

WORKSHOP
Women's Political Inequality in Poland and Ukraine:
Theory Statements and Empirical Research

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TITLES AND ABSTRACTS

Research on Gender and Politics in Poland: Women in Local Governments

Dr. Magdalena Grabowska, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Polish Academy of Sciences

My presentation will examine major trends in research on gender and politics in Poland. In the first part of my paper I will follow important theoretical shifts in women and gender studies regarding studies of gender and politics. I will analyze the transformation of *gender* from descriptive to analytical category, the shift from "critical mass" to "critical representation" approach in studies of gender and politics, and the new developments in studying women's political engagements in Central and Eastern Europe. In particular I will demonstrate how new approaches to gender and politics in Poland depart from "mass movement paradigm" towards the approaches focusing on "connective action" and "transactional activism," and "weak resistance." In the second part of my talk I will present the result of the qualitative study on women in local government in Poland that I have co-authored in 2017. I will focus on four aspects of gender and local politics that were critical for our study: the continuity between pre and post 1989 period, the private-public division, the sexual difference and the feminist consciousness of women active in local politics in Poland.

Do Gender Quotas Work? Women's Political Participation in Poland

Małgorzata Druciarek, Gender Equality Observatory, Institute of Public Affairs, Warsaw

malgorzata.druciarek@isp.org.pl

The quota mechanism introduced into the Polish electoral system in 2011 was an important step towards guaranteeing equal opportunities in electoral process for both men and women. According to these provisions, in order to be registered, each electoral committee candidate list has to include at least 35% female and male candidates each. The quota system works only in proportional representation, in which committees propose more than one female or male candidate in one electoral district, i.e. they register an electoral list. In Poland, such electoral system applies in the elections to the European Parliament, to the Sejm (lower house of the parliament), to counties (*poviats*) and to regional assemblies. Despite this legal regulation, women are still a minority group on the Polish political scene. Their share of positions in both central and local elected bodies does not exceed 30%.

The Gender Equality Observatory has been monitoring women's participation in election since 2012. This special unit inside the Institute of Public Affairs not only analyses electoral lists, political parties' strategies of promoting women in politics, but also recommends solutions which would strengthen the role of women on the political scene.

The last Polish local government elections of 2018 took place almost on the eve of the 100th anniversary of granting the right to vote and stand in elections to Polish women. The anniversary year of women's suffrage rights seems to be a perfect time to assess what women have managed to gain in politics and take a closer look at the situation of women in Polish politics.

Substantive Representation of ‘Women’s Interests’ in Legislative Bodies: Connecting Theory to Empirical Research

Nika Palaguta, Graduate School for Social Research, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Polish Academy of Sciences

Elected officials are at the forefront of gender equality and women’s rights promotion, as state legislators have the power to ‘act for’ women, i.e. to improve their substantive representation. Yet, assessing women’s substantive representation poses challenges. Women are far from being a homogeneous group with identical individual goals. Given the multiplicity of socio-economic and cultural arrangement across the globe, elaboration of a unified and exhaustive list of women’s concerns worldwide is problematic. The concept of ‘women’s interests’ seeks to grasp the diversity of women’s collective political demands. It offers a flexible framework for analysis of women’s substantive representation, open for interpretation depending on the research context. In this presentation, I will talk about (a) what ‘women’s interests’ are and (b) the application of the concept to empirical studies of women’s substantive representation in legislative bodies.

The Problem of the Methodology of Gender Monitoring of Electoral Process: the Experience of Ukraine

Dr. Oksana Yarosh, Head of the Sub-department of Political Science at Lesya Ukrainka Eastern European National University, Lutsk, Ukraine, yaroshoo@gmail.com

In May 2012, representatives of the Women's Democracy Network (WDN) of the International Republican Institute (IRI), Women's Consortium of Ukraine NGO, Kyiv Institute of Gender Studies, Gender Centre Volyn Regional NGO, Women's Choice All-Ukrainian NGO, and the Institute of Democracy and Social Progress NGO initiated establishment of the PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION 2012 GENDER EQUALITY SOCIAL WATCH NETWORK with the purpose of quantitative and qualitative monitoring of the electoral process. The result was an analytical report «Parliamentary Election 2012 Gender Monitoring»

Parliamentary election gender monitoring in Ukraine was carried out for the first time in 2012. The biggest problem was the development of a gender monitoring methodology. On May 18-19, 2012, in Ukraine hosted a two-day training and strategy session on gender monitoring of parliamentary elections with the support of the WDN Washington office and IRI Ukraine office. Representatives from the Partnership for Development National Women's Studies Information Center in Moldova, Alexei Buzu and Vasile Cantarji, who have successfully implemented gender monitoring projects for three national and two local elections in Moldova conducted the training. The participants familiarized themselves with a special methodology necessary for the pilot project implementation. At the conclusion of the training, the Chapter members and their partners formalized the timeline for the gender monitoring project and decided to create the Network for Public Monitoring of Adherence to Gender Equality in 2012 Parliamentary Elections. The Network's members decided to monitor Parliamentary elections with an eye on quantitative and qualitative analysis of candidates on the political parties' electoral lists and in single-member constituencies; to approach the leadership of political parties with a set of concise decision oriented proposals; to actively participate in the public debate and press clubs to raise the issue of balanced representation of women and men in elected positions as well as on electoral lists; and to monitor the reflection of women candidates in printed media.

This gender monitoring - 2012 has laid the foundations for further gender monitoring in Ukraine as, for example, there has been gender monitoring of the 2014 parliamentary elections, local elections 2015, and monitoring of gender sensitivity of the media 2017-2019, among others.

In Ukraine, the representation of women in power is a problem. Of the people's deputies in the Ukrainian Parliament, 12% are women, and this was the highest representation percentage in the history of Independence.

Table 1. Representation of Women of the Verkhovna Rada Deputies

| | Convocation | | | | | | | |
|--------------|-------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|---------------|----------------|
| | I (1991) | II (1994) | III (1998) | IV (2002) | V (2006) | VI (2007) | VII (2012) | VIII (2014) |
| Women (%) | 2,9 | 4,6 | 8,3 | 5,1 | 8,4 | 7,1 | 10 | 11,6 |

Diversity of aspects within the electoral process monitoring activities must remain its permanent component. Democracy cannot be enhanced by itself: this implies daily work. Women's participation in elections and in power provides for an integral component of democracy enhancement activities. Gender monitoring of electoral processes is important and promising for science and practice.

Gender Assessment of Political Parties Programs 2012 and 2014: Ukraine's Experience

Dr. Marfa Skoryk, Director of NGO "Kyiv Institute of Gender Studies," Ukraine

In two parliamentary elections in 2012 and 2014, we conducted a gender assessment of party programs based on a standardized methodology of 13 gender indicators. With the help of content analysis, we identified the availability / absence of relevant gender topics in the programs of the political party-candidates in the 2012 and 2014 elections, and evaluated them in points.

As a result, we built the "gender profiles" of these parties, identifying their thematic priorities on gender equality and, conversely, those that they ignored. Also, on the basis of this assessment, we made the final joint gender profile of parties - leaders of parliamentary races, which showed the joint readiness of the parties - leaders of parliamentary races to solve certain gender issues in the session hall.

According to the conclusions, both pro-government and opposition Ukrainian political parties were moving entirely within the trend of the Communist Party and the communist ideology on women's rights and gender equality. That is, the existing political elites had a consensus on these issues, and this was a traditionalist consensus of the Soviet standard.

They mostly declare their attention to demographic, social and economic issues (social protection); and inattention - to issues of women's political representation, and non-violence against women. These two indicators were of less interest to them.

The last two directions, according to our forecast, had the least chance of a positive decision in the parliament of both convocations.

In general, we consider the gender assessment of party programs to be a useful analytical and forecasting tool that deserves attention.