three main categories were identified for the respondents' answers: positive, negative and neutral. To not lose the country and generation that each participant belonged to, an ID code was defined for every sentence analysed. The results of this analysis are reported in the table below.

	Positive	Negative	Neutral
Outfit 1	7	6	3
Outfit 2	3	10	2
Outfit 3	5	5	2
Outfit 4	7	3	2
Outfit 5	5	4	0

Table 13: Positive, negative, and neutral remark for each outfit in absolute numbers

In addition, adjectives that were used to describe the fictitious candidate’s character were extracted from each sentence. This is useful to grasp what adjectives would have been more fitting to use in the questionnaire and to better understand participants’ opinions. The complete list can be found in the Appendix. They were classified in the same manner as the general sentences: positive, negative, and neutral.

Outfit 1

The first outfit seemed to give two main opposite signals. The first one was that its sobriety was an indication of professionalism. Participants believed the model in the picture had chosen to wear those clothes because she wanted to be judged by her actions and her role, not by what she looked like. The Spanish respondent from the Boom generation and its corresponding Millennial stated:

“She doesn’t want people to see at her as a woman, but as a person.”
 “I like the neutrality of the outfit, I believe she is someone who focuses more on what she does and how she does it than her appearance. Her body, her gender – they do not matter. What matters is her opinions, her mind.”

Thus, the interviewees found the ensemble, formal, sober, and a proper choice for a candidate for the European Parliament. On the other hand, some participants saw the outfit as representative of a close-minded, strict candidate. The severity of the outfit was judged negatively, portraying the image of an unfriendly, stern person. The Spanish respondent from Generation X even believed that:

“This woman lacks personality, so she dresses plainly because she is not confident enough to wear something else.”

Some respondents were seen expressing both positive and negative opinions on the candidate wearing this outfit. For example, the Italian who belonged to Generation X asserted that she saw the model as “elegant, sober, but a bit severe and perhaps inhibited”. Nonetheless, the Italian Generation X and Boomer both mentioned that, overall, they evaluated her positively because of the shoes she chose to wear.

It was seen that the majority of the positive evaluations were given by Boomers, while the negative ones by Generation X and Dutch participants.

Outfit 2

It was already seen in Table 13 that Outfit 2 was judged extremely negatively, with only 3 positive and 2 neutral remarks, while the negative ones amounted to 10. It was found that the candidate was unkept, insecure, and rigid. The Dutch participant who belonged to Generation X even defined her as “vulnerable”. The Millennial participant from Italy sentenced:

“I don’t feel that someone like her belongs in the Parliament. She doesn’t know what she stands for, has no charisma. She gives me a bit of a ‘nun’ vibe, too”.

Even respondents who found that the model was appropriately dressed added negative comments about her. The Spanish Millennial argued that:

“I do feel that she is properly dress for her role, but... something is off. I think she does not have a very strong character. She is mixing masculinity with femininity in her clothing style, but I feel that she is doing so to hide her true self”.

Outfit 3

Concerning this outfit, voters’ views were equally divided between negative and positive, with only 2 neutral remarks. The positive opinions described the candidate as a confident, elegant woman, capable of listening to others. The two youngest Dutch participants said she was their favourite one. The one who belonged to Generation X declared:

“I like her, I believe she is friendly and pleasant and would really try everything to represent at best her voters’ interests if she was elected to the Parliament”.

On the other hand, people who did not like the outfit labelled the model as dressed in a too ‘over the top’ manner. Both the Spanish and the Dutch Boomers believed she was not confident and was trying to hide it with a very ‘heavy’ feminine look. The accessories (necklaces and earrings) and the colour of the jacket (bright pink) were pointed out as the source of this ‘heaviness’.

It was seen that the majority of the negative evaluations were given by Boomers, while the positive ones by Generation X.

Outfit 4

Outfit 4 was evaluated mostly positively. The candidate was praised for the choice of her outfit, which defined her as bold, confident, not afraid to stand out. The Dutch Millennial asserted that she really liked the ‘attitude’ of this candidate:

“She doesn’t care about that her appearance may possibly influence how people see her and her career. She has experienced in her field and she can wear whatever she likes”.

The Dutch Boomer praised her choice of wearing feminine colours and piece of clothing, but also a jacket that covered her body:

“I love that she is wearing a dress because she is not hiding her femininity, she is putting it on display, so she is not afraid of showing who she is. [...] She is not ‘distracting’ with her femininity, but she is not negating it either”.

Similar ideas were expressed by the Spanish Boomer, who explained:

“She is confident enough to care little about other people’s judgement and wear what she likes and feels comfortable with [...]. She totally has a ‘multitasking’ persona: she can be a woman, a mother, but also a politician, a leader. She can be one without feeling the need to negate the other”.

In contrast, negative comments did not point towards a specific issue regarding this outfit. For instance, the Italian Millennial said she was ‘flaunting’ her femininity, while the same country’s Boomer stated:

“I feel that she is trying to blend in with the male politicians and she denies herself by doing so”.

The jacket seemed to be the source of many negative and positive comments. Approval was showed for the bright colour of the garment and its ‘appropriateness’ which made the dress more professional; on the other hand, it was criticised by some because of the assumption that she was trying to hide her femininity by wearing it. A curious adjective that was given by the Italian participants was “German-looking”. Although it was classified as neutral, the comment might have been intended negatively. Lastly, it was seen that the majority of the positive evaluations were given by Spanish respondents.

Outfit 5

The last outfit was the only one on which participants were very decisive with their answers: as it can be seen in Table 13 it received 5 positive and 4 negative comments, which make up the total number of people who took part in the focus groups. The woman was evaluated as someone experienced, resolute and confident, a person that fights for her ideals. The Dutch Boomer even described her as

“helpful and motherly”. The Spanish Millennial stated that it was his second favourite outfit, after number 1:

“I believe this ensemble is as strong as the first outfit, but in a different way. It is appropriate for the Parliament, but at the same times it highlights her body, showing that she is different from that of the male politicians. She is saying: I’m your equal even if I am different than you”.

Those who judged the candidate negatively thought she was stern, very conservative and not trustworthy. The shoes and the necklace were especially mentioned negatively by these participants. Her look was compared to Margaret Thatcher by the Italian of Generation X:

“I truly hate this ‘Thatcher’ look, how old school! She surely is a bigoted person who likes to boss people around”.

Chapter 4: Discussion and conclusion

In this chapter, the data from both the questionnaire and the focus groups will be discussed and the two hypotheses formulated in Chapter 1 will be tested. Successively, alternative explanations to the findings will be given. A reflection on the flaws and the advantages of the methodology will be made, thus addressing recommendations for further research. Finally, this thesis will be concluded by answering its research question: does clothing influence voters' perception of female politicians in EU elections?

Results overview and hypotheses confirmation

Two hypotheses were formulated to help in the answering the research question of this master's thesis. The first one assumed that:

H₁: Wearing masculine clothes has a larger positive effect on trait perceptions of voters compared to wearing feminine clothes.

As it was seen in Chapter 3, all the five outfits did relatively well in the leadership trait assessment: each of them obtained above 50% of the votes in almost each leadership trait, except in rationality. But the two ensembles that were consistently evaluated more positively were number 1 and number 5, which were positioned at the extremes of the masculinity/femininity scale. The most masculine one always did slightly better than the most feminine one, except when the results of the Boom Generation were analysed. In that case, this age group preferred Outfit 5. Furthermore, the second most masculine outfit, number 2, was rated inconsistently in the questionnaire, even resulting the least preferred one for Spain, the Netherlands, and the Boom Generation (see: Table 5; Table 9). In effect, the findings of the focus group show that it was rated extremely negative by participants. Other outfits which were manipulated to be perceived as more feminine were rated incongruously, leaving 1 and 5 as the only two constants. By observing these results, it can thus be stated that this first hypothesis cannot be confirmed.

The second hypothesis was formulated as such:

H₂: Young voters' perception of leadership traits is more widespread and less concentrated on politicians wearing masculine clothes.

When evaluated by Millennials in the survey, Outfit 2, 3 and 4 all received more than 55% of the votes on each of the four leadership traits. Additionally, their ratios between positive and negative traits are overall higher than those of the older generations'. This could be explained by the fact that, contrary to Boomers and Generation X, this age group grew up in a world where diversity in ethnicity, gender, and even clothes is diffuse. (Smith & Nichols, 2018, p. 40). Certain elements of outward

appearance have also taken a different meaning for them – for instance, they usually do not view tattoos as negatively as older generations (Smith & Nichols, 2018, p. 40). Hence, the same might have happened with their idea of femininity and what certain clothes represent. These findings confirm hypothesis 2.

Further findings are related to the three countries used as the case study. The Netherlands showed an overall more positive attitude towards each outfit than the other countries. This was expected because of its low degree on the Masculinity dimension of Hofstede's paradigm. On the other hand, Spain exhibited a strong preference for Outfit 1, even more than Italy, which was supposed to be the most masculine country and therefore expected to prefer the most masculine outfit. Instead, Italy had low ratios of negative and positive traits, revealing to have less strong opinions than the other two EU member states on this topic. It is thus difficult to associate the preferences shown by each countries with their score on the Masculinity dimension.

Alternative Explanations

Like every study, this thesis had to restrict itself to the analysis of selected categories' data, in this case age group and country. Two demographic factors were thus not taken in consideration: sex and education. The first one is indeed a relevant factor, although it is not known to what extent. In effect, studies have shown that men, more than women, think that good leaders possess masculine qualities (Schein et al. 1996; Koenig, 2011). Thus, this could be a factor that influenced the results. Education is another aspect that has been frequently considered in research related to voters' behaviour (Warren, 2008) and may have played an unknown role in this study. Additionally, Bartruff (2016) asserts that citizens who are less informed are more sensitive to candidates' appearance (p. 35). She adds that the same can be stated for citizens who watch substantial amounts of television. Respondents' media consumption could therefore be another relevant factor in assessing how their vote is influenced by apparel.

Another possible explanation to what was seen in the results is linked to the perceiver's interest in clothing. In fact, Angerosa (2014) asserts that this factor may alter the way people view others; another aspect that may influence perception is the perceiver's level of clothing satisfaction, as judgments of others are made relative to the self (p. 13). A further consideration that has to be made considers the influence of culture. Although it was indeed stated that differences among the countries selected for this study existed, the distinction between feminine and masculine culture might not be enough to analyse the results. In effect, differences in taste and diverse clothing preferences exist across Europe (Waarts & Everdingen, 2006) and could thus have influenced the results of this study.

Implications and Perspectives for Future Research

The use of a case study constituted by three countries selected by using the Hofstede's paradigm is easily reproducible for further research. However, it would be advisable to consider more than one dimension, so to have a clearer understanding of the country's culture, its members and what that implies for research dealing with how voters' perception is influenced by clothes. This study shows that using only the Masculinity dimension did not lead to very clear results.

It could be stated that the questionnaire is a valuable tool which can easily help to uncover fascinating social pattern in an easily codable way. However, it was shown that it may fail to capture the complexity of this topic. The suggestion for further research would be not to limit the survey to close-ended questions but to combine them with open-ended ones or give respondents the possibility to make comments. It is relevant to mention that the focus groups' subjects were never asked specific pre-made questions related to the five pictures but were just told to evaluate them. Nonetheless, after they freely assessed the outfits, they were demanded to evaluate their competence. This was done in order to understand the reason behind the steady high results for this trait in the questionnaire. It is relevant to underline that none of the participants mentioned the candidate's competence spontaneously. When asked, the general answer was that it would be unfair to evaluate her skills and abilities just from her appearance. Nonetheless, *professional* and *unprofessional* were often utilised to describe the fictitious candidate (see Appendix). It can be assumed that this term was deemed by voters less about the candidate's abilities and more related to the outfit's appropriateness to the situation. This trait could thus substitute *competent* in the questionnaire in the eventuality that the same experiment is repeated. However, it should be firstly understood if it is a suitable adjective for a leader. Furthermore, a method based on four criteria was developed to manipulate the outfits used for this study to the degree of masculinity or femininity desired; yet, this method could obviously present flaws that I did not realise. People recruited for the focus groups have been seen to focus often on elements like shoes and accessories when evaluating a person. A strong attention to details is therefore advised when putting together the outfits. Lastly, when considering the focus group, it was difficult to divert the participants' attention towards specific aspects that were of interest for this study. This was due to a lack of pre-existing questions, as it was decided that voters should be given great freedom in expressing how they felt about each outfit. Consequently, for further studies I would advise to keep participants' freedom at the maximum level possible, while still having a set of questions that focus on what the researcher needs.

Conclusion

This master's thesis sought to find an answer to the research question: does clothing influence voters' perception of female politicians in EU elections?

This study shows that certain leadership traits can be reinforced, in the eyes of voters, by clothes. However, it could not effectively be established if the degree of masculinity or femininity of garments has any influence on voters' perception. Therefore, the answer to the sub-question "is there a difference in how voters perceive politicians who wear feminine attires and those who do not?" seems to be negative. This study has nonetheless shed some light on a topic that has not been widely researched. It indicates that, to a certain extent, culture and age seem to be influencing how individuals assess female politicians solely based on what they wear. It also demonstrates that voters' idea of what may be considered appropriate to wear in the political arena is more varied than it was expected. This may signify that, as women are slowly filling leadership roles, voters have started to adjust to what a woman may be wearing and are abandoning existing preconceptions around what she 'should' be wearing. The hope is that the more women will be in power, the more leadership will be a domain less identified with masculinity and outward appearance will play just a minimal part on shaping how these women are seen.

Bibliography

- American Statistical Association. (1997). *Northern Arizona University*. Tratto da What Are Focus Groups?: <http://www.prm.nau.edu/prm447/asa%20brochures/focusgroups.pdf>
- Angerosa, O. N. (2014). *Clothing as Communication: How Person Perception and Social Identity Impact First Impressions Made by Clothing*. Tratto da Rochester Institute of Technology: https://www.academia.edu/35552038/Clothing_as_Communication_How_Person_Perception_and_Social_Identity_Impact_First_Impressions_Made_by_Clothing
- Appelbaum, S., Audet, L., & Miller, J. (2003). Gender and leadership? Leadership and gender? A journey through the landscape of theories. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 24(1), 43-51. Retrieved from: <https://doi.org/10.1108/01437730310457320>.
- Arvanitidou, Z., & Gasouka, M. (2013). Construction of Gender through Fashion and Dressing. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 4(11), 111-115. Retrieved from: <https://www.mcser.org/journal/index.php/mjss/article/download/1276/1305>.
- Bartruff, O. (2016). *Looking the part: How appearance and media coverage affect success in the masculine world of politics*. University of Oregon. Retrieved from: <http://hdl.handle.net/1794/20260>
- Beauvoir, S. D. (2010). *The Second Sex*. New York: Random House, Inc. .
- Behling, D. U., & Williams, E. A. (1991). Influence of Dress on Perception of Intelligence and Expectations of Scholastic Achievement. *Clothing & Textiles Research Journal*, 9(4), 1-7. Retrieved from: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0887302X9100900401>.
- Boris, E. (2006). Desirable Dress: Rosies, Sky Girls, and the Politics of Appearance. *International Labor and Working-Class History*, 69, 123-142. Retrieved from: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/27673025>.
- Burke, S., & Collins, K. (2001). Gender differences in leadership styles and management skills. *Women in Management Review*, 16(5), 244-257. Retrieved from: <https://doi.org/10.1108/09649420110395728>.

- Cole, D. J., & Deihl, N. (2015). *The history of modern fashion from 1850*. London: Laurence King Publishing.
- Corner, J., & Pels, D. (2003). *Media and the Restyling of Politics: Consumerism, Celebrity and Cynicism*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Craik, J. (2005). *The Face of Fashion: Cultural Studies in Fashion*. London: Routledge.
- Damhorst, M. L. (1990). In Search of a Common Thread: Classification of Information Communicated Through Dress. *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal*, 8(2), 1-12. Retrieved from: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0887302X9000800201>.
- Eagly, A. H. (2007). Female Leadership Advantage and Disadvantage: Resolving the Contradictions. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 31(1), 1-12. Retrieved from: <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-6402.2007.00326.x>.
- Eagly, A. H., & Carli, L. L. (2007). Women and the Labyrinth of Leadership. *Harvard Business Review*, 85(9), 62-71. Retrieved from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/5957753_Women_and_the_labyrinth_of_leadershi p.
- Eagly, A. H., & Chin, J. L. (2010). Diversity and leadership in a changing world. *American Psychologist*, 65(3), 216-224. Retrieved from: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0018957>.
- Eagly, A. H., & Karau, S. J. (2002). Role Congruity Theory of Prejudice Toward Female Leaders. *Psychological Review*, 109(3), 573-598. Retrieved from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/12088246>.
- EF Education. (2018). *EF EPI - Indice di conoscenza dell'inglese EF*. EF Italia. Retrieved from: <https://www.ef-italia.it/epi/>
- Ehrich, L. C. (1994). The Problematic Nature of Dress for Women Managers. *Women in Management Review*, 9(2), 29-32. Retrieved from: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/09649429410057640>.

- European Commission. (2018). *2018 Report on equality between women and men in the EU*. European Commission. Retrieved from: https://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:5lbFZ99uRRUJ:https://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/just/document.cfm%3Fdoc_id%3D50074+&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=de&client=safari
- Flügel, J. C. (1930). *The psychology of clothes*. Hogarth Press.
- Forsythe, S. M. (1987). Effect of clothing on perception of masculine and feminine managerial trait. *Perceptual and Motor Skills*, 65(2), 531-534. Retrieved from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/232533661_Effect_of_clothing_on_perception_of_masculine_and_feminine_managerial_traits.
- Gupta, A. (2018). *Do fashion and politics belong together?* Vogue India. Retrieved from: <https://www.vogue.in/content/do-fashion-and-politics-belong-together>
- Hamid, P. N. (1968). Style of dress as perceptual cue in impression formation. *Perceptual and Motor Skills*, 26, 904-906. Retrieved from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/5657747>.
- Hayes, D., Lawless, J. L., & Baitinger, G. (2014). Who Cares What They Wear? Media, Gender, and the Influence of Candidate Appearance. *Social Science Quarterly*, 95(5), 1194-1212. Retrieved from: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/ssqu.12113>.
- Heke, J. (2010). *The influence of grooming style on recruiters' evaluations of female applicants for a managerial position*. Massey University. Retrieved from: <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/fd6c/8e3a2d83767293463263cf05b29aba69b9d0.pdf>
- Hofstede, G. (2011). Dimensionalizing Cultures: The Hofstede Model in Context. *Online Readings in Psychology and Culture*, 2(1), 1-26. Retrieved from: <https://doi.org/10.9707/2307-0919.1014>.
- Hollander, A. (1980). *Seeing through clothes*. New York: Avon Books.
- Howlett, N., Pine, K., Orakcioglu, I., & Fletcher, B. C. (2012). The influence of clothing on first impressions: Rapid and positive responses to minor changes in male attire. *Journal of*

Fashion Marketing and Management, 17(1), 38-48. Retrived from:
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/13612021311305128>.

Inglehart, R. F. (2008). Changing Values among Western Publics from 1970 to 2006. *West European Politics*, 31(1-2), 130-146. Retrieved from:
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/01402380701834747?needAccess=true&instName=Masaryk+University>.

Jansens, F. (2019). Suit of power: fashion, politics, and hegemonic masculinity in Australia. *Australian Journal of Political Science*, 54(2), 202-218. Retrieved from:
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10361146.2019.1567677>.

Johnson, K. K., Schofield, N. A., & Yurchisin, J. (2002). Appearance and Dress as a Source of Information: A Qualitative Approach to Data Collection. *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal*, 20(3), 125-127. Retrieved from:
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/275429010_Appearance_and_Dress_as_a_Source_of_Information_A_Qualitative_Approach_to_Data_Collection.

Kawamura, Y. (2005). *Fashion-ology: An Introduction to Fashion Studies*. New York: Oxford International Publishers Ltd.

Kimle, P. A. (1994). *Business women's appearance management, career development and sexual harassment*. Iowa State University. Retrieved from: <https://lib.dr.iastate.edu/rtd/11279>

Koenig, A. M., Eagly, A. H., Mitchell, A. A., & Ristikari, T. (2011). Are Leader Stereotypes Masculine? A Meta-Analysis of Three Research Paradigms. *Psychological Bulletin*, 137(4), 616–642. Retrieved from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/21639606>.

Koenig, A. M., Mitchell, A. A., Eagly, A. H., & Ristikari, T. (2011). Are Leader Stereotypes Masculine? A Meta-Analysis of Three Research Paradigms. *Psychological Bulletin*, 137(4), 616–642. Retrieved from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/21639606>.

Lake, C., Snell, A., Gormley, C., Lethbridge-Cejku, F., & Carpenter, B. (2013). *She Should Run: An Examination of the Impact of Media Coverage of Women Candidates' Appearance*.

Name It Change It. Retrieved from:

http://wmc.3cdn.net/0d817481d880a7de0a_60m6b9yah.pdf

Lawson, C., Lenz, G. S., Baker, A., & Myers, M. (2010). LOOKING LIKE A WINNER: Candidate Appearance and Electoral Success in New Democracies. *World Politics*, 62(4), 561-593.
Retrieved from: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40891390>.

Lorber, J. (1994). *Paradoxes of Gender*. New Haven: Yale University Press .

Lumsden, J. (2005). *Guidelines for the design of online-questionnaires*. Retrieved from:
<http://publications.aston.ac.uk/id/eprint/24309/>: National Research Council Canada.

Lunceford, B. (2010). Clothes Make the Person? Performing Gender Through Fashion. *Communication Teacher*, 24(2), 63-68. Retrieved from:
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17404621003680864>.

Mavin, S. (2015). *Women Performing as Leaders: Gendered Bodies and Appearance* . Tratto da University College Cork: Women Performing as Leaders: Gendered Bodies and Appearance
McGuirk, P. M., & O'Neill, P. (2016). Using questionnaires in qualitative human geography. *Faculty of Social Sciences - Papers*, p. 246-273.

Mills, D. B. (1994). *Investigation of Clothing Cues Affecting Perceptions of Personality Characteristics in Business Settings*. Tratto da Oregon State University:
<https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/390e/e76a0ef1c979679eacdf4b6c3fca93f914e7.pdf>

Minkov, M., & Hofstede, G. (2011). The evolution of Hofstede's doctrine. *Cross Cultural Management: An International Journal*, 18(1), 10-20. Retrieved from:
<https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/13527601111104269/full/pdf?title=the-evolution-of-hofstedes-doctrine>.

Naderifar, M., Goli, H., & Ghaljaei, F. (2017). Snowball Sampling: A Purposeful Method of Sampling in Qualitative Research. *Strides in development of medical education*, 14(3), 1-6.
Retrieved from:
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/324590206_Snowball_Sampling_A_Purposeful_Method_of_Sampling_in_Qualitative_Research.

- Neculaesei, A.-N. (2015). Culture and Gender Role Differences. *Cross-Cultural Management Journal*, 18(1), 31-35. Retrieved from:
http://seaopenresearch.eu/Journals/articles/CMJ2015_I1_4.pdf.
- Onwuegbuzie, A. J., Dickinson, W. B., Leech, N. L., & Zoran, A. G. (2009). A Qualitative Framework for Collecting and Analyzing Data in Focus Group Research . *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*.
- Oxford Dictionary. (2019). *Emotional*. Tratto da Lexico powered by Oxford:
<https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/emotional>
- Oxford Dictionary. (2019). *Masculinity* . Lexico powered by Oxford. Retrieved from:
<https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/masculinity>
- Petriczko, A. (2019). *When journalists mistake an economic congress for a fashion show*. Newsmavens. Retrieved from: <https://newsmavens.com/news/aha-moments/2561/when-journalists-mistake-an-economic-congress-for-a-fashion-show>
- Poirier, A. (2012). *Cécile Duflot needs to learn that in France, dressing is a political art*. The Guardian. Retrieved from: <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2012/jul/23/cecile-duflot-france-dressing-political-art>
- Powell, G. N., & Butterfield, D. A. (1979). The "Good Manager": Masculine or Androgynous? *The Academy of Management Journal* , 22(2), 395-403. Retrieved from:
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/255597>.
- Praino, R., Stockemer, D., & Ratis, J. (2014). Looking Good or Looking Competent? Physical Appearance and Electoral Success in the 2008 Congressional Elections. *American Politics Research*, 42(6) 1096–1117. Retrieved from
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/274315930_Looking_Good_or_Looking_Competent_Physical_Appearance_and_Electoral_Success_in_the_2008_Congressional_Elections.

- Rabiee, F. (2004). Focus-group interview and data analysis. *Proceedings of the Nutrition Society*, 63, 655–660. Retrieved from: <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Focus-group-interview-and-data-analysis.-Rabiee/1e694df82fec64362534869ff881d4aecc6d414c>.
- Reeves, T. C., & Oh, E. (2013). Generational Differences and the Integration of Technology in Learning, Instruction, and Performance. *Handbook of Research on Educational Communications and Technology*, p. 295-303.
- Rosenberg, S. W., Bohan, L., McCafferty, P., & Harris, K. (1986). The Image and the Vote: The Effect of Candidate Presentation on Voter Preference. *American Journal of Political Science*, 30(1), 108-127. Retrieved from: https://www.jstor.org/stable/2111296?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents.
- Satrapa, A., Melhado, M. B., Coelho, C., Otta, M. M., Taubemblatt, E., Fayetti, R. D., & Siqueira, W. (1992). Influence of style of dress on formation of first impressions. *Perceptual and Motor Skills*, 74(1), 159-162. Retrieved from: <https://psycnet.apa.org/record/1992-34941-001>.
- Schein, V. E., Mueller, R., Lituchy, T., & Liu, J. (1996). Think Manager -- Think Male: A Global Phenomenon? *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 17(1), 33-41. Retrieved from: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2488533>.
- Schneider, M. C., & Bos, A. L. (2014). Measuring Stereotypes of Female Politicians. *Political Psychology*, 35(2), 245-266. Retrieved from: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/pops.12040>.
- Seeling, C. (2010). *Fashion: 150 Years: Couturiers, Designers, Labels*. Potsdam : H F Ullmann.
- Smith, T. J., & Nichols, T. (2018). *Understanding the Millennial Generation*. Tratto da Texas Wesleyan University: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/324922926_Understanding_the_Millennial_Generation

- Thurmond, V. A. (2001). The Point of Triangulation. *Journal of Nursing Scholarship*, 33(3), 253-258. Retrieved from: <https://sigmapubs.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1547-5069.2001.00253.x>.
- United Nations. (2019). *Facts and figures: Leadership and political participation*. Tratto da UN Women: <http://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/leadership-and-political-participation/facts-and-figures>
- United Nations. (2019). *Women in Leadership*. UN Leadership. Retrieved from: <https://www.un-leadership-learn.org/women-and-leadership>
- Waarts, E., & Everdingen, Y. M. (2006). Fashion retailers rolling out across multi-cultural Europe. *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, 34(8), 645-657. Retrieved from: <https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/09590550610675958/full/pdf?title=fashion-retailers-rolling-out-across-multicultural-europe>.
- Warren, K. F. (2008). *Encyclopedia of U.S. Campaigns, Elections, and Electoral Behavior*. Saint Louis: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Willermain, F. (2015). *Egmont Royal Institute for International Relations*. Tratto da European elections: from 'second-order' elections to 'first-order supranational' elections: <http://aei.pitt.edu/63566/1/EPB34.pdf>
- Wolf, N. (2002). *The Beauty Myth*. New York: HarperCollins.
- Young, R. (2011). *Power Dressing: First Ladies, Women Politicians & Fashion*. London: Merrell Publishers.
- Zelinsky, W. (2004). Globalization Reconsidered: The Historical Geography of Modern Western Male Attire. *Journal of Cultural Geography*, 22(1), 83-134. Retrieved from: <https://doi.org/10.1080/08873630409478248> .

Appendix A

1. Outfits

Outfit 1



Outfit 2



Outfit 3



Outfit 4



Outfit 5



2. Questionnaire

The influence of clothes on perception in politics

Hello and thank you for choosing to fill in this questionnaire!

I'm a student of European Governance at Utrecht's University and this questionnaire is part of the research for my Master's thesis. The goal is to understand how our perception of others can change just based on what they wear.

You will be firstly asked for some general information about yourself (age, sex). Later, you will be shown pictures of a model wearing different outfits. Imagine that she is a politician of your country running for the European Parliament. Each time you will be asked to choose 4 adjectives to describe the person.

It will only take around 3 minutes to complete the questionnaire and answers will be completely anonymous.

Thanks again for your participation.

Please specify your gender *

Male

Female

Please select the year you were born *

1946 - 1964

1965 - 1980

1981 - 2000



Choose 4 adjectives for the picture above *

Competent

Incompetent

Assertive

Submissive

Confident

Insecure

Rational

Emotional

3. Adjectives' table

Positive Adjectives	Negative Adjectives	Neutral Adjectives
confident (7 times)	severe (2 times)	masculine (2 times)
professional (5 times)	conservative (2 times)	feminine (3 times)
resolute (3 times)	close-minded (2 times)	formal
sober	easily influenced	neutral
appropriate (4 times)	uncertain	old school (2 times)
determined	strict	religious
tidy	unfriendly	traditional
honest	rigid (3 Times)	German-looking
proper (2 times)	insecure (4 times)	young
meticulous	lacks personality	
hardworking	inhibited	
friendly	unkept (2 times)	
driven	unprofessional (3 times)	
open (2 times)	not charismatic	
elegant (3 times)	not likable	
soft	not progressive	
good listener	rigid (2 times)	
generous	not innovative	
positive	weak; spineless (3 times)	
experienced (3 times)	difficult	
bold; fearless (3 times)	vain	
direct	over the top (2 times)	
multitasking	egoist	
leader	show off	
precise	indecisive	
helpful	not trustworthy (2 times)	
motherly	conservative	
refreshing	naive	
	bigoted	

