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## THE PROBLEMS OF GENDER EQUALITY IN CONTEMPORARY UKRAINIAN POLITICS

*The paper deals with gender aspects of politics. In particular, the authors shed light on the issues of comparing views on the policy and power of men and women; the implementation of gender policy, especially in the political sphere in Ukraine. Particular attention is paid to women participation in the political power, and to the formulation of gender policy in contemporary Ukraine.*

**Keywords:** *gender, gender equality, gender discrimination, feminism.*

**Литвин Наталія, Разіцький Віталій. Проблема гендерної рівності в українській політиці сьогодення.**

*В роботі розглядаються гендерні аспекти політики, а саме: співставлення поглядів на політику і владу чоловіків і жінок; впровадження гендерної політики перш за все в політичній сфері в Україні. Особлива увага приділяється участі в політичній владі жінок, а також формуванню гендерної політики в сучасній Україні.*

**Ключові слова:** *гендер, гендерна рівність, гендерна дискримінація, фемінізм.*

**Actuality of the research subject.** The purpose of our scientific exploration is to highlight and study the global experience of gender policy and to compare it with Ukrainian realities, and developing practical recommendations for improving gender policy and gender democracy in Ukraine. This topic is particularly relevant in the view of Ukraine's integration into the European Union, adherence to the recommendations of international organizations (including the UN) on democracy implementation, including gender, and the elimination of all forms of discrimination, including gender discrimination.

**The problem statement.** The concept of gender began to take shape in the second half of the 20th century. The essence of the concept of «gender» lies in the awareness, understanding of the two principles in man – female and male, and not in the biological, but in the social dimension. Namely, gender is a social feature of a person, a certain social role in society. The concept of gender implies: understanding the social features of thinking, men and women behavior in the public life and taking into account these features; the elimination of all forms of gender discrimination, and the providing of equal rights and opportunities in all areas; developing and implementing gender policies that aim to grant equal social status for men and women. Social status means the accessibility and degree of power wielding (political, economic, etc.), the level of social welfare, prestige in society not only based on wealth, position, but also a system of values and lifestyle. The concept of gender covers all spheres of human life. One of the most important areas that need gender analysis is the political one.

**Analysis of recent research and publications.** In modern humanities, the value of this problem is constantly increasing. It is interdisciplinary in nature: gender aspects of various phenomena are studied in political science, sociology, psychology, history, philosophy, public administration, etc. Among Ukrainian researchers, we should name T. Melnyk, N. Grytsyak, O. Kulachek, S. Pavlychko, O. Katan, I. Mironenko, L. Shumrykova, O. Kremleva, I. Zherebkina, Y. Kovalevska, N. Shevchenko. It is also worth to note that N. Hrytsyak, O. Kulachek, Y. Korolchuk pay considerable attention to the research of the state authorities' activity in the field of gender relations, as well as the participation of women in the work of the state authorities. Ukrainian scientists have already defended PhD and doctoral theses on gender issues in Ukraine. Among them, we should also mention V. Chernyakhivska. «Gender Policy in Public Administration: Ukraine and the European Experience» (Kyiv, 2017); Strelnyk O. O «Gender Inequality and the Social Status of Women in Modern Ukrainian Society» (Kharkiv, 2017) T. Martseniuk «Institutional Foundations for Gender Relations» (Kyiv, 2015) and others. The monographs of scientists V. Halagan, N. Kovalska, O. Kozulia, L. Shumrykova and articles of N. Shevchenko are also devoted to the problems of women participation in Ukrainian history.

The topic of gender aspects of social life is very popular in Western scientific thought as well. It is worth to note, that modern understanding of feminism, and a modern gender approach to all social life initiated Simone de Beauvoir in her famous work «The Second Gender». In the 60s of the twentieth century, there was a gender revolution, which resulted in a significant increase of scientists' attention to these issues. Among the most famous authors are D. Meyer, N. Davis, P. Norris and others. In addition, among foreign researchers we can name S. Weingarten, D. Edmin, who deal with the issues of feminism.

To obtain statistics on the gender composition of civil servants of Ukraine and the strategy for the development of gender equality policy in Ukraine were used many

resolutions and orders of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine and the official website of the Ministry of Social Policy, in particular, the Gender Policy Office.

**The presentation of the main material.** The concept of gender, as we have already stated, takes into account the difference between men and women in social life, including in the political sphere. For example, P. Hollins of England believe that a characteristic feature of the political culture of womanhood is moderation in reform and commitment to the tactics of specific small cases (Shevchenko N. V., 2016, p. 98). Scientific research shows that the representatives of both genders evaluate and understand power differently. For a man, power is foremost control over others, and for a woman – it is an influence on others (Hroshev Y. V., 2015, p. 69). A woman who possess power is more likely to compromise, to concede in something more than a man. They also perceive politics differently. Women are more likely to perceive it on an emotional and social level. They are most concerned with the issues of a social, humanitarian nature. In contrast, men perceive politics rather at the cognitive-analytical level and are interested in economic and foreign policy issues (Zhulkovska T. Ie., 2017, p. 114). Different perception also leads to differences in political behavior. Men are more eager for power and fighting harder to obtain and preserve it. Foremost, they seek work in public authorities. Women are more willing to participate in public organizations, movements, aiming to help society and save it from various troubles. Experience shows that the most active are middle-aged and upper middle-aged women with higher education and secondary or above average levels of financial well-being. According to studies results, education and income play a key role in politics (Sknar O., 2014, p. 44).

If we analyze the situation of women and men in the political sphere of life, the imbalance between the two genders is immediately apparent. Thus, in the parliaments worldwide women make up only 10%, in the governments – 6%. However, among the world's poor, women make up 70%. The best position of female representatives in Sweden and Norway. For example, in Swedish Parliament, the proportion of women reaches 40%, and they lead 43% of committees and commissions. The government has the highest proportion of women – 50%. Representatives of Sweden in the European Parliament by 45% are women (Terletska I. V., 2016, p. 91).

If we consider the participation of Ukrainian women in political life, we see a rather modest picture. Only 1.2% of women are directly in politics, 16% are simply annoyed by politics, 30% are not interested in it, and almost 50% follow policy information (Terletska I. V., 2016, p. 93). Among the highest-level politicians, we could see in recent years only a few influential and famous women. In political party involvement, women are somewhat more prominent here. However, they are less represented in the governing structures (Terletska I. V., 2016, p. 93). All these facts indicates that women do not play a significant role in the political life of the country and gender imbalance remains valid. The circumstances, mentioned above, are the evidence that an effective gender policy is needed to address this imbalance.

Ukraine, actively seeking to join the community of developed democracies, is shaping its gender policy as one of the humanitarian sphere areas. The special session of the UN General Assembly adopted the recommendations «Women in 2000: Equality between men and women, development and peace in the 21st century» (June 2000). Participating countries, including Ukraine, have pledged to develop and implement National Programs of Action on Gender Policy to promote the status of women in society (UN Convention (1979). On the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination. Retrieved from: [https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/995\\_207](https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/995_207)).

**The main normative acts of international law ratified by Ukraine in recently:**

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Articles 1,2 and 7);
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Articles 2,3, 26);
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Articles 2, 3);
- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination;
- United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women – 1999;
- Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women on September 15, 1995;
- Vienna Declaration of Human Rights – 1993;
- Council of Europe Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (Article 14);
- European Social Charter (Article 4);
- Framework Convention for the Protection of the Rights of National Minorities (Article 4);
- ILO Convention No. 156 «On Equal Attitudes and Equal Opportunities for Working Men and Women: Workers with Family Responsibilities»;
- «UN Millennium Development Goals» – 2000.

**Also, important for improving the gender policy legislation were these Resolutions of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine:**

- «About the National Action Plan of Improving the Status of Women and Promoting Gender Equality in Society for 2001–2005» (No. 479 of May 6, 2001);
- «About the Long-Term Program of Improving status of Women, Maternity and Childhood Care» (No.431 of 7/28/92);
- «About the Recommendations of the Parliamentary Hearings «The Situation of Women in Ukraine: Realities and Prospects» (No. 1904-4 of 29.06.04);
- «About the Declaration about General Principles of State Policy for the Family and Women» (№475-14 of 05.03.99);
- «About raising of social status of the women in Ukraine» (№ 283 / 2001 of 25.04.01);

- «About the Recommendations of the Parliamentary Hearings concerning the Implementation in Ukraine of the UN Convention about the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women» (No. 298/95 of 12/07/95);

- «About the Gender and Legal Expertise» (№ 504 dated 12.04.06);

- «Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine «Issues of Anti-discrimination Examination and Public Anti-discrimination Examination of Draft Legal Acts» (No. 61 dated 30.01.13);

- «About approval of the State Program for Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men for the Period up to 2016» (№ 717 of 26.09.13)

«In 2005 was adopted the Law «About Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men» (Law of Ukraine (2015). «About ensuring equal opportunities for women and men». p. 561–562). The law defines general directions of the state policy for ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men:

- approval gender equality;

- prevention of gender discrimination;

- application of positive actions;

- ensuring equal participation of women and men in socially important decisions:

- providing equal opportunities for women and men to combine professional and family responsibilities;

- family support and the formation of responsible motherhood and parenting;

- education and promotion of gender equality culture among the population of Ukraine;

- protection of the society from the information aimed at gender discrimination.

Despite a number of resolutions and ratification of international instruments, an analysis of the gender composition of civil servants in Ukraine shows that among clerks (lower level officials), the proportion of women is 67% and of men – 33%. At the middle levels of state power (managerial staff), women are almost twice less (37%) than men (63%). At the parliamentary level, women are 8% and men – 92% (Korolchuk Yu. Gender revolution in public administration. Retrieved from: <http://www.ji.lviv.ua>). At the level of regional councils, though the situation is better, but it is also not comforting. All these facts clearly demonstrate the need for modernization of public administration in Ukraine in the field of gender equality (Lypka O. 2016. Retrieved from: <http://science.lpnu.ua>).

Today, developed countries in Europe aim to provide representation of men and women on the leading positions in the ratio of 50% to 50%. The second strategic objective is to include in the top 15 candidates of party election lists an equal number of women and men. A comparative analysis of the gender performance of the institutions of the EU countries and Ukraine has shown the need to supplement Ukrainian legislation with provisions that are in line with the standards of countries

with developed democracies. However, not everything depends solely on public authorities. Much depends also on society and its consciousness. A serious problem for Ukraine is the lack of public opinion on this issue. In addition, women themselves have not been very active in upholding their rights. The experience of developed countries, where gender democracy has become a reality, shows that having a strong women' movement is an important factor in gaining and maintaining the level of women's participation in power. Without the efforts of the public, it is problematic for women themselves to achieve significant success.

Analyzing the program of equal rights and opportunities for women and men for the period up to 2021, you can identify a number of reasons of the problems' nascence. Among them, we should note:

- absence of gender component in strategic reform programs due to the lack of civil servants' understanding of the importance of promoting gender equality as a condition for reform effectiveness;
- low effectiveness of the national mechanism for promoting gender equality;
- low ability of authorities to realize the principle of equal rights and opportunities for women and men;
- insufficiency of the existing system of collecting statistical information on the basis of gender;
- lack of a comprehensive system for responding to cases of gender discrimination;
- insufficient level of application of legislation in the field of equal rights and opportunities for women and men and lack of actual responsibility for non-compliance with the Law;
- «About Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men»;
- partial non-implementation of the recommendations and remarks of international monitoring missions and international organizations (A strategy for promoting gender equality and non-discrimination in education. Retrieved from: <https://www.msp.gov.ua/timeline/Genderna-politika.html>).

The Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine outlined ways of solving the problem in the Concept of the Program of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men for the period up to 2021. Two options are possible:

- The first one envisages the application of the management vertical in cooperation with non-governmental organizations with a focus on the sole responsibility of a specially authorized central executive body to ensure equal rights and opportunities for women and men, and of the structural subdivisions of local state administrations responsible for the implementation of state gender policy.
- The second option envisages a comprehensive approach to solving the problem by overcoming systemic shortcomings and intensifying interaction between authorities of all levels, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, the Ombudsman, public associations, trade unions and employers, the mass media, the international organizations

and businesses. The option is less costly, since much of the change should be made through political will rather than investment (About approval of the state's social program concept for equal rights and opportunities for women and men for the period up to 2021]. Retrieved from: <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua>).

What about the improvement of legislation on equal rights and opportunities for women and men, it was proposed:

- Taking steps to implement the provisions of the United Nations Millennium Declaration, in particular with regard to gender equality.

- Conducting informational explanatory work among employers on the introduction of European standards of employees' equality in the field of work.

- Implementation of measures to reduce the gender gap in the wages of women and men.

- Carrying out information campaigns to highlight issues of equal sharing of family responsibilities and responsibilities between women and men in the upbringing of the children.

- Implementation of measures aimed at developing women's leadership skills to participate in management decision-making and entrepreneurial skills.

- Increasing the level of experts' competence on equal rights and opportunities for women and men.

- Implementation of gender-based approaches to the education system on an ongoing basis.

- Conducting information campaigns with the participation of mass media, cultural institutions and educational institutions in order to overcome stereotypical perceptions of the role of women and men.

- Developing a mechanism for exercising the protection right against discrimination on grounds of gender, and taking the necessary measures as a result of consideration of the cases of such discrimination (About approval of the state's social program concept for equal rights and opportunities for women and men for the period up to 2021]. Retrieved from: <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua>).

**Conclusion.** Today, Ukrainian society is only beginning to become aware of the gender approach to all spheres of life, including the political one. So far, neither parties, authorities, nor society has got rid of gender stereotypes, which give a woman a secondary place in society and in politics. They perceive a woman rather as an object, but not a subject of political and economic sphere of activity. The Ukrainian women themselves are not very active and in solidarity. So far, women's solidarity has not become a trait inherent to our women. Unfortunately, the women' movement is also not effective. Regulations adopted by Ukrainian authorities are more formal in nature. Mainly civil society efforts are focused on advocacy through media, seminars, and conferences. However, this is not enough. The situation requires more decisive actions. New gender approaches require attention to the values inherent in women, their (women values) inclusion in party programs and laws. The gender approach also involves rethinking leadership practices with a gender perspective.

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