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FREIE UNIVERSITÄT BERLIN

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Gendered Segregation in Danish Standing Parliamentary Committees 1990-2015[1]

CHRISTINA FIIG

Introduction

The decade of the 2010s is characterised as a European "suffragette moment" owing to celebrations of centenaries of women's parliamentary enfranchisement in Norway (2013), Denmark (2015), Austria, Germany and Great Britain (2018), the Netherlands (2019) and Sweden (2021). Winning the vote meant overcoming traditional norms that varied from culture to culture but nearly always excluded women from politics (Inglehart/Norris/Welzel 2002, 321). Denmark was among the first countries to achieve female enfranchisement to municipalities (1908) and to the national parliament (1915), thereby gaining a leading status in terms of political gender equality, women's rights and citizenship. 100 years later, the Danish case gives grounds for reflections on gender balance, horizontal and vertical gender segregation of parliamentary politics, and the positions occupied by women in national parliaments and power. The case contributes to a debate about "the next step" as it illustrates that the right to vote and to be elected is not sufficient to promote broad political representation – even in a society that considers itself relatively equal in terms of gender.

In the following, I focus on representation in parliamentary core positions: women's and men's committee membership and their tenancy as committee chairs and vice-chairs in the Danish parliament, the Folketing.[2] In other words, I examine the horizontal and the vertical gendered segregation of standing committees over 25 years (1990-2015). The fact that standing committees are influential motivates a comprehensive analysis of changes over time (Wängnerud 2015, 62).

Parliamentary committees are often described as the "epicentre of parliamentary influence" (Murray/Sénac 2018, 310) and as important for efficient law-making and oppositional control (Hansen 2010). They are a crucial resource in the legislative system. Moreover, committee positions constitute a stepping stone in individual parliamentarians' (MPs') political careers as they gain visibility and expertise in specific policy areas (Pansardi/Vercesi 2017, 63). Analyses of women and men in parliamentary committees draw a critical picture of gender segregation in different committees and expose a tendency to assign committee posts along traditional gender lines. For the Danish case, two studies found a horizontal and vertical segregation in standing parliamentary committees (Refsgaard 1990) and in committees in local municipalities (Baekgaard/Kjaer 2012). Sweden displays a decline in horizontal and vertical segregation in parliamentary committees (Bolzendahl 2014; Wängnerud 2009; 2015).

This article analyses the proportion of female and male MPs in standing Danish parliamentary committees based on an explorative study. It discusses two questions "100 years after enfranchisement" in the Danish context, where almost 40% of MPs

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are female: (1) What is the gendered distribution of seats and chairs in Danish parliamentary committees over a 25-year period? (2) What can explain these gender patterns? The analysis does not consider the prestige of the different parliamentary committees or the seniority of the individual MPs, their party affiliation, or individual preferences in terms of committee membership.
The gendered segregation of parliamentary committees is defined as follows. Vertical division of labour concerns men's and women's positions in political hierarchies; horizontal division of labour concerns the various policy areas in which women and men work (Raaum 1995, 31-32; Dahlerup/Leyennar 2013).
The article proceeds as follows. I first illustrate the Nordic context as a background for the Danish case. Then, I review the literature and the theoretical approaches that are relevant for understanding the analysis. Next, I present the methodological framework and my empirical findings. In the final section, I discuss the findings.

The Danish Case in a Nordic Context

Internationally, the Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden) are often considered a homogenous region with a high degree of political gender equality. While, indeed, this seems to be true in general terms, a closer look reveals distinct differences (Bergqvist et al. 1999). One common characteristic is that women's entrance into politics is a post-war phenomenon that has changed women's relationship to democracy, power and influence as well as the entire political landscape (Karvonen/Selle 1995). In the early 1970s, women were virtually absent from Scandinavian politics, but a decade later, their political presence was very apparent (Raaum 1995, 25). The Nordic countries became the first region in the world to pass 30%, which is considered a major threshold (Bergqvist et al. 1999; Dahlerup 2018, 190). However, the pace and direction of gender equality and women's representation in Nordic politics differ in the individual countries. According to Nordic gender research, being democratically elected as an MP constitutes the main channel of influence for women in the Nordic countries (Bergqvist et al. 1999; Dahlerup 1988; Fiig 2009; Hernes 1987; Raaum 1995; Skjeie 1992; Togeby 1995). The analysis of women's mobilisation, participation and representation in politics points to a range of connected background factors, such as demographic changes, growth of women's resources, government policies, and the influence of the women's movement (Karvonen/Selle 1995). Furthermore, high levels of economic development correlate positively with a high number of elected women (Wängnerud 2009, 56).
The picture of women in elite positions in the Nordic countries is not all rosy. Among the obstacles to female politicians are hostile reactions to women, working conditions that are incompatible with family responsibilities, and the existence of male-dominated networks (Wängnerud 2009, 60; Celis/Lovenduski 2018). This resonates with the fact that female Swedish MPs are less satisfied than their male colleagues with the working conditions in parliamentary party groups (Wängnerud 2015, 78).

Danish female MPs feel discriminated in media representations, both in the regional and the national press (Jensen 2004; Moustgaard 2004). Outside parliament and politics, white majority men predominantly occupy the powerful top positions in the Scandinavian societal hierarchies (Christiansen/Møller/Togeby 2001; Skjeie/Teigen 2003).

In the Danish case, certain characteristics stand out. The proportion of female MPs has risen from 16% in 1975 to 30% in 1987, 33% in 1994-1998, 37% in 1998, 38% in 2001, 37% in 2005, 38% in 2007, 39% in the 2011-election and 37% in the latest election, 2015. In the 2000s, women's political representation in parliament stagnated just below 40% (Dahlerup 2018). In 2011, Denmark's first female prime minister headed a centre-left government, which lost at the following election in 2015 (ibid., 191). Previous parliamentary studies have shown that female MPs are often more concerned with gender equality than their male colleagues (ibid.; Holli/Harder 2016; Wängnerud 2009).

Dahlerup's survey of Danish parliamentarians' perceptions of gender equality principles and policies in 2015 confirms this point (perception is defined as the way something is regarded, understood or interpreted) (2018, 193). Her findings document a gender gap in female and male MPs' active engagement in gender equality politics, with female MPs being more active than their male colleagues (ibid., 206). Moreover, Dahlerup's survey illustrates a left-right cleavage in attitudes towards whether gender equality has been achieved in Denmark. Left-leaning politicians do not find that gender equality has been achieved, whereas right-leaning politicians find that it has.

Gendered Segregation of Parliamentary Committees: Findings and Explanations

Research on gender and standing parliamentary committees is challenged by a lack of agreement about the reasons for the gender composition in committees (Murray/Sénac 2018, 311). However, several of these studies are based on data from countries with a different history of women's political rights and citizenship than the Nordic countries. These studies paint a picture of horizontal and vertical gender segregation in parliamentary committees. Women tend to be under-represented in influential positions and typically sit in committees on cultural and social issues, and men are present in committees on the economy and international affairs (Carroll 2008; Frisch//Kelly 2003; Heath/Schwindt-Bayer/Taylor-Robinson 2005; Murray/Sénac 2018; Pansardi/Vercesi 2017; Thomas 1994). There is a tendency to assign committee posts along traditional gender lines in a range of parliamentary contexts. The division of labour, both in committee membership and leadership, tends to favour men for instrumental issues like foreign affairs, transport, finance and taxes; and women for social issues, culture, health, human rights, rules and services (Bolzendahl 2014, 870). Several Nordic studies can help us contextualise the Danish case. In

Refsgaard's study (1990) of the standing parliamentary committees 1965-1988 in Denmark and women's numerical representation, she concluded that in the 1980s the assignment of women to committees and their representation were almost proportionally equal to that of men. However, she did identify a gendered horizontal distribution of committee seats. Committees with general economic functions had a low representation of women, whereas committees focusing on social issues had a high representation of women. The same tendency was documented in a study of committee assignments in the 98 Danish municipalities after the 2009 local election (Baekgaard/Kjaer 2012). They found that committee assignments are not gender neutral. Female local politicians were under-represented in the powerful finance committee and there were significantly more women in committees on children's issues than in technical committees. Baekgaard and Kjaer concluded that a gendered difference – vertical as well as horizontal – clearly existed in Danish local government committees (ibid., 471). They also concluded that women and men sit on different committees primarily because they have different preferences (ibid., 479).

Hansen's study (2010) of committee assignment politics in the Danish parliament 1994-2007 discusses a ranking of committee importance based on the ministerial portfolio to which committees are related. Hansen showed that depending on the party in question, MPs with certain characteristics are more likely to be assigned to higher-ranked committees than others regardless of gender. Hansen concluded that sectorisation has been reduced across all committees and that seniority has a significant, positive influence on committee assignments for some parties. In the Liberals, the Socialist People's Party and the Social Democrats, being a woman increased the possibility of being assigned to a higher-ranking committee (ibid., 394, 398).

Wängnerud's studies (2009; 2015) of Swedish parliamentary committees 1970-1996 are of particular interest as Sweden and Denmark are often compared. The overall picture is that the division between male and female policy areas was especially clear-cut in the 1980s and 1990s, and that the 1994 election was followed by a notable change as previous gender patterns almost disappeared (Wängnerud 2009, 61). There is evidence of increasing gender balance in terms of committee assignments and thus less gendered segregation in the Swedish parliament.

Some studies have sought to provide explanations for the gendered segregation of parliamentary committees. In general terms, these are placed on three levels: the political institution, the party and the individual politician (Heath/Schwindt-Bayer/Taylor-Robinson 2005, 422). Further explanations point to choice and self-selection (Frisch/Kelly 2003), and discrimination and stereotyping (Carroll 2008, quoted in Baekgaard/Kjaer 2012, 468). Recent research has argued that the increased influence of an institutional approach in research on women, gender and politics has made the issue of choice versus coercion partly outdated, and that it is problematic to overemphasise the importance of factors relating to individuals. Wängnerud proposes an approach that moves back and forth between the three levels (2015, 60-61).

Bolzendahl used a feminist institutionalist framework to study the gendered organisation of legislative committees in Germany, Sweden and the United States over 40 years. She argued that gender is embedded in political institutions, that gender operates beyond the individual level and can be seen as an institution in itself (2014, 848). Her institutional approach suggests that there is a risk of overemphasising individual factors, such as women's background, preferences and interaction styles (ibid.). Based on her findings, Bolzendahl distinguishes between three models of legislative committee systems and gendered organizations: Germany as a "polarized gendered organization", the United States as a "masculine dominance gendered organization", and Sweden as an "egalitarian-trending gendered organization" where traditional notions of gender are not inscribed in the structure of the committee system (ibid., 869). It would be reasonable to expect that the standing committees in the Danish and Swedish parliaments would resemble each other. However, women's representation in the Danish parliament seems to have stagnated at just below 40% (Dahlerup 2013; 2018), which is not the case in Sweden.

Murray and Sénac's (2018) study of gender gaps in French legislative committees employs expertise, seniority and gender stereotyping as explanations for women's relative over- or under-representation in each parliamentary committee for the 2009 and 2012 elections. Their study documents that the expertise accrued by legislators during their careers does influence their roles in parliament (ibid.). Stereotyping is amplified in parliament as small gaps in knowledge translate into larger gaps in experience and even larger gaps in committee allocation (ibid.). Murray and Sénac regard their findings as part of a wider, worrying trend of subtle discrimination against women throughout the political process (ibid., 328).

Finally, the time-lag hypothesis adds a valuable point, implying that both vertical and horizontal segregation decline over time and that the relative under-representation of women will also decline over time (Raaum 1995, 31, 47). The time-lag hypothesis predicts that women's representation will increase in a constant and perhaps even irreversible process towards permanent gender balance (Dahlerup/Leyennar 2013, 2). If the hypothesis is valid, a period of 25 years can be expected to cause a decline in both types of segregation in the Danish case.

The Structure and Function of the Danish Parliament

In order to describe the structure and function of the Danish parliament, I rely on legislative studies (Hansen 2010; Holli/Harder 2016; Mattson/Strøm 1995). Denmark is a parliamentary democracy with proportional representation. The parliament has 179 members, and the parties are key actors in the Danish parliament (Hansen 2010, 382). They are perceived as highly powerful by the MPs (Jensen 2004, 113). Parties are gatekeepers to political office and play an exclusive role in determining committee assignments (Norris/Lovenduski 1995, quoted in Pansardi/Vercesi 2017, 63). Danish parliamentary committees and the parliamentary design enjoy a large degree

of stability (Hansen 2010). As in any modern legislature, the committees play an important role in the day-to-day life of the parliament (ibid., 383) and MPs perceive committees as very powerful (Jensen 2004, 113).
Legislative power can be conceptualised as having two dimensions: drafting authority and agenda control. Danish parliamentary committees have high agenda control but negligible authority in drafting legislation (Mattson/Strøm 1995, quoted in Holli/Harder 2016, 3-4). Parliamentary committees have the power to call the relevant minister to appear before them at any time to ask questions concerning the legislation they are currently considering, and this is done frequently (Hansen 2010, 384).
Committee members are appointed by the parties at the beginning of each parliamentary session (lasting from the first Tuesday in October until June 5) or immediately after an election. The allocation of seats between the parties is governed by the Danish Constitution (§ 52), which states that all elections to commissions and committees must be based on proportionality (Hansen 2010). Chairs and vice-chairs are elected by the committee members. MPs who are not ministers almost always sit on at least one committee (Hansen 2010, 383). The standing committees generally mirror ministerial portfolios. In Hansen's analysis of committee assignment politics in the Danish parliament, he emphasises that three standing committees are especially important: Foreign Affairs, Finance and European Affairs (ibid., 384). Their importance is rooted in the constitutional mandate (foreign affairs), the committee's mandate (finance) and a rise in political importance (European affairs).
The Danish parliament has had varying numbers of standing parliamentary committees and ad hoc committees. Since 2011, most of the standing committees have 29 members compared to 17 previously. In 2011, the Danish parliament decided to form the Gender Equality Committee – before this date, gender equality was addressed by the Political-Economics Committee (Holli/Harder 2016, 799). Denmark has no legislative quotas for achieving gender balance in the political system.

Methodological Framework

My research design combines insights from existing studies of parliamentary committees (Hallberg 2003[3]; Raaum 1995, Refsgaard 1990) and research on gender, power and politics (Dahlerup/Leyenaar 2013). The research design makes it possible to map the vertical and horizontal segregation, to track developments over time in a longitudinal study, and to draw conclusions about trends at different points in time over 25 years.
In order to analyse the distribution of female and male committee positions over a long period, I collected an original data set of seats, chairs and vice-chairs in Danish parliamentary committees for the period 1990-2015. This period is interesting because the average percentage of female MPs was 36-37% and women's representation in parliamentary politics stagnated slightly below 40% (Dahlerup 2018). I compiled gender-disaggregated data of committee members for five selected par-

liamentary years (1991/1992, 1997/1998, 2003/2004, 2009/2010 and 2014/2015). Committee membership before 2008 was recorded based on the yearbook of the Danish parliament. Data after 2008 was obtained via the parliamentary website (see also Bolzendahl 2014, 853). Committee membership was coded for the second plenum of each parliamentary session in October when committee membership for the coming session is published.[4]

My classification of committees is inspired by Hallberg (2003) and Dahlerup and Leyenaar (2013, 10), I constructed a classification that reflects that the proportion of female MPs in the Danish parliament was 35-36% throughout 1990-2015. In principle, I would therefore expect each committee to contain 35-40% female MPs and 60-65% male MPs to reflect the numerical representation in the parliament.

Classification of Danish committees:

- Over-representation of women (> 40%)
- Reflexive representation (30-40% women)
- Under-representation of women (< 30%)[5]

Since there are 33%- 39% female MPs (on average 36-37%) in the Danish parliament in the analysed period, they would be over-represented if their share in committees were above 40% and under-represented if their share were below 30%. The terminology of over- and under-representation of women is inspired by Murray and Sénac (2018) and Pansardi and Vercesi (2017).[6] The term "reflexive representation" describes a type of committee whose gender composition reflects the gender composition of the Danish parliament in the analysed period (30-40%).[7]

Empirical Findings

The data reveals that female parliamentarians sit on all committees and act as chairs and vice-chairs as they do in the Swedish parliament (Wängnerud 2015, 61). The data also shows that the magnitude and shape of the segregation vary over time and over the different standing committees (Wängnerud 2009, 61).

Table 1 illustrates the vertical segregation of the Danish parliament, defined as speaker and vice-speakers of the parliament and chairs and vice-chairs of the standing committees. These positions have great impact on the policy as they prepare and govern the meetings. Throughout the 25-year period considered here, the parliament had a male speaker, but in the summer of 2015 (after the parliamentary elections of 2015), a female speaker was elected. There is a vertical division of labour in terms of the chairs and vice-chairs of the standing committees, as male MPs are appointed more often as chairs and vice-chairs in the period concerned. It is worth pointing out that a declining vertical segregation happens relatively late in the Danish parliament compared to Sweden.

Table 1. Total Number of Women and Men in Leadership Positions of the Danish Parliament 1989-2015. Selected Years

Position		1989	1993	1997	2000	2004	2006	2008	2013	2014
Speaker of the House	F	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	M	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Vicespeaker of the House	F	2	2	2	1	0	0	0	2	2
	M	2	2	2	3	4	4	4	2	2
Chair of the Parliamentary standing committees	F	7	5	8	11	14	11	8	14	13
	M	20	25	19	16	16	18	21	15	17
Vice-chair of the Parliamentary standing committees	F	8	9	10	15	12	15	11	15	15
	M	19	21	17	12	18	14	18	15	15

Sources: The Parliamentary yearbooks 1990-2008, the party secretariats and the minutes of the second plenum of the Parliamentary year 2008-2015. (The committee assignments are announced during the second plenum). F = female; M = male.

The gender composition of chairs of the standing committees in 1990-2015 is still gender segregated even if the general picture is "bumpy" (Wängnerud 2015, 63). As table 1 shows, the percentage of female chairs of the standing committees has risen throughout the period (particularly towards the end), whereas the number of female vice-chairs rose at an earlier stage.

Table 1 demonstrates that female parliamentarians started to become vice-chairs of the standing committees more frequently before they became chairs of these committees (the more prestigious position). Time is an important factor in this process, which confirms the time-lag hypothesis about segregation declining over time (Raaum 1995).

There has been some progress in terms of women being given leading positions in politics, but the broader analysis of gendered segregation of committee memberships reveals interesting patterns of change and stability. Table 2, 3 and 4 describe the gendered distribution of MPs in the standing committees for the period 1991-2015.

Table 2. Danish Parliamentary Committees with more than 40% Female Representatives 1991-2015. Selected Years

		1991/1992		1997/1998		2003/2004		2009/2010		2014/2015	
Standing committees		Number	in %	Number	in %	Number	in %	Number	in %	Number	in %
Elections	F	9	53	7	41	7	41	6	35	7	41
	M	8	47	10	59	10	59	11	65	10	59
Housing	F	7	41	10	59	9	53	4	24	14	48
	M	10	59	7	41	8	47	13	76	15	52
Citizenship	F	9	53	6	35	7	41	8	47	7	41
	M	8	47	11	65	10	59	9	53	10	59
Ecclesiastical Affairs	F	10	59	9	53	9	53	8	47	11	38
	M	7	41	8	47	8	47	9	53	18	62
Culture	F	8	47	5	29	8	47	7	41	13	45
	M	9	53	12	71	9	53	10	59	16	55
Social	F	11	65	7	41	12	71	13	76	22	76
	M	6	35	10	59	5	29	4	24	7	24
Education and Research	F	10	59	7	41	11	65	11	69	14	48
	M	7	41	10	59	6	35	5	31	15	52
Justice	F	8	47	7	41	7	41	9	53	13	45
	M	9	53	10	59	10	59	8	47	16	55
Health	F	11	65	10	59	10	59	12	71	16	55
	M	6	35	7	41	7	41	5	29	13	45

Source: compare Table 1.

Table 2 illustrates the category of over-representation of women: the following standing committees have more than 40% female members throughout the analysed period: elections, housing, citizenship, ecclesiastical affairs, culture, social, education and research, justice, and health. The ecclesiastical affairs committee had an over-representation of women until 2014-2015.

Most of these committees – social, education and research, and health – have a marked over-representation of women throughout the period. Other committees – especially culture and justice – move towards reflexive representation as the number of female members declines.

Table 3 shows the category of under-representation of women. Several standing committees have less than 30% female members in the analysed period, namely, foreign affairs, finance, defence, agriculture, fisheries and food, taxation, and transport. This category is complex when considered in a perspective of 25 years. The proportion of female MPs in these committees is generally lower than their proportion of ordinary representatives should imply. The growth in women's memberships mainly occurs

late in the period. Men's specialization has declined along with the narrowing gender gaps (see also Bolzendahl 2014). Several committees – e.g. agriculture, fisheries, and food and taxation – have seen a decline in horizontal segregation.
The committee on foreign affairs is particularly interesting as it plays a special role in the Danish constitution. The committee on foreign affairs must be informed by the government before any foreign policy decision is made (Hansen 2010, 384).
The under-representation of women in the committees of defence, finance and transport illustrates Murray and Sénac's (2018) point that women's committee assignments do not always improve as their numbers increase. Despite the decline in horizontal segregation documented in tables 2 and 3, committee assignments may still reflect gendered perceptions of power, and my data reaffirm the notion that women deal with "soft" issues while men are associated with "hard" issues that convey power and mastery. Coding of policy issues as feminine and masculine illustrate their importance (Bolzendahl 2014, 852).

Table 3. Danish Parliamentary Committees with less than 30% Female Representatives 1991-2015. Selected Years

		1991/1992		1997/1998		2003/2004		2009/2010		2014/2015	
Standing committees		Number	in %	Number	in %	Number	in %	Number	in %	Number	in %
Foreign Affairs	F	2	12	3	18	4	24	4	24	7	41
	M	15	88	14	82	13	76	13	76	10	59
Finance	F	5	29	4	24	4	24	3	18	2	12
	M	12	71	13	76	13	76	14	82	15	88
Defence	F	3	18	3	18	0	0	4	24	7	24
	M	14	82	14	82	17	100	13	76	22	76
Agriculture, Fisheries and Food	F	4	24	5	29	4	24	5	29	12	41
	M	13	76	12	71	13	76	12	71	17	59
Taxation	F	5	29	7	41	5	29	2	12	9	31
	M	12	71	10	59	12	71	15	88	20	69
Transport	F	3	18	3	18	2	12	3	18	7	24
	M	14	82	14	82	15	88	14	82	22	76

Source: compare Table 1.

To explore changes over time further, it is interesting to look at the category of committees with reflexive representation (30-40% women). Table 4 documents that the committees for political-economic affairs, environment, climate and energy, labour market, industry, local government, European affairs and foreign policy (not the same as the foreign affairs committee) have a reflexive representation of 30-40% women. This category is particularly interesting as it points towards a decline in

horizontal segregation. Almost all of these committees have seen a relatively high representation of women since the 1990s. They move towards a type of convergence but to a lesser degree than in Sweden (Wängnerud 2015).

Table 4. Danish Parliamentary Committees with 30- 40% Female Representatives 1991-2015. Selected Years

		1991/1992		1997/1998		2003/2004		2009/2010		2014/2015	
Standing committees		**Number**	**in %**	**Number**	**in %**	**Number**	**in %**	**Number**	**in %**	**Number**	**in %**
Political-Economical	F	3	18	6	35	6	35	6	35	–	–
	M	14	82	11	65	11	65	11	65	–	–
Environment	F	5	29	9	53	5	29	6	35	10	34
	M	12	71	8	47	12	71	11	65	19	66
Climate and Energy	F	6	35	6	35	5	29	6	35	8	28
	M	11	65	11	65	12	71	11	65	21	72
Labour Market	F	6	35	7	41	5	29	7	41	8	28
	M	11	65	10	59	12	71	10	59	21	72
Industry	F	6	35	7	41	6	35	3	18	10	34
	M	11	65	10	59	11	65	14	82	19	66
Local Government	F	7	41	5	29	7	41	4	24	9	31
	M	10	59	12	71	10	59	13	76	20	69
European Affairs	F	3	18	6	35	9	53	8	47	8	28
	M	14	82	11	65	8	47	9	53	21	72
Foreign Policy	F	6	35	7	41	6	35	7	41	9	31
	M	11	65	10	59	11	65	10	59	20	69

Source: compare Table 1.

Interpreting the Findings and Future Research

My data has documented vertical and horizontal segregation in the Danish parliament as well as a decline in segregation over time. The Danish case is complex. The longitudinal analysis shows that significant changes have occurred in the course of 25 years, but also that these changes have happened late and that segregation still exists. I cannot give a precise reason for this segregation based on my data. However, we can discuss various explanations based on previous research. In the following, I present three possible explanations for the gendered segregation in Danish committees.

The first explanation is time, and there is some data confirming the time-lag hypothesis that vertical and horizontal segregation declines over time (Raaum 1995). For a long time, access to leading positions in the parliament and chairs of standing

committees was unequal (table 1; see also Bolzendahl 2014, 852). The vertical segregation of leadership has declined. The increase in the number of female chairs of standing committees represents an important decline in segregation. However, although MPs perceive the committees as powerful, they seemingly perceive the committee chairs as less powerful (Jensen 2004). This point needs further research.
As far as the horizontal distribution of membership goes, there is also a limit to the explanatory power of the time-lag hypothesis. My data partly confirms a pattern of horizontal segregation that is almost similar to the pattern shown in Refsgaard's Danish study (1990). When we look at the period 1972-1988 (ibid.) and the data analysed here (1990-2015), it becomes clear that under- and over-representation of women are re-produced over time in certain committees. One major finding here is that the committees on defence, finance and agriculture, fisheries and food and to some extent foreign affairs are persistently characterised by an under-representation of women, whereas the committees on ecclesiastical affairs, culture, social affairs and education and research are persistently characterised by an over-representation of women according to the classification applied above.
The second explanation is inspired by Bolzendahl's thinking about legislative committee systems as gendered organizations (2014, 869). In light of the Danish history of women's rights and the gender equality culture (Inglehart/Norris/Welzel 2002), one would expect a specific parliamentary setting and gender dynamics. The empirical data leaves a mixed picture. However, there are certain indicators of new gender dynamics. If we base our discussion of prestige and power of the standing committees on ministerial rankings, which Hansen does (2010), then the picture is thought-provoking. Of the ten highest-ranking standing committees according to the Danish ministerial order, three can be categorized as underrepresented of women, two as an over-representation of women and five are in the category reflexive representation.
Towards the end of the analysed period, the gendered patterns in the committees with the historically greatest under-representation of women (<30%) – and an over-representation of men – are changing. The fact that some of these particular committees move towards reflexive representation indicates that a new situation might be occurring in a Danish context.
The third explanation is rooted in gendered perceptions of power (Bolzendahl 2014, 862-864) or gender stereotyping (Murray/Sénac 2018). Perception of power and gender associate or frame women with "soft" issues of care, the private sphere, people and frame male MPs with "hard" issues. These perceptions and stereotypes are transferred into political acts of assignment (ibid.).
In a historical analysis of Danish parliamentary debates, Kofoed (2015) argues that the political resistance to women's enfranchisement was linked to a conception of "female competences" as belonging to a different sphere than the political and to a fear of the social expansion of the electorate that would follow if women were given the right to vote. Later, this resistance changed towards a more positive approach to bringing women's special social skills and competences into parliament and poli-

tics more generally. One can hypothesise that the historical construction of gender, politics and competences is embedded in the political institutions as the feminist institutional approach predicts.

Conclusion

The article has identified gendered patterns as well as changes in standing committees in the Danish parliament both vertically and horizontally. Even if the distribution of membership over a 25-year period does not give us a clear-cut indication of decline or reproduction of segregation, several points are provided.
First that we need to hold on to the notion of gendered segregation as a way of understanding the Danish parliament and most probably most parliaments. Even if some Danish parliamentary committees are moving towards some form of convergence (Bolzendahl 2014), there are still several parliamentary committees in the category of over- and under-representation of women. Second, the time-lag hypothesis is confirmed in the Danish case. My data reveals a decline in vertical and horizontal segregation. It is fair to say that these changes can be identified late in the period and that they lead to a broader question concerning these longitudinal changes. Are they, for instance, a general trend towards a less segregated distribution of seats (cf. Pansardi/Vercesi 2017)?
Based on the empirical evidence of a vertical and horizontal division of labour in various policy areas, one may ask what we can learn from the Danish case. It illustrates some of the theoretical debates within the field in a Nordic context with a long history of women's citizenship and enfranchisement. This study leaves ample room for more scholarly and theoretically informed analysis of gender and politics 100 years after enfranchisement to produce explanations for the gender segregation in committees (also Baekgaard/ Kjaer 2012; Murray/Sénac 2018). Future research needs to address the gendered organisation of the Danish parliament, political parties, individual parliamentarians' priorities, experiences, path dependency (Murray/ Sénac 2018) and the standing parliamentary committees.
If we return to Wängnerud's (2009) interpretation of gender differences in the parliamentary process, she describes two ways forward: a static and a dynamic. Static describes a gendered pattern that can be "interpreted as a division of labour between female and male politicians" (ibid., 66). The dynamic interpretation sees the emergence of "genuine change" (ibid). The Danish case seems to be situated between these two perspectives. It is also situated between a model of the Swedish egalitarian-trending gendered organisation and a German polarized gendered organisation (Bolzendahl, 2014). Time will reveal interesting new Danish data.

Notes

1 The author thanks the two anonymous reviewers and the editors for important feedback.

2 The initial study was part of a project about gender and power in the Nordic countries 2009-2011 (Niskanen/Nyberg 2009). The original study of the Danish case covered the period 1991-

2004; the present study covers the period 1990-2015. A short presentation of some of the data is also available in Fiig/Verner (2016).

3 Hallberg's (2003) study of the Norwegian committee structure in 1945-2001 classified parliamentary committees with less than 30% female MPs as male-dominated, committees with 31-40% as gender-balanced, and committees with more than 41% female MPs as committees with a high representation of women.

4 I only selected committees that existed throughout the entire period. Several committees were renamed. The most recent name is used.

5 In an earlier article in Danish, we applied a slightly different categorisation of the data (Fiig/Verner 2016).

6 In comparison, Refsgaard's study (1990) of the Danish parliamentary committees (1965-1988) looks at the numerical representation of women in parliament in relation to the average representation of women in the parliamentary committees for every year.

7 I want to thank Drude Dahlerup for this term (personal communication).

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