

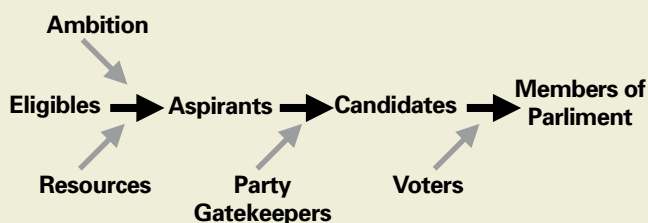
Political Party Quotas in Practice

Overview of the Session

Experience of quotas globally shows that their voluntary adoption by political parties can be an effective means of increasing women's representation. This is especially so in PR electoral systems that use party lists. In Europe, there are several examples of political parties adopting quotas, including the Nordic countries, which have long had the highest numbers of women in parliament. This session focused on cases of voluntarily adopted internal party quotas and conditions needed for successful implementation. It draws on studies of Norway, Croatia, Hungary and Poland.

Legislative recruitment and party quotas in Norway

Dr. Richard Matland began by highlighting the dramatic drop in women's representation in Eastern Europe immediately after the fall of the Berlin Wall. After more than a decade of democratic reforms, women's representation has increased significantly in some countries, but it is still very low in others. Russia and Slovenia are examples of 'real laggards'. Matland situated the dynamics of women's representation in the region within the general framework of the legislative recruitment model:



The model comprises three steps: moving from an eligible to an aspirant; moving from an aspirant to a party candidate; and moving from a party candidate to an elected representative. In the majority of countries, the eligible pool comprises 51–52 percent of women. Yet, at the end of the process, on average, only around 15 percent of those elected are women.

“While each of the three steps is important, the truly crucial step with respect to the level of women's representation is the step from aspirant to candidate, when the party gatekeepers select their candidates”.

During the first stage, eligible to aspirant, ambition, resources and interest in politics are important influences commonly found more among male than female citizens. Yet, there are still enough women in the aspirant pool for parties to select if they so desire. The final step, candidate to MP, is likely to be of only limited significance, since when voters make their choice they accord priority to issues more salient than the sex of the candidate. Gender quotas can be applied at all three stages of the process. The most common quotas (party or legislative) are intended to influence the second stage, aspirant to candidate. The reserved seats option (with or without elections) pertains to the final stage, candidate to MP. Women's recruitment is likely to be affected by the broad influences of societal culture, level of development, electoral system provisions and party rules and norms.

Applying the legislative recruitment model in the post-communist setting yields interesting patterns. Matland asserted that evidence from public opinion surveys indicates dramatic differences in the societal culture of Eastern and Western Europe. In a survey conducted across five West European countries, between ten and 15 percent of respondents contended that ‘men make better political leaders than women do’. In Central and Eastern Europe, the lowest percentage in agreement was 40; more typically it was 60, 70 or even 90 percent. Women agreed with the statement as strongly as men did. Clearly, women in the region face a more patriarchal culture, which diminishes their ambition and also has an effect in terms of access to resources. At the second stage, aspirant to candidate, research has pointed to significant sexism in political parties and somewhat higher recruitment standards for women. Parties tend to look for women with higher socio-economic status.

Matland introduced an important distinction between clientelistic and programmatic parties. A clientelistic party is based on patronage and loyalty to the leader, whereas a programmatic party aims to affirm its ideological identity and promote its platform. Programmatic parties tend to exhibit greater interest in women candidates and have sometimes used women as anti-corruption symbols or protectors of social goods. In general, women in

the region have fared better with leftist parties, especially those anxious to appear as Western European Social-Democrats. Women did worse with rightist parties that call themselves 'liberal'.

At the third stage, candidate to MP, evidence from Ukraine shows candidate sex to be almost irrelevant to voters' choices because of the higher salience of other issues.

The importance of the electoral system is clear, since the seven countries with the highest rates of women's representation all have pure PR rather than mixed-member PR systems. In six cases, there have been electoral shifts towards PR, and in all of them, women's representation increased post-reform.

Overall, women have done better in countries where politics have not remained centred on the development of electoral democracy and have instead focused on questions of democratic quality. The states that have done worse commonly have lower rates of economic development and very poorly organized women's movements.

Norway

Matland continued his discussion by maintaining that the Scandinavian states constitute the world's most successful examples of party quotas in action. He traced the experiences of women in politics in Norway over the course of several decades, a country where the legislative recruitment model involved the development of quotas over a long period. Candidate selection in Norway can be described as an elite but decentralized process, which may be influenced by motivated activists within the party. For all political parties, local nominating committees propose the candidate lists (based on the 1921 Electoral Law), for which rank-and-file party members vote. Thus, the nominating committee is constrained by the need to satisfy all party factions, place different interests under the party banner and appeal to various groups of voters. Nomination procedures in Norway result in a very strong

emphasis on group representation.

Women's influence over, and their position in, the process of party candidate selection has changed incrementally over the course of many decades. Matland distinguished four historical periods. The first is from 1909, when women received the right to vote, to 1953, when women's inclusion in parliament can be described as an era of 'Giants Among Men'. The 16 women elected to parliament in this period were all loyal party members or local notables, such as doctors, teachers or union activists. The second period from 1957–73 could be titled 'One Is Enough'. Nominating committees started to see women as a legitimate group to be represented. However, political parties never nominated more than one woman from a district, with the sole exception of the Labour Party delegations from Oslo. The third period, from 1977–81, could be named 'Tokenism No More'. In this transitional period, significant changes occurred. The Socialist Left and the Liberal Parties adopted the first gender quotas in Norway, driven by burgeoning social debates on women's issues and the desire to profile themselves as progressive parties in the eyes of voters. These parties had a very insignificant political presence but they had a crucial indirect impact on the largest political party in Norway: the Labour Party. In the fourth period, from the mid-1980s to the present, a gradual process of contagion took place. Women became 'Second Among Equals'. The Labour Party made the critical move of adopting its own quota in 1983. The Centre Party and the Christian People's Party adopted quotas in the 1990s. In 2004, five of the seven parties in parliament had quotas.

Since 1995, the percentage of women MPs has fluctuated between 36 and 40 percent. Despite the significant progress in Norway, the election of women is still dependent on the number of seats that parties win. It is noteworthy that, when parties capture an even number of seats in a district, women have a better chance

The development of party quotas in Norway is characterized by a long process of incremental change. The Labour Party quota was crucial but was adopted only after the party already had one-third of women in parliament. Party quotas have been helped by the progressive culture of second-wave feminism. Also, Norway has favourable electoral and party institutions. The country uses a closed list PR system with reasonably high party magnitude. Gradually, gender equality has become an important element of the nomination process. The internal party democracy structures have had a limited but crucial bearing on the selection of candidates.

of equal representation. However, when the number is odd, men come off best. Thus, although the principle of gender equality is well established, women are only 'Second Among Equals' and Norway has not managed to surpass 40 percent of women in parliament.

Croatia

Ms. Karolina Leaković presented an overview of the development of internal party quotas in the Croatian Social-Democratic Party (SDP), which was largely responsible for a significant increase in women's representation in parliament.

The SDP internal gender quota was the first such provision to be adopted by any reformed party in Eastern Europe in the 1990s. Leaković explained that the road to success was not a smooth one.

The establishment of the Social Democratic Women's Forum (SDWF) in early 1995, as an internal party organization, was crucial for the adoption of the party quota at the SDP Convention in 1995. The SDWF introduced the novel practice in Croatian politics of inviting women from other parties and non-partisans to participate in its activities. Despite criticism from male colleagues that the 'party was opening up too much', the SDWF managed to reach out to other political parties and NGOs. In 2004, the SDP approved the idea of having non-party members on its lists. It is predicted that this potentially beneficial trend for women will continue in the 2005 local elections.

The 40 percent quota for office holders within the SDP was not initially applied at all levels across the party structure. Although the main executive board and party presidency generally respected it, the lower levels held the quota in less regard, mostly because of the lack of sanctions. Therefore, a new statute of May 2004 introduced a supervisory board to act as a regulatory mechanism to oversee quota implementation on all levels.

Leaković noted that the implementation of party quotas has had far-reaching effects. For the parliamentary elections in 2000, the SDP not only applied the quota rule to its electoral lists but also was able to pressure its liberal coalition partner into nominating more women. The SDP managed to enforce the rule of at least 35 percent of women on each coalition

The SDP has incorporated into its Statute a 40 percent party quota for both sexes. The driving force behind the adoption of the gender quota was the separate women's organization within the party.

list. If there were not enough women candidates, the presidents of the parties refused to sign the list. In 2003, the SDP elected the largest share of women in parliament (12 out of 34 MPs). In the same election, the conservatives in Croatia elected around 25 percent of women to their parliamentary delegation, which is indicative of the contagion effect of the SDP's pioneering efforts to promote women's representation. Following the 2004 SDP Convention,

women make up 52 percent of the party's main executive board, and the SDP deputy president and two of the party's three vice-presidents are women. Given that, from 2000–04, the SDP was part of a coalition government and had the most women MPs, it was able to take several steps to deal with gender equality,

by passing the Gender Equality Act and a new Family Law and by creating a Committee on Gender Equality in parliament and a Government Gender Equality Office.

Hungary

Ms. Zita Gurmai examined the dynamics of women's representation in both the national parliament and the Hungarian delegation to the European Parliament. She began by noting that, in the Hungarian Parliament, in the pre-transition period, the Communist Party attained 30 percent representation of women. With the changes in the 1990s, however, the number dropped to between seven and 11 percent among the new democratic parties. In Hungary, women have a long tradition of political participation through labour unions; they have achieved high levels of education and a strong presence in the employment market; and the constitution stipulates equality of legal opportunities. Yet, the level of women's representation is very low. Gender stereotypes persist in public and media discourses.

After the 2002 elections, women held only 9.1 percent of the 386 seats in the Hungarian parliament. The Hungarian Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) electoral system includes a significant number of representatives from single-member districts, which partially explains the difficulties women face in being elected, compared to women on political party lists.

Within political parties, discrimination of women continues across the political spectrum. Only the Hungarian Socialist Party stipulates a 20 percent gender quota for its lists and demands that at least 25 percent of its candidates should be under 35 years of age. Nevertheless, it does not enforce a placement mandate on lists to ensure that women are in winnable positions. During the 2002 election, women comprised only 17.8 percent of the candidates and five percent of elected socialist MPs.

The overall proportion of women in the European Parliament has grown significantly over the past few decades: from 16 percent in 1979, to 31 percent in 2004. Hungary has performed better in terms of women's representation in the European Parliament than in its own national parliament (29.6 percent of women). Of the eight Hungarian female MEPs, five are from the Hungarian Socialist Party. Gurmai, who was elected Chairperson of the European Socialist Party Women in June 2004, drew attention to the agreement that exists within the leadership of the Party of European Socialists (PES) on the goal of women's representation:

"To ensure that gender equality is among the top priorities, we have to redefine its content and the structures supporting it; we have to formulate a clear vision on the way to proceed on future targets; we have to reorganize the party structures; and, we need more active women at the grassroots level and in political positions. We have to make gender equality a priority within the national parties".

To be successful, Gurmai underscored that governments must be convinced that the quality of democracy suffers without women. Thus, the political engagement of women needs to increase, European social-democratic values need to be further promoted and, in the economic realm, women's participation in the labour market must rise and the existing 'glass ceiling' that ensures that women are underpaid and remain in part-time jobs must be challenged. In the social sphere, a vital EU aim is to achieve progress on issues of childcare, poverty, trafficking and discrimination. Politically, it is fundamental to stress the horizontal process of gender mainstreaming.

Ms. Marta Bonifert completed the Hungarian overview by emphasizing the important role played by women's networks, connecting people at the local, regional and national level. The CEE Network has ac-

tively worked to raise public awareness, train women and empower them to address their social, economic and political needs. The Yellow Scarf Movement was essential in establishing supportive networks of politicians, activists and experts and successfully advocated for the introduction of gender quotas in the Hungarian Socialist Party. To make progress on the women's agenda, it is necessary also to engage devoted male activists and leaders. Hungary was successful in bringing women in to several very visible political positions, such as minister of the interior, spokesperson of the parliament and MEPs. Yet, greater numbers of women are needed in the National Assembly in order to promote gender equality and to strengthen women's leadership locally and nationally.

Poland

Dr. Renata Siemienska prepared a case study on women's participation in Poland (although the author could not attend the meeting and present the paper, it is included here). It analyzes the effectiveness of quotas in according women and men equal access to top positions in politics, with a focus on the parliamentary elections of 2001 and the local elections of 2002. It also examines Polish opinions on, and attitudes towards, quotas and the behaviour of members of society and the political elite towards gender inequality in politics. It shows that, while quotas are important for increasing the number of women in elected bodies, their efficiency depends on a numbers of factors, including the level of the elections (national or local) and the type of electoral system.

Discussions from the floor

The discussion focused on the variables that determine support for gender quotas across political parties, even among like-minded ideological parties. Slovenian conservative parties, for example, are very resistant to women's participation, despite the country's strong legislation, whereas in Croatia, the nationalist Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) elected significant numbers of women in the absence of legal quotas. The degree of successful cooperation between political parties and women's organizations also influences the presence of women. Links between Western and Eastern European parties, often predetermined by geographic proximity, can also be a factor. For instance, the Baltic parties received a lot of advice on women's issues from

their Scandinavian neighbours. Programmatic parties do not support quotas uniformly. All parties tend to look for resourceful candidates with higher socio-economic status and significant connections with important interest groups. Women are usually disadvantaged in terms of financial and other resources.

Another area of discussion focused on the attitudes of voters towards women candidates. The mass media and the media policies of parties frame gender issues for the public. It was suggested that party gatekeepers would increase the presence of women if they believed that voters would support women candidates or parties that field numerous women candidates. The converse argument is that, often, women do not automatically vote for other women or parties with more women candidates. Given the strong party-centred electoral systems in use in most European countries, it is the party gatekeepers, rather than voters, who directly discriminate against women candidates. Given the influence of female voters, though, party gatekeepers should be aware of the potential impact of women's votes.

An additional dimension of the voter-candidate relationship pertains to the type of electoral system and whether open or closed lists are utilized. It is generally held that closed lists, like those used in the Norwegian parliamentary elections, generally benefit women. Open lists, such as those employed in Denmark and Poland and in local elections in Norway, are believed to hurt the electoral chances of women. It was noted, however, that preferential voting does not have a uniform effect across parties. In egalitarian parties, where women have achieved significant gains in terms of their presence on candidate lists, preferential voting could diminish their electoral chances. Yet, in less inclusive parties, where party gatekeepers discriminate against women candidates, open lists may work to the advantage of women and improve their electoral prospects.

Participants also addressed the interplay between different levels of government—local, national and the European level—and its influence on women's representation. Local government has often been considered a training ground for previously excluded political actors. Some argued that the European Parliament is sometimes viewed as a level that is easier for women to access because it is believed to be less important than national parliaments. Thus, interac-

tion between different levels of government and the perceived prestige of representation in various institutions constitute an intriguing question for women in Europe. In Norway, a country of some four million people, there are more than 500 local councils, with 20 members each. Hence, it is relatively easy for women to participate at the local level, and it is in the best interest of each party to find people to fill local offices.

Working on local city councils is often seen as a starting point for a political career. The initial impetus for women's representation in post-communist Eastern Europe, however, was at the national level. The local level was not considered important due to the high degree of administrative centralization and the lack of communal power at the local level. However, with the increasing devolution of authority and resources, local government offices have become more politically attractive. Thus, it is increasingly difficult for women to capture local offices and to participate in local democracy.

At the European level, many EU members feared that the entry of new member states would decrease the level of women's representation in EU institutions. Yet, in the first post-enlargement elections (June 2004), the number of women in the European Parliament only dropped marginally: from 31 to 30 percent. EU policies towards both old and new members are crucial for gender mainstreaming processes.

With regard to Eastern Europe, participants repeatedly drew attention to the 'changing meaning of party quotas'. The spectacular decline in women's representation following the collapse of the Soviet Union "meant only the dramatic drop of ideology". The real level of women's representation could be gauged only on the basis of democratic elections, because "it is better to have nine percent of women in a meaningful parliament than 30 percent women in a non-democratically elected assembly".

The discussion also addressed the issue of gender quotas outside of the political arena. For instance, Norwegian legislation requires that, by the year 2006, all companies must have at least two women on their boards. This is an important step forward, given that women in corporate structures often find it impossible to break through the 'glass ceiling'. Unfortunately, in Eastern Europe, women's exclusion from positions of power in the private sector is still the norm.

The Norwegian Experience of Gender Quotas

RICHARD E. MATLAND

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE, UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON, USA

Introduction

For many years Norway has been a world leader in terms of women's representation. When it comes to women's representation in the national parliament, Norway has been among the top ten countries in the world for a quarter of a century. More than one-third of the representatives elected to parliament in each of the past six parliamentary elections have been female. Furthermore, for more than 20 years, the cabinet has been at least 40 percent female. In the 1980s, Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland was the dominant figure on the Norwegian political stage and worked actively and successfully to promote women's participation. All of these factors led to Norway being an inspiration to many women around the world who were fighting for greater access to political power.

Superficial knowledge of the Norwegian case led many people to note that, not only were the Norwegians world leaders with regard to women's representation, but also Norwegian parties had adopted gender quotas. This led to a natural assumption that gender quotas had resulted in the high levels of representation. While this may seem logical, the reality is that, in both Norway and Sweden, quotas were first established in the largest parties only after women had made significant inroads into the party. Before quotas were adopted in the Norwegian Labour Party, women held 25 percent of the parliamentary seats belonging to the Labour Party delegation. Before quotas were adopted in the Swedish Labour Party, women already held more than 33 percent of the seats in the Labour Party Riksdag delegation. So, in the Scandinavian case, quotas may not lead to significant representation, but rather, significant representation may lead to quotas.

Drude Dahlerup and Anita Freidenvall have argued that quotas in Scandinavia represent an example of incremental change.¹ This is certainly true. In both Norway and Sweden, quotas were merely the next logical step in a long process. As such, Dahlerup and Freidenvall question the validity of using Scandinavia as a model for emulation in other countries, where women are trying to institute dramatic and relatively quick changes. The conditions in the countries of Scandinavia are distinct enough that it would not be easy to transplant the Scandinavian institutions in other countries and assume they will function in a similar manner.

To provide a better understanding of the Norwegian case, which will hopefully help people to com-

prehend both how quotas work and why they work, this case study will take a close look at the advances made by women in terms of representation.² First, the paper briefly describes the legislative recruitment process. Then it outlines the candidate selection process in Norway, before looking at how this process has changed over time as women have lobbied for greater representation in Norway. The final section focuses on relevant lessons for other countries.

The Legislative Recruitment Process

I have examined the legislative recruitment process more extensively in other work.³ It is useful, however, to spend a little time going over the matter. Legislative recruitment refers to the process of selecting those individuals who eventually serve in legislative bodies. This is a process that Pippa Norris refers to in terms of a set of three hurdles.⁴ An individual must first select himself or herself, then he/she must be selected by the party, and finally he/she must be selected by voters. In virtually all countries at the outset of this process the pool of eligible candidates is slightly more than 50 percent female. At the end of the process, though, when the Members of Parliament (MPs) have been selected, the average is only 15 percent female.⁵ This means women must be systematically winnowed out at higher rates than men.

The first step in the process involves going from being merely eligible to actually aspiring for office, in other words, seriously considering standing for political office. In most political systems the move from eligibles to aspirants results in more men than women making the jump to aspiring for office. This move is affected by an individual's political ambition, the political resources that he/she can muster, and the political opportunity structure that defines the chances to run for office. Even in Scandinavia, it is clear that men are in possession of more political resources than women. In addition, men have substantially greater interest in, and knowledge of, politics.⁶ This results in an aspirant pool that is skewed towards men.

The second step in the process involves party gatekeepers (such as the election committee of a party or the party leadership) selecting which of the individuals in the aspirant pool the party is going to nominate

as its candidates for office. For reasons expanded on below, this is the crucial phase.

The final step involves voters choosing candidates. While many people assume that voters are the problem, and that sexist opinions are revealed in their reluctance to vote for women, most of the rigorous research on this question shows that this is largely not the case. While many voters may have very traditional views as to the proper role of women in society, when citizens step forward to vote they can draw on a vast array of political signals in order to form an opinion of a candidate. Political scientists consistently find the most important cues are the candidate's party, the policy positions taken by the candidate and his/her party, and whether the candidate is a member of the party in government (that is, an evaluation of the job done by the incumbent regime). Whether a candidate is a man or a woman is of much less importance in the mind of the voter. The party plays such a dominant role in most electoral systems that large numbers of voters can tell you immediately which party they voted for, but they cannot tell you the name of a single person on its list.

So, if the final hurdle does not significantly hurt women, then significant filtering out must occur during the first two stages. As noted above, the truly critical stage in this process is the second one, that is, when the party chooses its candidates. The reason for this is that the result of the first stage still leaves all parties in a situation where they have sufficient numbers of women to fill all of their nomination slots many times over.

Consider the case of Norway and the Norwegian Labour Party. In 2001, around 2.5 million of approximately 3.4 million eligible voters went to the polls to elect 165 representatives. The Norwegian Labour Party has been the largest party in Norwegian politics for the past 70 years and in the 2001 election it won some 600,000 votes and had 43 of its representatives elected to parliament. Estimates of those who have at one time or another considered standing for office—that is, the size of the aspirant pool—are, in most countries, in the range of ten to 20 percent of the total population. Even assuming that only ten percent of those not just eligible, but of those who actually voted, consider running for office, this still produces around 60,000 possible Labour parliamentary candidates. Even if the number of people who overcome this hurdle is highly skewed, so that 80 percent of those aspirants are male, this still leaves 12,000 hypothetical female aspirants. Compare these 12,000 female aspirants to the party's need to field a total of 165 parliamentary candidates, of which between 40 and 80 have a realistic chance of actually winning seats, and it becomes abundantly clear that the

party could nominate only women many times over if it so desired. What makes the party selection stage vital, then, is that the subsequent stage is not expected to affect women's representation, and while the stage prior to the selection phase may have led to a skewed pool, it is relatively easy for the party to make up for this in selecting candidates, if it so wishes.

This is one of the most important functions of quotas. They compensate for the imbalance that occurs in the first stage of legislative recruitment. If a party opts for an entirely gender-neutral nomination procedure it is unlikely that it will lead to equal representation, rather it will simply mirror the imbalance that existed in the shift from being an eligible to an aspirant. Quotas can rectify this imbalance by ensuring women receive a larger share of the nominations than their proportion of the aspirant pool. Positive discrimination through quotas or gender neutrality are two options open to parties in moving from the aspirant to the candidate pool. A third option, and certainly one that has been significant historically, is for parties to be discriminatory and to choose fewer women than their proportion in the aspirant pool. In the European context, it seems likely the critical stage will be the one where the party selects its candidates and decides between these three models.

Candidate Selection in Norway

Henry Valen describes candidate selection in Norway as a case of 'decentralized group representation'.⁷ This is a succinct and accurate description of the process. The process is decentralized, as decisions on list construction are made by party leaders at the county level in each of the 20 counties. These party leaders look for candidates who have been loyal to the party and preferably are seen in the community as 'local notables'. While these factors are central, when developing lists consideration of individual candidates always takes place with group representation firmly in mind. One of the central concerns of the nominating committees is to ensure groups the party perceives itself as representing are represented on the party lists. Women's march forward over time has occurred because the position of women as a group has altered gradually. Initially women comprised a group with no power or relevance; now the group is seen as crucial, deserving full representation.

Formally, the process of selecting candidates is governed by the Act of Nominations—an electoral law first enacted in 1921. This law guarantees that, while there is some variability in the process, the basic procedure is quite similar across all parties. Within each party a county nominating committee,

made up of between five and 15 county party leaders, develops an initial proposal for the party lists. This proposal is made after the committee has received recommendations from local party organizations in all county municipalities.

Next, the proposal is presented to a party nominating convention, at which delegates, who have been chosen at the local level, vote on whether to accept or reject the committee's proposal one position at a time. The norm is for the list to be accepted as proposed by the committee. Changes and even wholesale rejection of the committee's proposal happen often enough, however, that the nominating convention clearly does not exist merely to rubber stamp the committee's decision.

Under these conditions, the nominating committee's incentives are fairly clear. It wants to make sure that it does not alienate party members to such a degree that they might risk a revolt. It also wants to make sure that, in a crowded field, with five, six or even seven parties competing for parliamentary seats, the primary interests that their party represents are included on the party lists.

The emphasis on group representation is due to several factors. First, it is very clearly seen as a legitimate principle of representation. While the Anglo-American outlook⁸ on the selection of Members of Parliament (MPs) or Members of Congress (MCs) very much focuses on the individual and the selection of a specific candidate on the basis of group characteristics is often seen as an anathema and a violation of the liberal principle of choosing the most qualified person, in the Norwegian context, this is simply seen as a non-issue. Having a corporatist mindset and strong affinities to the consociational perspectives of Belgium and the Nether-

lands, which stress the need to ensure that all relevant interests are on the table, it is perfectly natural, from a Norwegian standpoint, to think in terms of balancing a ticket. Interests, much more than individuals, are central to the development of party lists in Norway.

Furthermore, decentralized group representation is an effective way of integrating factions and guaranteeing party peace. One can easily imagine a nomination committee chair saying: "Okay, your side did not get the number one slot, but you do not need to start an internal fight over the issue. Your candidate has been placed number two on the list, and that person has an extremely good chance of being elected. We all need to make sure everyone is represented'. Finally, Norwegian party leaders often see a diverse slate as important in appealing to various groups of voters. By placing representatives of a specific occupational group or public interest group in a prominent position on the list, party leaders believe they increase the likelihood of being able to attract the votes of ordinary citizens with ties to those groups.

Women's Representation in Norway

Table 1 shows the level of women's representation in the national parliament over the past 50 years. One can see that, at both ends of this spectrum, there was relatively little movement. Women did not start making strong gains until the 1970s, and they have made virtually no gains since the mid-1980s. In the period in-between, however, there was strong progress in terms of representation. These phases are divided into four separate categories, which are assessed below.⁹

Table 1: Women's Representation in the Norwegian Parliament (Stortinget), 1953–2001

Year	No. of women MPs	Total No. of MPs	% women in parliament
1953	7	150	4.7
1957	10	150	6.7
1961	13	150	8.7
1965	12	150	8.0
1969	14	150	9.3
1973	24	155	15.5
1977	37	155	23.9
1981	40	155	25.8
1985	54	157	34.4
1989	59	165	35.8
1993	65	165	39.4
1987	60	165	36.4
2001	60	165	36.4

Giants among men, 1909–1953

In this more than 40-year period—from the point at which women of property gained the right to vote—16 women were elected to serve in parliament. These women are unique in the sense they were able to survive and thrive in an era when being a female politician was extremely rare. Women from the capital, Oslo, were slightly more likely to be elected than women situated in other parts of the country.

At this time, nominating committees emphasized the importance of being an active and loyal party member, although they also looked for persons of standing in the community. Such a person would tend to be someone who held an important occupational position (minister, doctor or teacher), someone with previous experience of public office (local elected official) or someone holding significant status in social organizations outside the party (labour unions or religious organizations). While looking for ‘local notables’ with experience, parties focussed on a pool of aspirants that was heavily skewed towards men. Not many women were among the possible aspirants, since few women were members of the labour force, most women were not well educated, and most women had little experience of serving as organizational leaders or on local councils.

Parties made a serious attempt to balance their slates with respect to geography. A heavy emphasis was put on ensuring that all areas of the county were represented. In addition, concern was often expressed about the occupational groups and social organizations with which the party may have had connections. Women, as a conscious interest that needed to be taken into consideration, simply did not exist and were rarely nominated (even more rarely were they placed in a winnable position).

One is enough, 1957–1973

Over this time period women’s representation in parliament increased slowly, rising from eight percent in 1965 to 15.5 percent in 1977. By the 1960s, a second wave of feminism was starting to influence the public debate and there was a call for greater representation. Women outside of the parties were agitating for greater representation, and women inside the parties began to follow suit. This was quite significant. Women had always constituted a substantial portion of the party membership and had always carried out a significant amount of party work. In the past, however, their concerns had largely been tied to the electoral success of the party. As consciousness-raising took hold, though, they started to demand greater representation on the party lists.

In response to these societal changes we see party balancing strategies start to change. List creation looks quite similar to the earlier periods, but, especially at the end of this period, women start becoming seen as a legitimate interest with a right to representation. This is a fairly natural process as nominating committees were already thinking in terms of what “groups” they wanted to insure were represented. This made it relatively easy for women to present themselves as a “group” which had a legitimate right to representation.

While women were seen as a legitimate group, they were only one of many lobbying for representation, and, frankly, at this time, they were not a very powerful group. One can see this quite clearly in terms of the effect of party magnitude,¹⁰ that is, the number of seats that a party wins in a district. When party magnitude was low—that is, when a party won only one or two seats—women were not elected to parliament. When party magnitude was higher—that is, when a party won four or more seats—there was almost always a woman being elected.¹¹ Yet, it is quite striking that it was almost always one woman. No county delegation, with the exception of the Oslo Labour Party, ever elected more than one woman during this period (or prior to it either).

Tokenism no more, 1977–1981

This was a transitional period during which one witnessed significant changes in both levels of representation and nominating processes. Representation jumped from 15.5 percent in 1973 to 25.8 percent in 1981. The period of ‘one is enough’ was definitively over, as the number of party district delegations with more than one woman representative rose from one to seven. Women continued to press for greater access. Consequently, the nominating process was adjusted again to allow the gender of a candidate to play a much more prominent part in committee thinking as it put its slates together. It became clear that simply including one woman on the list was insufficient in terms of dealing with the matter of representation of women.

This period is also important as it witnessed formal quotas being adopted for women for the first time. In 1975, the Socialist Left and the Liberal Party both adopted gender quotas. This had relatively little direct effect, as only four of the 155 MPs elected in 1977 belonged to these parties, and only one of the four was a woman. The policy had a significant indirect effect, however, in that it clearly challenged the Norwegian Labour Party with respect to the issue of

women's representation. The Labour Party responded to this challenge. In all of the districts where either the Socialist Left or the Liberal Party placed a woman in the number one slot, the Labour Party markedly increased the number of women that it nominated. By contrast, in those districts where the Socialist Left and the Liberal Party did not place a woman in the top spot, the Labour Party's response was more limited.¹²

An interesting question is: why did these two parties adopt this policy at this time? There are a couple of key reasons. First, it was the 'right thing to do'. The debate on women's role in society had clearly had an effect on these parties and taking a policy stand on this issue was important to both parties with respect to their broader public image. The Socialist Left had strong ties with leftist organizations and women within the party were demanding proof of sincere and substantive (rather than merely rhetorical) support for greater equality. The Liberal Party, meanwhile, was in the process of reinventing itself as at least partially a Green party, and there were strong indications that the Greens were among those most in favour of greater representation for women.¹³ The second reason is that it seemed to make strategic sense with regard to both parties' attempts to curry favour with voters. Especially for the Socialist Left, which was always looking for ways to distinguish itself from the much larger Labour Party, the adoption of gender quotas was seen as an effective way of attracting leftist women away from Labour and towards its cause. For the Liberal Party, which had been split by the vote on joining the European Union (EU), the adoption of quotas was part of its plan to establish a new identity.

Second among equals, 1985 to the present

Between 1981 and 1985, the level of representation of women in parliament jumped from 25.8 percent to 34.4 percent. Since 1985 four elections have been held and the level of representation of women has never been below 35.8 percent, or higher than 39.4 percent.

The most important event in this period was the 1983 decision by the Labour Party to adopt quotas (implemented in the 1985 election for the first time). The move was crucial, since, as noted above, the Labour Party is the largest party in Norwegian politics. Thus, when it decided to increase the rate of representation, it led to a significant rise in the number of women being elected to parliament. New party rules

were honoured (an important requirement for quotas to be effective). These completely changed the role that the sex of the candidate plays in the construction of party lists. Now, candidate sex is one of the first things to be considered by party nominating committees. In just two election periods (1981–1989), women's representation within the Labour Party delegation went from 33 percent to 51 percent. In the party nominating caucuses, a candidate's sex went from being a factor of some relevance to one of primary significance. Every other candidate had to be a woman.

Why did the Labour Party adopt quotas? One important factor was that a large section of the party elite viewed it as the right thing to do. This policy has never been seen as a necessary evil or a temporary measure only to be utilized during a transitory phase, as it has been described in some countries. Rather, it is seen as a legitimate way to ensure that women receive the representation that they deserve. That women made up one-half of the population and one-half of Labour voters and hence deserved one-half of the nominations was a compelling argument. A second important factor was that Gro Harlem Brundtland was the leader of the Labour Party and Prime Minister for most of the 1980s. She was a powerful force who was actively engaged with a large number of issues, including pushing the Labour Party in the direction of greater representation of women. Her support for quotas was not necessarily decisive, but it was significant. Finally, even when there was a degree of reluctance on the part of some men within the party or some party strategists, the political reality was that the party was under pressure from the Socialist Left with respect to this issue. Leftist women within the Labour Party could easily say, 'You do not need to accede to our demands, we can just leave, the distance to the Socialist Left is not very great. If you are not willing to provide us with meaningful representation then we can simply move over to a party that will do so'. In many ways the Labour Party was forced to adopt this policy so as not to lose votes to the Socialist Left.

In a previous work,¹⁴ this has been described as a contagion process, as one party adopts a policy or strategy first implemented by one of its competitors. Once the Labour Party adopted quotas there has been a slow shift to the right in terms of the adoption of gender quotas in Norwegian politics. In the 1990s, both the Senterparty (an Agrarian-based party with a strong anti-EU element) and the Christian People's Party adopted gender quotas. This means that, of the seven 'major' parties in the Norwegian parliament, five have officially adopted quotas. The exceptions are

the Conservative Party (Høyre) and the Progress Party (FrP), which are situated on the far right of Norwegian politics. Both have argued they choose the best candidate and do not want to be bound by arbitrary rules requiring them only to consider a man or a woman. Nevertheless, the adoption of quotas by the other parties has put some pressure on the Conservative Party, which has increased its level of representation of women to the point that its parliamentary delegations are consistently in the 30 percent range.

The obvious question to ask is: why, if five major parties have adopted quotas and a sixth is heavily influenced by the others, have women not been able to break through the 40 percent barrier? Fifteen years ago the Swedes lagged slightly behind the Norwegians, but they have continued to move forward, while the Norwegians have stood still. There are two primary explanations for this. First, the Progress Party has become much stronger and this has worked to suppress women's representation. The FrP is a male-dominated party whose supporters are overwhelmingly male. In the 2001 elections, 26 Progress Party MPs were elected, only three of whom were women (13 percent). Among the other parties, 41 percent of MPs were female.

The second reason is that, although quotas have been adopted, women still tend to be treated as second among equals. If the party magnitude is even (two, four or six seats), parties in recent elections have tended to split the seats evenly between men and women. If the party magnitude is odd, however, (one, three, five or occasionally seven), men are consistently placed first. If we look at the 2001 elections and two-member party district delegations, excluding the Progress Party and the Conservative Party, we see that women achieve parity, holding 50 percent of the seats (16 out of 32). If we look at one-member party district delegations, however, after excluding the Progress Party and the Conservative Party, we see that women hold 36 percent of the seats (15 out of 41). Because of the relatively low district magnitude in the Norwegian counties and the large number of viable parties, a large number of small one-person delegations are generated (more than one-third of all of the party district delegations in the 2001–2005 Storting were single members). If we juxtapose this with the system employed in Sweden, where there are fewer viable parties, a much higher number of MPs (349 as compared to 165) and a slightly greater number of counties (29 as opposed to 20), one can see in part why the Swedes have continued to make advances in terms of the representation of women, while the Norwegians have floundered.

Conclusion

In assessing changes in women's representation in Norway, one can see that quotas have played a role, although probably not a vital one. The process must be viewed as incremental, leading to a significant but not equal role for women in Norwegian politics—the adoption of quotas was merely a step towards greater equality. The incremental nature of the process can be seen in Table 1: the rate of increase in women's representation from one election to the next has never been greater than 8.6 percent. Rather, there has been slow upward movement, reflecting the changing role played by candidate sex in the nomination puzzle. Initially, candidate sex was irrelevant, then it became one of several weak, but legitimate, interests of the parties, and finally it graduated to a position of central importance in the process to construct candidate lists. The most significant event in terms of the impact of quotas and representation was the adoption of gender quotas by the Labour Party in 1983. Note, though, that this occurred after women had already acquired 33 percent of the positions in the party's parliamentary delegation and when there was a female party leader. This is hardly a case of storming the palace and instituting dramatic change overnight.

In analyzing how the increase in women's representation came about and the reasons for the adoption of quotas it is clear that culture is important. Second wave feminism raised a number of equity issues that were especially salient within the Nordic context of egalitarianism. But the egalitarian culture is not in itself sufficient. While women have been quite successful in gaining access to positions of political power, they have been much less successful, despite a mighty struggle, in gaining access to large numbers of prominent positions in business.¹⁵

An important part of the explanation for the relative success of women in the political sphere is connected to existing political institutions. The political institutions that were in place were particularly well suited to providing women with the opportunity to acquire positions of political power. In addition, Norwegian feminists, by and large, made an explicit decision to stay and work within existing political parties. They did not leave and establish separate political organizations. The candidate selection procedure placed an emphasis on group representation, hence it was entirely legitimate for women to argue that, as a group, they represented 50 percent of the population, yet enjoyed nothing like that level of representation. Closed list proportional representation in districts with a reasonably high district magnitude

meant that internal party decisions with respect to representation led directly to increased representation.

Furthermore, while there may have been those who were sceptical about the calls for greater representation, additional institutional arrangements pushed them in the direction of agreeing to these demands. First, if party leaders refused to consider seriously these demands for greater representation, there was an easy and clear alternative: feminists could simply switch their support to a party that backed their call. This threat meant that many reluctant men felt that they had to improve the rate of representation. Second, party nominating committees knew full well that, if they ignored these demands for greater representation, women within the party were capable of mobilizing and turning out en masse at the party nominating caucuses where each of the decisions of the nominating committee would be reviewed. Just the threat of attempting to overturn committee decisions was sufficient in many cases to get nominating committees to consider carefully women's demands for better representation. In short, the institutional arrangements played a crucial role in assisting women in their fight for greater representation.

Endnotes

- 1 Dahlerup, Drude and Lenita Freidenvall. 2003. 'Quotas as a Fast Track to Equal Political Representation for Women'. Paper presented at the Nineteenth International Political Science Association (IPSA) World Congress in Durban, South Africa, on 29 June–4 July 2003.
- 2 More extensive versions of these discussions can be found in: Matland, Richard E. 1993. 'Institutional Variables Affecting Female Representation in National Legislatures: The Case of Norway'. *Journal of Politics* 55. pp. 737–755; Matland, Richard E. 1995. 'How the Election System Structure has Helped Women Close the Representation Gap in Norway'. In Lauri Karvonen and Per Selle, eds. *Closing the Gap: Women In Nordic Politics*. London: Dartmouth; and Matland, Richard E. and Donley T. Studlar. 1996. 'The Contagion of Women Candidates in Single-Member District and Proportional Representation Electoral Systems: Canada and Norway'. *The Journal of Politics* 58. pp. 707–733.
- 3 Matland, Richard E. 2005. 'Enhancing Women's Political Participation: Legislative Recruitment and Electoral Systems'. In Julie Ballington and Azza Karam, eds. *Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers* (second edition). Stockholm: International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA).
- 4 Norris, Pippa. 1996. 'Legislative Recruitment'. In Lawrence LeDuc, Richard Niemi and Pippa Norris, eds. *Comparing Democracies: Elections and Voting in Global Perspective*. London: Sage.
- 5 The very latest numbers in terms of women's parliamentary representation are available from the Inter-Parliamentary Union at <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/world.htm>. As of 1 January 2005, 15.6 percent of the world's parliamentarians were women.
- 6 Strømsnes, Kristin. 1995. 'Kjønn og politisk kunnskap' (Gender and political knowledge). In Nina C. Raaum, ed. *Kjønn og politikk* (Gender and politics). Oslo: Tano Publishing.
- 7 Valen, Henry. 1956. 'Nominasjonen ved stortingsvalg—en demokratisk prosess eller et eksempel paa partidiktatur?' (Nominations to parliamentary elections—a democratic process or an example of party dictatorship?) *Statsøkonomisk tidskrift*. 70(2). pp. 115–152; Valen, Henry. 1966. 'The Recruitment of Parliamentary Nominees in Norway'. *Scandinavian Political Studies* 1. pp. 121–166; and Valen, Henry. 1988. 'Norway: Decentralization and Group Representation'. In Michael Gallagher and Michael Marsh, eds. *Candidate Selection in Comparative Perspective: The Secret Garden of Politics*. London: Sage Publications.
- 8 Squires, Judith. 1996. 'Quotas for Women: Fair Representation?' *Parliamentary Affairs*. 49(1). pp. 71–88.
- 9 Matland, Richard E. 1993. 'Institutional Variables Affecting Female Representation in National Legislatures: The Case of Norway'. *Journal of Politics* 55. pp. 737–755.
- 10 Ibid.
- 11 This is a general trend that we see across many countries and is the basis on which recommendations to women's groups that they should carefully consider the electoral system rules when looking to develop strategies to maximize representation have been made. Electoral system rules that lead to significant party magnitudes are very likely to help women, while electoral system rules that result in small party magnitudes are likely to hurt women. The most striking example of this distinction is the large gap that exists in terms

of representation between majoritarian single-member districts and proportional representation electoral systems.

- 12 Matland and Studlar. op. cit.
- 13 Caul, Miki. 2001. 'Political Parties and the Adoption of Candidate Gender Quotas: A Cross-National Analysis'. *Journal of Politics*. 63(4). pp. 1214–1229.
- 14 Matland and Studlar. op. cit.
- 15 Skjeie, Hege. 1991. 'The Rhetoric of Difference: On Women's Inclusion into Political Elites'. *Politics and Society* 19. pp. 233–263; and Skjeie, Hege and Mari Teigen. 2003. *Menn imellom: Mannsdominans og likestillingspolitikk* (Between men: Male dominance and gender equality policy). Oslo: Gyldendahl Akademisk.

Political Party Quotas in the Croatian Social Democratic Party

KAROLINA LEAKOVI

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE WOMEN'S FORUM OF THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY, CROATIA

Introduction

Before the break-up of Communist Yugoslavia, Croatian women had the benefit of equal rights under the law. Although quotas ensured women were represented in State and Republic legislatures, and despite being represented in parliaments, unions and even the various organs of the Communist Party, women in the former Yugoslavia enjoyed very little real political power, which was vested in the few—male—elite members of the party.

After the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, immense structural change took place across Europe, ending the Cold War and uniting the West and the East. At the same time, this event led to the demise of the 'glorious' heritage of Yugoslav Socialism and exposed all of the shortcomings associated with party monopolies and state-run economies. As political elites lost their positions, ordinary Croatian people had reasonable expectations that their own lives would benefit with the advent of democracy. Despite the existence of a vibrant women's movement in the former Yugoslavia, the fall of Communism also witnessed a decline in women's political participation. This decline is in part a result of the patriarchal processes established by the wartime nationalist groups but is largely seen as a backlash to the Communist legacy of a highly proclaimed, although rarely implemented, equality—a backlash experienced in much of Eastern Europe.

As a multi-party system emerged in Croatia, social democrats looked at the examples of social democratic parties of the more privileged stable democracies, which set highly desirable goals. Croatian social democrats carefully studied other parties' patterns and structures and, of course, assessed the time required to attain certain standards. One important aspect of political party reform examined was that of gender quotas and women's participation in politics, which is the focus of this case study.

The Social Democratic Party of Croatia

Social democratic parties in the 'post-nineties democracies' have their roots in different sources. Some are the offspring of the traditional social-democratic par-

ties and movements that existed before 1990 (for example, those in Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary and Slovenia). Others emerged out of the so-called alliances of citizens (Socijalistički savez), even the trade union traditions. Many social democratic parties of Eastern Europe, and the most likely to survive, are the products of former communist parties that successfully reformed into social democratic parties.

Today's Social Democratic Party (SDP) of Croatia was created in 1994 after a merger of the relatively large Croatian League of Communists—Democratic Party for Change (SKH-SDP) and a smaller social democratic party, the Social Democratic Party of Croatia (SDH). The new party's programme and statute was to be adopted at the party's convention in 1994 which would provide real opportunities to shape the future of the party.

The beginning of the Social Democratic Women's Forum

In autumn 1994, a group of women started talking about establishing a women's organization within the party, a suggestion that, in general, met with disapproval mostly from male members of the party. One activist commented that 'we had our women' and that the SDP did not need a women's organization. Interestingly, male and female party activists reacted in a similar way.

Nevertheless, a 'critical mass' of support developed and the SDP Women's Forum (SDWF) was founded in Zagreb, Croatia, on 8 January 1995. As an internal organization of the SDP, it had to comply with the party statute, although it had its own Statute that created parallel structures. The latter called for gender representation of at least 40 percent for both sexes; a formulation developed following consultations with Slovenian colleagues. The SDWF proposed quota was the first attempt in any reformed party in the 'post-nineties democracies' to recommend internal party quotas (soon after this proposal, the Social Democratic Party of Croatia introduced gender quotas in the party's statute at the Convention in 1996).

The SDWF Statute clearly stated that women who share the same values may become members of the SDWF on equal terms without having to become

party members. Of course, there is a danger that a forum, which includes women who are not members of the SDP, can develop policies which deviate from, or are opposed to, the party's general orientation. On the contrary, however, the SDWF has created space for many women experts and activists to engage. It has been one of the bridges to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that have contributed to the establishment of a true civil society within a prosperous state based on the rule of law, democracy and respect for human rights.

The growth of the SDWF

What has the Women's Forum done over the past ten years to ensure that the quota system is not only 'proclaimed' but truly implemented? Initially, the strategy was to form branch offices in any place where there was a party branch, at the municipality, city or county levels. Within two to four years (after 1995) almost 100 SDWF branches were established across the country. The SDP had some 400 branch offices at the time.

Some of the most important topics and issues dealt with by the SDWF during this first phase were unemployment, healthcare, representation in decision-making bodies and the strengthening of social democracy.

The next phase saw closer cooperation with civil society and a number of NGOs that came into being after 1990, ranging from genuinely feminist groups to those that focussed only on the provision of humanitarian aid. Of course, during this phase, questions concerning women war victims and reconciliation were of the utmost importance.

One of the next priorities was to provide education and training for women in any possible field, ranging from empowerment in general to media presentation and debate skills. Of particular value was the series of seminars entitled 'Women Can Do It', following the example set by Norwegian political parties. During this third phase, numerous women were motivated to become candidates in the local and parliamentary elections.

SDWF understood that external cooperation and training should not happen at the expense of also focusing on the internal structures of the SDP and women's representation within the party. Between 1995 and 1999, there were six vice-presidents of the SDP, of which two were women. The total representation of women on the party's governing executive committee—the Main Board—stood at 52 percent. The SDP's respectable record of women's representation within the party was partly responsible for the

party's admission into the Socialist International in 1999. Representatives of the SDWF engaged in very intensive exchanges of views at different meetings and conferences with their colleagues from Southeast Europe, the countries of the European Union (EU) and worldwide through the SIW.

Women in Parliament

The strategy of capacity building and increasing the representation of women within the SDP was essential for the SDWF in order to influence the national agenda and implement gender-related policies once the SDP formed government in 2000. As the leading party in the new coalition government, the SDP was largely responsible for the 34 percent women's representation in Parliament. Between 2000 and 2003, an enormous step forward in legislation was achieved.

Strategies and legislation introduced included a new family law, a law on Gender Equality, legislation preventing domestic violence, a national policy on gender equality, and a law on employment with various measures favouring unemployed women. Moreover, huge steps were taken on regional and local levels, especially in areas of women representation in decision-making bodies at those levels. In addition, the SDWF was keen to provide support for the foundation of local gender equality committees at the town and county levels, stressing that these local-level bodies would be very hard to get rid of if there was a change of government.

The next phase was marked by the loss of parliamentary elections (in 2003) when the SDP became the major opposition party. Maintaining the high standards associated with the 40 percent gender quota for all bodies of the party on all levels, at its ninth convention, on 8 May 2004, the SDP adopted a new Statute and a new Declaration. Although the new Statute does not make explicit reference to external quotas for candidate lists, delegates demonstrated a high level of commitment for the principle of equality within the party, voting for a woman deputy chair (there were three candidates, two of whom were men). Two of the three vice-chairs are women, and both vice-chairs of the SDP's Main Board are women. The representation of women on the Main Board stands at 53 percent, the highest level ever.

The Challenges to Implementing Quotas

The introduction and implementation of quotas at all levels will depend on many factors, including overcoming traditional, patriarchal values. There are, how-

ever, disadvantages and challenges even to the quotas which are in place now. One significant shortcoming of the current quotas within the SDP is that absence of sanctions. If the party leadership fails to meet its statutory obligations, there are no mechanisms to sanction or punish individuals.

In addition, the percentage of women party members is far less than 40 percent, and hence the question of positive discrimination arises and jeopardises the commitment to putting women on candidate lists and placing them in winnable positions. Although the SDWF has been successful at ensuring the placement of women on candidate lists (although not always in satisfactory positions), the lack of a formal quota for candidate's lists for local and parliamentary elections is a barrier to guaranteeing women's political representation.

The relationship between the SDWF and the SDP is delicate at times. Although the Forum has no independent sources of income, the SDP has never, to date, turned down requests for funding. The party is not, however, obliged to provide resources to the SDWF. The successes and strengths of the SDWF is a double-edged sword. Although support among party members for increased women's participation is strong, getting more women in positions at all levels of the party sometimes means displacing men who have held positions in the party for years. During the first 10 years of the SDWF women have not only remained partners with their male colleagues in the SDP but many have also become rivals.

Conclusion

The successes of the SDWF have also been the successes of the SDP. Without the perseverance of the SDWF, particularly on the issue of quotas, the number of women representing the SDP in parliament and local assemblies in Croatia would be much lower. Certainly, the number of women holding decision-making positions within the party would also be reduced. At every election, SDWF will continue to press for greater women's participation and representation. Thankfully, the fierce battles of the 1960s and 1970s when women were the only group insisting on equality are over. True equality requires partnerships, which include men and the SDWF will nurture those partnerships.

Advancement of Women's Issues through Political Mobilization in Hungary: Impact of the Hungarian Socialist Party Quota

ZITA GURMAI
EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT FOR HUNGARY

MARTA BONIFERT
REGIONAL CENTER FOR ENVIRONMENT, BUDAPEST

The countries within the former Austro-Hungarian Empire are long-time traditionalists when it comes to the role of women in society. Hungarian society is no exception with regard to the position of women in public life, particularly in decision-making positions. However, this case study¹ briefly reviews the past 120 years, and illustrates that it is possible to identify the major steps that led to the emergence and acceptance of women in public life.

The Origins of Women's Political Participation

The first women's associations, involving aristocratic women, were established in Hungary in the Reform Age (1825-49), and lacked a distinctive political profile. The first women's association was called Pesti Jotekony Noegylet (Charity Women's Association of Pest), set up in 1887. By the end of the 19th century, participation in women's associations had become a prestigious activity. Real change occurred when social-democratic women formed a revolutionary women's organization in trade unions in the final years of the 19th century.

These women engaged in highly politicized action, such as the fight for universal suffrage prior to the First World War—Rozsika Bedi-Schwimmer, the leader of the feminist and pacifist movement, had to leave the country. Following the war, in 1920, the first woman deputy, Margit Slachta, the leader of the Social Mission Association, was appointed to parliament. Anna Kethly of the Social Democratic Party followed her in 1922.

Two national women's associations were founded post-1945 during a period of reconstruction and the re-emergence of networks. The democratization of the country and the introduction of universal women's suffrage in 1945 accorded feminists no social space, however. The 1951 decision of the Hungarian Workers' Party (MDP) regarding women's political participation marked the beginning of the period of state feminism. The number of women deputies in the provisional assembly rose to 12, compared with between one and two in the past. In the first MDP congress only four of 66 deputies were women.

Women in Parliament

Although women received the right to vote in 1919 and a few women members of parliament (MPs) were elected before the Second World War, women did not enjoy a strong political role in society before 1945. In socialist times, despite the proclamations of the communist regime that gender equality was one of its main values and political goals, and numerous improvements in the economic and social position of women, the percentage of women in parliament never exceeded 35 percent. Furthermore, women were not adequately represented in the executive structures of the only existing political party Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party.

Unfortunately, the change to a multi-party system in Hungary in 1989 did not lead to equality for women. They became the group that lost the most, achieving less in the realms of healthcare, education, employment, social security and childcare, to name but a few. Women's representation in the 386-seat General Assembly fell to 7.3 percent after the first democratic elections in 1990. In 1994, it stood at just 11 percent (the highest level since 1979). In 1998, it fell to 8.3 percent. In 2002, it hovered around ten percent—with three women ministers in government. After the 2004 European Parliament elections it declined again slightly to 9.1 percent.² The decline occurred because three incumbent women MPs successfully competed for seats in the European Parliament and none of their replacements in the Hungarian General Assembly were women.

Key factors behind this situation were the following:

- not one of the large political parties that made it into parliament had a strong interest in, and thus programme on, gender equality;
- conservative parties from their establishment/re-establishment promoted the traditional role of women; and
- gender-focused non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and independent women's civil society groups, were numerous, but they could not attract any real attention from any of the decision-makers in government or parliament, not even from opposition parties.³

It became a great challenge for Hungarian progressive parties, civil groups and activists to work on gender issues in this environment.

The Hungarian Socialist Party

Hungarian Socialist Party (HSP) women were among the first to persuade their party to change its attitude towards gender equality. However, the transformation of the HSP into a women-friendly party was slow and very gradual. The shift was helped by the moral backing received from the Socialist International Women (SIW) and its sister organizations and support networks, including the CEE Network for Gender Issues, during the HSP's accession to the Socialist International.⁴ The supportive national and international network of politically active women and men also facilitated the process.

The first women's organization within the HSP was established in 1992. The HSP women's organization drew on the examples of British, German and Swedish parties, including their gender-related laws. Among the issues raised was the request, in 1993, to include a quota in the party statute.

The HSP, in coalition with the SZDSZ liberal party (Szabad Demokraták Szövetsége: Alliance of Free Democrats) won the second free elections in 1994. The results seemed positive: 11.1 percent of women MPs and one minister. It was obvious, though, that gender equality was not one of the party's priorities, as the gender equality department in the Ministry of Labour was given to the smaller coalition partner, the SZDSZ.

This was also the time when the government had to introduce radical transitional measures to reduce the outstandingly high debt of the country. The austerity programme, while allowing the country to recover, also led to a decline in some important social achievements for women (for instance, paid maternity leave was shortened and many crèches and kindergartens were closed).

Although the country stabilized economically and politically, voters did not forget the austerity programme and hence the HSP lost the election of 1998. The conservative coalition government took office and restructured its operations, including the introduction of newly developed gender equality mechanisms in the country.⁵

Different steps were taken compared to previous governments, such as the participation of Hungary in the multi-stakeholder 12 country Stability Pact Gender Task Force (SP GTF).⁶ HSP and HSDP (Hungarian Social Democratic Party) party leaders

signed the appeal to establish the SP GTF, but the new government decided not to take advantage of the opportunity to ensure Hungary's inclusion in regional gender equality projects after 1999.

Lobbying within the Party

From 1998, the HSP women's organization and its partners started to mobilize in a more structured and determined way, resulting in the HSP 'engendering' its party values, programmes and policies. With the direct moral support of the SIW, material backing from the CEE Network for Gender Issues and in close cooperation with social-democratic foundations and women's organizations from Austria, France, Italy, Netherlands, Norway and Sweden, as well as with women from different political backgrounds connected through the SP GTF's regional training programmes, these women activists started to strengthen their party organization. Their work spanned the entire country. There were increasing calls for including a quota in the party statute. Greater emphasis was put on the argument that the party badly needed the support of women and young voters. To be taken seriously by supporters, it is important for the party to highlight these issues, and give prominence to people representing these issues to the decision making structure of the party. Lobbying together with the party's youth organization, HSP women succeeded in getting a 20 percent quota for women and a 20 percent quota for youth integrated into the party statute at the 1999 Congress.⁷

Election Results

The first real breakthrough came with the party leadership that was selected in the internal party elections of 2001, chaired by Laszlo Kovacs. Even though the quota was only 20 percent, all women who ran for positions were elected. Suddenly, the party leadership had 30 percent of capable, visible women, bringing to the electoral race all of their knowledge and strength. This was the moment when people like Katalin Szili and Zita Gurmai led the HSP women's organization, all multilingual, brilliant politicians, dynamic and sensitive to gender issues, with a decade of campaigning experience. Not only did they facilitate the establishment of the best possible tool to invigorate the party electoral campaign, but they also forged a strong relationship with major international support networks.

2002 National Election

Even if the HSP saw the need to target women voters, very few of its women activists got the chance to run on eligible places on the party lists. The women's

organization had two priorities: to change the government; and to introduce the women's quota.⁸ HSP women decided to create a progressive tool to ensure that their issues were taken seriously, to underscore their determination and passion for change and to better society.⁹

The establishment of the national Yellow Scarf Movement in 2002 was their most important innovation. In all of Hungary's main cities (more than 50), the HSP women's organization invited all women to back their silent public demand for a change of government policy on gender issues. Every Friday, for two hours, they stood in the main squares of their cities, wearing long yellow scarves, in silent demonstration. They had just one slogan: **governments change, we stay!** As the electoral campaign progressed, an increasing number of women participated in the weekly protests. A few days before the election, 2,500 representatives of the Yellow Scarf Movement from all over the country gathered in a Budapest sport's hall where the HSP's prime ministerial candidate outlined his electoral promises:

- one-week paternity leave following the birth of a baby;
- higher pensions for widows;
- reintegration of women into the labour market; and
- the establishment of a ministerial post in the national government focused on equality matters¹⁰

The 2002 elections were very tight. The HSP and its coalition partners won by two percent—a couple of thousand people made the difference. A significant proportion of people believe, even among the losing parties, that the Yellow Scarf Movement was the decisive factor.¹¹

The movement's success immediately opened a window of opportunity for all women looking to acquire real power in Hungary's public and political spheres. While ten percent is not a high percentage of MPs, women were given many important positions in parliament and government (president of the parliament and three ministerial portfolios). Furthermore, all of the parties started to show more interest in gender equality issues and in having women candidates in the forthcoming council and mayoral elections. On comparing figures for the local elections of 1994 and 1998, one sees that the percentage of women councillors rose from 20 percent to 23 percent and the number of women mayors from ten

percent to 13 percent. In 2002, the statistics slightly increased. Women were successful not only in small, poor, rural communities, but also in important cities like Nyíregyháza and Szolnok.¹²

The European Parliament

It seems that the HSP really understood the power of women voters and the importance of its gender equality policy in getting them on-board. The new government kept the promise that it had made to women during the pre-electoral campaign, and started to work seriously on gender equality issues in the context of Hungary's accession to the European Union (EU). A gender equality minister was appointed for the first time, the gender equality mechanism was re-established and given a much stronger mandate than was the case between 1994 and 1998, legislation in some fields (labour, violence against women and trafficking) was reshaped in accordance with EU best practice, and the first anti-discrimination law was passed in 2004.¹³

HSP women's next battle for full gender equality in politics came in June 2004, during the first EU elections in Hungary. This time, the CEE Network for Gender Issues worked closely with campaigning women across the region, among others, introducing a specific sandwich strategy. The HSP women's organization applied bottom-up pressure, while social-democratic women within the Party of European Socialists (PES) applied top-down pressure. The leader of the PES, Poul Nyrup Rasmussen, sent a letter to all social-democratic party heads, including EU newcomers, asking them to target women voters in their campaigns and to give their women candidates a real chance of election. In Hungary, this strategy worked very well. The results of women's campaigns in the last national and local elections offer the best proof yet that a gender equality approach really matters.

Election 2004

The European parliamentary election of 2004 revealed a very positive result. Of the first 18 candidates on the conservatives' list, six were women. The liberals had eight women among their 18 candidates, while the socialists placed five women among their 24 candidates (although they were all in winning positions). The HSP makes up the second biggest Hungarian faction within the European Parliament. The total number of Hungarian women in the European Parliament is 9, out of a total of 24 Hungarian Members of the European Parliament.

European Parliament Party Delegations

The HSP brought to the Party of European Socialist a delegation of European parliamentarians consisting of five women (55 percent) and only four men. A so-called contagion effect—when a serious approach to gender equality in one party forces competing parties also to move in the right direction—was also visible with regard to the group of European parliamentarians elected to the group of the European People's Party. This right-wing party, which won the European Parliament elections in Hungary, has 23 percent of women, one even coming from the Roma community.¹⁴

The Results of the HSP Quota

What impact has the use of the quota by HSP women had on the political empowerment of women in Hungary? What lessons can be learnt?

1. The quota can serve as a positive measure to counter structural gender inequality within a large party only if there is enough systematic external support (from the PES and SIW, and from sister parties and their women's organizations). Additionally, women must be organized regionally (CEE Network for Gender Issues and SP GTF), so that they can help each other with the exchange of best practice, and a strong and determined women's organization must exist that is capable of attracting important allies within the party. In this case, these allies were the youth organization and new party leaders.
2. The quota will be well respected only if the women's party organization can ensure its public visibility and prove that campaigning produces tangible results. In this case, the Yellow Scarf Movement ensured the visibility of HSP women and the result of the general election in 2002 persuaded the HSP to take gender equality seriously.
3. To sustain the process and to trigger a contagion effect, the most important thing is that the first big party with a respected quota, leading to a larger number of women being elected on all levels, keeps its promises to voters and that its women's organization does not forget to take advantage of an ensuing window of opportunity. In this case, the window of opportunity took the form of the first European Parliament election in Hungary.¹⁵

Conclusion

Women have come to acquire political power through political parties. The quota is an important tool to en-

hance their participation in decision-making, helping women to assume an active and visible role in public life.

In summary, from 1990–2002, the number of women candidates grew continuously—actually, the figure doubled. In 2002, 614 women participated in the parliamentary elections (17.8 percent of all candidates). Of the running female candidates, 5.7 percent entered the General Assembly. Of the running male candidates, 12.4 percent entered the General Assembly.

Strategies that bolster women's participation in politics are the application of the parity principle and the employment of the quota system in the election of the political structure. According to the parity principle, the representation of women and men in governing structures should be 50:50. The Hungarian Constitution ensures this, stipulating that: 'The Republic of Hungary shall ensure the equality of men and women in all civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights'.

Endnotes

- 1 This case study is largely based on Gurmai, Zita and Marta Bonifert. 2005. "The Yellow Scarf Success: The impact of the Hungarian Socialist Party (HSP) Quota". In Sonja Lokar, ed. *From Quota to Parity: Social Democratic Women in Action*. Novi Sad, Serbia and Montenegro, CEE Network for Gender Issues.
- 2 Ibid., p. 13. See also Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2005. 'Women in National Parliaments,' available at <http://www.ipu.org>
- 3 Idem.
- 4 Ibid., p. 14.
- 5 Idem.
- 6 The Gender Task Force is the working body of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe and is working under the auspices of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).
- 7 Ibid., p. 15.
- 8 Idem.
- 9 Idem.
- 10 Ibid., p. 16.
- 11 Idem.
- 12 Idem.
- 13 Idem.
- 14 Ibid., p. 17.
- 15 Ibid., p. 18.

Gender Party Quotas in Poland

RENATA SIEMIENSKA

INSTITUTE OF SOCIOLOGY & SOCIAL STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF WARSAW, POLAND

The process of democratization, observed in many parts of the world, has not been accompanied by a significant rise in the number of women in senior positions in economic and political structures, especially decision-making posts.

Analyses show that the presence of women in decision-making bodies is not directly related to the level of economic or social growth, or to the development of democratic systems in individual countries.¹ Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart underline the importance of cultural factors because: (1) they make it easier to choose some careers; they impact on women's aspirations to become decision-makers; (2) they influence the level of support for women candidates, affecting the electoral behaviour of men and women; (3) they determine which political goals are to be prioritized, such as gender equality, which are considered to be socially important by various groups and organizations; and (4) they shape the beliefs and behaviour of party gatekeepers, that is, those who decide who will be on the lists of candidates, and who will be appointed to political (governmental) and economic positions.

Therefore, traditional or egalitarian views on women's participation in political and economic decision-making bodies influence both the supply-side of the equation (whether women want to run in an election and be appointed to such posts) and the demand-side (whether they attract the support of party gatekeepers and the media, as well as financial support from sponsors and actual backing (votes) from the public). However, several authors have pointed out that electoral legislation can facilitate an increase in the number of women in politics. A proportional system benefits women more than a majoritarian one.² Also, quotas, applied by political parties or established at the state level, as part of electoral law, are considered an important mechanism to bring more women into politics.

This paper analyzes Polish opinions on, and attitudes towards, quotas and the behaviour of members of society and the political elite with respect to gender inequality in politics. It also seeks to assess the effectiveness of quotas in according women and men equal access to top positions in politics. The analysis will focus on the parliamentary elections of 2001 and

the local elections of 2002, following an introduction of quotas for women. It will demonstrate that quotas are important for increasing the number of women in elected bodies. The efficiency of quotas, though, depends on the level of the elections (national or local) and on the existence of several other factors that can aid or hamper their implementation. To verify the hypotheses, the elections will be discussed separately.

The Representation of Women in Parliament

The proportion of women elected to the lower chamber of parliament in 1991, 1993 and 1997 was nine percent, 13 percent and 13 percent respectively. In the higher chamber, over the same timeframe, women held eight percent, 13 percent and 12 percent of seats. Formally speaking, the number of women has decreased compared to the communist period when the figure stood at over 20 percent (in 1985). At that time, women were considered 'tokens'—present, but with much less influence than the statistics might suggest. Usually, they did not represent the interests of women and for the most part, parliament simply 'rubber stamped' decisions made by Communist Party bodies.

The Debate on Quotas as a 'Positive Discrimination' Mechanism

The debate on women's low representation in elected bodies began in the early 1990s. At the time, feminists and other women activists rejected the idea of introducing quotas, remembering how members of parliament were selected under the communist regime (although a formal quota system was not in place in Communist Poland, women and men were picked by party decision-makers). However, some parliamentarians and members of women's non-governmental organizations (NGOs) began to work on a law to grant men and women equal status in society in Poland.³

The proposed law has been changed several times (last time in June 2005), having been systematically rejected by members of the lower or higher chambers of parliament. The opponents are from the parliamentary opposition, consisting of male and female deputies of centre-right and right-wing parties. Parliamentary members of rightist parties point out, for

instance, that there is no need for a new bill when everything to do with the issue has been incorporated into the Constitution and criminal and civilian codes. To some deputies, furthermore, the bill appears to be oriented towards feminists and hence is unacceptable. Finally, they highlight the cost of implementing the law, particularly with regard to the creation of a new office and monitoring.⁴ In the 1990s, women found it more difficult to secure placement on a candidate list (compared to men).⁵

The version of the bill submitted in 2002 included an article on the proportion of men and women in all elective bodies. It specified that, until 31 December 2003, the proportion of each sex should be at least 30 percent. Between 1 January 2004 and 31 December 2011 the proportion should be at least 40 percent. And from 1 January 2012 it should be at least 50 percent. The proportion of candidates of each sex on party lists should be 30 percent until 31 December 2003, and at least 40 percent thereafter. Names of men and women should alternate (i.e. man - woman - man or woman - man etc.) on the lists of candidates to equalise the chances of men and women to be elected, since experience shows that candidates at the top of lists have higher chances to be elected. If a body consists of less than four persons, men and women should both be represented. The parliamentarians who submitted the latest proposal of the bill stress that the bill satisfies European Union (EU) recommendations and should be introduced so as to bring Polish law into line with EU law.⁶

Implementation of Quotas by some Political Parties

Some kind of 'positive discrimination' mechanism was implemented in 2001 before the parliamentary elections, despite of the above-mentioned lack of the legislation. Pressure Discussions among women NGO activists about the low level of representation of women in elected bodies and in positions where promotion is based on appointment and, about more frequent contact between Polish parliamentarians and West European politicians, culminated in changes. Under pressure from female party members, three political parties agreed to introduce a 30 percent quota: the two coalition partners—the Alliance of Democratic Left (SLD) and the Labour Union (UP), and also the centrist Union of Freedom. But they did not agree on the order in which women and men should be placed on candidate lists (despite the demands of several women in these parties), which would have given men and women an equal chance in subsequent elections.

Following the introduction of quotas by the aforementioned parties, the number of women in the lower and higher chambers of parliament increased to 20 percent and 23 percent respectively (in the last (2001) parliamentary elections). However, only two women became members of the government: Barbara Piwnik was appointed Minister of Justice and Łybacka was appointed Minister of Education (Ministry of National Education and Sports). Actually, only one woman, Izabela Jaruga-Nowacka, is in the government (beside of the Plenipotentiary for Equal Status of Men and Women).

Summarizing, the increased presence of women was due to different events that occurred and different initiatives that were launched between the parliamentary elections of 1997 and 2001:

- **Some political parties introduced a gender quota:** The SLD–UP coalition and the centrist Freedom Union accepted the proviso that neither sex should make up less than 30 percent of all candidates, and that individual constituency lists should be approved only when they satisfy this condition. Moreover, even right-wing parties, such as the League of Polish Families (LPR), were influenced by these changes. While they officially rejected quotas, they included more women on their candidate lists than in previous elections.⁷
- **The electoral law was changed:** Poland uses a proportional representation electoral system, with open lists. In 2001 the total number of constituencies was reduced, creating larger constituencies with a greater number of seats. The reduction in the number of constituencies was the result of a new national administrative structure coming into being. This change also led (incidentally) to an increased number of women being placed on candidate lists: the more candidates there were per constituency, the greater the chance that a woman would be included on a list.⁸ Richard Matland identified this general relationship.⁹
- **Attitudes towards women in politics changed:** In 2001, 60 percent of women (compared to 50 percent in 1997) and 40 percent of men (compared to 28 percent in 1997) did not agree with the statement that 'men are better suited to politics than women'.¹⁰
- **The women's lobby became stronger:** This resulted in more pressure being placed on political parties and the wider public. Fifty organizations joined the

Table 1: Women Candidates and Deputies, Lower Chamber of Parliament (Sejm), 2001

Name of party or electoral coalition	Candidates**			Elected***			
	Number of districts in which women were on candidate lists	Women as a percentage of the total number of candidates	% of women in positions one to three on candidate lists	Total	% of total	Women	% of women
Alliance of Democratic Left (SLD)*	41	36.3	18.7	200	43.6	50	25.0
Polish Peasant Party (PSL)	41	14.6	6.5	42	9.1	0	0
Labour Union (UP)*	41	36.3	18.7	16	3.4	5	31.3
Civic Platform (PO)	41	16.8	15.4	65	14.1	13	20.0
Self Defence of the Polish Republic (SO)	39	20.3	13.0	53	11.5	9	17.0
Law and Justice (PiS)	40	17.9	12.2	44	9.6	6	13.6
League of Polish Families (LPR)	41	24.7	25	38	8.3	10	26.3
Social and Cultural Society of the German Minority in Silesia (MN)			16.7	2	0.4	-	-

Notes:

* The SLD and UP ran as part of an electoral coalition.

** Author's calculations.

*** See Inter-Parliamentary Union, "Women in National Parliaments", <http://www.ipu.org>.

Orientation of parties: SLD and UP (left); PO (centre-right); SO (populist); PiS and LPR (right); and PSL (Polish Peasant Party).

Pre-Electoral Coalition of Women—an open agreement between women's organizations and groups entered into a few months before the 2001 elections. Members emphasized the apolitical character of the coalition. Ideologically, the Pre-Electoral Coalition of Women (as well as other women's groups and feminist organizations) was located somewhere between the centre and the left. It enjoyed the support of the Women's Parliamentary Group. Women parliamentarians from all parties organized an action entitled 'Women run, women vote' to convince voters to support women candidates.

- **The electoral preferences of society changed:** In the 2001 election, the SLD–UP coalition obtained the highest number of votes (shift from right to left). This was important from the standpoint of women, since the Alliance of Democratic Left has, for a long time, been willing to take women into consideration with respect to its political plans and reforms.

The number of elected women has depended to a great extent on the number of women listed as candidates, where party gatekeepers have positioned them on the lists (those in positions one to three are known to have the best chance of election), and the attitudes of members of the general population in the different districts towards women in politics (Table 1)

In several regions, the percentage of women elected was higher than the percentage of women fielded as candidates by political parties. In regions where the (post-communist) SLD amassed more votes, more women were elected. In the 1990s, there was a significant increase in the number of women and men who voted for men and women, as opposed to voting only for men. In 2001, 46 percent of men, in comparison with 31 percent of women, voted exclusively for men. But 39 percent of men and 55 percent of women voted for men and women.¹¹

Women's representation at the local level

In the 1990s, women continued to be under-represented in local government bodies.¹² The number increased slightly from 11 percent in 1990, to 13.2 percent in 1994, to 15.7 percent in 1998. In comparison, in 1989, 22 percent of the members of local councils were women. Consequently, there was a reduction of the number of women in elective bodies at the beginning of the 1990s at both the national and local level.¹³

It is a truism to say that the number of women selected is directly related to the number of women placed on candidate lists, the places that they occupy, and the political advantages of their opposing can-

Table 2: Candidates and Women Elected in the Local Government Election of 2002

	Number of candidates	Number of women candidates	% of women among candidates	Number of councillors	Number of women councillors	% of women among councillors
Commune councils	232,753	60,151	25.84	39,978	7,233	18.09
Poviat councils	57,357	13,716	23.91	6,294	1,003	15.94
Voivodship Sejms	9,920	2,795	28.18	561	81	14.44
Commune administrators, mayors, city mayors	10,371	1,083	10.44	1,273	168	13.20

didates. Yet an examination of lists of candidates and those elected revealed that at the highest, voivodship level (16 administrative regions in Poland), there were relatively more women candidates; women were least represented in the Poviat Sejms (intermediate level) and in communes with no more than 20,000 inhabitants. The pyramid pattern emerged, however, as a result of the elections. Most women are to be found in commune councils; women are least represented in the Voivodship Sejms (see Table 2). Like before, the district councils (commune councils before the reform) in Warsaw have proved to be an exception: the number of women candidates and elected women is definitely higher (more than 30 percent).

A comparison of the lists of candidates and the lists of elected persons also underlined how important it is to hold a high position on the list. Women made up 24 percent of all candidates occupying the first and second spots on the list; the number of women in third place was slightly higher (26.2 percent). Most women occupied first position in communes with 20,000 or less inhabitants (24.8 percent). Warsaw was an exception, with as many as 29.9 percent of women candidates occupying the first position on the lists.

Over time, the behaviour of the electorate has changed. Being a male candidate in an election is less advantageous than it was in the years immediately following the political transformation. The number of men and women who vote for both women and men is increasing, and the number of voting only for men is decreasing. Changes in this regard are more significant with respect to men than to women. The number of people voting for men and women increased between 1994 and 2002 by around 20 percent (in the case of men) and by more than ten percent (in the case of women). Less than one percent of the electorate voted only for women in 2002, just like in previous local government elections.

Such shifts in electoral behaviour are consistent with a change in attitude towards the presence of

women in politics, as well as, more broadly, in public life.¹⁴ When analyzing changes in the behaviour of the electorate, we also have to remember that the 'offer' has changed as well. In earlier elections, a specific party used not to include women on its lists much more frequently. As a result, the electorate was unable to vote for women, only being able to choose between men representing parties or local committees.

The electorates of the individual parties differ visibly in this regard. In some cases the behaviour of men and women is similar (*vis-à-vis* the SLD-UP and the PiS, for example) and in others it is noticeably different (*vis-à-vis* the LPR, the PO and the local committees, for instance).

As for the LPR electorate, most men voted for women and men; many more men than women opted to do so. A significant number of women and a very small number of men only supported men during the election. Like in the previous local government election 1998, in the case of local committees, the large number of women (compared to other electorates) voted for men and women. As for the PSL electorate, like before, a significant number of men voted only for men. The number of women who voted only for men was much lower.

Social class (based on the combined level of education and income) is a better variable with which to assess the behaviour of voters than education or income (analyzed separately). This indicator shows that: (1) the higher the social class, the more often women and men vote for representatives of both genders; (2) membership of a particular social class has more of an influence on the voting behaviour of women than that of men; (3) women belonging to higher classes (A and B) vote much more often for women and men than women belonging to classes C, D and E; (4) men belonging to class A (that is, those with the highest level of education and income) are more eager than other men to support women (voting for both men and women); and (5) women and

men belonging to classes A and B differ significantly, however, with regard to the level of support that they extend to women and men during an election—men are much less willing to vote for women.

These results show that the pattern of electoral behaviour and the attitudes of voters observed during previous elections (in the 1990s) has been changing.

More Women Candidates?

Just like research carried out after the 2001 parliamentary election, analyses conducted following the local government election of 2002 revealed that, for most respondents (84 percent), the fact that some parties applied quotas (according to which women were to make up at least 30 percent of all candidates on their lists) was not important. For five percent of respondents, this was a reason to vote for a particular party; for one percent it was a reason not to vote for it.¹⁵

According to 23 percent of men and 38 percent of women, there were not enough women candidates. According to 71 percent of men and 58 percent of women, there were enough women. And according to four percent of men and one percent of women, there were too many women.

Those who said that there were not enough women were people with a university education, lower income respondents, who disagree with the opinion that ‘men are better suited to politics than women’, and those who have been in favour of Poland’s accession to the European Union.

Differences between men and women vis-à-vis the number of women candidates are similar in all age brackets (except for persons between 30 and 39 years).

In social class A, differences in opinion between women and men were shocking. This showed once again that male decision-makers are not enthusiastic supporters of increasing the number of women in politics, at the local level, or the national level.

Conclusion

Women want to enter the world of politics and they are increasingly encouraged to run, although support for them is not evenly distributed among members of Polish society. Some voters believe that women are better suited than men to solving problems in many spheres of life; in other areas, though, they do not believe that there is much of a difference. The greatest problem is still the unwillingness of parties to include women on their lists of candidates. It is worth noting that, whenever we deal with less petrified structures, that is, the local ad hoc committees and not parties,

there are more women among the candidates. Therefore, it seems quite reasonable to demand the introduction of legal regulations, without which it seems impossible to increase significantly the number of women decision-makers—as evidenced by the experiences of other countries.

The introduction of a quota-based system by the SLD–UP and the Freedom Union during the local government election of 2002 did not bring about similar results to the parliamentary election in 2001. This undoubtedly shows that, in the case of local government elections, other mechanisms play a part and that objectives are different—such an election is about solving everyday problems. There are very specific influences and very concrete forms of power which can be executed in local communities. Moreover, the women’s lobby may have had more impact at the national level than in the numerous constituencies, where its presence may have been very weak or even non-existent.

Endnotes

- 1 Inglehart, R. and Norris, P. 2003. *Rising Tide. Gender Equality and Cultural Change Around the World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- 2 See, for example, Matland, R. 1998. Enhancing Women’s Political Participation: Legislative Recruitment and Electoral Systems. W: *Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers* A. Karam, ed. Stockholm: IDEA, pp. 65-88)
- 3 Fuszara, M. and Zielinska E. 1995. Obstacles and Barriers to an Equal Status Act in Poland. In: *Women: The Past and the New Roles* Siemienska, R., ed. Warsaw: Information and Documentation Unit on the Council of Europe. Warsaw University.
- 4 Siemienska, R., ed. 2005. *Płeć – wybory – władza* (Gender – Elections – Power). Warsaw: Scholar.
- 5 Siemińska, R., 1996. *Kobiety: nowe wyzwania. Starcie przeszłości z terażniejszością*. (Women: New Challenges. Clash of the Past and the Present). Warszawa: Instytut Socjologii- Uniwersytet Warszawski; Wesołowski, W., and Mielczarek P. 1999. “Zmienność i stabilizacja warstwy politycznej: cztery Sejmy okresu transformacji”. *Studia Socjologiczne*, nr 3. pp. 37-82.
- 6 Unpublished materials of the Parliamentary Women’s Group of the Polish Parliament.

- 7 Siemieńska, R. 2000. *Nie moga, nie chca czy nie potrafią? O udziale kobiet w życiu publicznym.* (They Have No Opportunities, They Do Not Want, They Are Unable, Do They? About Attitudes and Women's Political Participation in Poland). Warszawa: Scholar.; Siemieńska, R., 2003, Women in the Polish Sejm: Political Culture and Party Politics versus Electoral Rules. In: *Women's Access to Political Power in Post-Communist Europe*, Richard E. Matland and Kathellen A. Montgomery eds. Oxford: Oxford University Press. pp. 217-244.
- 8 Siemienska, R. 2000. Nie moga, nie chca..op. cit.
- 9 Matland, R..E. and K. A. Montgomery, eds. 2003. *Women's Access to Political Power in Post-Communist Europe.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- 10 Siemienska, R. 2000 Nie moga, nie chca.. op. cit.; Siemienska, R., 2002, The Political Culture of Elites and the Public: Building Women's Political Representation in Post-communist Poland. In: T.Klonowicz, G. Wieczorkowska, ed. *Social Change. Adaptation and Resistance.* Warsaw: Warsaw University - Institute for Social Studies Press. 73-96.
- 11 Siemienska, R., 2000, op. cit.; Siemienska 2002. op. cit
- 12 Siemienska, R. 1994a. Women Managers in Poland: In Transition from Communism to Democracy. In: Nancy J. Adler and Dafna N. Izraeli, eds. *Competitive Frontiers. Women Managers in A Global Economy.* Cambridge - Oxford: Blackwell. pp. 243-262; Siemieńska, R., 1996a, "Women's Political Participation in Central and Eastern Europe: A Cross-Cultural Perspective". In: Wejnert, Barbara, Metta Spencer, Slobodan Drakulic, eds. *Women in Post-Communism.* Greenwich - London: JAI Press. Inc., 63-92; Bartkowski, J. 1996, *Lokalne elity władzy w Polsce w latach 1966-1995* (Local Elite of Authorities in Poland 1966-1995). Warsaw: Interart.; Jasińska-Kania A., 1998, "Kim są przedstawiciele lokalnych elit władzy?" (Who are representatives of local authorities?). In: Wiatr, Jerzy (ed.), 1998, *Władza lokalna w warunkach demokracji* (Local Authorities in Conditions of Democracy). Warsaw: Institute of Sociology - University of Warsaw; Scholar. 35-45.; Wiatr, J., ed., 1998. *Władza lokalna w warunkach demokracji* (Local Authorities in Conditions of Democracy). Warsaw: Institute of Sociology - University of Warsaw; Scholar.; Siemienska, R., 2000, Nie moga, nie chca... op. cit.
- 13 Siemienska, R. 2002, op. cit.
- 14 Siemienska, R. 2003. op. cit.
- 15 Siemienska, R. (red.) 2005 Płeć – wybory –władza op. cit.