



Women and the state power system in the Russian federation

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ABSTRACT

Summing up the results of the XX century, the analysts typically mention massive breakthrough of women into the political elite and into social management spheres as one the main achievements. The participation of women in politics is one of the criteria for democratization since it creates real opportunities for the reflection of multipolar interests in society. Today, the UN adheres to the main organizational principle: without sharing power with women, no sustainable solutions can be found in a society threatened by social, economic and political problems. There is an ever-growing share of women in the political elite of developed countries: they take senior positions in the government structures, in social movements and in non-governmental organizations, in culture and education, and even in the army. When comparing the political elite of European countries, a huge gap in the number of women in the legislative and executive bodies of these countries becomes evident. Since there is no expansion of women's representation in Russian politics, the experience of other countries might be particularly interesting for study.

Keywords: gender researches, women's rights, gender equality, representative bodies, quota system.



INTRODUCTION

In the modern world, women have political rights but their integration into the world of politics has not yet happened: it begins with an equal gender representation within political structures. Traditionally, women have been convinced that their participation in politics is at best limited to voting.

It was a dominant idea in most states during the whole 20th century that in order to overcome discrimination it is enough to give women the same rights as men. Thus, it was gender-neutral approach which was dominant in the promotion of women by parties as their candidates, both in single-member districts and in party lists.

In parallel to this type of regulation, the so-called "declarative approach" was developed – it led to the idea that the program documents of the parties declared the goal of supporting women and their rights, but no procedural measures were taken to implement the stated goals. The implementation of measures of positive discrimination in a number of countries is considered as a temporary measure in order to create equal opportunities and in relation to previous discrimination that took place (Abubikirova & Kochkina, 2001).

METHODS

Western society and its political establishment reflects and institutionalizes gender interests, subjecting gender analysis to what is happening in all spheres of life. Gender analysis as a process of assessing different impact on women and men, assessing the proposed or existing programs, legislation, public policy in all spheres of society and state is part of the political culture of western democracies (Kenworthy & Malami, 1999). It is necessary to take into account the differences in historical circumstances, the difference in the dynamics of socio-economic development, political processes in general, including political and legal status of women in Russia in comparison with other countries, the difference between Russian electoral legislation.

Gender researches should be defined through their focus on establishing the facts and reasons for inequalities in access to resources in social, economic, political and cultural spheres for citizens depending on their social and / or culturally-symbolic gender. In gender researches, the concepts of "gender", "women" and "men" are variables while the object of analysis is the entire existing system of governing institutions. In this case the subjects of research are different forms and systems of power, and the objective is to reveal the facts and reasons which cause and reproduce inequality. The common value of advocates of a gender approach is the desire to create a society in which gender is no longer a social-stratification sign of inequality.

Gender methodological approach offers a completely different system for interpreting the reasons for low political participation and representation of women and the dominance of men in politics. Such analysis, unlike other methodological approaches, makes it possible to single out structural factors that make it difficult for women to participate in the political process on an equal footing.



RESULTS

THE DYNAMICS OF CHANGES IN GENDER COMPOSITION OF REPRESENTATIVE BODIES IN 1993-2016 IN RUSSIAN FEDERATION.

Currently, the discrimination of women in the implementation of the electoral right is still an important problem that has not yet been fully resolved. Following the results of the 1995 elections, the State Duma had 46 women out of 450 deputies – 10.2%, in 1993 it was slightly more than 13%, and in 1999 only 36 people were elected – it less than 10%, in 2003 year 45 women (10.1%), in 2007 - (13,5%)(Belyaeva ,2008), in 2011 - (14%) 2016 15% (Rogozina & Nagornaya., 2016).

The penultimate elections in Russia used the proportional electoral system. According to one study, "the average proportion of women elected to the legislative bodies via the proportional representation system in 1987-1991 was 15% compared to 8.5% in countries where the proportional representation system was not used" (Rule, 1996). Modern Russian elections confirmed this conclusion. The number of women has increased, although insignificantly. In 2016, the country once again returned to mixed electoral system. In the modern parliament, the number of women deputies is 15% while women make up more than 50% of the population of the Russian Federation. In regional bodies of legislative power, this pattern is repeated literally. For example, in the first convocations of State Council of the Republic of Tatarstan, there were only 5-6 women among 130-100 deputies. The situation improved with the introduction of the representative system of the proportional component in 2007.

In foreign parliaments this number is much higher. According to the Inter-Parliamentary Union data, the number of women deputies in Iceland is 48%, in Sweden – 44%, in Finland – 42%, in Spain – 39%, in Germany – 37% The representation of men and women is generally an international problem. In the nineties, an electoral experiment was held in the Calabria region (Italy): parties participating in an electoral campaign had to include at least 30% of women in their list of candidates. The experiment was unsuccessful. The elections failed, because the parties could not comply with this proportion.

But since that time, state bodies and parties have started taking decisions in their actions and programs to ensure a fixed representation of women in power structures at all levels from 20% to 50%. In August 1992, the Government of the Netherlands adopted special program to ensure the representation of women in the parliaments of the provincial states and municipal councils in 1994 at the rate of no less than 30%. At the same time, not less than 100 mayors of total 646 mayors were to be women. The program was fully implemented (Halitova, 2000). A number of parties have taken measures to ensure the quota representation of women in parliaments and local self-government bodies. In recent years, such quotas – although mostly in the form of the initial inclusion of women in party lists of candidates – have become a daily practice (Dahlerup, 2005). The use of quotas for women by parties in these countries contributed to an increase in the number of women in representative bodies. In the USSR there was a compulsory gender policy, which can be described as a socio-sexual



quota electoral model. It demanded a formal compliance with a set of criteria for age, sex, ethnic and professional membership of candidates for deputies of all levels and somehow solved the balance between men and women in government. The presented order had its certain point – the authorities represented some kind of social cross-section of society arose. In the Russian Federation, the issue of the need to introduce quotas for the representation of both sexes in public authorities was discussed during the preparation of the current Constitution.

It was proposed to use the most effective way of eliminating hidden discrimination of women in the issue of participation in representative bodies with implementation of certain percentage (at least 30%) of electoral districts where women should be elected as deputies. In these districts, elections were to be held using the majority system, and each party and public organization had to nominate one woman candidate. At the recent elections, all electoral associations without exception included a certain number of women in their lists. The total number of women remained low (table) (Veselov, 2018).

THE SHARE OF WOMEN IN THE DUMA PARTIES

Party	Women, %		
	IV co nv eni ng	V con veni ng	V I co nv en in g
United Russia	8.8	15.5	20.2
KPRF	12	9.7	4.3
LDPR	6.7	9	3.6
A Just Russia	8.6	15.6	14
Total	10 %	15 %	14 %

GENDER COMPOSITION OF EPRESENTATIVE BODIES IN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION 2016-2018.

Modern parliament was formed as a result of 2016 elections, it includes 60 women. 36 of them people have won in the single-seat constituencies (225). Women who gained their seats via party lists: from United Russia – 20, from Communist Party – 2, from LDPR – 1, from Just Russia – 1. Undoubtedly, the evolution of the female structure can be observed, but it breaks through the male chauvinism with great difficulties. It is gratifying that there were women among the contenders for the Presidency of the Russian Federation in 2004 and 2018. Irina Khakamada (self-nomination) in 2004 gained 3.84%. Ksenia Sobchak, representing the "Civil Initiative" gained 1.68% of



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protest votes. Sociological researches show that the Russians are not yet ready for a female president. According to the Levada Center survey, 54% of citizens would not like to see a woman as president of their country in the near future for 10-15 years. Only 33% believe that this is possible. More than 70% of men of all ages were among the respondents who were against that idea. The answers of the women were more loyal: 59% of 18 - 24 year old respondents were positive about this possibility, 42% old respondents at the age of 40 and older also stated that they were not against women's leadership. In general, respondents approve of the participation of women in politics and would like to see women in senior government positions. But the paradox of the situation is that the women themselves do not really aspire to political power since they believe that they will be pushed aside anyway and that they can not do anything there (Fox & Lawless, 2011).

DISCUSSION

The true legal and factual equality of the sexes in what has to do with election to representative bodies remains one of the main issues of political theory and practice in the Russian Federation. In 1996, the Presidential Decree "On increasing the role of women in the system of federal bodies of state power and state authorities of the subjects of the Russian Federation" was issued. The decree considered the possibility of introducing minimum quotas for women on public positions. This caused a discussion in the scientific community. There were both supporters and opponents of this decree. They believed that "reserving a certain number of places on the basis of gender and not only gender but also on the basis of other characteristics (age groups, social status and others) is contrary to the very principle of democracy based on the free expression of the will of citizens, not constrained by any artificially imposed requirements for the candidates for the elected office" (Pilipenko, 2000). On the contrary to well-known facts, the author refers to the experience of civilized countries where the idea of quotas for seats in representative institutions for women is allegedly unfamiliar. We have already cited examples from the political life of a number of countries where such a norm is widely used and legislated. It is worth to agree with the author's opinion that if the reform is not supported by economic, social, cultural measures – the effect will be minimal. To implement the principle of equality for men and women in government, there need to be policy measures to create conditions for their achievement and to overcome the existing abnormal situation. Meanwhile, the CEC of the Russian Federation could trace the legal and actual ratio of men and women in the parties' election lists.

SUMMARY

Political parity is a good goal, which is both ethical and practical. The number of women representatives in various government bodies is an important indicator of whether the diversity of women's experiences has been taken into account, as well as a good indicator of the success of other aspects of the gender equality policy. The



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reform of the women status in any system should correct the existing political process. In order to realize equality, long-term efforts are required as well as pressure groups (on the part of women, political elites), and projects involving women in political life and supporting changes in the distribution of domestic duties. The significant political representation of women is a necessary condition for the support of gender parity on behalf of the political elite.

CONCLUSION

Gender differences in political life are a historically developed phenomenon. They reveal themselves in all indicators of political participation and representation: in the gap between women and men in terms of representation in the leadership of political parties, legislative and executive authorities of all levels, and hence in the influence on the authorities as a whole (Paxton & Kunovich, 2003). This determines the role and place of women in the system of power relations. In the scientific literature these differences are called the "gender gap".

The complexity of work on the topic is related to the inaccessibility of the research materials – especially in Russian – and, on the other hand, it is related to the fact that the Russian political science is still developing this approach.

The policy of gender equality requires strong legal guarantees of social and political rights. The change of views, which is the goal of a well-conceived policy of equality, requires continuous, broad-based discussion of the impact of gender on social, political, cultural and legal rights. This policy needs strong support from well-recognized politicians, and its goals must coincide with and strengthen other important political goals.

The experience shows the importance of having a research team to monitor the implementation of this policy, to evaluate it and develop it further. Certain efforts should be made at the local, regional and national levels in political, legal, social and educational institutions. The experience shows the need to create the network of supporters of the equality policy in the majority, if not all, structures related to it (ministries, equality officials in firms, trade unions, educational institutions, ombudsmen) so that it could recognize itself as a social group and could reach certain size ("critical mass"), until the success of this policy is guaranteed.

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