WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN NORTH MACEDONIA

STUDY AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH PAPERS

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IN **NORTH MACEDONIA**

STUDY AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH PAPERS

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FOREWORD

This publication deals with the 'Political Participation of Women in North Macedonia' and thus combines an in-depth study which provides an overview of the general situation of this problem in the country with five very specific research papers, each exploring a different aspect of the political participation. The selected multi-point approach provides a comprehensive and complete insight into this very important and complex issue.

The tendency in modern democracies is to ensure that all groups in society are effectively represented and able to participate actively in policy-making and decision-making processes. The participation and inclusion of different groups should result in an appropriate presentation of their needs and attitudes. But is it really so? Do all groups, even when they constitute 50% of the population, in reality, have an equal opportunity for effective participation?

This study and the research papers included in the publication explore the participation of women in various aspects of 'political' life in North Macedonia. By observing their participation in political parties, state institutions and decision-making bodies as well as in the governing bodies of the business sector and the academia, the authors attempt to present the current state of affairs on this issue. Moreover, they go a step further and try to identify factors that contribute to the greater participation or prevent such participation of women in North Macedonia. By understanding the factors that enable positive deviators to emerge in society, the authors pave the way for numerous directions leading to increased political participation of women in the future.

The intent is to present this evidence to a variety of factors, the general public, the media, and state and non-state stakeholders. We hope that the evidence will be used by a broad community that could then present policies on how to solve the specific problem.

We likewise hope that the study will initiate a broader discussion on the topic of women's political participation in North Macedonia.

Damir Neziri,

WFD Country Representative

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STUDY: WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN NORTH MACEDONIA

INTRODUCTION

Feminist commitments to women's political participation are one of the most important areas of impact for gender equality and include equality in terms of creating conditions and ensuring women's and men's participation in policy-making and implementation processes. The starting point is the existing inequality and, hence, the need for constant awareness and continued commitment to meet all the factors affecting the promotion of women's political participation at all levels of social functioning. These factors shape social, economic, educational, health, cultural and all other aspects of living, create conditions and enable (/prevent) women's participation in political processes and policy-making. The interception of systemic factors that enable(/prevent) women's political participation implies gender mainstreaming at all levels of education and educational content, as well as additional positive measures in encouraging programs addressing these issues and affirmative action for the inclusion of women in fields where they are absent, such as the exact or natural sciences (STEM).[1] On the other hand, in addition to knowledge and awareness-raising through educational processes, strengthening women's political participation implies empowering them through experiential and direct involvement in decision-making processes at all levels - in the family, school, local community, etc.

Feminist efforts are linked to democratic principles and mechanisms of governance through equal opportunities and participation, and together they provide effective opportunities for promoting gender equality. The process of democratising society through the introduction of participatory decision-making mechanisms at all levels of governance are important to be related to gender equality commitments. Namely, the mechanisms for democratic participation alone do not allow equal participation of women and men due to the different systemic influences and factors that contribute to the unequal inclusion and participation of women in decision-making processes. Therefore, it is important to continuously educate and raise awareness of the existence of inequality, i.e. gender sensitisation, as well as building specific skills for gender mainstreaming

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1 The acronym STEM stands for a group of sciences, i.e. hard sciences or natural and exact sciences. Namely, STEM is used for: sciences, technology, engineering, mathematics.

- gender analysis, gender budgeting, etc. Further crucial to achieving greater gender equality and representation in politics is empowering women to be included in decision-making and policy-making processes.

The third starting point in the text derives from a feminist intersectional approach that identifies various aspects of social and political discrimination that affect, in addition to gender, the position of women in society. Namely, gender analysis, and in the case of women's political participation, the issues of class, race, sexual orientation, age, religion, disability, etc. are included as additional factors that broaden the scope of the exclusion. Such analysis is necessary for the attempt to identify the influencing factors that contribute to the reduced inclusion, participation or absence of women from certain social groups in decision-making and policy-making processes. Also, recognising these factors implies their inclusion in programs and policies that seek to contribute to greater equality, i.e. greater political participation of women.

Through data presentation and analytics, the following analysis monitors the processes, institutional mechanisms, systemic factors, roles of social actors, and the dynamics that enable (/prevent) enhanced political participation. We determine the image of the dynamics influencing women's political participation through sections of the analysis which relate to the history of the women's movement and the gender equality movement; educational opportunities in the fields of gender and women's studies; through the history and analysis of gender equality policies; legal and institutional mechanisms and their functioning, as well as through the lived experiences of women and gender equality activists. The analysis does not follow women's political participation only through political parties as formal political institutions, but through their involvement in decision-making and policy-making processes at all levels of social governance: education, public enterprises, local communities, local government, executive institutions and the legislature. This approach is based on pre-set commitments and a theoretical analysis that the exclusively formal political participation or representation of women will not be a sufficient condition or factor for achieving gender equality in societies. The approach we use in the analysis allows to stimulate and challenge the systemic factors that influence political participation, which are analysed as well in the text and are the basis for the recommendations arising from the analysis.

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT AND THE MOVEMENT FOR GENDER EQUALITY AND THE IMPORTANCE OF THE KNOWLEDGE IN AREAS OF GENDER AND WOMEN'S STUDIES (IN THE LAST 2 DECADES)

LINKS BETWEEN ACTIVISM AND KNOWLEDGE

The women's movement in Macedonia emerged in the late 19th century. In the period between the two world wars, the Macedonian Secret Women's Organization (MSWO) was formed, a precursor of the Macedonian movement WAF (Women's Anti-Fascist Front), the main goal of which was to improve women's education and increase their literacy rate.[2]

In recent history, the first women's NGO's were established in the period since the proclamation of independence of the Republic of Macedonia as an independent and sovereign state, mainly organised into national 'umbrella organizations' with mass membership on a territorial principle and most often ethnic identification, such were the: Organisation of the Organisations of Women of Macedonia (OOWM),[3] the Albanian Women's Association of Macedonia (AWAM), the Roma women's organization 'DAYA', multiethnic networks uniting a number of individual organisations, such as the Federation of Women's Organisations of the Republic of Macedonia (FWOM)[4]; as well as organisations that were set up independently of these structures with a program focus on the human rights of women and gender equality. Despite the lack of strategic awareness and explicit ideological legitimization of programmatic action and strategies applied as feminist by most organisations, much of their activities in this period did not differ from those of organisations in the Western Balkans and in the world, which self- identified as feminist.[5] A significant part of the project activities of these organisations was aimed at informing and educating the membership about women's human rights in different areas of discrimination and taking pioneering steps in public advocacy to introduce legal solutions, policies and mechanisms to advance the status and position of women.

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2 Ayten Alkan et al. "The Problems with the Interdisciplinary Character of Female/Gender Studies: Examples with the Czech Republic, Macedonia and Turkey," Journal of Politics, Gender and Culture: Identities. (Skopje: Research Center for Gender Studies, 2007), p. 21-22.

3 This organization has ceased to exist and is important because it was proposed to be the successor of the National Assembly and was the largest by 2011 when their activities gradually ceased. This organization is not currently active.

4 Renamed to National Council on Gender Equality FWOM, available at: http://www.sozm.org.mk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1&Itemid=5&lang=en, accessed 12.03.2019.

5 Zarko Trajanovski, "The Ideology of Women's Organizations in Macedonia: A Feminist Perspective". Ed. Katerina Kolozova, Research in Gender Studies: Proceedings, Skopje: Research Center for Gender Studies, 2002.T.1.

Summarising the results of women's organised action on gender equality policies, it can be concluded that the biggest breakthrough occurred in the first decade of the 21st century. It is a time of enthusiasm, multitude and variety of women's sector activities with access to resources and specialised multi-year programs for empowerment and leadership from the donor community, such as the Open Society Institute Foundation - Macedonia Women's Program, the Swedish Foundation 'Kvinna Till Kvinna', the Delphi International's 'STAR Project', the regional program for political empowerment 'Women Can Do It', supported by various sources. In addition to other developmental assistance directed specifically towards the organisations, the programs in question greatly enabled a more focused action of the women's non-governmental sector, as well as its connection to regional and international women's movements. They have also contributed to maintaining active communication with women from the communities, as well as collaborating with women from politics, institutions and the academic community that provided the theoretical knowledge transfer, and produced the first gender studies research.[6]

The key achievements of women's activism from that period were the first legally regulated special measures, namely, the introduction of the mandatory 30% representation of both sexes in the electoral lists in the Law on Election of Members of Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia[7]. They tripled the turnout in the parliamentary elections from 6.7% in 2000 to 18% in 2002, when an Albanian woman was elected MP. The continued efforts and joint action of women activists and political parties yielded further changes and improvements to the electoral legislation. In 2006, they enabled better positioning of women on the electoral lists, resulting in a 28.33% increase in representation.[8] In 2004, the long years of advocacy activities led by ESE resulted in the regulation of the problem of domestic violence in both civil and penal legislation. This ensured compliance with international standards and recommendations in this area, requiring the introduction of comprehensive legal solutions, i.e. incriminating domestic violence and introducing temporary measures to protect victims.[9] The Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men was adopted in 2006,[10] formalising for the first time the requirements for legal regulation in the field of gender equality. The law establishes the obligation to take measures and policies and establish institutional mechanisms to promote equality between women and men in the legislative, executive and local governments.

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6 Katerina Kolozova (ed.), Research in Gender Studies: Proceedings, Skopje: Research Center for Gender Studies 2002.T.1.

7 Law on Election of Members of Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia, Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, no. 42/02 of 14.06.2002 (revoked).

8 "Electoral Code", Official Gazette of RM, 40/06.

9 "Family Law", Official gazette no. 38/04, 83/04 and 33 and the "Criminal Code of the Republic of Macedonia", Official gazette no. 19/04.

10 "Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men", Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia No. 66/2006, June 6, 2006 (revoked).

FEMINISM AND GENDER STUDIES IN THE MACEDONIAN ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS: ACTIVIST AND PARACADEMIC BATTLE FOR ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONALISM

The beginnings of feminist theory in the Republic of North Macedonia began with the establishment of the Research Center for Gender Studies (RCGS) set up within the Euro-Balkan Institute in 1999 on the initiative of the Women's Program of the Open Society Institute Foundation - Macedonia, which mission was to disseminate academic and scientific knowledge in the field and linking theory - i.e knowledge - with activism. One of the Center's first projects was the international conference on the institutionalization of gender studies organised together with the Faculty of Philosophy in December 1999. There followed an international summer seminar on gender theory for young scientists from Central and Eastern Europe led by Prof. Judith Butler, organized in Ohrid in 2000. In 2001, the same centre started publishing the international magazine on politics, gender and culture 'Identities', which included authors such as Slavoj Žižek, Judith Butler, Anne Fausto-Sterling, Drucilla Cornell, Ray Brassier, François LaRue Immanuel Wallerstein, Jacques Rancière, Svetlana Slapshak and many more. The magazine exists today and is part of the Central and Eastern European Online Library (CEEOL), as well as many other databases. Earlier, in the late 1990s, the first gender issues were introduced, such as 'Feminist Literary Theory' and 'Gender and Culture'.[11] It is important to note that at the initiative of the Center, the South-East European Gender and Women's Studies Network was established in 2004 with headquarters in Skopje (RCGS Euro-Balkans) and in Belgrade (Centre for Women's Studies at the Faculty of Political Science). After 2011, the Network's activities cease, which coincides with the completion or decline of initiatives at both local, regional and international levels - 'gender mainstreaming', in our opinion, is the cause of the reduced number of visible or existing activities.

We explain this decline as follows: public policies and donor strategies rely on the illusion that if gender is included in the mainstream of policy management and policy-making, it is automatically enhanced, although over time, data on the gender pay gap, feminisation of poverty, women victims of domestic violence and sexual harassment reveal that special attention and focused strategy are needed. In other words, the decline in activities that coincide with the decline or stagnation of the situation on the ground indicates that apart from mainstreaming, separate and closely targeted initiatives are still needed.

RCGS analyses have shown that the country's communist and socialist past has in fact contributed to greater nominal equality between men and women (in terms of formal rights). However, the focus on nominal legal rights has contributed to anticipating the fact that gender asymmetries exist on a symbolic and cultural level and, primarily - in the private sphere, as in any patriarchal society. RCGS's collaboration with Women's Lobby and women's NGOs has enabled their gradual acceptance of the

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11 Ayten Alkan et al. "The Problems with the Interdisciplinary Character of Gender/Gender Studies: Examples with the Czech Republic, Macedonia and Turkey, Journal of Politics, Gender and Culture: Identities (Skopje: Gender Studies Center, 2007), p. 30.

concepts of feminism and gender sensitivity (rather than neutrality) in policy-making. In addition to RCGS, other gender-related centres and education centres also participated in this process, including the South-East European University of Tetovo, which for several years, at the end of the first decade of the 21st century, organized summer schools for female members. political parties, as well as men interested in creating gender-sensitive policies.

INSTITUTIONALISATION OF GENDER AND WOMEN'S STUDIES

The introduction of gender studies began in the early 21st century. In the beginning, an informal School for Gender and Policy was introduced in 2002 through the Research Centre for Gender Studies within the Euro-Balcans Institute at the Euro-Balkan Institute. From 2002 to 2006, the school offered about ten interdisciplinary gender studies courses to about 60 students.

The efforts of individuals and institutions from the non-governmental sector, scientific and higher education institutions, by raising awareness and knowledge dissemination on gender rights and the importance of equality between men and women, have necessitated the production of staff who would work on this issue. In 2006, the Law on Equal Opportunities for Men and Women was adopted for the first time[12] further realising the need for educated staff to deal with gender equality and women's rights.

In 2006, the Euro-Balkans became a private scientific institute for social sciences and research and together with the University of Skopje established the Centre for Support and Development of Gender Studies in Higher Education.[13] The informal School of Gender and Politics was an indication of the need to introduce gender studies in higher education. Almost simultaneously, in 2007, the first undergraduate gender studies at the UKIM's Faculty of Philosophy and the interdisciplinary postgraduate studies in Gender and Sociology and Gender and Philosophy of the Department of Gender Studies were accredited at the Euro-Balkan Institute, as was the former Research Centre for Gender Studies renamed. In 2012, the interdisciplinary postgraduate Gender Studies Program at the Institute of Social Sciences and Humanities - Skopje was accredited.

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12 "Law on Equal Opportunities for Men and Women", Official Gazette of RM no. 66/06 dated 29.05.2006, available at: http://www.mtsp.gov.mk/WBStorage/Files/ZEM.pdf, accessed 19.03.2019.

13 Ibid. 45.

GRADUATE DECLINE OF ACTIVISM AND THEORY IN THE LAST DECADE

At the beginning of the second decade of the third millennium, women's rights in Macedonia decline. This period is characterised by a significant decrease in the number of active women's organisations, especially local ones, as a result of the breakdown of the large umbrella organisations, as well as a significant decrease in the activities of the organisations in certain areas.[14] A whole range of new legal solutions, strategies and action plans were adopted during this period, implemented within the framework of projects of international organisations developed and implemented with developmental financial aid, which certainly did not reflect the original intention of the then government for promoting gender equality.[15] The relevant women's organisations had virtually no impact on the needs' and priorities' analysis as well as on the design of the projects, although some of them were occasionally involved in their implementation. A draft law amending the Law on Termination of Pregnancy was submitted in 2013, which was more restrictive in terms of women's right to freedom of choice.[16] This draft law activated women's organisations, which strongly opposed certain articles and demanded their amendment. The ensuing protests and outreach activities by the said organisations were also significant due to the narrowed scope for mobilisation and public action of the civil society over labelling with party-opposition affiliations, which became a very effective way of ruling at the time to delegitimise and minimise their impact on the public. Attempts by some women's organisations to inform and mobilise broader support among the wider population of women as most affected by the legislative proposal remained limited due to fears of stigmatisation of any challenge to the discriminatory policies and the promotion of retrograde women's roles as partisan agenda.[17] The law put to the test the cooperation and the dialogue between the women activists and the women PMs, especially those belonging to the majority which not only accepted the arguments of the potential damage on women and gender equality but also publically supported the draft law. Simultaneously, this period marks a noticeable 'downtime' of the Women's Parliamentary Club, indicating an absence of the pre-established supra-partisan cooperation and parliamentary dialogue. This informal body, consisting of all women Members of Parliament, independent of the caucus, formed with the idea of coordinating the performance of an already significant number of female

14 Internal analyzes conducted in 2011 by Akcija Zdruzhenska on the program focus and financial and organisational capacities identified some 50 national and local organisations that were still active in the field of women's rights and gender equality at that time and identified the major challenges as: lack of funding to withdraw the donor community and lack of targeted assistance women's projects, the inability to plan long-term in the areas of interest, the limited human resources typically put in place to implement the activities of large organisations with access to EU funds.

15 "Shadow Report to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women," Association for Emancipation, Solidarity and Equality of Women - ESE and Association for the Promotion of Gender Equality (Skopje: Akcija Zdruzenska, 2012).

16 "Law on Termination of Pregnancy", Official Gazette of RM, no. 87 of 17.6.2013, available at: http://zdravstvo.gov.mk/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/1-ZAKON-ZA-PREKINUVAN-E-NA-BREMENOSTA-87.13.pdf, accessed 19.03.2019

17 "I am not falling for it" campaign by Akcija Zdruzenska (website of the organization), available at: http://zdruzenska.org.mk/%D0%BD%D0%B5-%D0%BD%D0%B0%D1%81%D0%B5%D0%B4 %D0%BD%D1%83%D0%B2%D0%B0%D0%BC/, Accessed 09. 04. 2019.

parliamentarians, has played a significant role in organising events and raising initiatives with civic associations in promoting women's inclusion in decision-making processes. However, amid fierce inter-party confrontations and the absence of parliamentary dialogue at the time, this group failed to overcome differences and, using the support of women activists, oppose the blatant convolution of women's rights and a range of legal solutions and policies that undermined the benefits already gained. Since 2018, there has been increased activity of the MPs Club which defined the areas and issues and corresponding activities in its strategic three-year plan, inter alia, to amend legislature ensuring parity representation of women at all levels of government.[18]

At the same time, with the amendment of the Law on Termination of Pregnancy, the Government of the (then) Republic of Macedonia campaigned for a large family, and during this period put on hold gender studies organised by the Faculty of Philosophy at the Ss. 'Cyril and Methodius' University in Skopje. Also, a new first-cycle study program was introduced at that time - a family study program which was a conservative response to what gender studies represented. In 2017, after a 5-year break and with a change of government, the Government of the Republic of Macedonia decided to reactivate gender studies at the Faculty of Philosophy at the Ss. 'Cyril and Methodius' University in Skopje.[19]

CURRENT SITUATION OF WOMEN'S ACCESS TO POSITIONS AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The development of electoral legislation by introducing a 40% representation, in combination with the 'sandwich system', i.e., the positioning of the under-represented sex at third place on every candidates' list, as well as the mandatory replacement of women elected with female candidates, significantly increased women's access to selected positions. However, this process going parallel to a continued and prolonged pressure of women activists, with the collaborative support of women from political parties with the aim to establish firm rules for the party leadership for female representatives' elections. These rules were posed as a necessity because of the parties' formal approach to quotas,

18 WMPs Club, Assembly of the RNM, available at https://sobranie.mk/klub-na-pratenicki.nspx accessed 24.04.2019

19 "MES: Gender studies will be activated and UKIM faculties will not have dispersed studies this year", available at: http://www.radiomof.mk/mon-kje-se-aktiviraat-rodovite-studii-a-fakultetite-pri-ukim-godinava-kje-nemaat-disperzirani-studii/?fbclid=IwAR2ZmafHpessTEfRlIqyWxdk48NadDM8P5BbF4vF3BCByG0LzwatGMkkeMs, accessed 19.03.2019

namely, positioning women at the bottom of candidate lists or in higher places in lower-ranking constituencies where they have poor electoral chances. Initially regarded as too radical, not only by party leaders but also by female political party groups and by parliamentarians, they were incorporated by the legislation and listed RNM in the most progressive countries in terms of women's political participation.[20]

In the current composition of the Assembly of the RNM, 45 of 120 MPs (38.3%) are women, while their representation in the local councils after the 2017 elections is 415 women councillors out of a total of 1,388 elected councillors in the local units of self-government (29.8%). This is significant progress from 8.4% in 2000 before the legislative changes were introduced. However, this progress is on the threshold of achieving the legal minimum.

To what extent are these positive developments a result of the current readiness of the party leadership to share power? The data on the trends in the representation of women for positions without mandatory quotas speaks volumes. The number of mayors varies from 2.4% in 2005 to 0% in 2009, to a current 'record' representation of 7.4% after the 2017 local elections.

Progress has been slow both at the participatory and at the executive level, as RNM has not yet had a woman in the prime ministerial position. The participation of women, as one of the strategic priorities in the Government Program 2017-2021, does not reflect the current total representation of only 19 women (11.18%) in the appointed functions and decision-making, management and governance bodies of the current government. Namely, except for the 4 ministerial positions held by women (15.38%) and 1 woman (6.67%) in the deputy ministerial post, the gap is highly negatively inclined towards the female gender. Thus, there are 4 women (25%) in the positions of secretaries-general and state secretaries, while among the directors, deputies, spokespersons and coordinators appointed by the government, the representation of women is only 8.85%, i.e. 10 women.[21]

Research data show that there is inequality in women's involvement in decision-making processes, such as committees and boards at the national and local level. Namely, only 5% of the directors of the institutions are women and 29% of the governing structures are women, which is contrary to the policies for promoting gender equality.[22] Despite the statutory requirements, the participation of both genders in committees

20 Elena NACEVSKA, Sonja LOKAR, "The effectiveness of gender quotas in Macedonia, Serbia and Croatia, THEORY IN PRACTISE let. 54, 2/2017 available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/317224845_The_effectiveness_of_gender_quotas_in_Macedonia_Serbia_and_Croatia Accessed 06.05.2019.

21 Answer no. 49-8855 / 2 Submitted by the General Secretariat of the Government of the RNM on 18.10 2018 on request for access to public information from the Association for Promotion of Gender Equality, Action Zdruzhenska Skopje.

22 Misha Popovic and Marko Pankovski, "Who Governs out there?" Institute for Democracy "Societas Civilis" - Skopje, 2019, available at: https://idscs.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/WEB_A5_MKD_КОЈ_ТОА_ТАМУ_УПРАВУВА.pdf, Accessed: 05.03.2019

and boards in decision-making bodies and at the national and local level should not be less than 40%, but the factual situation shows that women do not participate sufficiently in the work of the boards and that the legislation is not being complied with.

The political parties that play a key role in promoting women's political participation, especially in their own ranks, have no practice of publishing data on their websites pertaining to women's inclusion in their membership and bodies. Producing such analyses shows additionally difficult given the diverse internal structure of the parties. Female structures have been established in almost all political parties such as unions, women's forums, women's clubs, etc., but information on their activities and effects is not available on party websites. What is known is that the top positions are reserved for men, given that there is only one female party leader in the current parliamentary composition. Available data from previously conducted analyses of the three largest political parties in the RNM show a low representation of women in the executive committees, i.e. boards, between 13% (in DPMNE) and 25% (in SDSM), while only between 3% (DUI) and 7% (SDSM) of the chairmen of local committees, i.e. boards, are women.[23]

It would be interesting to analyse the governance structure of civil society organisations, especially those operating in politically prioritised areas and managing significant resources which enables them significant political influence. Unfortunately, such data is missing from the available analyses of the various aspects of civil society organisations' activities.

The absence of women is particularly noticeable in the local self-government, neglected, but extremely important as the potential for formal activation and practice of public/political participation of women, especially in rural areas. In the absence of more comprehensive publicly available analyses of the specific number of urban/rural communities and the gender structure, there are indicative data from the 2009 MLSP survey showing that out of the 68 municipalities that responded, only 13 women were elected presidents of the urban/rural local communities. The latest data on the structure of the disadvantage, indicating the current minimal representation of female presidents, especially in rural local communities. Data from 6 municipalities (Kumanovo, Strumica, Bitola, Sveti Nikole, Radovish and Tetovo for the 2018-2022 mandate) show that out of 230 presidents of urban and rural local communities, only 9 are women, 6 of which are from urban communities and 3 from rural communities. The current government's electoral promise was to restore the status of legal entities to the local self-government units, as a condition of overcoming their marginalisation and dysfunction. However, the status of implementation remains unknown to the general public.

Data on women's participation in local planning and decision-making processes are also disadvantageous. The latest local citizenship survey

23 N. Korunovska et al. ("Women in Politics: The Path to Political Functions and Influence at the Local Level in Macedonia", Reactor - Research in Action, Skopje 2015. Available at: http://rodovre-actor.mk/media/publications/Жените_во_политиката__MK.pdf, Accessed: 25.04.2019

shows that 77.6% of women surveyed have never been involved in decision-making processes.[24]

This survey confirms the data on the state of women's participation collected in the framework of Akacija Zdruzenska's programs to encourage women's participation in the local program, budget planning and decision-making processes. Thus, a survey of 900 women from 11 municipalities during the Akcija Zdruzenska street campaigns conducted during 2016 and 2017 indicates that the majority of women surveyed were never involved in any consultations, had no information, nor were they interested to know about the size of the municipal budgets and the budget spending rationalisation, and only 1 woman was familiar with the size of the municipal budget.

INSTITUTIONAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR POLITICAL/PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

FORMAL STRUCTURES AND RULES

Specific legal and political documents for the enhancement of gender equality, except for the electoral, allow for the affirmation of women's participation in institutions at all levels of the legislative, executive, local and judicial branches, including political parties. Crucial in this regard is the Law on Equal Opportunities for Men and Women,[25] which defines the equitable representation of a particular sex not less than its proportional representation in the total population. Simultaneously, it provides for the introduction of special interim measures for the Assembly in the selection and determination of the composition of working bodies and delegations; the Government, which is obliged to provide for equal participation in all bodies and delegations and to regularly publish data on the representation of men and women, the political parties which in the acts should regulate the manner and measures to promote equal participation in organs and bodies; the mass media in promoting equal participation in an inoffensive, humiliating or demeaning manner. The Law also affirms the participation and cooperation of civil society institutions with different structures in

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24 Sunchica Sazdovska "Citizen Participation" Macedonian Center for International Cooperation (MCIC) Telma TV (2018) available on: http://www.mcms.mk/images/docs/2018/gragjansko-uchest-vo-izveshtaj.pdf Accessed 24.04.2019

25 "Law on Equal Opportunities for Men and Women" (consolidated text) Official Gazette of RM no. 201 of 16.11.2015.

the creation of measures and policies for equal opportunities. The Law also regulates the obligation for institutions to establish specialised organisational structures which main function is to provide internal initiative and coordination for the achievement of the objectives of the Law in the institutions in which they are established. The Committee on Equal Opportunities for Men and Women, as a permanent working body in the Assembly[26] The Committee on Equal Opportunities for Men and Women has an important role in promoting gender equality in political dialogue, initiating and improving legislative proposals and policies, including those related to public finances, as well as in overseeing their implementation. The Committees on Equal Opportunity for Men and Women, as permanent working bodies in the councils of the local self-government units have had a similar role. At the Government level, this structure comprises the MLSP, as the line ministry for development, coordination, monitoring and reporting on the implementation of laws and policies to promote gender equality. An inter-sectoral advisory group has also been set up, where representatives are appointed by government decision and are coming from state administration bodies, civil associations, trade unions, employers' associations and individual experts. Each state administration body is obliged to appoint coordinators and deputies for equal opportunities for women and men, which is also the responsibility of the units of local self-government. The Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services also plays an important role in the control and oversight of the media through the preparation and publication of annual analyses.

The education system is also recognised as one of the key structures in women's and men's readiness for active and equal participation in all areas of social life. Modifications to education and vocational training programs, innovative methods, including the elimination of prejudices and stereotypes, are particularly highlighted as measures to achieve the purpose of the Law. Simultaneously, the institutions in charge of education and the educational institutions have a legal obligation to regularly analyse the curricula, programs and textbooks in terms of promoting equal opportunities for women and men.

Promoting gender equality in decision-making processes is one of the priority thematic areas of the Strategy for Gender Equality 2007-2020, while the implementation of the National Plan for Gender Equality Action 2018-2020 is expected to include a quota in the legislation of 50% representation of men and women in election administration bodies and decision-making processes at the national and local level by 2020.

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26 Committee on Equal Opportunities for Men and Women, Assembly of the RNM, available at: https://sobranie.mk/rabotni-tela-2016-2020-ns_article-komisija-za-ednakvi-moznosti-na-zenite-i-mazite-16.nspx, Accessed 23.04.2019

THE UNREALISED AMBITIONS OF THE GENDER EQUALITY POLICY IN RNM

Data on the situation of women's participation indicate the limitations of approaches focused on the parity representation of women in politically elected positions, without taking into account the need to provide a favourable environment for their effective contribution to the development and implementation of policies that promote equality. Multiple (non-) representation is more a symptom than an essential feature of gender asymmetry in the distribution of social power, which has deeper roots in culture and social strategies. Namely, they should be complemented by approaches that, instead of accommodating women in existing patriarchal structures, have the potential to change them.

In this regard, it is also important to consider the implementation of the adopted laws and policies for the promotion of gender equality, especially given the mainstreaming of the issue of gender equality, adopted as a strategic approach to the current institutional framework, which was deeply influenced by the EU accession process. Namely, the process of alignment with the Union's gender equality standards has largely shaped the conceptualisation, domains, approaches and measures addressing gender equality in RNM. The experiences from applying a gender mainstreaming approach within the Union show its implementation consequences as an aimless strategy, i.e. a profoundly self-oriented and bureaucratic strategy, rather than an exercise of high policy which requires progressive political leadership, resources and parity democracy. The gender mainstreaming approach is conceived as a transformative tool which would radically change the processes of planning, implementing and measuring the effects and impacts of policies in the pursuit of political, social or economic goals, while delivering gender benefits and changing power relations which is the central problem of gender inequality. Neglecting the need for joint action by decision-makers, administration, academia and civil society, this strategy was largely used to weaken the role of specialised expert structures and the development of focused, active policies for identifying the most obvious challenges in achieving women's rights and their unequal social status evident in the gender gaps in almost all areas. The 'depoliticisation' of gender equality policies has also resulted in reduced resources for empowerment and targeted initiatives; integrating the issue into general anti-discrimination policies, reducing institutional capacity and neglecting the issue as irrelevant to the important reform processes and political priorities stemming from the 2008 economic crisis. With the rise of liberal movements and hostile strategies towards women, the correlation between collective actions of feminist movements with institutional mechanisms is seen as an opportunity to exploit the transformative potential of gender mainstreaming.[27]

As far as the RNM context is concerned, Akcija Zdruzenska's analysis of the implementation of gender equality policies shows disastrous

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27 Agnes Hubert, Maria Stragiraki Twenty years of EU gender Maistreaming: Rebirth out of the Ashes, Femina Politica 2/2016.

results.[28] One of the reasons is the absence of debate among all relevant stakeholders focusing on the broader picture of gender equality policy, as well as the definition of a conceptual framework reflecting the unique notion of gender equality and long-term priorities, guidelines and instruments, including structural assumptions, rather than specific topics and issues. A key issue in the design and implementation of gender equality policies is the issue of institutional considerations. In formulating and implementing gender equality policies, fully or partially, there is no prior analysis of the situation; assessment of implementation capacities, including organisational aspects relating to the powers, positioning and expertise of the gender equality machinery, as well as to each individual part of the institutional structure; or transparency and accountability system. The situation is further exacerbated by the marginalisation of the civil sector and the academic community, which are the main source of expertise in the field of gender equality.

The reluctance of political and institutional actors to adopt gender equality as a value is also demonstrated by reports on the implementation of specific legislation and strategic documents. The Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men is not implemented even at the level of the technical assumptions. Even 5 years after the adoption of the Law, 6 state administration bodies and 35 local self-government units failed to meet the obligation to submit annual reports to the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy in 2017. Also, from the review of the 2017 annual reports submitted by state administration bodies and local self-government units, the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy concludes that there is still no systematised position of coordinator for equal opportunities for women and men.

There is also a lack of analysis of the effects of the implementation of the Strategy for Gender Equality 2017-2020. The annual reports on the implementation of the four-year action plans represent a set of activities that do not follow even the basic procedural indicators, and it is unclear whether and how they contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the Strategy. Particularly, for the most part, the report provides an overview of activities carried out with projects and funds of civil and international organisations, indicating that the state as the bearer of the document does barely participate by investing budgetary allocations and institutional capacities to implement the Strategy. Annual reports on the implementation of the Strategy do not serve to develop guidelines for the next planning cycle due to the continued practice to delay their preparation and adoption and in a period not in line with current Government priority planning processes for the coming year. To illustrate, the Government of RNM in January 2019 adopted the Annual Report on the Implementation of the Gender Equality Strategy for 2017.

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28 For more information on publications, analysis, and monitoring reports on law enforcement and equal opportunities promotion from 2005 to 2018, available at http://zdruzenska.org.mk/publikacii/ Accessed 08.05.2019

Here we would mention the role of the Assembly, which, subject to the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, adopts the Strategy and monitors its implementation in sectoral policies and programs through cooperation with social partners, NGOs and other public institutions. The trend of activating the Women's Club in the Assembly and with the remarkable openness and the readiness for cooperation of the Commission for equal opportunities and its acceptance of civil society initiatives can contribute to enhancing the political debate and the oversight role of the Assembly through exchange and increased impact on the efficiency and effectiveness in executive action. A positive step forward in this regard is the adoption of Akcija Zdruzenska's proposals by the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, including those for initiating amendments to the Rules of Procedures which would ensure holding of mandatory annual oversight hearings; introducing a mechanism for reviewing shadow reports before and during the reporting process of progress made in meeting the strategic goals of gender equality; strengthening the commitment to the quota of 50% women in the parliamentary and local elections, introduction of a quota for mayors, participation in the executive branch, and local self-government.[29]

Our review of decades of promoted gender-mainstreaming policies (including gender in the political mainstream) shows that without the active involvement of women's rights organisations, relying solely on bureaucratised documents as national strategies and general recommendations based on CEDAW reports, has resulted in uninventiveness and inertia in terms of advocating for gender-sensitive policies. In addition to the representation quota, which has been a priority inherited since the late 1990s, for years, primarily due to the fact that this has been a UNDP (UN Women) priority focus for almost a decade, the focus has been on gender-responsive budgeting. CEDAW's next recommendation was to regularly monitor the gender representation in the media, resulting in regular annual analyses with negative conclusions and recommendations for affirmative action which were, as a rule, ignored. The same can be said of the time and energy invested in gender-responsive budgeting, without concrete favourable results for the economic status of women in society.

Initiatives related to the introduction of gender-responsive budgeting into institutional action, including the LSGUs, are being implemented within the projects and with the financial support of international organisations. The first gender-responsive budgeting initiative was implemented in Australia by the women's policy machinery, which included many feminists well-versed in gender equality issues. Continuous dialogue, exchange of knowledge and experience and cooperation with stakeholders outside the institutionalisation process are crucial for achieving the main objective of gender-responsible budgeting policy, reducing inequality through a coordinated and transparent gender-responsive budgeting

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29 Conclusions of the Ninth Session of the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men of the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia, 04.02.2019. Available at https://sobranie. mk/2016-2020-srm-ns_article-javna-rasprava-na-komisijata-za-ednakvi-moznosti-na-zenite-i-mazite-5-2-19.nspx?fbclid=IwAR0wlwZ42ChGDprYaCVaPvwcn2B8Njbpz4_pWiM3xevlRusM-jyrdnnaeW4

process. Worldwide experiences show that gender-responsive budgeting initiatives are most influential in situations where there is coexistence between external civil society organisations and institutional actors within the government, i.e., in cases of close co-operation through the exchange of expertise and experiences between these two sets of stakeholders.[30]

The analysis of gender equality treatment by newly formed local authorities after the 2017 elections also shows disappointing results. Data from the 2017-2019 annual programs and budgets indicate reduced transparency, marginalisation and low levels of attention paid to gender equality issues and women's priorities by newly elected local governments, inefficiencies of gender equality mechanisms and equal opportunities for women and men. The practice of decision-making without wider consultation with citizens, especially women, continues, and the accomplished activities are largely due to the initiatives of civil and international organisations.[31]

Global analyses suggest that even the most emancipatory legal norms are insufficient, i.e. can be regarded as meaningful only if they are being implemented and result in a change in perspective and lives of women. The solutions incorporated in the gender equality policies and the development assistance programs cannot produce effects without analysis of the context and reasons for inequality, including the political and public participation sphere. Additionally, empowering women, as one of the approaches, is a complex process that requires structural, institutional, as well as social changes that cannot be achieved with quick and simple solutions.[32]

30 Sheila Quinn, Maria Savovska, Gender Responsive Budgeting: Tools for CSOs, UN Women, October 2013.

31 Data from program documentation of the Association for Promotion of Gender Equality, Akcija Zdruzenska Skopje.

32 "Introduction: Connecting Perspectives on Women's Empowerment", editors Deepta Chopra and Catherine Müller, Transforming development knowledge, IDS Bulletin, Volume 46, Number 1A, March 2016.

ANALYSIS OF THE POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL FACTORS AFFECTING THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN THE PUBLIC LIFE AND POLITICAL DECISION-MAKING

SOCIO-CULTURAL PRECONDITIONS FOR LOW PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN PUBLIC LIFE AND POLITICAL DECISION-MAKING

Despite having sufficient reasons, based on empirical data[33], to believe that Northern Macedonia is a patriarchal culture, the answer to the question of how patriarchal prejudice are a limiting precondition for women's participation in public life and on the political scene is not so simple. More precisely, it counters the initial intuition and is complex. Patriarchal values are transmitted through all forms of traditional culture, religion and practices that support and reinforce established and stereotypical roles of men and women. According to patriarchal values and traditions, the place and role of women are mainly positioned in the home[34], i.e., in the sphere of privacy and family rearing, while the place and role of the man are in the other social, economic and political spheres, i.e., restricted to the public domain. Data from the State Statistical Office show the traditional division of labour between the sexes, according to which men spend most of their time on paid work, while domestic activities occupy most of the time of women. Employed women participate with 14% in domestic activities, in comparison with employed men who participate with only 5%. Preparing food for women accounts for 37% of their domestic activities, while only 12% of men's. Also, dishwashing accounts for 16% of domestic activities for women, while only 2% of men's. In addition to the traditionalism of society, North Macedonia has a decades-long history of socialist society and two to three living generations as direct heirs to the values of the Yugoslav socialist order. Namely, the nominal full gender equality propagated by socialism, although partially implemented in reality, nevertheless creates a certain horizon of social acceptability for an employed woman combined with the roles of mother and wife, politician, a woman who has the right reach for any degree of political power. However, there is a gap between the social norm, the legal norm and the practical reality, which we will try to explain here.

A research conducted by the Institute of Social Sciences and Humanities - Skopje in the Polog region in 2015 confirms the social differences between men and women, showing much higher participation and commitment of women in the home, thereby indicating the existence of systemic factors that create unequal conditions and opportunities for the inclusion of women in decision-making processes. For example, in the family, women rate their freedom to manage the home budget with an

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33 "Time Use Survey, 2014/2015", State Statistical Office 2015, available at http://www.stat.gov.mk/Publikacii/2.4.15.20.pdf, Accessed 05.03.2019

34 Ibid.13

average rating of 3.5 on a scale of 1 to 5. Although the largest percentage of respondents said that decisions at home are made by men and women together (62%), one-third, or 33.2%, responded that men make decisions in the family, and only 4% responded that decisions were made by women. Regarding the daily housework (cooking, ironing, cleaning), 84% of the respondents said that these responsibilities belong to the woman, 15% that the spouses share the same, and no answer that these duties are performed predominantly by man. Also, childcare is largely left to mothers with 64%, grandmothers with 8.5%, to both parents with 25.8%, and to fathers with 0.8%.[35] Further confirmation of the division of roles and domains of participation is research data showing that 70% never follow politics, as opposed to more than half of the men.[36]

Given that social norms are relatively favourable in terms of women's participation in public life and politics, however, the assessment of the impact of women's non-governmental organizations on gender equality has been reduced, as the ISSHS-Skopje survey shows,[37] that is, increased participation of women in public life and in decision-making positions is considered socially acceptable,[38] It is necessary to closely examine and investigate the situation in two categories of issues inaccessible to the analysis of nominal norms. Those categories of issues are related to the private sphere - patriarchalism at home - which reduces the woman to her role of mother, sister and daughter, and is internalised by women themselves, women's self-marginalisation and individual insecurity to take on a role in public life, which again stems from the inherited patriarchal culture. The latter requires a predominantly psychological analysis, but also the same means of dealing with the problem (public speaking skills workshops, psychological workshops for dealing with fear of public speaking, etc.). Of course, the approach needs to be multidisciplinary and applied knowledge of communications and policy studies is also necessary: problem formulation and solution in public policy terms, devising problem-solving strategies and methodologies, etc.

When considering patriarchalism in the private sphere, we should be reminded that in Macedonia it often manifests in the form of physical violence, and more often in the form of psychological violence. Studies on the prevention of violence indicate that the most dominant form of violence against women is the psychological violence, followed by physical and in third place, according to the reported cases - the sexual violence, i.e. 64.80% of the victims reported psychological violence.

35 "The State of Equality in Decision-Making and Promotion of Gender Equality in the Polog Region", Association for Gender Equality Promotion Akcija Zdruzenska, 2015, Accessed 3.05.2019, available at: http://zdruzenska.org.mk/wp-content/uploads /2015/11/Izvestaj-Sostojba-so-ednakv-osta-vo-odlucuvanjeto-Poloski-region-FINAL.pdf

36 N. Korunovska et al. ("Women in Politics: The Road to Political Functions and Influence at Local Level in Macedonia", Reactor - Research in Action, Skopje 2015. Available at: http://rodovreactor.mk/media/publications/Жените_во_политиката__MK.pdf, Accessed: 25.04.2019

37 According to research conducted by the Institute of Social and Human Sciences - Skopje in 2015, citizens' assessment of the contribution of CSOs to increasing gender equality was 3.53, the following year this rating was reduced to 3.06, for 2017 average grade of 2.88.

38 According to the current composition of the Assembly, 37.5% of the deputies are women, while in the previous composition this percentage was 31.2%.

violence, 27.70% physical violence and 13.80% sexual violence.[39] In the analysis of homicide cases on women in R. Macedonia In the period from 2008 to 2016, 80% of the total 70 murders of women are femicide (i.e. killed in particular by a man and on account of their gender), and in more than 50% of the cases, the murder was committed by a partner or former partner, most often in a common home or in a woman's new home, mostly using firearms.[40]

The latest OSCE research of May 2019 points to an unchanged trend in the situation of violence against women, with 60% of women believe that violence against women is common, 17% of respondents personally know a female victim coming the circle of family or friends, and 14% of the women surveyed said they were victims of physical or psychological violence. The psychological violence committed by an intimate partner is more common, represented with 44%, while 30% of women reported being victims of sexual harassment, of which 10% in the last 12 months and as many as 67% of respondents consider domestic violence to be a private matter.

This problem needs to be addressed by the institutions that have on disposal all legal mechanisms to monitor, prevent and eliminate the occurrence, as well as to provide services to women victims of violence. We can see that in recent years there has been marked marginalisation of the civil sector in this area, which has been completely excluded from the process of legislative change,[41] but that its active role in tackling the problem is more than necessary - civil society has played a key role in raising the institutional standards and the introduction of appropriate legislation in order to overcome this problem. Its task, however, is long-term, and more active involvement with institutions is more than recommended.

As for the symbolic in the private sphere, patriarchal stereotypes that discourage women from taking an active role in politics, the media, popular culture and mainstream public discourse can and should play a crucial role. In the socialist order, nominal social norms over time influenced the change of intimate norms and adjustments to the symbolic order.[42] By the same logic, the recommended methods and policies to overcome the problem of symbolic and intimate patriarchalism, in our opinion, are correction of public speech, gender sensitication workshops

39 "Shadow Report to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women", Association for Emancipation, Solidarity and Equality of Women - ESE and Association for the Promotion of Gender Equality Akcija Zdruzenska (Skopje: Akcija Zdruzenska, 2012).

40 Elena Dimusevska, "Analysis of Feminine Cases - Homicide of Women in the Republic of Macedonia", National Network against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Skopje: Voice against Violence, 2018).

41 "Press: Draft Law on Prevention, Stopping and Protection from Domestic Violence", Macedonian Network against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, available at: ..http://www.mhc.org.mk/announcements/243#.VsWm6vkrLIU<http://www.mhc.org.mk/announcements/243#.VsWm6vkrLIU Accessed 09.04.2019

42 Biljana Ugurovska, "After a Four-Year Campaign: Attitudes Towards Abortion Between the General Population and Gynecologists in Macedonia," HERA - Health Education and Research Association (Skopje: 2013), available at http://civicamobilitas.mk/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/istrazuvanje_kampanja.pdf, Accessed 05.03.2019

for media workers, gender mainstreaming in the academic sphere. They some the means of raising awareness in public speech that is expected to affect both the private sphere and its symbolic order.

The patriarchal symbolic is one of the key reasons for inhibiting and discouraging women's participation in politics. The unimpeded use of patriarchal stereotypes by the media or lack of the necessary dose of awareness and sensitivity points to the socially acceptable acceptance of stereotyped gender speech. Gender and media analyses, conducted by the Institute for Social and Human Sciences in Skopje for the needs of the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services, indicate gender 'blindness', i.e., lack of sensitivity in reporting or a spontaneous, unconscious tendency for deleting, excluding, marginalising women in their portrayal as politicians, professionals in areas relevant to political analysis, etc. The data obtained in our analyses show that, on average, over 70% of the people represented in the reporting or appearing in the capacity of politicians or commentators are men. Politics in Macedonia is masculine, quantitative, and therefore qualitative, as the very unconsciousness of the discursive and representative presence shows the unawareness for the relevance of gender-aware and responsible reporting. The method of reporting, of course, is part of creating publicity - in the media, women and women politicians are almost invisible. Social norms and values are spontaneously reflected in the media-mediated reality, i.e., in the public.

However, in professional media outlets broadcasting television and radio programmes, there is some level of awareness and standards regarding gender equality, and politically correct speech is the norm which is largely respected. According to the empirical data from the research we rely on here, gender symmetry appears primarily through marginalisation and invisibility, most often implicit, representative and discursively present due to the low sensitivity to the issue of visibility rather than consciousness and explicitness[43]. What we can discern, according to our ongoing field research in the form of *observation* (ethnographic), is that agitation and advocacy on social networks are much more explicitly sexist, and misogyny is known to be brutally open. Already in the first week of campaigning for the candidate of the leader of the main opposition party we have noticed that she is the target of explicit misogyny regarding her age, appearance, reproductive social role and gender stereotyping.[44] There were other similar campaigns in the past few years, and the most striking and refreshing example are the campaigns related to the Prespa Agreement referendum. Misogyny evolved with the fact that each of the opposing political factors created several female icons that symbolised all that was hated by the opposing camp, and the dominant stereotype - or, more precisely, the archetype - that operated in these imaginary reactions

43 Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services (2017) "Gender in Television Programs - Results of 2017 Research". Available at: http://avmu.mk/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/%D0%98%D1%81%D1%82%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%B6%D1%83%D0%B2%D0%B0%D1%9A%D0%B5-%D1%80%D0%BE%D0%B4%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%B8-2017-1.pdf, Accessed 08.05.2019

44 Gabriela Dimkovic-Misevska, "Reactions to Siljanovska's Insults: It is a Shame to Satanize a Person by Age and Sex," Makfax (February 17, 2019), available at https://makfax.com.mk/makedonija/reaction-offensive- kon-siljanovska/, Accessed 27 March 2019.

and imaginary reactions was 'a witch', the very meanings that fall under this category.

Education is another of the key areas that shape socio-cultural factors of influence for women's political participation. In the field of education, there is a lack of gender sensitivity in programs and strategies. CSOs also pointed to this shortcoming with regard to the new Education Strategy 2018-2025, where gender issues are only included in one of the objectives, in terms of auditing educational programs.[45] Grounds for gender discrimination have been identified in several elementary and higher education textbooks, and in 2017 the eighth-grade Civic Education textbook was withdrawn.[46] There is also a lack of academic and applied research in the field of women's/gender studies that will analyse social trends and policies through the scientific approach, as well as the factors influencing women's political participation.

INTERSECTIONAL FACTORS

The intersectional factors affecting women's inclusion in politics can be located in several socio-economic fields highlighted in various studies: education, ethnicity, class, culture, work, place of residence (urban/rural), age, sexuality, handicap etc.[47]

Thus, the interdisciplinary research carried out by ISSHS Skopje and Akcija Zdruzenska in the Polog region can serve as a cross-section with regards to the intersectional factors.[48]

In this region, 73% of the population are ethnic Albanians, 18.76% are ethnic Macedonians, 5.38% are ethnic Turks and 2.86% others. According to data from the State Statistical Office for 2011, the Polog region has an index of 46.9, which, in comparison with others, shows the lowest GDP per capita in relation to the national average and the lowest economic and social development index. About 70% of the population in the Polog region lives in rural areas. This region has the highest

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45 Ministry of Education and Science (MoES), "Education Strategy and Action Plan". Available at: http://mrk.mk/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Strategija-za-obrazovanie-MAK-WEB.pdf Accessed: 08.05.2019

46 Youth Educational Forum (YEF) (12.07.2018), "Textbooks discriminate, the academic community is silent and students must listen". Available at: https://www.radiomof.mk/uchebnici-diskri-miniraat-akademskata-zaednica-molchi-a-studentite-se-zarobena-publika/ Accessed: 08.05.2019

47 Sylvia Walby Sylvia Walby,Theorizing Patriarchy (Oxford UK: Basil Blackwell: 1990); NiraYuval-Davis, ''Intersectionality and Feminist Politics,'European Journal of Women's Studies (SagePublications 2006, 13: 3), pp.193-209; N. Korunovska and others 'Women in Politics: The Road to Political Functions and Influence at Local Level in Macedonia', Reaktor - Research in Action (Skopje: 2015), available at http://rodovreactor.mk/media/publications/Жените_во_политиката__MK.pdf, accessed 05.03.2019

48 'The State of Equality in Decision Making and Promotion of Gender Equality in the Polog Region', Association for Promotion of Gender Equality Akcija Zdruzenska (2015), available at: http://zdruzenska.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Izvestaj-Sostojba-so-ednakvosta-vo-odlucuvanje-to-Poloski-region-FINAL.pdf, accessed 03.04.2019.

percentage of the population - recipients of social assistance (37% of the population in 2011).

20% of economically inactive women working in agriculture are unpaid workers.

Such data indicate that rural women are in a very disadvantageous situation, which may mean their absence from official data, which in turn leads to their absence from the policies of the institutions or services they provide.[49]

Only in 6% of families in the country, women own agricultural land or houses, i.e., women do not have possession of the property or means of production.

It additionally leads to unequal access to finance, lending and investment, i.e., completely minimises the potential for economic growth.

The economic status of women is significantly determined not only by the cultural heritage but also by the manner family life is organized, which in turn is conditioned by the availability of certain services in the field of child care and care for the elderly. The status of women in the economy varies by sector and type of work assignment.

In 2017, the employment rate for women in the Republic of North Macedonia is 34.6 and is significantly lower than that for men, which is 53.6. The unemployment rate for women is 21.8 and for men 22.7. The activity rate for women is lower and stands at 44.3, while it is significantly higher for men at 69.3.[50]

Women earn 12.5% lower salaries than men and the percentage increases to 28.5% for people with lower or no education. If we compare the salary level of women and men with the same characteristics (education, experience and skills), the percentage is lower by 17.3% in women.[51]

Women are less likely than men to undertake business ventures. In Macedonia, in 2015 there were 2.46 times more entrepreneurially active men than women, and in 2017 2.51 times more men vs. women entrepreneurs.

In the ownership structure of the economy of Macedonia, enterprises owned by at least one woman with a founding share of over 50% participate with about 29.39% in the total number of active enterprises, but only with 12.9% in the total number of employees (data for 2017).

49 Diana Stojanovic-Djordjevic et al. 'Analysis of the Situation of Women in Rural Areas: More Obstacles Than Opportunities', Helsinki Committee for Human Rights of the Republic of Macedonia (Skopje: 2018).

50 'Women and Men in Northern Macedonia' 2019, Skopje: State Statistical Office available at http://www.stat.gov.mk/Publikacii/Gender2019.pdf accessed 03.05.2019.

51 'Why Are Women Paid Less Than Men in Macedonia?', Finance Think, available at: http://www.financethink.mk/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Policy-brief-9.pdf

These data show that women-owned businesses are very small given the number of employees (on average, around 2 employees). The largest share of women-owned entities in 2017 is in the sector of wholesale and retail (7,489), processing industries (1,770) and professional, scientific and technical activities (1,678). In the dynamics of registering new business ventures, women (if the owner is at least one woman with at least 50% ownership) women account for 25% - 28% for the period between 2010 and 2017.[52]

In order to develop outreach strategies for the increased inclusion of women in local processes, in 2017 Akcija Zdruzenska and Strategic Development Consulting conducted 20 focus groups in 10 municipalities, involving a total of 252 women. The analysis of the factors that influence their non-participation points to several key challenges. Most women, regardless of which social group they belong to, have difficulty connecting their daily problems with local government competencies and responsibilities due to a lack of information on key processes and the role of the local government. Of particular concern is the indifference, or even the rejection, of dealing with public finances, taking the view that they have no right to interfere with budget planning and decisions. There is a high level of criticism and mistrust towards CSOs and local governments, apathy and indifference to any kind of civic activity that could improve their position. This situation is partly due to unsuccessful attempts and/or previous negative experiences with CSOs and local government units. The most vulnerable categories of women are too poor and focused solely on dealing with their daily survival to be able to focus on activism. Besides, rural women, due to the absence of public transport, are physically restricted to access to information and inclusion. Many women are very articulate in expressing their everyday problems, yet they do not perceive themselves as stakeholders in the process of solving them. Self-interest is prevalent among women and they rarely see their own problems as shared problems of the wider community of women, probably due to the reduced level of social interaction, especially in urban areas. A small proportion of women, whether living in urban or rural areas, show interest in greater social engagement. In urban areas, these are largely mature women who have been socially engaged in the past and have had previous experience with highlighting community problems but have withdrawn for various reasons. In rural areas, these are the women who are aware of the wider community and are activated when faced with an extremely pressing issue in their community. However, the interest in both categories of women is not sufficient for self-organisation and is a conditioned to external factors ('Someone should organise us').[53]

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52 Strategy for Development of Women's Entrepreneurship in the Republic of Macedonia, 2019-2023 available at:http://www.economy.gov.mk/Upload/Documents/%D0%A1%D1%82%D1%80%D0%B0%D1%82%D0%B5%D0%B3%D0%B8%D1%98%D0%B0%20%D0%B7%D0%B0%20%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%B7%D0%B2%D0%BE%D1%98%20%D0%BD%D0%B0%20%D0-%B6%D0%B5%D0%BD%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%BE%20%D0%BF%D1%80%D0%B5%D1%82%D0%BF%D1%80%D0%B8%D0%B5%D0%BC%D0%BD%D0%B8%D1%88%D1%82%D0%B2%D0%BE%20%D0%B2%D0%BE%20%D0%A0%D0%B5%D0%BF%D1%83%D0%B1%D0%BB%D0%B8%D0%BA%D0%B0%20%D0%9C%D0%B0%D0%BA%D0%B5%D0%B4%D0%BE%D0%BD%D0%B8%D1%98%D0%B0%202019-2023.pdf, accessed 03.05.2019.

53 Project Developing strategies to increase women's inclusion at the local level, implemented within the framework of the UN Women regional project Promoting gender-responsive policies in

Experiences from the implemented outreach pilot models of Action Zdruzenska with local women's organizations that serve to empower the female local community to activate and effectively participate in local planning and decision-making processes show an unfavourable demographic structure. An initial analysis of the target group of 236 women from Debar, Mustafino and Dobrejci highlights age and education as the most disadvantageous factors, i.e., 50% of women are over 50, 25% are 35 to 50 and 25% are aged 18 to 35. The percentage of women with completed higher education is a dramatic 4.3%, while 16.8% are without education and 62% are unemployed. The majority of women (77%) live with a partner, while 19% have children up to the age of 12. Most of the women expressed an interest in learning more about the competences, activities and services municipalities offer (85%), but more than half (56%) were not ready for active involvement in educational and advocacy activities. The reasons for lacking the motivation stem from limited opportunities due to age, health, family or work responsibilities, lack of knowledge and information, lack of confidence that their opinion is relevant or will be taken into account, and some women simply stated that they do not want to be included.[54]

POLITICAL FACTORS

Research into the factors that enable women's inclusion into politics shows that social prejudice relates to traditional framing of the role of women in the home. It further shows that women entering politics should have a prestigious, stable and well-paid position and a higher level of education, closeness and exposure to politics.[55] The largest impetus and support for the inclusion of women in politics is the support and nomination of the political party and the support of the family. On the other hand, the research concludes that there is systematic discrimination against women within political parties, as well as in the process of recruiting for municipal councils. That is, political parties give men a chance based on their potential, while women must prove themselves before they get a chance.[56]

All these data show that 'there is systematic discrimination against women within political parties'.[57] That is, women within political parties as forms of organised political participation face different forms of discrimination and

Southeast Europe and the Republic of Moldova, financially supported by the Austrian Development Agency and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation.

54 Project Active Women - Accountable Governments 2018-2020, funded by the Swedish Foundation Kvinna Till Kvinna

55 N. Korunovska et al. ('Women in Politics: The Road to Political Functions and Influence at the Local Level in Macedonia', Reaktor - Research in Action, Skopje 2015. Available at: http://rodovreactor.mk/media/publications/Жените_во_политиката__MK.pdf Accessed: 05.03.2019.

56 Ibid. 75.

57 Ibid. 75.

unequal opportunities for advancement. Such data indicate that at this level of political inclusion of women, activities and processes should also be introduced to enable the empowerment of women involved in politics through the political parties.

Taking these data into account, we propose a number of possible guidelines for addressing discrimination against women in political parties - empowering women in political parties, raising awareness of gender differences in political parties, creating measures to promote women and changing public discourse towards women in politics.

Research and experience in implementing action projects show that the initial problem in gender-sensitive policymaking is the lack of gender-sensitive policymakers.[58] Data show that at all levels of policy-making there is a view that decision-making, i.e., policies should be gender-neutral. That is to say 'equality between men and women' should be reflected in the same approach to men and women in policy and decision-making processes. Such attitudes reflecting the problem previously identified with the cultural and systemic roots of inequality need to be met with a systemic response which will move the system towards gender equality change. Thus, the first disadvantage detected is the lack of awareness and knowledge of gender issues and gender inequality. In other words, due to the uneven playing field, due to gender asymmetries in the cultural and symbolic order, nominal equality does not mean actual equality of opportunity for the participants in the political race participants as well as in political decision-making. This is why it is necessary for female and male politicians to be able to adopt gender-sensitive and conscious policies.

The conviction that nominal equality and reality can be identified stems from a lack of adequate education (gender and/or female studies), and thus an awareness and capability to recognise (*gender sensitivity*) the existence of gender inequality in all segments of social living. Raising awareness, however, does not guarantee the application of gender equality norms and values. *The goodwill to apply these values needs to be translated into institutional policies and capacity-building* represented by a range of proactive gender equality measures, embedded in every sphere of the society the operation of which they govern.

The established institutional mechanisms for implementing gender equality, with all their weaknesses, set up a system that was supposed to enable closing the gender gap in all areas of social life. This system implies that institutions have, as sources of expertise and support, specialised profiles or structures with sufficient knowledge on gender equality and authority to influence the institution's political and management processes, i.e., should be the pillar of gender mainstreaming, policies and practices ('gender mainstreaming'). However, the appointment of people (in most cases women) at random (other than the gender criteria)

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58 Ana Blazheva, Creating Gender Effective Policies: A Model for Strengthening Dialogue and Involving Community Citizens in the Process of Gender Responsive Policy Making (Skopje, Institute of Social and Human Sciences, 2013).

to these positions does not guarantee gender-sensitive and conscious policies. That is to say, there is no criterion regarding the knowledge of gender issues and the knowledge and skills for their inclusion in the policy-making processes. The civil society, with the support of international organisations, has attempted to address this problem through program and project activities that include training and analysis with specific proposals on various gender issues - gender-sensitive budgeting, prevention of gender-based violence, etc. However, the analysis shows that this contribution does not make much progress in the processes of gender-sensitive policy-making by elected female and male politicians.

Fulfilment of gender equality policy commitments, in addition to understanding the relevance of gender issues to policy success, is closely linked to the responsibility of government institutions to practice transparent, inclusive policy planning and implementation; public finance and service delivery tailored to the needs of women.

Despite the current government's publicly declared political commitments to systematic efforts for addressing gender inequality, national policy planning and implementation still rely heavily on international organizations' capacity building and resource projects, mainly conducted by contracting experts.[59]

There is currently no information available on specialised programs and instruments for larger-scale financial support intended for institutional development and autonomous program support for CSOs to empower women and promote gender equality that would complement the aforementioned development assistance programs.

On the other hand, the key to achieving a sufficient level of responsibility lies with active citizens and influential civil society. There are two specific challenges/needs that affect the low level of accountability of politicians and public institutions for the comprehensive development and effective implementation of the legal and policy framework for gender equality.

The insufficient number of influential gender equality organisations with developed organizational capacities and resources, technical knowledge, skills and an established constituency base results in limited effectiveness in advocating for gender equality, especially at the local level. Faced with limited financial, human and other resources and extremely intense dynamics in policy development across different sectors, they are positioned to complement the lack of political will, understanding and capacity of institutions to incorporate a gender perspective into policy planning, and in some cases they literally develop policies/documents

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59 'Shadow Report to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women', Ad Hoc Coalition: Association for Emancipation, Solidarity and Equality of Women - ESE, Association for Gender Equality Promotion Action Zdruzenska, Open Gate/La Strada Macedonia and the Coalition 'Margini', available at: http://esem.org.mk/pdf/Voved/Monitoring%20na%20cho-vekovi%20prava/Izveshtai%20vo%20senka/CEDAW/Written%20submission%20for%20pre%20 session%20WG_71%20session%20on%20CEDAW_12-16%20March%202018%20-%20ASSO-CIATION%20ESE.pdf accessed 07.05.2019.

while ignoring the need to mobilise public support and/or broader involvement of women in the preparation of gender policies..

The absence of active civic culture among women stemming from their marginalisation as a social and political factor further confirms the relevance and need for continued and tailored approaches to empowering women for meaningful, rather than formal, participation in local planning and budgeting processes.

Supporting the practice of public engagement of the female community on issues that concern them, be it mere communal issues, is an opportunity to prepare for a future engagement at the level of local self-government and, in the long run, as a representative of communities in local self-government councils. AZ's experiences of the positive benefits of shifting personal boundaries in housewives are a great basis for upgrading in this direction. In addition, the experiences and expertise of women, gained through civic engagement, which are also recognised by political actors, should not be overlooked, given their integration into formal structures and processes.

Case study/Success story

Given the initial contextual assessment, a surprising result from the reinforcement process was achieved in Strumica.

The location selected was the settlement Dobrejci, located in the vicinity of urban Strumica, and yet lacking basic infrastructure and services provided by the local government. As reported by the local government, this was due to the increased civic activity of residents from other settlements, which resulted in prioritising their constant demands on municipal programs and budgets.

Dobrejci is also the location with the lowest level of surveyed women interested in actively participating in and engaging in consultations and decision-making processes (36 with a negative and 16 with a positive response). Municipal authorities confirmed our findings of the initial assessment, pointing to the challenges of civic participation in the village, indicating the serious difficulties they face in securing the presence of women in consultation with the settlements' residents, which are regularly practised annually in over 20 villages. in the vicinity of Strumica.

In addition, the local Dobrejci animators were rated by the project team as the least active during the introductory workshop, with a high level of dissatisfaction and distrust in local authorities that women expressed at the outset of the educational process.

Given these negative circumstances, the most unexpected effect is the ownership of the action by the animators and the local group of Dobrejci women as community representatives. Recognising their civic responsibility and the benefits of public engagement, they self-organised and acted autonomously against the extremely intense dynamics of local government consultative and decision-making processes for 2019. With the support and information provided by the Association for Gender Equality 'Akcija Zdruzenska' and the local organisation, women represented their priorities during budget forum sessions without being accompanied by representatives of Akcija Zdruzenska or the local organisation.

This engagement has proven to be an example of a critical and yet constructive contribution by citizens to the local government during public consultations, and in this case, made by women. This is an argument for the benefits of women's active and meaningful participation and at the same time it is a model for the further proactive efforts of local stakeholders responsible for implementing and collecting data during the consultation processes. Namely, during the initial phase of implementation of the activities, the local authorities were quite sceptical about the effects of any efforts to increase attendance or, even more, to include more women in the deliberations in establishing community priorities. Obtained data from the municipality regarding the 2019 consultative events in 23 settlements show an average presence from none to a maximum of 2-3 women, with the exception of Dobrejci, with 11 women present (all of them involved in project activities).

The most significant news was the extension of the 'permissible' limits for citizen participation set by the local government through the attempt by community women to obtain specific information from the mayor himself on the status of their policy proposals made during public consultations, followed by the distribution of the document. with suggestions to the relevant local government departments.

They also suggested more frequent meetings to monitor the implementation of the activities planned for Dobrajci. This unexpected step of requesting information on specific measures/activities and budget allocations in annual programs and budgets prior to their submission for adoption to the local council, and providing feedback on implementation status, was rated as excessive and out of bounds, and women were advised to be content with the given opportunity to present their proposals during the consultation process. However, such feedback did not result in disappointment for women but rather encouraged them to pursue public engagement and mobilise support and advocate for the collective rather than the self-interest. Women are actively engaged in improving school conditions and exploiting opportunities for potential donor funding.

Several assumptions that contribute to the success of such cases can be discerned from the gained experience. Communication with women in the community and their motivation to engage in any activity must be carried out by one or two carefully selected women from the community who must in no way be prominent party activists and with whom most

women can identify. Empowerment of women must take place within their communities, within their own time, and with an approach that provides a safe space for learning, respect and social interaction in order to convince them that they are capable of public engagement. The other aspect is the carefully moderated mutual debate among women on reconciling individual interests and priorities on policy issues and linking its work to their daily lives. The activation and community building which were almost nonexistent at the outset are often conditioned by an extremely pressing problem they face, therefore it is desirable to obtain specific prior information on what the municipality is (not) doing to address it. The support of an external close-knit factor (in this case the local organisation) is of utmost importance, which is well-versed in local government and provides the conditions for self-navigating the municipal processes and for the communication women lead with local representatives. Municipalities should have an established practice of communicating with citizens through consultations and provide access to specific data on activities and financial allocations for places where women come from. Such an approach takes longer time and careful preparations, so it could initially be considered ineffective, but in the long run, produces sustainable changes for women at both the individual and group levels.

CONCLUSIONS

The overall conclusion of this analysis is that besides the legal framework and general policies for gender equality and political inclusion of women, as well as democratic mechanisms that enable participation through various forms of action (political parties, CSOs, local and central government mechanisms), there is a lack of continuous policies and commitments regarding women's empowerment and their involvement in decision-making and policy-making processes.

- The national gender equality policy, which relies on mainstreaming, is not fully implemented, i.e., key aspects for its implementation are missing. Mainstreaming is not enough, targeted women's rights-driven initiatives are strongly supported by the active participation of women's rights organizations. The term 'gender' has proven to be too broad for a targeted, tailored to specific needs and sustainable intervention. The analysis shows that this policy largely depends on current political tendencies, which may adversely affect the inclusion of women in politics and even more - gender equality commitments. Policies, on the other hand, transform society, and it is, therefore, necessary to introduce and implement appropriate policies that respond to the challenges of changing the socio-cultural and symbolic patriarchal foundations of society.

- The analysis of the structures and practices which result from the national policy and legislation shows that the mere placing institutional mechanisms or declarative policy commitments, such as gender equality committees, women's political representation or gender budgeting, does not contribute to women's political participation, nor towards achieving gender equality.

- The analysis of the data on the current state of women's participation at all levels of decision-making and across different forms and institutions shows that there is a trend of increasing women's representation but does not show strong political participation of women, gender representation or a guarantee of the advancement of gender equality.

- The structural factors influencing women's political participation are located in the wider social processes, the existence and maintenance of patriarchal values, tradition and culture. The patriarchal symbolic reinforces gender stereotypical and social roles of women in all social spheres and inhibits the political participation of women. These factors also include economic factors, namely the economic gap created by differences in ownership, access and decision-making to/from economic resources, employment inequality, and wage inequality which shape the economic power of women from different social backgrounds and communities. There are further socio-cultural factors such as education, religion, social and institutional networks of support and empowerment, etc. All of these factors can inhibit or stimulate the strengthening of women's

political participation. They likewise influence women's individual self-perception and self-inhibition by locating their position and power in the home and family, as opposed to the public and the political sphere.

The inhibiting structural social factors could not be overcome only by campaigns for raising awareness and other activities relying primarily on the civil sector but by a coordinated institutional approach in the field of 'soft' policy, such as educational, media, social policies, as well as public health policies.

- The analysis shows that the systematic inclusion of a gender dimension in educational programs, namely the inclusion of the awareness-raising dimension, gender sensitisation, is one of the key factors influencing the strengthening of women's political participation.

- The impact of the CSOs, the women's organisations and other forms of civic engagement and activism show great potential and contribution to fostering political processes, their monitoring and analysis, strengthening the capacity of institutions at all levels and supporting institutional processes, and services, as well as empowering women for active political involvement.

- The analysis of the different roles and involvement of the social factors and the dynamics they establish shows that the best and the most effective results for women's political inclusion are the joint and synchronised efforts of institutions, political actors, CSOs and activists.

ON INFORMAL PRACTICES AND SUITABLE SOLUTIONS

The practice that cannot be enshrined in laws and other formal rules of the game belongs to the part of the society that is enshrined in the (patriarchal) tradition that spontaneously emerges in such practices. The reduction of women to the private sphere, the patriarchal prejudice that female domination or equality in the public space is 'unnatural' or contrary to tradition, is something that formal rules of the game cannot address in their decisions. The following is necessary:

a) Informal practices and sustainable processes that will change society from the bottom up:

- A collaboration of women's rights organisations with local initiatives to strengthen women's leadership in activism, which presupposes their strengthening for public appearances, public speaking, initiative leadership and other psycho-social challenges for women in their participation in the public sphere.

- Strengthen co-operation between organisations for women's equality (or gender equality with a special focus on women's

rights) and political parties, where training in public speaking, public initiative, public/media performance will enhance the subject-positioning of the female politician.

b) Informal and formal women's empowerment practices and policies for participation in the public sphere.

- Holding workshops with media outlets and journalists on the gender-sensitive representation of women in the political sphere.

- Introducing quotas for positions of political power other than parliament.

- Holding workshops to mobilise women politicians on gender equality issues with a particular focus on women in politics and women's rights.

c) Policies that, while formal - laws and bylaws and institutional policies - reshape the informal part, more precisely - change the patriarchal mentality and inertia of society.

Examples: Affirmative policies for economic empowerment of women such as favourable loans for women entrepreneurs, educational quotas that increase women's participation on the labour market where there is the greatest demand for labour, special subsidies for women in agriculture etc.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ESTABLISHING CONSIDERATIONS FOR ESSENTIAL POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN

The identified weaknesses, barriers and problems are suggested to be met by a systematic approach that will respond to the impact factors analysed in the study by including all social factors identified in the analysis so far. The starting point is the efficient use of the favourable legislation and the assumedly established systematic framework for gender mainstreaming and the established implemented mechanisms and opportunities set up in an institutional sense, which may offer good infrastructure, even though its impact is conditioned by other influences. The most important aspects we propose to be based on political participation are gender-sensitive policy-making programs, and empowering women to be involved in decision-making and policy-making processes and gender mainstreaming at all levels of education.

1. A model of gender-sensitive policymaking mechanisms that build on local knowledge and experience, as well as international experience in the pursuit of gender equality. This model entails three phases of the approach: continuous capacity building on gender issues in the administration and political representatives, introducing gender analysis as a mandatory part of the policy-making process, gender budgeting and engaging dialogue between institutions and citizens not only through their representatives and advocates in civil society organizations, activists but also by ensuring systematically informed participation, especially of women, in policy-making processes. Using the model of gender-sensitive policymaking will address socio-political factors of influence, that is, affect the enabling conditions for women's political participation, but will also shape the economic opportunities and outcomes that generally affect the situation with gender equality in society.

2. Multi-year programs for the empowerment women and leadership focused on the process and the delivering of quality results, rather than an exclusively quantitative coverage, with a bottom-up approach. They will be based on tested and adapted pre-applied and existing reinforcement models.

Outputs organised in interdependent contexts/components:

- Three sets of knowledge and skills that include both theory and practice: a) Gender equality; b) Equality and good governance policy and institutional (applied) policy; c) Public appearance and negotiation for change. Designed content and methods of transfer of knowledge and skills tailored to the needs arising from different levels of initial knowledge and interest, role and reality of different categories of women: politically active, women in institutions, institutional structure for equal opportunities for women and men (gender machinery), civic activists, citizens, as the primary target. Learning through practice, not short-term training as one-off activities.

- Continuous two-way communication/building horizontal alliances between the women in civil society, politics and academia with a set minimum consensus on key priorities and approaches for cohesion/exchange/support.

3. Education and media

We consider education and the media as essential social areas through which inhibitory interference and motivating socio-cultural factors can be encouraged to enhance women's political participation.

In terms of education, we recommend the following: Analysing educational programs at all levels, which will result in the creation of gender-sensitive programs that contain gender-relevant content promoting women's

political participation; Supporting academic programs for gender studies and their involvement in the creation of national gender equality strategies and policies and the creation of affirmative enrollment policies in all areas where women are absent (especially in STEM areas).

Reinforcing the capacities of media workers, journalists and creatives in gender issues. Their awareness of the discourses, symbolic and manner of representing women in public life and politics, as well as their role in contributing to the maintenance of unfavourable socio-cultural factors that have an inhibiting effect on women's political participation. Affirmation and promotion of women in politics and women's participation in decision-making processes.

4. Empowering women in politics

There should be a compulsory democratisation of parties which inevitably need to include and demonstrate awareness of the gender gap and gender issues. Additional support may be offered for capacity building programs on gender issues of political parties and for women empowered in political parties. Encourage cooperation between political parties and CSOs, as well as through the establishment of mechanisms for consultation with women from the local community when designing programs and policies offered by political parties. Continuous and enhanced use of existing forms of political participation by women - women's clubs, women's unions and other forms of gender mainstreaming and advocacy.

5. Support to CSOs and gender advocacy

Development of specialised programs for the program and organisational financial support to local women's organisations as key implementers of field methodological approaches to empower, mobilise and engage marginalised groups of women's communities and promote participatory democracy. This type of support is also needed for the national CSOs, which are a key source of feminist expertise necessary to empower women for political or civic participation, and qualitatively contribute to the promotion of equality. At the same time, advocacy of autonomous advocacy actions in policy-making processes at all levels of management based on analysis and research in the field of gender inequality in different sectoral policies is needed.

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SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH PAPERS ON THE POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN

THE POSITION AND POWER OF WOMEN AS MEMBERS OF MANAGEMENT BODIES IN THE MACEDONIAN BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

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FOREWORD TO THE SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH PAPERS

Debates related to women's rights, and especially those related to the feminisation of poverty, the position of women in modern society and family, gender and sex, social, economic and political (in)equality, and a bundle of other debates, preoccupy the academic, activist and the political public with hitherto unnoticed intensity for more than 70 years. Reigniting these debates to the political and scholarly scene, located sometime in the 60`s of the past century, has enabled a flourishing field of literature on women's issues, women's activism and of course the new political agendas of the women's rights movements.

Although academic and scientific literature on women's rights "exploded" in the second half of the XX century as well as the first two decades of the XXI century, this does not seem to have an adequate reflection on the Republic of North Macedonia. This has less to do with theoretical, academic literature, and much more with specific qualitative and quantitative studies on gender issues that scientific and academic debates need to rely on. The chronic shortage of studies of this kind leads to the fact that, often, the executors of public polices and policymakers do not have complete and accurate information on women's rights issues and the position of women in different segments of Macedonian society. Such a deficit results in the inability to formulate accurate and adequate public policies related to women's issues, even when there is political will to adopt and implement them.

Given this situation, the Westminster Foundation for Democracy has decided to make an effort to fill the deficit of specific studies on women's issues. In 2019, the WFD launched a call for young researchers on topics related to women's rights and the status of women in Macedonian society. After a rigorous selection process of men an women researchers, the WFD decided to stand behind five different studies, which went through a rigorous review process by independent experts, corrections and refinements, in order to make the final product the best it can be. The studies address different social segments, and analyse challenges related to women's rights and the position of women in the labor market, in the corporate environment, in higher education, in institutional politics, and in the sphere of political participation in general.

The first paper, by author Blagica Petrova, deals with gender inequality in political participation. The paper is entitled "Socio-economic factors and their impact on the political participation of womenin the Republic of North Macedonia". More specifically, the paper examines socio-economic factors and their impact on the political and civic participation of women in the Republic of North Macedonia. In this regard, the paper is one of the pioneering attempts to identify the relevant socio-economic factors affecting women's political participation and to examine the factors that inhibit or encourage women's participation in the political and social spheres of the Republic of North Macedonia.

The second analysis, entitled "The position and power of women as members of the board of directors in the Macedonian business environment", by author Marija Topuzovska - Latkovic, explores the issue of the position and power of women as board members in the Macedonian business environment. The analysis also focuses on issues related to motivating factors for women to be on the board, as well as the position of women versus men in the same position. In addition, the analysis looks at the sources of power used by women as board members and the real impact on other board members, as well as on the key values of women who personally believe in contributing to corporate transformation and leaving a mark on Macedonian business environment.

The study "Essence or Decor: An analysis of the representation and participation of women in decision making in public universities in North Macedonia" deals with the analysis of current trends in the representation of women in public universities in the country, especially in terms of their participation in governance and decision-making processes. The author Misho Dokmanovic analyses the key statistical trends, but attempts to determine how these trends are manifested in the actual dynamics of university power. This research looks at the real role women play in decision-making processes at public universities in the country, analysing whether their participation is essential or only at the declarative level.

The work of authors Ana Mukoska and Eva Jovanova focuses on an unusual topic that at first glance remains unnoticed to the public eye. Namely, the study "The Role and Impact of the Women PMs Club in building supra-partisan cooperation in the Assembly" deals with one of the institutional actors that could seriously contribute to increasing the dynamics of resolving many pressing issues related to the position of women in Macedonian society. The Women MPs Club, as an institutionalized form of cooperation between women MPs from different parties within the Assembly of the RNM, contributes to their supra-partisan cooperation and actualisation of women's rights issues. The paper proceeds from the assumption that inter-party cooperation enables greater effectiveness and influence for women MPs, which opens opportunities for greater inclusion of women's perspectives, i.e. gender, in the adoption of laws, the budget and control of the executive and other public office holders accountable to the Assembly. That is why the research focuses on the role and influence of the Parliamentary Club in the building of inter-party cooperation in the Assembly.

The latest, and at the same time the most comprehensive analysis, is signed by the author Jovana Gjorgievska and entitled "Gender bias among the youth of North Macedonia: what are youth`s perceptions of employability of candidates for managerial positions in politics, the private and civil sector?". Referring to very little research and analysis of issues in Macedonian society, the analysis is focused on an experimental examination of the (non)existence of gender bias among young citizens of North Macedonia, as well as their perceptions of gender stereotyped characteristics of candidates for managerial positions in politics, the private and civil sectors. The author concludes that the youth of North Macedonia is gender biased in favor of female candidates for managerial positions in politics and the civil sector, and in favor of male candidates for managerial positions in the private sector. This points to interesting, gender-stereotyped perceptions that are elaborated in the research.

This edition, totaling five studies, represents a document that is addressed to the general public. This is primarily the academic and scientific community, for which it creates a solid reference base in a number of areas related to a specific topic. Activists in the non-governmental sector are also concerned, as it introduces a more detailed and comprehensive analysis of women's rights and the position of women in various spheres of Macedonian society. But perhaps the most important aspect is the policy actors who, through this edition, can rely on methodologically sound and accurate data when creating their policies on gender-sensitive issues. The five studies offer insights into the specific issues of women's rights and the status of women, and in themselves are a provocation to further deepen these topics and to discover many new ones.

Nenad Markovikj,

Editor of the scientific research papers

THE POSITION AND POWER OF WOMEN AS MEMBERS OF THE BOARDS OF DIRECTORS IN THE MACEDONIAN BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

MARIJA TOPUZOVSKA LATKOVIKJ

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1 THE POSITION AND POWER OF WOMEN AS MEMBERS OF THE BOARDS OF DIRECTORS IN THE MACEDONIAN BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

INTRODUCTION

Despite the existence of national legal and strategic documents addressing gender equality rights and principles in the country, there is little knowledge in the domestic professional and scientific literature of the participation of women as managers and board members in the business sector, which at the same time represent one of the most important and influential managerial positions in socio-economic terms and in a professional context. The following topic-related data are currently available:

- 'In the largest companies in the country,[60] the ratio between women and men is as follows: 30:70 (or 3 women in total are chairmen), 20:80 (or 12 women in total are board members), 26:74 (11 women in total are CEOs) and 10:90 (3 women are CGDs)' (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2018);

- According to the Mariley agency, 'more and more female managers can be found at senior positions in companies, the majority of which are in family businesses and in sectors with predominantly educated female staff, such as finance, human resources management, IT and Communications sector, private health institutions, educational centres, etc.. Women managers are often present in small and medium-sized companies, while in the largest and most influential areas of industry they find it difficult to reach senior management positions' (MTM, 2018);

- Research on gender representation in senior management positions, conducted by the Institute for Communication Studies in cooperation with the Isida Vita Institute in Slovenia (ICS, 2017), shows that 'although only 65% of employees in large and medium-sized enterprises in Macedonia believe that gender equality in

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60 10 companies listed on the stock exchange were covered.

management is very important, as many as 60% said that the company they work for has not implemented gender-balanced management activities and they do not plan to do so'.;

• According to a survey by the Association of Businesswomen (Fakulteti, 2017), 'Of the listed companies in the country, only 3.86% have appointed women to senior management positions, which is a devastating figure'.

Such low representation of women in management positions places Republic of North Macedonia below the European level, which stands at 26.7% (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2018), especially given that in the European Union the target is women to be represented on the supervisory and management boards of medium and large companies with a minimum of 40% by 2020 (European Commission, 2012). In addition to the quantity or rate of representation of women in senior positions, there is also the question of the quality, or the actual degree of participation, of women: active role, authority and influence of women as equal members in boards of directors and decision-makers. Therefore, the idea of this research is to determine and describe the position of women board members[61] in medium and large companies, as well as the sources of power they have on boards.

The survey selected medium and large companies [62] operating on the territory of the Republic of Northern Macedonia as business entities with direct and indirect impact on the social and economic development of the country.

The paper attempts to answer the following research questions:

• Main research question:

  - What is the position and power of women as members of Boards Directors in the Macedonian business environment?

• Supporting research questions:

  - What are the main motivating factors for women to be members of Boards of Directors?

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61 According to the Company Law: "The managing body is the body of the joint stock company entrusted with the management of the company as a board of directors in a one-tier management system, a board of directors or a manager in a two-tiered management system (...)" and "the Board of Directors has the broadest powers in the management of the company, that is, in the performance of all matters relating to the conduct of the business and the current activities of the company (...)".

62 Women's management of small companies in science literature is usually associated with female entrepreneurship.

- What is the position of women as members of the Board of Directors in the Macedonian business environment vis-à-vis men in the same position?

- What sources of power do women use as Board members and what is their influence on others?

- What are the key values of women members of the Board of Directors, through which they personally feel they 'make a difference'/leave a mark on the Macedonian business environment?

The research is qualitative, the sample is purposeful and semi-structured interviews with female board members were conducted to collect data.

The topic is considered scientifically and socially relevant and useful because it is not sufficiently researched, and the results are expected to enrich the professional and scientific literature, while contributing to the promotion of gender perspectives, both within private companies, in the private sector and in all spheres of society. The results are expected to directly help women as stakeholders and marginalised groups, by raising public awareness, for future equitable positioning and promotion of appropriate jobs, in line with their expertise, professional experience and personal characteristics and abilities.

THEORETICAL DISPUTE (LITERATURE REVIEW)

Studies of women in management positions have begun to attract attention in the early eighties of the last century (Daily, Certo & Dalton, 2000). More specifically, the focus was primarily on the extent to which women can break through the 'glass ceiling' of their careers and become board members. The glass ceiling effect is defined as' an invisible barrier in the hierarchy that prevents women or minorities from attaining higher levels' (Merriam-Webster, 2019) or 'an invisible but realistic barrier through which the next level of progress can be seen, but cannot be reached by a part of qualified and deserving employees' (Businessdictionary, 2019).

Studies of power and gender perspectives explain how social, organisational, and individual forces often give women little opportunity to influence decisions, and therefore their voice may have little influence (Ragins & Sundstrom, 1989). In gender heterogeneous workgroups it is common for men to speak more frequently and louder, to be more influential, and to be more perceived as leaders than women (Lockheed &

Hall, 1976). However, the status and power of women as board members is interesting to analyse because, in workgroups that are heterogeneous in the status of the members, higher status individuals speak more frequently and tend to use influence in group discussion (Berger et al. 1972; Cleveland et al. 2000). In any case, demographic heterogeneous boards are expected to provide more diverse information and knowledge in managing the organization (Geletkanycz & Hambrick 1997; Goodstein et al. 1994).

Often, gender diversity in boards is simply analysed in terms of the ratio between male and female members (Campbell & Mınguez-Vera, 2008; Hillman & Cannella, 2007; Huse et al., 200; Asch, 1951, 1955; Tanford & Penrod (1984) assuming that when women's participation is very low (below 30%), they as a minority constitute a marginalised group with no board influence (Maass & Clark, 1984; Nemeth & Wachtler, 1983). Such members are called 'tokens', which are perceived negatively and without confidence by other stakeholders, which in turn creates such feelings of discomfort, isolation and self-doubt (Kanter, 1977: 68). According to the literature, women are only appointed as members of the board of directors just to meet the requirements of gender diversity. tokenism, or despite the formal status that women have as board members, their voice is not expressed (repressed) or does not influence (ignored) decision-making in favour of male members of the board of directors (Torchia et al. 2011; Zelechowski & Bilimoria 2001).

According to Pfeffer's (1992) Organizational Power Surveys, organisational boards are among the first ranked functional units to be expected to use power, mainly when making decisions related to (re-) organisation, strategy, staffing changes and budget allocation.

In particular, this research proceeds from the definition of power as 'the ability or capacity to influence one's behaviour' (Dahl, 1957: 202). This definition of power, of course, implies a political dimension, since the decision-making process itself has a political context (Mintzberg, 1983; Finkelstein, 1992; French & Raven, 1959; Robbins & Judge, 2013). According to Mintzberg (1983: 5) and Dahl (1957: 202), the terms *power* and *influence* are synonymous and can be used interchangeably and unambiguously in organisational research..

In terms of sources of power, there are two generally accepted divisions in organisational behaviour and leadership literature. According to Finkelstein (1992: 530), they differ in:

- structural power (originating from the formal position and hierarchical authority in the organisation);

- ownership power (related to founding status or ownership stake/shares in the company);

- expert power (implies appropriate expertise, professional background and experience in the same or similar positions); and

- prestigious power (personal status, reputation, credibility, membership in elite organisations).

Whereas, according to French and Raven (1959: 151), there are five types of power:

- legitimate (originating from the formal position and hierarchical authority in the organisation);

- reference (derived from personal characteristics that others recognise in the leader/manager: image, credibility, charisma);

- rewarding (the power to reward desired behaviour);

- punitive (the power to punish unwanted behaviour); and

- expert power (relevant position/business expertise).

Accordingly, sources of power may be located in the person or position, ie they may be internal (expert and reference or prestigious power) or external (legitimate or structural, proprietary, rewarding, punitive) (French & Raven, 1959). According to Lunenberg (2012: 6), 'the higher the rank of the individual in the organization, the stronger the structural power', and 'persons who have expert power also have stronger structural power because others accept expertise as the basis for their authority'. According to Pfeffer & Salancik (1978: 145), 'the prestige of board members strengthens the credibility of the company' and 'affirms the rest of the world the value of the company', and according to Dalton and Dalton (2011), companies that have prestige board members, perform better.

From the perspective of resource theory (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978), board members' contributions are mainly based on the combination of their human capital (Barney, 1991) and relational/social capital (Hillman & Dalziel, 2003: 386; Adler & Kwon, 2002). Human capital is defined through the knowledge and skills that these human resources posses, and the results of developing such resources through work experience, learning and specialisation (Hatch & Dyer, 2004), and relational or social capital through the relationships that such human resources establish and build with others, based on their reputation, image and credibility (Hillman & Dalziel, 2003; Adler & Kwon, 2002).

In Europe, with the aim of extending the representation quota of women on boards, countries that have (legally) provided for quotas of 30% to 40% (with variations in company size as well as in the type of ownership of the company) are the following: Norway, Spain, Iceland, France Austria, Belgium, Germany, Greece, Italy and the Netherlands (European Commission, 2016). In these countries, the highest participation of women in such senior positions has been registered since 2010 (Italy + 25%, France + 24.8%, Belgium + 16.1%, Germany + 14.6%, the Netherlands + 13.2%), as well as in countries where there is intense debate on this issue (Slovenia + 14.1% and the United Kingdom + 13.7%) (European Commission, 2016).

In this context, it is important to note that when Norway set a legal quota of 40% for women on boards, the main response of business leaders and employers' organizations was to warn of the lack of women with relevant managerial experience, which may have led to reduced performance, authority and legitimacy of Norwegian boards, which in turn will result in reduced competitiveness of the Norwegian industry in international markets (Hoel, 2008). Therefore, further research by Huse (2009) has shown that professional background has a stronger effect on board discussion than gender, and is therefore considered to be the relative importance of gender diversity for board performance (Elstad & Ladegard, 2010).

Undoubtedly, there are more positive benefits to women's board membership, such as improved decision making, increased corporate social responsibility, competitive advantage and gender sensitivity (Bilimoria, 1995; Segal, 1996; Bilimoria and Huse, 1997). According to Daily and Dalton (2003), women in such management positions add unique values, perspectives, experiences and work styles to their male equivalents. Women as managers and board members also serve as positive role models for other women in the corporate world (Burke, 1994; Ely, 1995). If there are fewer women in management positions, that would mean less successful examples, which in turn would suggest to young women who want to be leaders that being a woman is a disadvantage/barrier, discouraging them to perceive women in senior positions as credible sources of influence, advice and support (Ibarra, Ely & Kolb, 2013).

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

RESEARCH STRATEGY AND RESEARCH METHODS

According to the scientific purpose, the research is exploratory and descriptive, that is, it seeks first to identify the cases being analyzed and then to describe their characteristics and properties according to the formulated research questions, following the deductive method.

The research strategy is qualitative, using an in-depth, semi-structured interview as a research technique for data collection, tailor-made for the needs of the research topic..

RESEARCH SAMPLE

Since there are no official data on the target population surveyed (records/base, precise size and other characteristics), the sample is purposeful, covering typical population representatives. The research sample is designed through an online search by the author, of relevant data, published on the websites of the Municipalities, the Central Registry, the Macedonian Stock Exchange and the official websites of the companies, to detect the actual presence of women on the boards of medium and large private sector companies operating on the territory of the Republic of North Macedonia. The following division is used to define the size of the companies:

Table 1. Criteria for defining the size of organizations. Source: EU Definition (EU Recommendation 2003/361) and Company Law (amended 2013).

Size of organisation	Number of employees	Annual gross income
Micro	< 10	< 50,000 euros
Small	< 50	< 2 mill. euros
Medium	< 250	< 10 mill. euros
Large	over 250	over 10 mill. euros

The online search identified a total of 30 cases, i.e., medium and large organisations from different sectors, with female board members during the period of the survey. All identified board representatives have been called for an interview via email and offered a brief explanation of the WFD's research and initiative.

In accordance with the given time frame, a total of eleven interviews were completed (N=11)[63], some of which are conducted face-to-face and some are completed electronically, at will and/or at the insistence of respondents (which is to be expected when it comes to this specific category of respondents). As this target population is small in number, the interviews are considered to meet the sample size criterion, and because the data are beginning to be repeated, that is, exhausting, there can be theoretical saturation. The respondents are representatives of organizations from the financial sector (banks and insurance companies), health, education, tourism, manufacturing and the IT sector.

63 The design of the research project foresaw at least six and at most twelve interviews.

DATA ANALYSIS

The data from the conducted interviews were stored in written or audio record with the informed consent of the respondents, with the anonymity of the data guaranteed. The data are thematically and narratively analysed by the author, without the use of software, and is illustrated by quotations and anecdotes. Some data are quantified, with frequency and mean values represented.

OPERATIONALISATION OF THE VARIABLES

The position of women on Boards of Directors (hereinafter: BD) in the paper is analyzed through: the large proportion of female and male board members; reasons for breakthroughs in boards; active participation and women's 'voice' on the boards; and equality with male members.

In the paper, the sources of power are operationalised through the Finkelstein's dimensions (1992) because they are based on the facts about the power of those who possess and use it, and not on the perception by others of what power they possess, such is, in the case of the definition of French and Raven (1959).

Because the paper uses the definition of power as 'the ability or capacity to influence one's behaviour' (Dahl, 1957), the effect is measured by the subjective feeling or perception of the respondents of the influence they personally feel they have on others (members of BDs and stakeholders).

Values are analysed by classifying Schwartz's (2012) values into clusters: virtue (love, care, care, honesty), universalism (understanding, tolerance, protection, social justice, equality, honesty), self-direction (independence, creativity, freedom, curiosity), security (harmony, stability, sense of belonging), conformity (obedience, submission, avoidance), hedonism (enjoyment, pleasure, self-sufficiency), achievement (personal success by showing necessary competencies, ambition, ability), traditions (respect, commitment and acceptance of the customs/values), stimulation (looking for excitement, innovations, challenges), and power (social status, prestige, control over people and resources, authority, wealth, social recognition, public image).

RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

The following can be considered as limitations to the study: 1) The sample is not representative nor stratified, so the data cannot be generalised to the entire research population, i.e., only to the sample; 2) companies are joint-stock companies, some of which have family-owned structures

and most do not; 3) the influence that women have on board members is measured through subjective perception and on a small sample; 4) there is no record of whether the power and influence of women as members of BDs is used solely for the benefit of the organisation or for self-interest; 5) missing data on the perception of the position, power and influence of women as board members by other BD members, employees, shareholders and other stakeholders; 6) The analysis of the organizational documentation of the sample companies has not been done, and hence no detailed information on the criteria that are crucial in selecting board members.

PROFILE OF FEMALE RESPONDENTS

The table presents the codes for the individual interviews, which will provide examples of the analysis, as well as a description of the respondents' profile (degree and type of education completed, working status in the company of which BDs they are members and working position, time period of membership in the BDs, funding status or equity stake in the company).

Table 2. Code book of interviews and profile of the female respondents

Code book of interviews	Profile of the female respondent
#1	MSc in Strategic Management, MSc in Human Resource Management, Doctorate in Management in Education; employed in the company; managerial position; 7 years member of the BD; with no founding status or equity stake.
#2	MSc in Economics; employed in the company; managerial position; 10 years member of the MB; with an equity stake.
#3	MSc (MSc in International Healthcare Management, Economics and Policy), Executive Education Harvard Business School; Executive Development Program Kellogg's School of Management; employed in the company; managerial position; 5 years member of the MB; with no founding status or equity stake.
#4	Higher education; employed in the company; managerial position; 8 years member of the BD; with no founding status or equity stake.
#5	Higher education, Bachelor of Technology; is not employed in the company; 16 years member of the BD; with an equity stake.
#6	Higher education, Bachelor of Economics; employed in the company; managerial position; 7 years member of the BM; with no founding status or equity stake..
#7	Completed MBA studies; employed in the company; managerial position; 1 year and 8 months member of the BD; with no founding status or equity stake.
#8	Higher education, Bachelor of Economics; employed in the company; managerial position; 1-year member of the BD; with no founding status or equity stake..
#9	Bachelor of Economics, Master of Economics, Executive education - Cornell University; employed in the company; managerial position; 24 years member of the BD; with an equity stake.
#10	MSc in Economics/Finance and Banking; is not employed in the company; 2 years member of the BD; with no founding status or equity stake.
#11	Higher education, Bachelor of Economics; employed in the company; managerial position; 4 years member of the BD; with no founding status or equity stake..

THE RATIO BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN ON THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

According to the data, the ratio of women to men on the boards of directors in the sample companies varies, as does the total number of members, in some cases women being dominant, men in others, but women represent 30% of the total. There are at least 3 and up to 15 members of the boards of directors, and the number is always odd due to outvoting. The most numerous and dominant presence of women is observed in the sample boards of banks, where the management is mainly represented by women.

From the responses received, it can be concluded that there are no formal rules and policies that impose gender diversity or equality in the BDs, as all the respondents answered negatively to this question. According to the respondents' opinions (from the supporting questions arising from the answers to the semi-structured face-to-face interviews), there should be no restrictions or quotas depending on gender as a biological feature, but the position should depend solely on professional and personal characteristics. Such assurances are in line with the claims of Huse (2009), Elstad & Ladegard (2010), and Dalton and Dalton (2011), that the poor representation of women on boards in the past and its growth in recent years is due precisely to the increase in women's professional background, therefore, these positions can be said to be deserving, not due to increased attention to gender diversity and inclusion.

MOTIVATION FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Respondents were asked about the personal motivation to be part of the BDs. From the analysis of the answers, it can be concluded that women have chiefly intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2010) to be members of the BD, pointing tho the following most frequently mentioned factors: personal challenge; professional and career development; influence on decision making; applying knowledge/expertise, managerial skills and competencies; business/organisation development. While the financial compensation and social status (as factors of external motivation) are hardly ever mentioned.

Given the respondents' data on the degree and type of their education, which is high, advanced and specialised, in several cases even acquired at the most renowned universities in the world, as well as their career paths, it can be assumed that the respondents had high working ambitions, aspirations and self-efficacy before becoming members of the BDs, which again reaffirms their intrinsic motivation (Bandura & Schunk,

1981). The invitation or recommendation to become a member of the board is undoubtedly a kind of professional acceptance and recognition, as well as an expectation of external authority (which is a combination of internal and external motivation).

Examples:

'Challenging, possessing the expertise, knowledge, managerial skills and competencies to organise, manage and make decisions, share and develop knowledge in the organisational environment, which is a prerequisite for company's development.' (#1)

'The education I gained at top schools, as well as further education, challenged me to prove myself professionally. Some of those top schools also shaped my desire to influence decision making at managerial and other higher levels. Commitment to work, of course, involves a commitment to business or organisation development.' (#3)

'Extensive experience in one area, complemented by the experience of establishing an entirely new business; monitoring and influencing the development of the company in all its phases, from the initial establishment of a highly regulated business to the appropriate organisation and selection and development of personnel; opportunity for strategic vision, high level of expertise and initiative in proposing solutions at the highest level of decision making: functionality, efficiency and effectiveness, recognizing and linking theory and practice, establishing healthy and long-term sustainable relationships within the team.' (#4)

'It was a challenge for me to climb to the top in the company where I started my career, applying my acquired knowledge and experience to develop the organisation.' (#6)

'It was a personal challenge and business development. I have introduced new services in the company portfolio which have significantly increased revenue.' (#7)

'It is important to note that in order to be a member of the BD, the invitation and decision come from instances hierarchically higher than the BD. In my case, the invitation itself was a recognition of the qualities and values of being a professional, a valuable person, and of past achievements and confidence in future expected achievements. My motives for accepting the invitation were combined, but above all, it was the personal challenge, the expected step up in career development and the opportunity to achieve results by putting knowledge, experience, personal qualities and social capital into business development. I don't see them as motives for either social status or financial compensation, but as something inevitably linked to the very appointment on the BD.' (#8)

'My main motivation was to make sure that the decisions we make increase the value of the company. I believe this is why were are in fact elected as members of the BD.' (#10)

REASONS AND CRITERIA FOR BREAKTHROUGHS/ENTRY OF WOMEN ON THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Companies or businesses, through their supervisory boards, elect the members of the BDs most often from the sectorial directors, although external members may also be elected, usually from the larger shareholders or independent members. Often, there are prescribed criteria (legal, statutory, etc.) for the election of a member to the BD. For example, under the Banking Law, for someone to be appointed as a member of the Bank's Board of Directors 'there must be a minimum of six years of experience in finance or banking or three years of experience as a person with special rights and responsibilities in a bank with activities congruent to the bank in which they are appointed; (...) the members of the Board of Directors must be permanently employed in the bank (...)'.

Respondents were asked to indicate, in their opinion, what the main reasons were for their appointment to the BDs. The answers show that the key contribution women make to the BDs and which at the same time is an appointment criterion is: education/expertise/knowledge; possessing appropriate personal characteristics; managerial skills and competencies; extensive work experience (of non-managerial and managerial positions); achieved results; company loyalty; business knowledge; professional contact networks (both domestically and internationally); and the image and credibility of business and society.

Such data are again in line with the views of Huse (2009) and Dalton and Dalton (2011) on the reinforcement of women's professional background as a factor in the advancement of managerial/senior positions and Resource Dependency Theory (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978), according to which, resources that are scarce give the company a competitive edge. As a reminder, it is believed that 'board capital is a combination of human capital (expertise, knowledge, experience, skills and reputation of members) and relational/social capital (members' networks or relationships with other companies and other stakeholders)' (Hillman & Dalziel, 2003: 386; Adler & Kwon, 2002.

Examples:

'The professionalism, the expertise, the dedication, the competencies gained through formal and non-formal learning, and most of all through the experience in the organization in which I work, knowing all the processes because I have worked in all positions. The ability to lead and create followers leading by example of how you should devote yourself to science, work and

family, all combined and managed in a way that will deliver the greatest corporate and personal success.' (#1)

'First and foremost, it is due to professional qualifications and abilities: cutting-edge theoretical and practical education, knowledge-based authority building, built-in system and integrity for managerial decision-making, knowing and following the global trends in the industry in which I work, professional contact networks gained studying at renowned foreign universities.' (#3)

'Expertise and work experience, possessing appropriate personal characteristics and abilities, especially in process setting, organisation, selection and mentoring staff.' (#4)

'Extensive managerial experience and knowledge.' (#5)

'Expertise and years of experience in the company, brand image and credibility; loyalty to the company.' (#6)

'I think the main reasons for my choice were my results and personal characteristics such as dedication, professionalism, ethics and understanding of the relationships with people (both employees and clients).' (#8)

'I used to hold other key positions in the organisation and still am, and because of that, as well as the years of experience, business knowledge and results, professionalism and loyalty, it was natural and necessary to be part of the BD.' (#9)

'In my view, only people with good professional background or adequate personal characteristics to suit the position can be appointed on the BD.' (#10)

EQUALITY OF ENTRY CRITERIA FOR WOMEN AND MEN ON BOARD

Most of the respondents (7 in total) stated that gender is not a barrier to BD membership, that the criteria are equal and based on the qualities of the individual. Four (out of 11) respondents pointed out that there is still no equality in the criteria for admission to the BDs, i.e., they think that male members are easier or more frequently elected, with lower criteria being applied or they are being relativised.

Examples:

'I think that serious companies are making less and less of a difference, or less of an emphasis on gender.' (#1)

'There are equal criteria in the company.' (#6)

'Although I am aware of the discrimination of women globally, in my particular situation, I am happy to say that this was not the case, i.e., the same criteria have always been applied to both men and women.' (#7)

'The criteria are not gender-related, but solely on personal merit and performance.' (#11)

'Gender does not affect choice. In our organisation, gender is never a measure of work or engagement.' (#5)

'The entry criteria were the same. I support this claim by the fact that I was in my third pregnancy when I received the invitation. This somewhat departs from the stereotyped practices that women, especially pregnant women, are less favoured than men.' (#8)

'Despite the defined legal requirements for the position on the BD member and defined 'fit and proper' policies within larger EU member groupings, however, the choice may be relativised and certain factors of a quantitatively and qualitatively immeasurable nature may prevail. I think women still have an unequal position on the BD. The criteria are being relativized, especially in our environment.' (#4)

'In my personal experience, the criteria were the same. But generally speaking, men are easier to be elected to the boards and lower criteria apply.' (#3)

'Men are easier to be elected to the boards ... And absolutely lower criteria apply.' (#9)

'In my case, I can say that the criteria for joining the board were the same for both men and women. However, the number of women nominated for the board was lower than the number of nominated men.' (#10)

WOMEN'S ACTIVE PARTICIPATION AND 'BEING HEARD' ON THE BDS

The analysed responses reveal that once women are given the status of board members, they are considered equal, active and vocal members, whose opinion is being heard and valued, which again rejects the assumption of tokenism and repression of women's voice. (Kanter, 1977; Torchia et al., 2017; Zelechowski & Bilimoria, 2001).

Nevertheless, we find the observation of one respondent interesting: the characteristics considered crucial for the success of male leaders are contrary to the traits commonly attributed to women (i.e., what is perceived as positive in men leaders perceived as negative in women leaders), as well as that executive power is more readily given to men. Studies (Ibarra, Ely & Kolb, 2013: 7) suggest that 'women who dominate the traditionally male domains are perceived as competent but less liked by their male counterparts, that is, behaviours that suggest self-esteem/self-confidence in men are perceived by women as arrogance or assertiveness, while women who are in the position of authority and behave according to conventional feminine style are liked, but not respected, and are considered too emotional to make firm decisions and too soft to be strong leaders'.

Examples:

'I consider myself a loud member of the board, when appropriate. If there is a conflict of opinions the decision is always made according to the opinions expressed, not guided by the concept of female-male hierarchy.' (#1)

''(...) Men are favoured when it comes to decision-making or executive power, and women do not get those positions. Even if they do, their decision-making power is limited or the way they are perceived is limited. When a woman has all the characteristics of a good leader, that is, what literature and practice define as a good leader, such as determination, responsibility, imposing opinions and the like, then the perception of the woman being that she is 'cold', arrogant, assertive. When a man in the same position bears the same traits, then he is a successful leader, resolute, straight thinker, taking responsibility. That's the stereotype, the perception that exists to this day. Women are expected to constantly manifest some amount of emotion, empathy, or some kind of mild behaviour. But when they show that, on the other hand, these positions are at risk of being perceived as weak, or not given full decision-making power. Otherwise, I personally always express my opinion and fight for my position." (#3)

'Active member of the BDs - my opinion is equally valued and taken into consideration.' (#6)

'I consider myself a loud, active member of the BDs. I always express my opinion, even in situations where it might be perceived unfavourably or when I know in advance that it will not be immediately accepted. In my opinion, deliberate hiding, opportunity for convenience, is a dangerous phenomenon. In changing conditions, such as increased competition, passivity can be a serious factor for untimely adjustment and failure.' (#4)

'I am considered as one of the most vociferous, who always expresses her opinion and it is being respected, I have had no problems with my opinion being underestimated because of gender.' (#5)

'I consider myself an active member of the BD. I think it's very important for a person to be confident and support their opinions with arguments. I don't think men's opinions are taken into consideration more, but every board member gives their opinions and suggestions on how to improve certain processes. I believe and affirm that when confronted with arguments and facts, there is much more room for rational, logical and reasonable decisions and much less room for subjectivity and bias. Within my sector, if necessary, I am amending or supplementing procedures and instructions and they are accepted by other members and the President of the BD.' (#8)

'I consider myself an outspoken and active member, always guided by arguments.' (#9)

EQUALITY WITH MALE BOARD MEMBERS

Almost all of the respondents answered affirmatively for whether they felt equal to the male board members. In two interviews, it was emphasized that women in senior positions are expected to prove themselves professionally, with continuous and maximum effort and achieve excellent performance and results, with no room for error. While one respondent cited family relationships with ownership structure as a factor that usually influences the selection of board members (as opposed to her case).

Examples:

'There are no male members in the BD.' (#11)

'I feel equal, and this emanates from built-in professional integrity, clearly set personal principles and a preserved freedom to choose and decide.' (#4)

'I must emphasize that a woman who is not in any family relationship with the ownership structure and sits in that position, is a great rarity in our area (...) I do not feel any different or less respected by colleagues sharing that table. My experience generally shows that I have never felt inferior to the male members of the boards where I participate. Fortunately, I participate in boards where the opinion is not valued on the basis of the gender of the speaker, but on their worth.' (#3)

'Yes, I feel equal to any member of the BD, including the male members. It is because of my self-confidence and the reasoning behind my views and opinions.' (#8)

'Yes, I absolutely feel equal to the male members of the BD, there is no discrimination on that basis.' (#5)

'I am aware that because of the very nature of women and social norms, women are certainly faced with having to work harder than men. However, I am firmly convinced that if both men and women work harder than usual and if both men and women have similar performances and qualities, it will eventually become increasingly irrelevant whether you are a man or a woman, and it's becoming more relevant how you perform.' (#8)

'I feel I'm equal because I have deserved that right, with maximum effort and extensive work around the clock, but I know that despite it all, I am absolutely not allowed to make any mistake in my work.' (#9)

SOURCES OF POWER WOMEN USE AS MEMBERS OF BDS

In addition, respondents were asked, as BD members, what job situations and sources of power they used. For the analysis of the data obtained in relation to this question, the data are quantified, i.e., represented by the frequency of responses.

Table 3. Sources of power women in different work situations

In setting strategic goals	1) Expert power[64] (N=8) 2) Structural power[65] (N=6) 3) Prestige power[66] (N=3) 4) Ownership power[67] (N=2)
In making business decisions	1) Expert power (N=9) 2) Structural power (N=8) 3) Ownership power (N=3) 4) Prestige power (N=2)
In creating organisational policies	1) Expert power (N=9) 2) Structural power (N=5) 3) Ownership power (N=2) 4) Prestige power (N=1)
In appointing managers and general directors	1) Structural power (N=7) 2) Expert power (N=7) 3) Ownership power (N=2) 4) Prestige power (N=1)
In dealing with financial matters	1) Expert power (N=8) 2) Structural power (N=5) 3) Ownership power (N=3) 4) Prestige power (N=1)
In relations with stakeholders (employees, shareholders, creditors, distributors, government officials...)	1) Prestige power (N=7) 2) Structural power (N=7) 3) Expert power (N=7) 4) Ownership power (N=3)

It can be seen that in different work situations, women as members of the BDs use multiple sources of power. The analysis implies that those with ownership (3 respondents in total) use it in almost all work/organisation related situations, then that when it comes to strategic planning, organisational policy-making, business and finance decision making, such as and the choice of leadership, both expert and structural power is used in parallel, with expert power predominating, while prestigious power is equally used in stakeholder relations, in addition to structural and expert power.

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64 It implies adequate expertise, professional background and experience in same or similar positions.

65 Stems from the formal position and hierarchical authority of the organisation.

66 Personal status, reputation, credibility, membership in elite organisations.

67 Associated with the founding status or ownership stake/shares in the company.

Such data are very positive and encouraging, primarily because it has been shown that women in the Macedonian business environment, as members of the BDs, simultaneously and appropriately use several sources of power. This is also important because when structural power, as a formal and legitimate power coming from the very top management (in the case of all respondents), is supported by the possession of expert power, it is strengthened and maximized (Lunenberg , 2012: 6). Respondents also use prestige power appropriately, especially in the relations with other stakeholders, thus increasing their influence over others (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978: 145; Dalton and Dalton, 2011). Ownership power is expected to be used wherever possible and necessary, especially since the sample businesses are joint-stock companies, and for this purpose, shareholder representatives are also part of the BDs. One of the main functions of boards is to protect the interests of shareholders (Hillman & Dalziel, 2003: 383, 387).

INFLUENCE OF WOMEN AS MEMBERS OF BDS

In this section, in order to measure the impact women BD members perceive they have on other board members and stakeholders, in different work situations, respondents had to locate their answers on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is 'no impact' and 5 is 'large impact'..

Graph 1. Perception of the impact women BD members have on others (median value analysis)

Please rate the INFLUENCE you percieve you have on OTHERS as BD members in each of the situations listed below

In relations with stakeholders (employees, shareholders, creditors, distributors, govt officials...)
4,27

In dealing with financial matters
4

In appointing managers and general directors
3,72

In creating organisational policies
4,09

In making business decisions
4,36

In setting strategic goals for the organisations
4,36

0   1   2   3   4   5
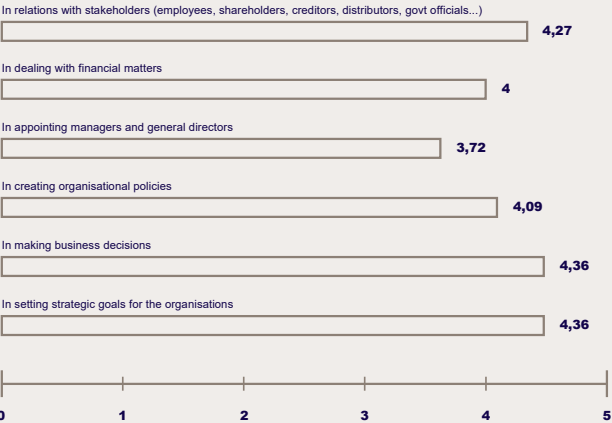
The results show that women as BD members feel they have great influence in all work-related situations since almost all the values obtained for each of the variables are concentrated in the high-positive axis interval (between 4 and 5). The smallest impact is detected in appointing managers and general manager (between 3 and 4).

The last data can be explained, according to the analysis of the laws and conversations with the respondents, is that the Supervisory Board is usually appointed by the Director-General..

The data on this are also positive: women contribute and influence to a large extent to strategic goals of the organization, business decisions and relationships with stakeholders, which are their main functions as board members (Hillman & Dalziel, 2003, Bainbridge, 1993).

FOCUSING THE IMPACT ON THE INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

Regarding the question of where do women as BD members rather focus their influence, it can be concluded that when women also perform the role of directors/managers, their influence is focused both towards the internal (employees, processes, products, organisation, strategy, finance) and the external environment (shareholders, business partners, distributors, suppliers, customers, government officials, media, competition, environment, company image and reputation). However, the focus towards the internal environment is prevailing, most likely due to the direct involvement in the management structure and organisational processes of the sample respondents, who are mostly employed in companies and hold senior management positions. The implication arising from the two answers is the understanding that women in such positions can further increase their influence and power through active engagement in other formal groups (professional associations, other managing boards), and again relate to established relationships with foreign partners as significant.

Examples:

'Both to the external and the internal, but in terms of the current responsibilities, greater focus is given to the internal business environment.' (#1)

'Since I participate in the work of several BDs, my participation is multivalent.' (#3)

'Mostly to the internal, the external only partly.'." (#11)

'My influence is chiefly focused internally. In my field of work, it is primary that the system is placed in compliance with the regulations, which means a clear organisation, competencies and

responsibilities, defined strategies and policies, internal rules, procedures and guidelines, appropriate control functions, selection and continuous staff upgrading, appropriate technological information support. All of this has been a challenge for me, but primarily in preparation for the task of enabling appropriate alignment to the external business environment. A well-established company with a high level of self-esteem can actively engage with the outside world and offer a quality product, service and customer care.' (#4)

'In line with the formal division of powers, my influence is more directed towards the internal environment.' (#6)

'My influence is focused on technical issues, mainly because of my expertise and years of experience in managing that field - managing production staff, but also to a long-term communication with foreign partners on that basis.' (#5)

'My influence is focused on the internal environment when it comes to the production process, and to the external for product distribution and marketing.' (#10)

'As I also perform the role of a General Director, my influence has to be directed both to the internal and the external environment. In my view, the position and engagement in the association and other working groups further enhances my influence and power in the external environment.' (#9)

KEY VALUES OF WOMEN BD MEMBERS

Respondents identified the following values as most valuable for them, which they consider to 'make a difference' and leave a mark on the Macedonian business environment:

Table no. 4 Values of women BD members

More frequently mentioned	Less frequently mentioned
Professionalism (N=10)	Analytical and systematised approach (N=4)
Commitment (N=9)	Readiness for change, challenges and risks (N=4)
Responsibility (N=9)	Reputation (N=3)
Knowledge (N=8)	Innovation (N=3)
Integrity (N=7)	Creativity (N=3)
Credibility (N=6)	Transparency (N=3)
Leadership N=5	Persistence (N=2)
Continuous learning and development (N=5)	Impulsivity (N=1)
Loyalty (N=5)	

It can be concluded that for women, as members of the boards of directors, the values of achievement, self-direction, stimulation and power are the most important ones. According to Schwartz (2012), these four clusters are complementary to each other and jointly refer to self-empowerment and openness to change as major individual goals.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The fact that a growing number of companies are taking action to ensure gender equality and have this issue as their strategic commitment speaks to the extent the equal representation of women in companies, especially in managerial positions, is a priority for their work (Macedonian Human Resources Association[68]). The regulation of quotas regarding the 40% representation of women on company boards is a positive practice which, following the example of European countries, should undoubtedly be introduced the Republic of North Macedonia, both in the public and private sectors, in order to remove potential barriers women face in their career development, and also reduce the risk of manipulating members' selection criteria, depending on the gender of the candidates (in favour of men). Also, the presence of women in governing bodies is a potential motivating factor for proactive behavior and a desire to involve other women.

However, the analysis shows that it is even more important for women to continuously work on building their professional background, which will justify and support their structural/formal power in senior management positions by possessing expert and prestigious power, thus directly increasing their authority and influence. According to research findings, this primarily means appropriate and specialised advanced education, which will provide women with formal qualifications and expertise. Next, it is important to meet the criteria for career advancement in the organisation, with the acquired work experience and leadership positions being an important factor in developing managerial skills and competencies, and business knowledge. The following factors are of particular importance: credibility, reputation or public image of women in such positions, as well as the professional networks they have the potential to create. Possible mechanisms for achieving this goal are identified in the paper: building and maintaining personal integrity, visibility or public recognition, active participation in professional associations (associations and chambers), membership in other governing or supervisory boards and schools abroad - which directly provides a highly qualified and international professional network of contacts.

Because, if quota regulations exist while no suitable female candidates can be found inside or outside the organisation, in all sectors/industries, a serious problem could arise for the organisation, its performance and competitiveness, which could negatively affect the implementation process of such a practice and could undermine its viability and sustainability.

The companies (in the sample) are joint-stock companies, and one of the main tasks of the BDs is to protect the interests of shareholders, hence, also having an equity stake and/or founding status is an advantage in these companies. While ideal, it is still rare to have structural, ownership,

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68 There is no data on the year of issue.

expert and prestigious power as a board member. In the context of this issue, as a recommendation for future research, it would be interesting to determine the status or position of women on the boards of companies dominated by family ownership structures.

The analysed responses reveal that once women are given the status of BD members, they are considered equal, active and vociferous members, whose opinion is heard and valued; women greatly contribute to and influence the organisation's strategic goals, business decisions and stakeholder relations, which are also their main goals as board members; there is a number of boards dominated by women, or over 30%, which (specifically for the sample) rejects the assumption of tokenism and repression of women's voice as a marginalised group on the boards.

Other notable findings show that women have intrinsic motivation for work and board memberships, exhibit high professional ambition, as well as high self-efficacy (actively selecting the best opportunities, managing situations by avoiding or neutralising obstacles, setting goals and standards, planning, preparation, accomplishment, investing effort, creative problem solving, learning from experience, vision for success). The values respondents consider to be key (self-direction, stimulation and power) indicate having individual goals related to self-empowerment and openness to change.

The listed positive features, along with the described professional background required, should serve as a role model or example for other women, encouraging and empowering them to take appropriate actions to properly position for their desired jobs..

However, one of the respondents observed that traits considered crucial for success in men leaders contradict the traits typically assigned to women leaders, which confirms the usual global pattern. This perception, linked to the stereotypes of male and female roles, indicates that it is necessary to develop and engage in public debate to raise awareness of women in management positions in order to differentiate the perceptions of the roles that women have in their private/family life and at the workplace.

Our recommendation for future research is to examine the implication of the data analysis indicating that executive power (represented by CEO and president of the board) is most commonly entrusted to men.

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44) https://www.mtm.mk/biznis/24650-zhenite-upravuvaat-so-mali-kompanii-vo-golemite-dominiraat-mazhite

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APPENDIX: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Ratio between women and men on the Board of Directors:

no._____women : no._____men

Degree of completed education:

_____

How long have you been a member of the BDs?

_____ г.

Are you an employee of the company of which BD you are a member?

Yes   No

Do you have a founding status or ownership stake in the company of which BDs you are a member?

Yes   No

1.   What is your personal motivation to be a member of the BDs?

2.   In your opinion, what are the main reasons why you have been elected to the BDs?

3.   Do you believe that the same criteria for joining the BD applied for you as a woman and for the male BD members?

4.   Is there any formal rule/policy in the company/sector/activity that requires gender diversity on the BDs? If applicable, please indicate it.

5.   Do you consider yourself an active (vociferous) or passive (silent) BD member? How often do you state your opinion and how is it valued? How often do you deliberately state your opinion because you know in advance that it will not be taken into account? Are men louder and their opinion 'worth more'? Please explain.

6. Do you generally feel equal to the male members of the BD? Please explain.

7. Where is your influence as a BD member rather focused? To the internal and/or external business environment? Please explain by provding an example.

8. Please indicate (by X) the POWER SOURCES you use as a member of the BD for each of the following situations:

	Structural power (formal position and hierarchical authority in the organisation)	Property power (founding status or equity stake/ shares in the company)	Expert power (relevant expertise, professional background and experience in the same or similar positions)	Prestige power (personal status, reputation, credibility, membership in elite organisations)
In setting strategic goals				
In making business decisions				
In creating organisational policies				
In appointing managers and general directors				
In dealing with financial matters				
In relations with stakeholders (employees, shareholders, creditors, distributors, government officials...)				

9.   Please rate (by circling the value) the IMPACT you feel you have on OTHERS as a BD member in each of the situations listed below:

	No impact	Minor impact	Partial impact	Large impact	Very large impact
In setting strategic goals					
In making business decisions					
In creating organisational policies					
In appointing managers and general directors					
In dealing with financial matters					
In relations with stakeholders (employees, shareholders, creditors, distributors, government officials...)					

10.   What are the key values through which you personally feel you 'make a difference'/leave a mark on the Macedonian business environment?

ESSENCE OR DECORUM?

ANALYSIS OF WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION AND PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES' DECISION-MAKING IN NORTH MACEDONIA

MISHO DOKMANOVIKJ, PH.D

CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS

SUT   State University of Tetovo

UGD   University 'Goce Delchev' - Shtip

UIST   University of Information Sciences and Technologies 'St. Apostle Paul '- Ohrid

UKIM   University 'Ss. Cyril and Methodius'- Skopje

UKLO   'Ss. Clement of Ohrid' University - Bitola

UMT   University 'Mother Teresa' - Skopje

2 ESSENCE OR DECORUM: ANALYSIS OF WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION AND RARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES' DECISION-MAKING IN NORTH MACEDONIA

<div style="background:red">INTRODUCTION</div>

Over the past ten years, the field of higher education has seen remarkable successes in improving gender equality. Statistics pertaining to these issues are on the rise. A growing number of women are enrolling at universities, graduating, but continue to attain higher educational ranks (master's and doctoral) that increase their employment opportunities, including at universities in North Macedonia. According to the latest available statistics, the number of women students enrolled in the 2017/18 school year was 31,669 or 55.6% of the total number of students enrolled.[69] At the same time, the number of graduated women students was 57.5% in 2017.[70]

The fact that the field of higher education is a key point and instrument that enables and will enable to improve the position of women in society in the medium and long term (the traditional educational process, increasing the number of female students enrolled, as well as increasing the number of female student graduates at different study cycles) was an additional reason for choosing this research topic.

In this regard, the main purpose of this research was to analyse the current trends in the representation of women at public universities in the country, especially in terms of their participation in the governance and decision-making processes.

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69 State Statistical Office. "Enrolled students of the higher vocational schools and faculties in the Republic of Macedonia in the academic year 2017/2018 (first cycle of studies)". Accessed May 22, 2019 http://www.stat.gov.mk/pdf/2018/2.1.18.26.pdf

70 State Statistical Office. "Number of graduates in 2017". Accessed May 22, 2019 http://www.stat.gov.mk/pdf/2018/2.1.18.14.pdf

It is an issue that has not been explored in detail in the country. Through the research, in addition to determining the key statistical trends, we are trying to go a step further, namely, to see how these trends are manifested in the actual dynamics of university power. In other words, this research seeks to add value to the research discourse regarding the real role women play in university decision-making processes, whether their participation is essential or only at the declarative level.

As for the methodology, the research was lead from the postulate that for the determination of the effectiveness of existing policies it is extremely important to analyse the views of the categories to which those policies relate. On this basis, a methodological framework was created which included primary and secondary sources of information. The primary sources of information are based on an analysis of the available statistics, as well as a survey of public universities and interviews with key stakeholders, while the secondary - on an overview of key laws and documents related to the regulation of the issue of interest at the national level.

REVIEW OF RELEVANT SOURCES

The interest of the public, as well as of researchers in issues related to the situation and trends of women's participation in different spheres of social life, is constantly increasing. In this context, it should be emphasized that more research has been conducted in the country pertaining to gender equality, as well as policy-making processes over the past decade. To a large extent, it relates to employment and labour market participation (Care International; Basheska, M., Stavrevska E.B., 2016; Blazheva, A.; Kazandziska, M., Risteska, M., Schmidt, W., 2012; Reaktor, 2012b; Romalitiko, 2017; University of Tourism and Management, 2018; Cvetkoska, S., 2016), participation in politics and policy processes at the national and local level (CSO 'Local Development Agency' - Struga, CSO 'The Blue Project' - Ohrid; Practical Note 3; Reaktor, 2015; Romalitiko, 2016), Violence Against Women (Reactor, 2012a), Demographic Policies and Gender Equality (Jens 21st Century Woman Center, 2012), Sustainable Development (Jovanoski B., et al., 2016), Women in the Media (Korubin, N., et al., 2014), Women in the Rural Environment (Helsinki Committee for Human Rights of the Republic of Macedonia, 2018; Center for Research and Policy Making, 2012) etc.

One of the few studies addressing the issue of gender equality in the academic environment is Stavrevska, *Towards Gender Equality: Obstacles and Perspectives on the Academic and Professional Progress of Women and Girls*, Skopje: Impact Research Institute, 2019. This study maps the obstacles and challenges women and girls in northern Macedonia face in academic and professional life.

With regard to the current environment, which is relevant to the topic of interest in this research, it is important to emphasize that North Macedonia is a signatory to a number of international conventions that guarantee the equality of men and women in many spheres adopted by the United Nations (International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, UN[71] and the Optional Protocol[72] etc.), International Labor Organization (the Convention against Discrimination [73], Equal Pay Convention - Convention no. 100[74]), Council of Europe (European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms[75] and Protocol no. 12 to the Convention [76], European Social Charter) and others.

In addition, several laws have been enacted in the country that operationalise the gender equality provided for in the Constitution, namely: The Law on Equal Opportunities for Men and Women [77], the Law on Prevention and Protection against Discrimination [78], the Labor Relations Law [79], the Law on Employment and Insurance in Case of Unemployment[80], the Law on Protection against Harassment in the Workplace [81],etc. Further, the country has adopted several documents promoting gender equality (Gender Equality Strategy (2013-2020), National Strategy for Equality and Non-Discrimination (2016-2020), National Employment Strategy (2016-2020), etc.).

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71 United Nations. Office of the High Commissioner."Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women".Accessed on May 7, 2019. https://www.ohchr.org/documents/professionalinterest/cedaw.pdf

72 United Nations. Office of the High Commissioner."Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women". Accessed on May 7, 2019. https://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/pdf/cedaw-one.pdf.

73 International Labor Organisation. "Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111)." Accessed on May 8, 2019, https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C111

74 International Labor Organisation. "Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No.100)." Accessed on May 8, 2019 https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C100.

75 European Court of Human Rights. "European Convention on Human Rights". Accessed on May 9, 2019. https://www.echr.coe.int/Documents/Convention_ENG.pdf

76 Council of Europe."Protocol No. 12 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms". Accessed on May 8,2019. https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/search-on-treaties/-/conventions/treaty/177

77 Law on Equal Opportunities for Men and Women ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" No. 6/2012 and 166/2014).

78 Law on Prevention and Protection against Discrimination ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" No. 50/2010 and C. No. 82/2010, "Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" No.127/2010).

79 Labor Relations Act, consolidated text, available at http://www.mtsp.gov.mk/content/pdf/zakoni/ZRO%20Precisten%2074-15.pdf

80 Law on Employment and Unemployment Insurance ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" No. 153/2012).

81 Law on Protection against Harassment in the Workplace ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia", No. 79/2013).

However, in the context of the key issue for this research, gender equality related to higher education in the country seems to be more declarative rather than substantive. To illustrate, the issue of women's inclusion in higher education is not covered in the 2016 Annual Report on the Implementation of the Gender Equality Strategy (Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, 2017). In addition, in the Education Strategy 2018-2025, the issue of gender equality is stated without defining the proposed operational measures and/or objectives to be achieved in the said project (Ministry of Education and Science, 2018).

It was these trends and conditions that were the additional reason for conducting the research. In this sense, this research is a pioneering endeavour in studying the participation of women in governance and decision-making at universities, especially due to the fact that in the field of higher education, key indicators of the number of students, graduates and female employees are constantly improving.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology of this research is based on primary and secondary sources.

Primary sources include:

(1) Statistics on the number of female employees (teachers and associates) in universities with a particular focus on public universities in the last 9 academic years (processed data in Tables 1 and 2);

(2) Data on the representation of women in the Rector's Office (Rectors and Pro-Rectors) and Dean's Faculties (Deans and Vice-Deans). These data were provided through the information available on the websites of the universities/faculties and are integrated into Tables 3 and 4;

(3) A survey was conducted in 218 respondents (women employed as teachers and associates at public universities) pertaining to their position, as well as the involvement in processes and decision-making. The survey was conducted electronically using computer software between April 10 and 25, 2019. An email with a link to the survey was sent to a total of 902 emails listed on the university websites. The survey covered 218 respondents (i.e., 23.14% of the surveyed persons), employed women selected for teaching-scientific or associate degree at public universities in the country.

(4) Interviews with teachers (6). When collecting and analysing the data, it was taken into account that they were used to assess whether these positive statistical numbers and trends were also manifested in the actual dynamics of university power. For these reasons, from April

10 to 20, 2019, interviews were conducted with 6 teachers - full-time female professors, one from each of the Fraskatian classification areas. Given the fact that this survey aroused a great deal of interest among the respondents (some sent longer messages with their views on the issues of interest but also contacted the researcher by telephone), these views were further included in the results of the interviews as qualitative data.

The secondary data included: existing legislation, policies, practices that enable more active participation of women in decision-making processes at universities. The volume of data is adjusted to the project timeframe and survey period. Particular attention was paid to the following research questions:

- What is the representation of women in the Macedonian public universities??

- What are the factors that influence the positive trends in women's representation at universities??

- Do women participate in the governance structure of public universities and their faculties? To what extent?

- Do women influence decision-making processes at public universities and how?

- Do women have decisive power in higher education??

METHODOLOGICAL LIMITATIONS

Finally, the chosen methodology faced several limitations. First, due to the relatively short period of research, part of the data are based on information available on university websites. In this regard, we faced the challenge that some universities/faculties did not publish contact email addresses of employed teachers or associates (UGDs) or did not publish data on senior executives (vice-rectors, deans, vice-chancellors) on their website - site (UMT). Due to the time factor, data could not be obtained through the instrument - request for access to public information. Second, comparative research on this specific issue has not been undertaken in the country, nor is there a policy of explicitly promoting gender equality in the specific sector that limits the possibilities for analyzing existing documents and/or other relevant acts..

In this part of the study, we present the key research results. According to the methodology, the results are divided into three parts: 1) overview of relevant statistics; 2) survey results and 3) interview results.

REVIEW OF RELEVANT STATISTICAL DATA

The research began with an analysis of the current situation and trends in the number of employed women, selected in teaching and associate titles, at universities in the country with a particular focus on public universities. The data are based on official information published by the State Statistical Office and are integrated into the table below (State Statistical Office, 2019).

Table 1. Number of teaching staff and associates at the universities in North Macedonia (per school year, from the academic year 2010/11)

Academic year	No. of teachers and associates	Share of to-tal academic staff (in %)	Chain indices[82]	Base indices[83]
2010/2011	1.823	47,2%	0,0	100,0
2011/2012	1.729	47,2%	94,8	94,8
2012/2013	1.633	47,6%	94,4	89,6
2013/2014*	1.673	49,9%	102,4	91,8
2014/2015	1.710	47,3%	102,2	93,8
2015/2016	1.885	47,4%	110,2	103,4
2016/2017	1.910	46,4%	101,3	104,8
2017/2018	1.964	47,6%	102,8	107,7
2018/2019	2.060	47,7%	104,9	113,0

82 This index shows the change that occurs in the current year compared to the previous year (i.e., academic year).

83 This index shows the change that occurs compared to the base year (2010/11).

Table 2. Number of teaching staff and associates at public universities in North Macedonia (per school year, from the academic year 2010/11)

Academic year	No. of teachers and associates	Share of total academic staff (in %)	Chain indices	Base indices
2010/2011	1.401	48,2%	0,0	100,0
2011/2012	1.380	48,9%	98,5	98,5
2012/2013	1.355	49,2%	98,2	96,7
2013/2014*	1.389	51,5%	102,5	99,1
2014/2015	1.425	48,2%	102,6	101,7
2015/2016	1.544	48,1%	108,4	110,2
2016/2017	1.567	47,2%	101,5	111,8
2017/2018	1.678	48,9%	107,1	119,8
2018/2019**	1.710	48,3%	101,9	122,1

* Data for the academic year 2013/2014 do not include the State University of Tetovo.

** In the academic years 2017/2018 and 2018/2019, data for the University 'Mother Teresa' are included.

At the same time, as part of the research, we also conducted research on the representation of women in the management of universities (rector, vice-rector) and faculties (dean, vice-dean) at public universities in North Macedonia. These data are integrated into Tables no. 3 and 4 and are based on the data available on the university websites.[84] Unfortunately, some of the data were not available for several faculties, most of them for the University 'Mother Teresa'.

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84 A detailed preview of the data listed in Table no. 3 is provided in Annex no. 1 of this document.

Table 3. Overview of gender representation of current rectors and vice-rectors at the public universities in North Macedonia (according to web site data), April 2019.

Overview of the gender representation of current rectors and vice-rectors at the public universities in North Macedonia (data available from web-sites), April 2019.				
Univerity	**Rector**		**Vice-Rector**	
	m	**w**	**m**	**w**
UKIM	1	0	2	2
UKLO	1	0	1	3
SUT	1	0	3	1
UGD	1	0	2	0
UIST	1	0	1	0
UMT	1	0	-	-
Total	**6**	**0**	**9**	**6**
Percentage share	**100%**	**0%**	**60%**	**40%**

Table 4. Overview of the gender representation of current deans and vice-deans at the public universities in North Macedonia (according to data available from websites), April 2019

Overview of the gender representation of current deans and vice-deans at the public universities in North Macedonia (according to data available from websites), April 2019.				
University	**Dean**		**Vice-dean**	
	m	**w**	**m**	**w**
University of 'Ss. Cyril and Methodius'- Skopje				
Total	20	3	32	27
Percentage share	87%	13%	54%	46%
'Ss. Clement of Ohrid' University - Bitola				
Total	7	2	9	13
Percentage share	78%	22%	41%	59%
State University of Tetovo				
Total	13	0	16	7
Percentage share	100%	0%	70%	30%
University 'Goce Delchev' - Shtip				
Total	9	5	7	6
Percentage share	64%	36%	54%	46%
UIST	-	-	-	-
University 'Mother Teresa' - Skopje	-	-	-	-
Total	**36**	**10**	**64**	**53**
Percentage share	**78%**	**22%**	**55%**	**45%**

As noted at the outset, the survey was conducted between 10 and 25 of April 2019. The survey covered 218 respondents (i.e., 23.14% of the persons surveyed), employed women selected for teaching scientific or associate staff positions at the public universities in the country. As for the universities where they are employes, 67.86% work at the UKIM; 21.94% - at UKLO; 5.1% - SUT, 4.08% - UGD and 1.02% - UIST. In the survey, we did not receive any response from any of the employees of University 'Mother Teresa' - Skopje.

Graph no. 1

Which university do you work for?
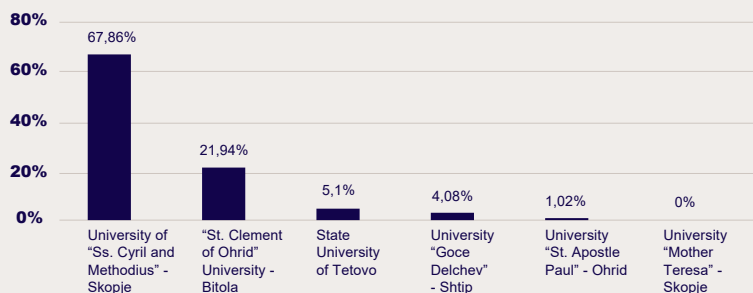
Regarding the title the teachers and associates were elected for, of the respondents included in the survey, 37.56% are full-time professors; 37.06% - part-time professors; 20.81% - docents, 3.55% - assistants and 1.02% - junior assistants.

What is your title?

40%	
30%	
20%	
10%	
0%	

1,02% — Junior assistant
3,55% — Assistant
20,81% — Docent
37,06% — Part-time Professor
37,56% — Full-time Professor
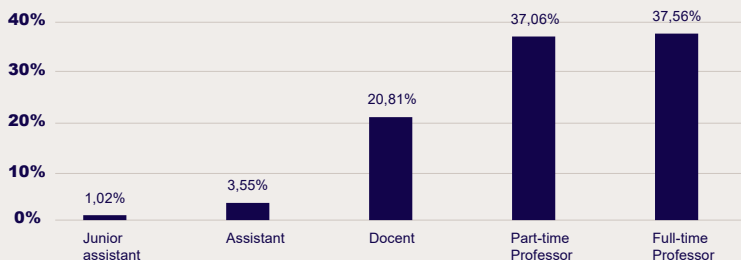
In terms of the scientific field they work in, 41.75% work in the field of social sciences; 19.59% in technical and technological sciences; 15.46% in humanities; 10.31% in biotech sciences: 7.73% in natural sciences and 5.15% in medical sciences and health.

As for the age of the respondents, 1.52% of the respondents were at the age of 23 to 30; 47.72% were from 31 to 45; 43.65% from 45 to 60, and 7.11% are over 60 years of age.

In which scientific field do you work?

45%	
30%	
15%	
0%	

7,73% — Natural and Mathematical Sciences
19,59% — Technical and Technological Sciences
5,15% — Medicine and health
10,31% — Biotechnical Sciences
41,75% — Social Sciences
15,46% — Humanities
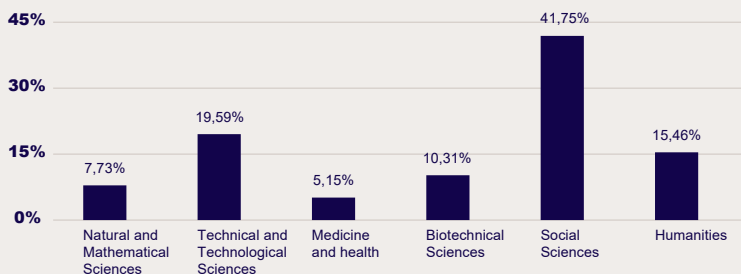
In terms of nationality, 89.34% of the respondents declared they are Macedonian; 5.58% as Albanian, 2.54% as Serbian; 1.02% as Vlachs, 0.51% as Turkish and 1.02% other.

Graph no. 4
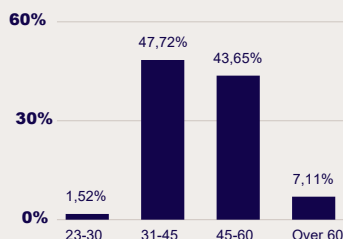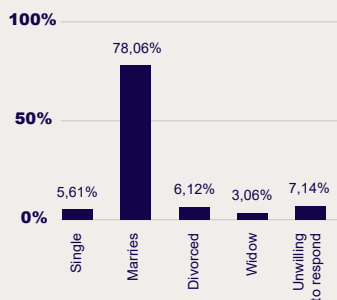
Graph no. 5

Years of Age

Marital status

As for the age of the respondents, 1.52% of the respondents were at the age of 23 to 30; 47.72% were from 31 to 45; 43.65% from 45 to 60, and 7.11% are over 60 years of age.

In terms of marital status, 78.06% of the respondents are married; 6.12% are divorced; 5.61% are unmarried; 3.06% are widows and 7.14 were unwilling to respond. Of the respondents, 83.16% have children, 11.22% have no children, and 5.61% were unwilling to respond.

The questions regarding the views and perceptions of the respondents were divided into two groups: 1) personal views and 2) the work environment of the interviewees.

The following question was given regarding the section devoted to personal views: 'As a teacher, or associate at a public university, do you feel equal to your colleagues from the opposite sex?" To the question, a relatively high percentage of respondents - 78.6%, 21.4% gave a negative answer. We also received a similar answer to the question 'Do your male colleagues, elected at the same time as you, earn higher monthly income than you?' To the question, 75.61% gave a negative answer, 12.65 gave a positive answer and other - 11.71% (most often 'I don't know' or 'I have no information').

**As a teacher, or associate
at a public university, do you
feel equal to your colleagues
from the opposite sex?**

```
100% ┐
     │        78,6%
     │         ███
 50% ┤         ███
     │         ███            21,4%
     │         ███            ███
  0% ┴─────────███────────────███──────
              Yes             No
```
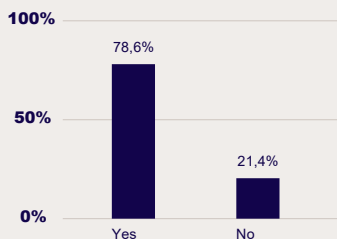
**Do your colleagues,
elected at the same time
as you, earn higher
monthly income than you?**

```
 80% ┐               75,61%
     │                ███
     │                ███
 40% ┤                ███
     │     12,65%      ███            11,71%
     │      ███        ███             ███
  0% ┴──────███────────███─────────────███────
           Yes         No             Other
```
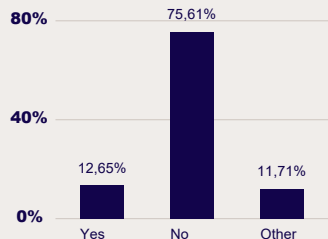
One of the indicators of women's participation in the work of universities is their participation in the management and decision-making processes. For this reason, the survey included questions related to past experiences of running for office, as well as the motives and reasons that encouraged or prevented them from running. The basic parameter showed that 44.39% of the respondents were elected to the university management position (Head of Institute, Dean, Vice-Dean, Senate Member, Vice-Rector).

**Have you been elected to a managerial position
at your university (Head of Institute, Dean, Vice-Dean,
Senate Member, Pro-Rector)?**

```
 60% ┐                                    55,61%
     │                                     ███
     │            44,39%                   ███
 40% ┤             ███                     ███
     │             ███                     ███
 20% ┤             ███                     ███
     │             ███                     ███
  0% ┴─────────────███─────────────────────███──────
                  Yes                       No
```
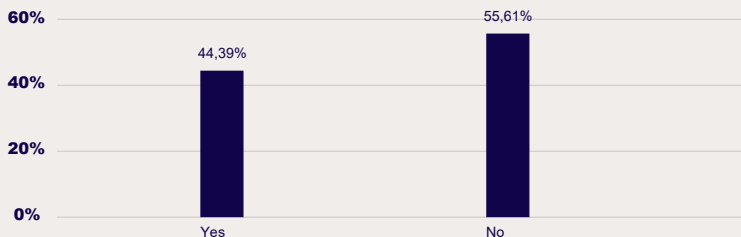
In that regard, to the question 'What management position have you considered running for at your institution?' As many as 44.19% responded that they did not consider running. Other respondents were considering running for offices, such as Head of Institute/organisational unit (26.51%), Dean (12.56%), Vice-Dean (16.26%), Senate Member (15.35%), Pro-Rector (1.86%) and Rector).

Graph no. 9

What management position have you considered running for at your institution?
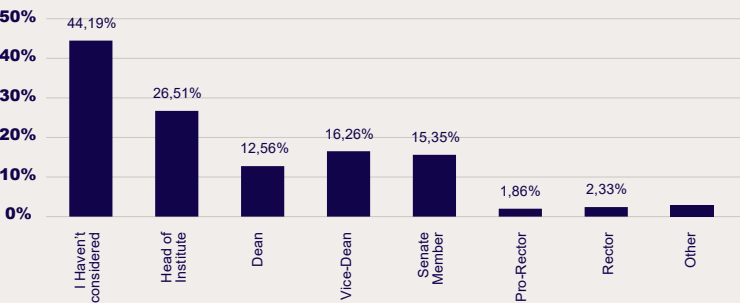
On the other hand, only 34.1% of the respondents have applied for a managerial position (Head of Institute, Dean, Vice-Dean, Senate Member, Pro-Rector). The main reasons that prompted them to run were: 'I want to change my work environment' (as high as 64.86%), career advancement (29.73%), financial reasons (4.05%) and other reasons (9.46%, most commonly the obligation to help the collective).

Graph no. 10

What motiveted you to run?
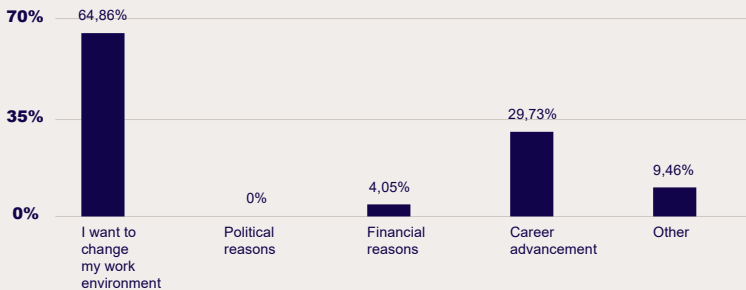
As previously stated, 65.9% of those surveyed never run for a university management position. The reasons why they did not run for university management positions are as follows: 'I cannot see myself into that' role (47.79%), family reasons (14.71%), political reasons (8.82%), 'management as a male-dominated environment leaves little room for women' (5.88%). 27.94% of the respondents listed other reasons: age, interpersonal relations in the institution, lack of time due to work responsibilities and health reasons.

Graph no. 11

What prevents you from running?
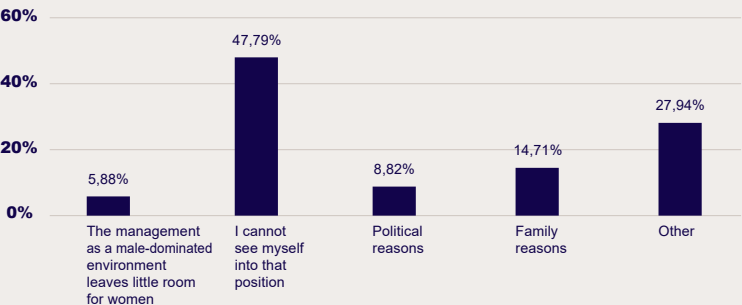
To the supporting question of 'Have you taken concrete actions to improve your position as a woman at the university?' 39.51% gave a positive answer, 51.22% gave a negative answer and 9.27% gave other responses (most commonly 'I never had the need').

The second section of the survey questions was devoted to the environment in which universities operate. For this reason, at the beginning of the second section of the survey, the women surveyees were given the opportunity to rate a given statement on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 - strongly disagree, 5 - completely agree).

Table 5.

VIEW RATED ON THE SCALE FROM 1 TO 5 (1 - STRONGLY DISAGREE, 5 - COMPLETELY AGREE)	Rate on the scale 1 - 5
The university where you work encourages and empowers women's participation in management and decision making.	3,48
The management of your faculty/institute encourages the participation of women in management and decision-making.	3,64
The opportunities for career advancement are equal for men and women at my university.	4,04
The fact that women are under-represented in managerial positions is largely their personal responsibility.	2,90
Men are more capable in management and leadership than women .	1,19
Women are less interested in attaining responsible and managerial positions.	2,51
As a woman, I do not get the same opportunities for professional development as the colleagues of the opposite sex.	1,71
As a woman, my freedom for research is limited at the university.	1,46
Men have more influence than women in my work environment.	2,49

In this second section of the survey, we also asked questions pertaining to the existence of documents (policies or strategies) for the promotion of gender equality. When asked 'Does your institution have developed a gender equality policy or strategy?, 4.41% answered 'yes, there are acts and procedures for gender equality at my institution' and 8.33% other (most commonly 'I have no information' or 'I don't know').

During the preparation of the survey, we identified potential points which could pose a restriction on women's participation and which are not related to governance or management. In this regard, the following points were identified as such: participation in the peer review committees, the committees for the evaluation and defence of doctoral theses, scheduling of work and teaching assignments, as well as women's participation in teaching and scientific councils.

When asked 'Do you think your faculty should pay attention to adequate gender representation in promotion committees for promotion to a higher position?', 46.7% answered 'not at all', 22, 84% answered 'yes'; 'yes, to a large degree" - 11.17%; 'partially' - 14.21% and 'yes, but to a lesser degree' - 5.08%.

Graph no. 12

Do you think that your faculty pays attention to the adequate gender representation in the composition of the reviewing committees for promotion to a higher position?
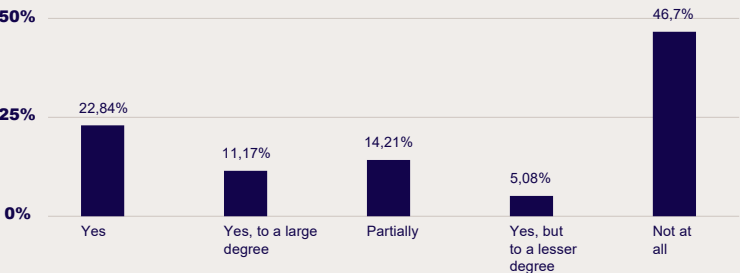
Similar results were obtained in answering the question 'Do you think that your faculty pays attention to the adequate gender representation in the composition of the committees for the evaluation and defense of master's and doctoral papers?". For as much as 50% the response to this question was 'not at all'; 21.94% answered 'yes'; 10.71% answered 'yes, to a large degree'; 14.80% answered 'partially' and 2.55 'yes, but to a lesser degree'.

Do you think that your faculty pays attention to the adequate gender representation in the composition of the committees for the evaluation and defense of master's and doctoral papers?

60%	
30%	50%
	21,94%
	10,71% 14,80%
0%	2,55%

Yes	Yes, to a large degree	Partially	You, but to a lesser degree	Not at all
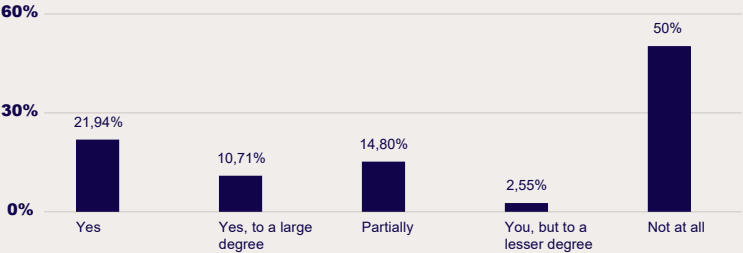
Regarding the role gender plays in determining the work schedule and assignments at the universities, the following answers were given: 'Gender does not play a role in the allocation of assignments' - 76.26%; 'Sometimes I feel that gender to a lesser extent influences allocation' - 17.66% and 'I feel that because I am a woman I'm often assigned less current subjects' - 6.06%.

When determining the work schedule and assignments at my faculty: Gender does not play a role in the allocation off assignments.

90%	
	76,26%
60%	
30%	
	17,66%
0%	6,06%

Gender has no role when allocating duties.	Sometimes I feel that gender to a lesser extent influences allocation.	I feel that because I am a woman I'm often assigned less current subjects.

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Regarding participation in the work of the teaching and scientific council, the following answers were given: 'discussing occasionally" - 49.75%; 'discussing regularly' - 18.59%; 'not discussing' - 17.59% and "discussing when personally affected with a particular issue' - 14.07%.

Finally, the question was raised about the factors that contribute to women's participation in the academic community. In this regard, 51.53% of the respondents stated the factor 'existence of academic freedom of the institutions', 29.08% - 'the number of women in the academic environment', 20.92% - 'the views of the heads of institutions', 19.90% - 'the existence of gender equality rules and procedures at the university level'.

Graph no. 15

Which factors, in your view, contribute to women's participation in the academic community?
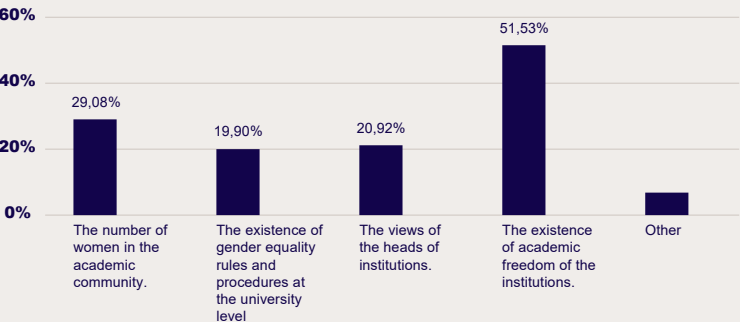
INTERVIEW RESULTS

As already outlined in the methodology description, the research also included interviews, as well as e-mails to university staff.

The following are the main conclusions of the interviews:

- There is a trend of improvement in the equality of women in terms of their percentage representation as employees at the universities, but also in their participation in the management of the faculties.

- There is a refreshing trend of female students increasingly being named best students, even in the technical sciences. However, this trend does not follow the labour market, which often favours male candidates in these areas.

- Up to the adoption of the new Law on Higher Education in 2018, maternity leave did not enter the required timeframe for election to a higher post, which created factual inequality in the advancement of candidate.

- Although there is no difference between doctoral candidates during the doctoral studies, post-doctoral inequality is most often manifested in the opportunities for professional development (study visits abroad, postdoctoral research, etc.), which affect the career development of candidates and which are the reason women with families opt less for this option.

- A very small number of women are opting to run for the top faculty offices even in areas where women's representation is close to 50%. On the other hand, it seems that women find it easier to run for Dean's offices in environments where they are a visible majority.

- Ten years ago, some cases of mobbing were recorded at some universities in the context of women's participation in decision-making processes, especially in the lower ranks.

Based on the data obtained from the applied methods, several conclusions can be drawn.

It can be concluded that the number of female teachers and associates of higher educational institutions has increased by 4.9% compared to the previous year and 13% compared to the school year 2010/2011 (base year). Their percentage share in the total number of employed teachers and associates at the public universities in the period 2010 to 2019 ranges from 47.2% to 51.5% of the total number of employees. This trend indicates gender equality in the number of employees of public universities in the country. In addition, the data generated indicate that the percentage of women participating in public universities is higher than at private universities.

In the last two years, there has been a more dynamic increase in the number of women teachers and associates compared to the increase in the total number of teachers and associates in higher education institutions, resulting in an increase in the percentage of women in the total academic staff. As Table 2 shows from the academic year 2013/2014 to date, the number of teachers and associates in higher educational institutions is steadily increasing.

However, this positive trend in terms of the ratio of male and female staff to public universities in the country is not manifested in the performance of the top management positions of the universities. This is illustrated by the following trends, visible from Table 3: first, there is no female rector of the six public universities in the country; second, the ratio of pro-rectors of both sexes is 60:40 in favour of the male sex, with the majority of female pro-rectors being UKLO and the UGD and UIST having no female pro-rectors.

Regarding the representation of women in management positions at the faculties of the four largest public universities,[85] the following can be discerned: First, the number of men male Deans dominates at the national level (78%); second, the proportion of Vice-Deans nationwide is 55% to 45% in favour of the male gender; third, at the university level, the highest number of female deans is found at the UGD (5) and the lowest at the SUT (0); third, the highest percentage of female Vice-Deans is at the UKIM and the UGD (46%) and the lowest at the SUT (30%).

Concerning the presented results of the survey, the following conclusions can be drawn:

Regarding personal attitudes, a relatively high percentage (21%) reported that they did not feel equal to their male counterparts. In addition, 12.65% reported that their male counterparts elected to the same title earn higher

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85 Data on these issues are not listed on the UMT and UIST websites.

monthly income. This means that some respondents have a perception of inequality with their male colleagues.

In addition, almost half of the respondents (44%) do not consider running for managerial positions at the university where they work. It is a relatively high percentage, almost half of the respondents, which indicate that a significant number of women are not motivated to run for office. In terms of reasons, these are prevailing: 'I cannot see myself in that role' (47%), family reasons (15%), political reasons (9%) and leadership is a men's job with very little room for women (6%). These data show that there is still a category of respondents who consider that leadership is a male realm, but also that some of the respondents do not run due to political reasons. The largest percentage think that they do not see themselves in that role, which is a legitimate view given that it is a university and that respondents have chosen to be professors rather than managers. Perhaps this is due to the fact that lately, due to the poor condition of university funding, there is little interest in performing these functions. In the context of these answers, it would be useful to compare the attitudes of male teachers and associates on this issue. On the other hand, as it was emphasized, one third of the respondents decided to run for managerial positions. Those who are considering running for office have for the most part decided on the managerial positions of the organizational units or university senate membership, or lower positions, as indicated by the statistics presented in the text above. This result shows that women feel safer to run in environments where they are well known. In terms of reasons, almost two-thirds (64%) identified the need to change their working environment as the main reason. This leads us to the conclusion that changes are needed in the environment in which universities operate, and it is this environment that serves teachers and associates as a drive for running for office.

Only one-third of the respondents have run for a managerial position, and this result coincides with the question 'Have you taken concrete actions to improve your position as a woman at the university?' (positive answer - 39%). Most of the respondents running for management positions are driven by the idea of changing their working environment (almost two-thirds of the answers).

There are several conclusions to be drawn from the results of the environment for women at universities:

First, of the questions graded on the scale from 1 to 5, the highest score was given to the sentiment 'The opportunities for career advancement are equal for men and women at my university" (4.04). In support of this trend, there are reverse sentiments: (1) 'As a woman, my freedom for research is limited at the university.' (1,46) and (2) 'As a woman, I do not get the same opportunities for professional development as the colleagues of the opposite sex,' which score relatively low (1.71). The sentiment 'Men have more influence than women in my work environment,' is positioned at the near-perfect median on the scale (2.49). These parameters indicate that the environment enables gender equality at the university, of course, with certain limitations.

In addition, it can be concluded from the assessment of the graded sentiments that a relatively higher score for encouraging the involvement of women in the decision-making processes is given by the faculties' leaderships versus the university (rating 3.64 vs. 3.48).

As regards the formal acts for the promotion of gender equality, it should be noted that the percentage of respondents who confirmed that such an act was adopted by their institution (only 4.41%) is extremely low. On the other hand, it is alarming that the other part of the respondents answered that no acts for promotion of equality were adopted, that is to say, only on an informal level (more than 80% of the respondents in total).

Finally, the most interesting data from the survey were obtained in the context of potential points where women's participation could be restricted and which are not related to governance or management.

In this respect, surprising data were obtained which can be summarized in the view that half of the respondents consider that the composition of the peer review and evaluation committees of master's and doctoral theses is not taken into account. In addition, almost a quarter of respondents think that there is some kind of gender-based influence on the distribution of tasks and the distribution of lectures.

The results obtained in terms of participation in the work of the teaching-scientific councils show that the interviewees generally participate in the work of the councils, with the exception of less than 17.59%, who do not discuss it at these sessions.

Based on the research conducted, several conclusions can be formulated.

First, although there is apparent gender equality in the number of teachers and associates in public universities, this is not manifested in the key points of power at the universities. This view is best illustrated by the fact that there is no female university rector, and the percentage of male deans is as high as 78%. There is not a single female dean at any of the public universities. This leads us to the conclusion that women's participation in decision-making processes is more of a declarative rather than an essential nature. In other words, it seems that the more a woman rises in the hierarchical structure of university governance, the fewer opportunities for more active participation she has.

Second, there is a dominant view among respondents that there is a relatively high degree of gender equality at universities. However, there is a certain perception that there is inequality between teachers and collaborators of both sexes in several areas, i.e., issues. This perception stems from several factors identified in the research: monthly salary (if dissatisfaction with committee membership is projected in financial compensation), the composition of peer review committees, master and doctoral thesis evaluation committees, etc.

To the universities:

- The fact that the survey was of great interest to the respondents, including the supporting messages submitted, indicates that this interest needs to be channelled within the discourse of universities which will initiate the promotion of a favourable environment for gender equality in all aspects of the academic community. Addressing these issues at the university level will lead to a more active promotion of gender equality, which seems more than necessary.

- Universities, together with the competent state authorities, should cooperate more actively in removing certain challenges affecting gender equality in the academic environment (such as maternity leave or career opportunities after doctoral studies). It is an obvious fact that only a few measures could promote equality relatively quickly in this segment as well.

- Universities should promote a culture of dialogue, encourage more active participation of women in the decision-making processes, but also protect and promote academic freedom.

- If necessary, take formal measures to promote women's participation in universities' decision-making processes (for example, adopting a general equality promotion act).).

To the academic community:

- Encourage public discourse on women's participation in university decision-making processes. The potential activities for encouraging discourse include organising forums, discussions, forming working groups, promoting concepts and best comparative practices of women's participation at universities, organising Senate thematic discussions, and faculty advisory boards, etc..

- Consider the opportunities for more adequate representation of women in peer review and master's and doctoral studies committees. A logical starting point would be to investigate what is the current state of affairs regarding this issue at the faculties (primarily based on available and relevant statistics) and to initiate a discussion of these issues at a lower level, i.e., at the level of departments and institutes. It seems that this issue will be addressed more effectively through informal instruments.

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APPENDIX 1

University	Dean		Vice-Dean	
	m	w	m	w
University of 'Ss. Cyril and Methodius'- Skopje				
Faculty of Architecture	1	0	2	1
Faculty of Civil Engineering	1	0	2	1
Faculty of Economics*	1	0	1	1
Faculty of Mechanical Engineering	1	0	3	0
Faculty of Medicine	0	1	2	2
Faculty of Pedagogy	1	0	1	2
Faculty of Law	1	0	0	3
Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics	1	0	3	0
Faculty of Dentistry	1	0	0	3
Faculty of Technology and Metallurgy	1	0	2	1
Faculty of Veterinary Medicine	1	0	2	1
Faculty of Furniture Design and Technologies	1	0	3	0
Faculty of Dramatic Arts	1	0	0	1
Faculty of Electrical Engineering and IT	1	0	2	1
Faculty of Agricultural Sciences and Food	1	0	1	2
Faculty of Inf. sciences and comp. engineering	1	0	2	1
Faculty of Fine Arts	1	0	1	0
Faculty of Music Arts *	1	0	0	0
Faculty of Physical Education, Sport and Health	1	0	2	1
Faculty of Pharmacy	0	1	1	0
Faculty of Philosophy	1	0	1	2
Faculty of Philology	0	1	0	3
Faculty of Forestry	1	0	1	1
UKIM Total	**20**	**3**	**32**	**27**
Percentage share	**87%**	**13%**	**54%**	**46%**

Overview of the gender representation of acting Deans and Vice-Deans at the public universities in North Macedonia (data available on websites), April 2019.

University	Dean		Vice-Dean	
Overview of the gender representation of acting Deans and Vice-Deans at the public universities in North Macedonia (data available on websites), April 2019.				
	m	w	m	w
'Ss. Clement of Ohrid' University - Bitola				
Faculty of Economics	0	1	2	1
Faculty of Biotechnical Sciences	-	-	-	-
Technical faculty	1	0	2	1
Faculty of Pedagogy	1	0	0	2
Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality	1	0	1	1
Faculty for Security	1	0	1	2
Faculty of Law	1	0	1	2
Faculty of Technology and Technology	0	1	1	2
Faculty of Veterinary Medicine *	1	0	0	0
Faculty of informatics and comp. technologies	1	0	1	2
UKLO Total	**20**	**3**	**32**	**27**
Percentage share	**87%**	**13%**	**54%**	**46%**
State University of Tetovo				
Faculty of Economics	1	0	1	1
Faculty of Pedagogy	1	0	1	1
Faculty of Law	1	0	1	1
Faculty of Business Administration	1	0	0	0
Faculty of Agriculture and Biotechnology	1	0	1	2
Faculty of Medical Sciences	1	0	1	2
Faculty of Food Technology and Nutrition	1	0	2	3
Faculty of Applied Sciences	1	0	1	0
Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics	1	0	2	3
Faculty of Arts	1	0	1	1
Faculty of Physical Education	1	0	2	1
Faculty of Philosophy	1	0	2	0

Overview of the gender representation of acting Deans and Vice-Deans at the public universities in North Macedonia (data available on websites), April 2019.

University	Dean		Vice-Dean	
	m	w	m	w
Faculty of Philology	1	0	1	1
SUT Total	**13**	**0**	**16**	**7**
Percentage share	**100%**	**0%**	**70%**	**30%**
University 'Goce Delchev' – Shtip				
Academy of Fine Arts	0	1	0	1
Music Academy	1	0	1	0
Film Academy	1	0	0	0
faculty for agriculture	1	0	0	1
Faculty of Mechanical Engineering	1	0	1	0
Faculty of Electrical Engineering	0	1	1	0
Faculty of Technology and Technology	0	1	1	0
Faculty of IT	0	1	0	1
Faculty of Natural and Technical Sciences	1	0	1	0
Faculty of Medical Sciences	1	0	0	1
Faculty of Economics	1	0	1	0
Faculty of Law	1	0	0	1
Faculty of Philology	-	-	-	-
Faculty of Educational Sciences	0	1	0	1
Faculty of Tourism and Business Logistics	1	0	1	0
UGD Total	**9**	**5**	**7**	**6**
Percentage share	**64%**	**36%**	**54%**	**46%**
UIST	-	-	-	-
UMT	-	-	-	-
North Macedonia Total	**36**	**10**	**64**	**53**
Percentage share	**78%**	**22%**	**55%**	**45%**

THE ROLE AND IMPACT OF THE WOMEN MPS' CLUB IN BUILDING A SUPRA-PARTISAN COOPERATION IN THE ASSEMBLY

ANA MUKOSKA, EVA JOVANOVA

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3 THE ROLE AND IMPACT OF THE WOMEN MPS' CLUB IN BUILDING A SUPRA-PARTISAN COOPERATION IN THE ASSEMBLY

INTRODUCTION

The Macedonian Assembly is the highest national representative and legislative body[86]. The Assembly reflects the multi-party, i.e., the political pluralism in society. According to the Constitution, the Assembly is particularly concerned with issues related to ethnic pluralism[87]. In spite of the commitments to foster political and ethnic pluralism, the Assembly does not reflect the demographic reality of gender in most parliamentary assemblies[88]. In this sense, the issue arises with women, as a gender group in relation to the total population, which are not adequately represented in Parliament. In general, women's access to a parliamentary position is an access to a position of power, which is a serious prerequisite for enabling functional democratic institutions and full respect for human rights.

> *'The woman is the pillar of the family, and the woman politician could be the pillar of the state. This is thus because she is less likely to get corrupt and become involved in criminal activity, she has more love. But she is not a pillar of the state yet, and by the time she does, our state will resemble Sweden.'*
> ***Gjulumser Kasapi***.

In the current parliamentary Assembly (2016-2020), 46 out of 120 MPs are women; 38% of the total number of MPs, which represents the largest percentage of their representation in the history of Macedonian

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86 The Assembly is a unicameral representative body comprised of 120 deputies, i.e., four-year term parliamentarians elected in general, direct and free elections.

87 Pursuant to Article 78 of the Constitution, the Assembly establishes a Council for Inter-Ethnic Relations, which consists of: the President of the Assembly and two members of Macedonian, Albanian, Turkish, Vlach, Roma and two members of other nationalities in Macedonia..

88 According to the publication 'Women and Men in North Macedonia', Skopje, 2019, of the Statistical Office, 'The percentage share of women and men is almost equal in the total population, 49.9% of the population are women and 50.1% are men'.

parliamentarism. This representation is made possible by the requirement in the Electoral Code of a mandatory quota of at least 40% for candidates belonging to the under-represented sex, which guarantees that there shall be at least 40% women on the MP candidate lists. This, of course, is a positive but not a sufficient condition for the sustained influence of women on positions of power.

In particular, the increased participation and influence of women MPs in all aspects of parliamentary life, besides their numbers, also contributes to their **supra-partisan** (inter-party) **cooperation**. Inter-party cooperation enables greater effectiveness and influence for women MPs, which opens opportunities for greater inclusion of women's perspectives, i.e., gender perspectives, in the adoption of laws, the budget and control of the executive branch and other public office holders accountable to Parliament. It is precisely because of this argument, the research focuses on the role and influence of the MP's Club on building supra-partisan co-operation in the Assembly.

HISTORY OF THE WOMEN MPS' CLUB AND ITS SIGNIFICANT ACHIEVEMENTS

The women PMs' Club is an informal consultative body for the promotion of the rights and position of women, which includes women MPs with current mandates [89]. The Club was established in 2003 on the initiative of the Macedonian Women's Lobby, with the support of the Gender Task Force (GTF) of the Stability Pact for South-East Europe. [90]. The context in which the club is established tells that the strengthening of participation of women the public life takes place in a symbiosis with the euro-integration processes and the activism of civil society organisations.

Since the establishment of the Club, great results have been achieved in terms of regulating women's rights and gender equality, including significant amendments to the **2006** Electoral Code[91], to ensure the inclusion of at least 30% of women candidates in party lists, and thus every third place on the list is allocated to the less represented sex. The **2015** amendments to the Electoral Code[92] provided for even greater inclusion of women in the candidate lists for MPs, or at least 40% of women, and at every three seats, at least one seat belongs to the less

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89 Women MPs Club, Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia https://www.sobranie.mk/ za-klubot.nspx (accessed 12.4.2019)

90 Ibid.

91 Electoral Code (Official Gazette No. 40/2006), Article 21, paragraph 3.

92 Law on the Amendment to the Electoral Code (Official Gazette:196/2015).

represented gender (women) and additionally at least one seat every ten places. The same applies to the candidate lists for council members of the municipality and the City of Skopje. Other notable achievements in regulating women's rights and gender equality are[93]:

- Law on Labor Relations[94] regarding the improved working conditions for women, greater benefits for retiring female workers, the right to extended maternity leave, and guaranteeing the right of women to return to the same work position after the maternity leave (2006);

- The Health Insurance Act[95], stipulating that every woman over the age of 14 is entitled to free preventive gynaecological examinations for early detection of breast and cervical cancer (2006);

93 Women MPs Club, 2018 г.

94 Law on Labor Relations ('Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia' No. 62/2005, 106/2008, 161/2008, 114/2009, 130/2009, 149/2009, 50/2010, 52/2010, 124/2010, 47/2011, 11/2012, 39/2012, 13/2013, 25/2013, 170/2013, 187/2013, 113/2014, 20/2015, 33/2015, 72/2015, 129/2015, 27 / 2016 and 120/2018). Decisions of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Macedonia: no. 139/2005 of 21 and 22 December 2005, published in the 'Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia' no. 3/2006, C. no. 161/2005 of 21 and 22 December 2005, published in the "Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" no. 3/2006, C. no. 134/2005 of 29 March 2006, published in the 'Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia' no. 44/2006, C. no. 187/2005 of 10 May 2006, published in the 'Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia' no. 66/2006, C. no. 111/2006 of 24 January 2007, published in the 'Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia' no. 16/2007, C. no. 188/2006 of 4 April 2007, published in the 'Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia' no. 57/2007, C. no. 170/2006 of 6 June 2007, published in the 'Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia' no. 77/2007, C. no. 200/2008 of 13 May 2009, published in the 'Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia' no. 63/2009, C. no. 20/2009 of 13 January 2010, published in the 'Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia' no. 10/2010, C. no. 176/2009 of 14 April 2010, published in the 'Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia' no. 58/2010, C. no. 263/2009 of 22 September 2010, published in the 'Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia' no. 132/2010, C. no. 62/2013 of 28 May 2014, published in the 'Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia' no. 106/2014 and C. no. 114/2014 of 29 June 2016, published in the 'Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia' no. 134/2016.

95 Law on Health Insurance ('Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia' no. 25/2000, 34/2000, 96/2000, 50/2001, 11/2002, 31/2003, 84/2005, 37/2006, 18/2007, 36/2007, 82/2008, 98/2008, 6/2009, 67/2009, 50/2010, 156/2010, 53/2011, 26/2012, 16/2013, 91/2013, 187/2013, 43/2014, 44/2014, 97/2014, 112/2014, 113/2014, 188/2014, 20/2015, 61/2015, 98/2015, 129/2015, 150/2015, 154/2015, 192/2015, 217/2015, 27/2016, 37/2016, 120/2016, 142/2016 and 171/2017). Decisions of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Macedonia no. 85/2000 of 22 November 2000, published in the 'Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia' no. 104/2000; C. no. 173/2000 of 04.04.2001, published in the 'Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia' no. 30/2001; C. no. 37/2001 of 06.06.2001, published in the 'Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia' no. 48/2001; C. no. 60/2006 of 03.10.2006, published in the 'Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia' no. 109/2006; C. no. 40/2007 of 04.07.2007 and C. no. 167/2006 of 27.06.2007, published in the 'Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia' no. 88/2007; C. no. 45/2006 of 11.07.2007, published in the 'Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia' no. 106/2007; C. no. 199/2008 of 18.03.2009, published in the 'Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia' no. 45/2009; C. no. 109/2009 and C. no. 185/2009 of 27 January 2010, published in the "Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" no. 14/2010 and C. no. 112/2011 of 16 November 2011, published in the 'Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia' no. 166/2011. Law on Compulsory Social Insurance Contributions ('Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia' No. 142/2008). Law on Voluntary Health Insurance ('Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia' No. 145/2012).

- The Law on Games of Chance and Entertainment[96], so that two per cent of the income tax on the games on chance is allocated to a special fund to combat domestic violence (2006);

- The Family Law[97] by adding a chapter to legalise the fight against domestic violence and, at the same time, making amendments to the Criminal Code making domestic violence punishable by law (2008);

- The Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men[98] which incorporated 11 amendments submitted by the Club, defining in greater detail the roles and responsibilities of the Parliamentary Committee on Equal Opportunities, the obligation to analyze laws from a gender perspective and the formal link between the committee and similar committees locally. The amendments also redefined the roles and responsibilities of the Committee on Equal Opportunities between Women and Men at the municipal level (2011);

- The Council of Europe's Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence[99] (the Istanbul Convention) ratified (2017);

- The Criminal Code[100] regarding the amendment to Article 197

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96 Law on Games of Chance and Entertainment ('Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia' No. 24/2011, 51/2011, 148/2011, 74/2012, 171/2012, 27/2014, 139/2014, 61/2015, 154/2015, 23/2016 and 178/2016). Decisions of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Macedonia: no. 53/2011 of 14 September 2011, published in the 'Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia' no. 132/2011; C. no. 8/2014 of 15 October 2014, published in the 'Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia' no. 156/2014 and C. no. 65/2016 of 5 July 2017, published in the 'Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia' no. 90/2017.

97 Family Law ('Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia' No. 80/1992, 9/1996, 38/2004, 33/2006, 84/2008, 67/2010, 156/2010, 39/2012, 44/2012, 38/2014, 115/2014, 104/2015 and 150/2015). Decisions of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Macedonia: no. 149/1999 of 9 February 2000, published in the 'Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia' no. 19/2000; C. no. 15/2001 of 19 September 2001, published in the 'Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia' no. 79/2001; C. no. 50/2005 of 6 July 2005, published in the 'Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia' no. 60/2005; C. no. 2/2009 of 9 September 2009, published in the 'Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia' no. 117/2009 and C. no. 153/2017 of June 20, 2018, published in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia no. 122/2018. Law on Property and Other Property Rights ('Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia' No. 18/2001), Law on Prevention and Protection from Domestic Violence ('Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia' No. 138/2014). Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men ('Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia' no. 6/2012, 30/2013, 166/2014 and 150/2015)

98 Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men ('Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia' no. 6/2012, 30/2013, 166/2014 and 150/2015).

99 Council of Europe's Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, Istanbul, 11.V.2011, https://rm.coe.int/168046253a (accessed 29.5.2019).

100 Criminal Code ('Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia' no. 37/1996, 80/1999, 4/2002, 43/2003, 19/2004, 81/2005, 60/2006, 73/2006, 7/2008, 139) 2008, 114/2009, 51/2011, 135/2011, 185/2011, 142/2012, 166/2012, 55/2013, 82/2013, 14/2014, 27/2014, 28/2014, 41/2014, 115/2014, 132/2014, 160/2014, 199/2014, 196/2015, 226/2015, 97/2017 and 248/2018). Decisions of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Macedonia: no. 220/2000 of 30 May 2001, published in the 'Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia' no. 48/2001; C. no. 210/2001 of 6 February 2002, published in the 'Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia' no. 16/2002; C. no. 206/2003 of 9 June 2004, published in the 'Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia' no. 40/2004; C. no. 228/2005 of 5 April 2006, published in the 'Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia' no. 50/2006 and C. no. 169/2016 of 16 November 2017, published in the 'Official Gazette of the

to raise the lower limit for marriage from 16 to 18 years of age (2018);

• The Law on Prevention and Protection against Discrimination (2019)[101];

• The Law on Termination of Pregnancy (2019).[102]

In addition to playing an important role in promoting the rights of women and their standing in public life, the Club has a unique position in the Assembly as a unifying ground for women MPs from different political backgrounds and different ethnicities. The club has 46 members, i.e., all Members of Parliament, 17 of whom are from SDSM, 14 are from VMRO-DPMNE, six are independent, two are from DUI, two are from DOM, one is from LDP, one MP is from NSDP, one MP is from BESA, one MP is from DPA and one MP is from SPM. Regarding the ethnic composition of the Club, five members are Albanian and the others are Macedonian. In addition to the Chair, there are also 11 MPs from different political parties and ethnicities.

The increase in the number of MPs in the Assembly implies a greater number of Club members and may imply strengthening its role and influence in the creation of appropriate policies and laws. At the same time, the **supra-partisan parliamentary networking of women MPs** is a very important factor in strengthening the role and influence of the Club in the work of the Assembly and in the parliamentary processes in general. The increase in the number of MPs may also imply an increase in their representation in the membership and chairmanship of Committees, as working bodies of the Assembly, which consider draft laws and other acts adopted by the Assembly. An overview of the existing structure of the committees in terms of the representation of women MPs in the membership and chairmanship of the committees is given in **Table 1.**

Republic of Macedonia' no. 170/2017.

101 The Decree for the promulgation of the Law on Prevention and Protection against Discrimina-tion has not been signed by the President of the Republic of North Macedonia, i,e, the Law is not in force. The materials related to the Law on Prevention and Protection against Discrimination are available at https://www.sobranie.mk/materialdetails.nspx?materialId=11a48c40-c491-481f-9136-adbc62285ad6 и https://www.sobranie.mk/materialdetails.nspx?materialId=a50cbf8c-c79e-4805-a5ae-7cb5e1fbce1e (accessed 9.5.2019).

102 The Decree for the promulgation of the Law on Termination of Pregnancy has not been signed by the President of the Republic of North Macedonia, i.e., the Law is not in force. Materials related to the Law on Termination of Pregnancy are available at https://www.sobranie.mk/materialdetails.nspx?materialId=9b372fbe-1fba-4a03-be50-7c581b65d94f (accessed 9.5.2019).

Table 1. Representation of women MPs in the membership and presidency of the Committees in the Assembly 2016-2020

Of the total of 120 MPs in the Assembly, 46 are women (38%)	Committees with a **high representation of female members** of over 50%	Committees with **equal representation of women and men members** (50%)	Committees with **representation of women members** 30% -50%	Committees with **low representation of women members** (under 22%)
Committees with a woman **Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson**	Committee on Education, Science and Sport; Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men		Legislative Committee; Committee on Health	Committee on Transport, Communications and Environment
Committees with a woman **Chairperson**		Committee on Culture		Committee on Budget and Financing
Committees with a woman **Deputy Chairperson**		Committee on Labor and Social Policy; Committee on Local Self - Government		Committee on Rules of Procedure and Mandate-Immunity Matters (without female members)
Committees **without women** Chairpersons/ Deputy Chairpersons	Foreign Policy Committee	Committee on European Affairs; Committee for Oversight of the Work of the Security and Counter-Intelligence Directorate and the Intelligence Agency; Commission for Oversight of the Implementation of Communications Monitoring Measures	Committee on Constitutional Affairs; Standing Inquiry Committee for Protection of Citizens' Freedoms and Rights; Committee on Economic Affairs; Committee on Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy	Committee on Defense and Security; Committee on Election and Appointment Issues; Committee on the Political System and Inter-Community Relations

METHODOLOGY

The assumption of the role and influence of the Club as a unifying factor in the development of gender-based party politics points to the question of exercising parliamentary power. In this research, the woman or man MP's decision is being treated as a materialisation of the MP's power. According to Article 62 of the Constitution: 'Members of Parliament represent the citizens and decide in the Assembly on their own conviction.' In particular, the research considers the following factors related to the decision-making processes of women MPs within the Club:

- factors for strengthening the capacities of the Club's work, i.e., strengthening the role of the Club;

- factors for strengthening the influence of the Club in the decision-making processes in the Assembly;

- factors that facilitate or hinder decision-making in the Club.

The research tests the above factors empirically through a qualitative case study, which includes collecting data through semi-structured interviews with current women MPs and thematic analysis of the results obtained.

The methodology of this research is designed as an exploratory case study and is the most appropriate research model for a small group of individuals with similar characteristics in specific conditions. Unlike quantitative research which is deductive and focused on the representativeness and objectivity of the empirical material, qualitative research is inductive and focused on the specifics of the empirical material. Quantitative research starts with specific expectations which spring from a defined theoretical framework and its hypothesis, and the dependent variable which results from the hypothesis is tested through empirical material. In contrast, qualitative research aims at exploring a phenomenon without explicit expectations[103] and strives to follow empirical findings and their conceptual interpretations..[104]

This qualitative case study does not hypothesize or test a dependent variable because the cases under investigation, namely, interviews with women MPs, are selected on the basis of their common characteristic ('constant')[105], i.e., their shared membership in the Club. This does not mean that qualitative research shows no interest in the correlations between the cases under investigation, but simply that the focus is on constituting the main commonalities of the cases under investigation and from which the implications for the broader whole are drawn.[106]

103 Schutt, 2011,13.

104 Adler and Adler, 2019, 8.

105 Ragin, 2019, 34.

106 Ibid.

Qualitative research is much more open-ended, with no explicit expectations and aims to follow empirical findings and their conceptual interpretations. For this reason, qualitative research does not have a consensus on a specific figure on the amount of empirical material needed to collect data, i.e., for the research sample.[107]

DATA COLLECTION

One of the biggest challenges of this research was the question/problem of how many interviews are needed for qualitative research.

The number of interviews required for qualitative research can be determined by internal and external factors.[108] External factors that determine how many interviews are needed for qualitative research are sometimes much more important than internal factors. One of the key external factors is the time available for research.[109]

Internal factors depend on which dimensions will be the basis of comparison (eg gender, age, profession, etc.).[110] Next, it is to determine how many cases should be covered for each dimension.[111] If the three dimensions above are taken as the basis for the sample, it means that at least 6 qualitative interviews (multiplied by 2 due to gender - male/female) are required. However, it is advisable to have two interviews in the gender subgroups, so that the optimum number of qualitative interviews is 12 respondents.[112] Since this research is gender-restricted to female respondents only, this means that according to this methodology, 6 qualitative research interviews are sufficient. At the same time, in terms of profession, there are no variations ie all respondents are women MPs.

The empirical data collection in this research is conducted through interviews with 6 women MPs from the current Assembly in March and April 2019. The following MPs were interviewed: Daniela Rangelova (I1); Gjulumser Kasapi (I2); Juliana Nikolova (I3); Liljana Kuzmanovska (I4); Liljana Popovska (C5); Maja Morachanin (I6). The interview questions are provided in **Appendix 1**.

In percentage terms, this means that 13% of the total 46 women MPs interviewed in the current Assembly (2016-2020) are interviewed. 'In cases where research is conducted on segments of the population which is difficult to reach, such as deviant segments or elites, then the small

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107 Adler and Adler, 2019, 8.

108 Flick, 2019, 27.

109 Ibid.

110 Ibid.

111 Ibid.

112 Ibid.

number of respondents in the survey can be treated as a satisfactory sample.'[113]

'The assessment of the success of sample recruitment is not determined by the size and scope of the sample, nor the distribution of the number of individuals within the group. It is far more important to locate a case that is unique and to provide a person/organisation that is more difficult to obtain a statement from.'[114]

In view of both of the above arguments, it is concluded that interviews with six female MPs can be considered as a relevant source of data. The relevance of the interviews from this research further stems from the fact that part of the interviewed MPs have a multi-year parliamentary mandate, that is, MP's career in several parliamentary Assemblies. At the same time, some of them hold key positions in the Coordinating Body, i.e., the Chairmanship of the Club of Representatives, as well as in the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men[115], with which the Club cooperates closely.[116]

An additional approach for determining the amount of sample required for empirical material is to achieve empirical saturation.[117] 'In the opinion of Charles Ragin, Wolcott and many other experts, saturation is a key factor in determining a qualitative sample. Once the empirical data of the research have begun to show repeatability, then saturation may be considered achieved and the number of respondents is met.'[118] From this point of view, the thematic analysis of the interviews with the six female MPs showed 'saturation' in identifying the themes [119] from which the analysis factors in this research emerge.

113 Adler and Adler, 2019, 8.

114 Brannen, 2019, 16.

115 Among the women interviewed, was is Gjulumser Kasapi, Chairwoman of the current Club. Members of the Presidency, Liljana Popovska and Liljana Kuzmanovska, as well as Daniela Rangelova, who chairs the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, were also interviewed. Popovska and Kuzmanovska were part of the Club's chairmanship in the previous parliamentary composition (2011-2014), with Kuzmanovska co-ordinating the Club from 2011-2013, and Popovska being one of the founding members of the Club of MPs and former Chair of the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men.

116 According to the Rules of Procedure of the Club, the Chair of the Committee on Equal Op-portunities for Women and Men also participates in the work of the Club Presidency.
Rulebook on the Organization and Scope of Work of the Club of Representatives of the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia (4.2.2019), Article 8, paragraph 4, available at https://www.sobranie.mk/dokumenti-928085e5-84ee-47c0-9162-9d6f2ff348fe.nspx (accessed 22.3.2019).

117 Adler and Adler, 2019, 8.

118 Elsie Baker, 2019, 5.

119 Brannen, 2019, 16.

DATA PROCESSING

The processing of interview data is carried out through thematic analysis. The focus of the thematic analysis is on the constitution of the main common features of the cases under investigation and from which the implications for the broader whole will be drawn. In this research, the thematic analysis of the interviews is reduced to units of analysis (factors) resulting from specific categories:

1.   Factors for strengthening the role of the Club.

The first unit of analysis derives the following categories of thematic analysis that relate to the decision-making procedures within the Club:

- formalising the work of the Club;

- Club leadership;

- budget.

2.   Factors for strengthening the Club's influence in the political processes and in the work of the Assembly.

The second unit of analysis derives the following categories of thematic analysis that relate to the impact of Club decisions:

- Representation quotas for women Members of Parliament, including their representation in parliamentary committees;

- Areas of activity of the Club of Women Representatives;

- Eurointegration processes;

- Cooperation with civil and international organisations and experts;

- Tools and mechanisms for increasing the information of women MPs;

- Parliamentary TV channel..

3.   Factors affecting the inter-party cooperation between the women MPs within the Club:

- factors that hinder decision-making in the Club, and

- factors that facilitate decision-making in the Club.

FACTORS TO STRENGTHEN THE ROLE OF THE WOMEN`S PARLIAMENTARY CLUB

The factors that strengthen the role of the Club relate to the internal aspects of its work and decision-making that can contribute to improving its efficiency. The research focuses on the following three factors: formalising the work of the Club; leadership of the Club and budget of the Club. These factors emerge from the analysis of the interviews with the MPs in the current Assembly, which indicate that women MPs are most interested in structuring the way the Club operates (agenda of activities, own budget, technical support person), but not formalising the way how MPs from different political parties cooperate.

FORMALISING THE CLUB`S WORK

Although it has been promoted as an informal body since its establishment in 2003, the 2008 Rulebook[120] is the first act to establish the informality of the Club. This provision remains in force with the new 2019 Rulebook[121], according to which the Club is an informal group in which all female Members of Parliament are members. However, the 2019 Rulebook introduces novelties indicating that the Club receives more formal treatment in the Assembly, providing technical support to the Club by the Assembly, as well as archiving all documentation resulting from the Club's activities through the official archive of the Assembly[122]. The more formal treatment of the Club in the Assembly also contributes to the opening of the Club's "women's room" following the example of the Swedish Parliament, in which MPs debate the problems affecting women, hold meetings, meet and receive delegations. The Room was opened on October 10, 2018[123], and in December 2018 the Club also got a Technical Support Assistant, supported by the National Democratic Institute (NDI)[124].

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120 Rulebook on the organisation and scope of work of the Club of Women Representatives (5.3.2008), Article 2, paragraph 2, available at https://www.sobranie.mk/dokumenti-928085e5-84ee-47c0-9162-9d6f2ff348fe.nspx (Accessed 22.3.2019).

121 Rulebook on the organisation and scope of work of the Club of Women Representatives of the Assembly of Republic of Macedonia (4.2.2019), Article 2, paragraph 2, available at https://www.sobranie.mk/dokumenti-928085e5-84ee-47c0-9162-9d6f2ff348fe.nspx (Accessed 22.3.2019).

122 Rulebook on the organisation and scope of work of the Club of Women Representatives of the Assembly of Republic of Macedonia (4.2.2019), Article 9, paragraph 3 и 4, available at https://www.sobranie.mk/dokumenti-928085e5-84ee-47c0-9162-9d6f2ff348fe.nspx (Accessed 22.3.2019).

123 Announcement of the open women's room of the Club of Women Members of Parliament https://www.sobranie.mk/aktivnosti-3e658721-eeaf-413b-bca1-5f4126db801b-ns_article-otvorena-zenska-soba-na-klubot-na-pratenicki.nspx (Accessed 21.3.2019).

124 The National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) is a non-profit, non-partisan organisation working to support and strengthen democratic institutions.

The analysis of the interviews shows that in order to strengthen the role of the Women MPs Club, it is necessary to **formalise the work** of the Club. Although "The club is an informal body, it should work formally"[125], "because when something is informal, it is always dealt with at the end, if there is time for it"[126]. The MPs' commitments to the committees leave little time for their activation within the Club. But if the activities are put on the agenda and regular meetings of the Club are formalised, the influence of the Club on the political processes in the Assembly will increase[127].

The activities foreseen in the annual work programs of the Club, as well as in the Strategic Plan, can be included in the calendar of activities with a timetable, which will enable monitoring of the implementation of the activities of the Club. This will facilitate an insight into the impact the Club has on the political processes in the Assembly, in particular in terms of passing laws and proposing amendments affecting women's rights. In accordance with the Assembly's commitment to transparency and openness, the Calendar of Activities and Meetings of the Women MPs Club should be available on the Assembly's website as a separate Calendar, but also within the Parliamentary Calendar, which is available on the Assembly's website.

However, as there is usually no practice of setting pre-established plenary and working body dates in the Assembly, they are scheduled ad hoc once the correct agenda is known, as the Parliamentary Calendar does not cover a longer period of time.[128] If that practice is changed, both the dates and the agenda of the plenary and working body sessions are entered into the Parliamentary Calendar for an extended period of time, for example, on the basis of the Annual Work Program of the Government, the planning of Club activities will be facilitated and it will be possible to specify the agenda of the Women MPs Club meetings. At the same time, women MPs will be able to plan the time for their responsibilities in parliamentary committees and other activities related to the MP function in a more effective manner, including those in the Women MPs Club.

From the analysis of the Club situation, from the point of view of its formalisation, it appears that some steps have been taken in this direction, such as the existence of a Club Room, a Club Technical Support Assistant and archiving the Club documentation through the official archive of the Assembly. However, there are a few essential elements left to complete this formalisation process, such as: "having your own budget a provision in the Parliamentary Budget"[129], which would, among other things, enable the hiring of a technical support person for the Club as part of the Assembly service administration; holding meetings of the Club's management once a week[130], as well as a "calendar of activities

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125 I5.

126 I6.

127 I6.

128 Stojanovski 2017, 8-9.

129 I5.

130 I6, I1.

with a timetable, i.e. a framework for monitoring the implementation of the planned activities of the Club".[131]

The findings of the interviews show that in the arguments for greater formalisation of the Club, none of the women MPs equates the formalisation with the hierarchy of relations within the Club itself. On the contrary, it emphasizes the inter-party cooperation that derives from the horizontal and consensual decision-making in the Club. Women MPs argue the need to formally strengthen the Club as a need for capacity building[132] of the Club regarding the committees of the Assembly and the opportunity to increase its influence in the drafting of laws and policies. "The club itself has no activities, all activities are carried out with the Equal Opportunity Commission."[133] This remark can also be seen through the formal arrangement of relations between the Club of Womwn MPs and the Equal Opportunities Committee. The analysis of the 2008 Club Rules and the 2019 Club Rules indicates that the Club operates in symbiosis with the Equal Opportunity Committee. The Club Rules of 2019 introduce a novelty in the organisation of the Club and stipulates that "the Chairmanship of the Committee on Gender Equality in Functioning also participates in the work of the Club's presidency."[134]

However, despite the formalisation as a precondition for strengthening the capacity of the Club, the Club "needs to maintain an informal atmosphere in order to maintain this cross-party co-operation"[135]. The informal atmosphere also means that meetings between women MPs within the Club will not be publicly disclosed and that MPs at the Club meetings will primarily be in the interest of women's rights, irrespective of party attitudes. In fact, the capacities of the Club are correlated with the "will and personal capacity of the woman MPs through working together in the Club to resolve issues"[136] from the parliamentary agenda. An important and useful tool in improving the capacity of women MPs is the training of MPs through the Club to influence the political processes of the Assembly or, some brainstorming, i.e. unstructured and unorganised discussion meetings of the women MPs, "because solutions come mostly through conversation"[137]. Hence, formalising the Club is about structuring its way of working through regular weekly meetings perspective[138], having

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131 I1.

132 To strengthen the capacities of the Club, the Strategic Plan of the Club of women MPs 2018-2020 envisages hiring and training a person for the needs of the Club of women MPs, training of the Assembly's expert service and increasing the Club's database of studies, analysis and information. The Strategic Plan of the Club of MPs 2018-2020 is available at https://www.sobranie.mk/dokumenti-928085e5-84ee-47c0-9162-9d6f2ff348fe.nspx (Accessed 20.3.2019).

133 I1.

134 Rulebook on the organisation and scope of work of the Club of Women Representatives of the Assembly of Republic of Macedonia (4.2.2019), Article 8, paragraph 5, available at https://www.sobranie.mk/dokumenti-928085e5-84ee-47c0-9162-9d6f2ff348fe.nspx (Accessed 22.3.2019).

135 I6.

136 I3.

137 I3.

138 Rulebook on the organisation and scope of work of the Club of Women Representatives of the Assembly of Republic of Macedonia (4.2.2019) Article 9 paragraph 1 foresees that "The club

an agenda of activities and monitoring their implementation, having their own budget and technical support staff for the work of the Club, but not formalising the way women MPs from different political parties cooperate. That is, despite holding formal weekly meetings of the Club's leadership, to maintain the informal nature of the unstructured meetings in which women MPs manage to co-operate independently of their party positions.

WOMEN MPS CLUB LEADERSHIP

Formally, Club leadership is defined by the Club Rules of 2019[139]. In essence, the most significant change compared to the previous Club Rules of 2008 is the organisation of the Club. The 2019 Rulebook establishes the functions of President and Vice President of the Club, rather than the previous Coordinator and Deputy Coordinator functions established by the 2008 Rulebook. The changes indicate that the leadership of the Club has been strengthened in a symbolic sense with the new 2019 Rulebook.

The analysis of the interviews shows that out of all the categories surveyed, the least dedication was to leadership. Of the six MPs interviewed, only three raise the topic of Club leadership as a factor in strengthening the role of the Club, not in terms of hierarchy, but in terms of capacity to initiate[140], to build unity[141] and to hold regular meetings, that is, to coordinate[142]. The fact that only half of the interviewed women MPs open the topic of Club leadership and treat it from a horizontal perspective (cooperation) rather than a vertical one (imposing their own will) is in line with the political culture of consensus building, inclusiveness and inter-party cooperation that was raised by the Club since its inception. This benefit of the Club was recognised and became formally guaranteed by the provision of the Club Rules of 2008[143], which remains in force with the 2019 Rulebook, according to which "The Club delivers its conclusions by consensus"[144].

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convenes its meetings as needed and at least once a month". The Rulebook is available at https://www.sobranie.mk/dokumenti-928085e5-84ee-47c0-9162-9d6f2ff348fe.nspx (Accessed 22.3.2019).

139 Rulebook on the organisation and scope of work of the Club of Women Representatives of the Assembly of Republic of Macedonia (4.2.2019), Article 7, available at https://www.sobranie.mk/dokumenti-928085e5-84ee-47c0-9162-9d6f2ff348fe.nspx (Accessed 22.3.2019).

140 I5.

141 I4.

142 I1.

143 Rulebook on the organisation and scope of work of the Club of Women Representatives (5.3.2008), Article 9, paragraph 2, available at https://www.sobranie.mk/dokumenti-928085e5-84ee-47c0-9162-9d6f2ff348fe.nspx (Accessed 22.3.2019).

144 Rulebook on the organisation and scope of work of the Club of Women Representatives of the Assembly of Republic of Macedonia (4.2.2019), Article 9 paragraph 2, available on https://www.sobranie.mk/dokumenti-928085e5-84ee-47c0-9162-9d6f2ff348fe.nspx (Accessed 22.3.2019).

HAVING A DEDICATED BUDGET

All the interviewed women MPs agree that one of the factors for strengthening the role of the Women MPs Club is the availability of its own budget, i.e. the availability of the Club with a separate budget sub-program within the budget of the Assembly. However, this process of financial independence is correlated with other processes, generally referring to the Assembly as an institution, and which are related to the organisational independence of the Assembly with regard to the executive, i.e., the Government. The principle of organisational independence encompasses various aspects, including: professional parliamentary service with its organisational set-up and career structure, independent of that of administrative staff in government institutions and control over its own budget, i.e. the budget of the Assembly not being a subject to executive approval on the adequacy of the resources required[145]. These processes will facilitate the hiring of a technical support person for the work of the Club as part of the Assembly service. The existing support for the work of the Club is recruited and paid for by the NDI, and prior to it, the technical support of the Club was provided by the staff of the Assembly whose primary tasks are related to the work of a specific Assembly Committee. At the same time, the financial independence of the Assembly can contribute to the allocation of the budget allocated to the Women MPs Club within the budget of the Assembly. So far, the Club depends on the financial support of international and civic organisations for much of its activities and, above all, for the organisation and delivery of women MPs training.[146]

> *"First, we need to achieve financial independence of the Assembly, we have a vision on that, but the political will must be worked on, and then the committees, the Club and other informal bodies should achieve that independence in terms of the budget,"* **Liljana Kuzmanovska.**

The benefits of having a dedicated budget for the Club would lead to its greater independence, better functioning in terms of the allocation of money for their own needs[147], such as "getting involved in work and expert services"[148]. At the same time, the need for own funds is related to the implementing of the Club's work program[149]. According to the Rules of Procedure of the Club[150], the Club's annual work program runs until the end of December of the running year for the following year, and prepares a report on its work. In order to plan the activities in the annual work

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145 Beetham 2016, 117-119.

146 Reports of Women MPs Club activities are available at https://www.sobranie.mk/aktivnos-ti-3e658721-eeaf-413b-bca1-5f4126db801b.nspx (Accessed 3.5.2019).

147 I3.

148 I4.

149 I5.

150 Rulebook on the organisation and scope of work of the Club of Women Representatives of the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia (4.2.2019), Articles 4 and 5, available at: https://www.sobranie.mk/dokumenti-928085e5-84ee-47c0-9162-9d6f2ff348fe.nspx (Accessed 22.3.2019).

programs, the Club needs to have a pre-planned budget. At the same time, the implementation of most of the activities foreseen in the annual work programs, as well as the activities foreseen in the Strategic Plan 2018-2020, is conditioned by the availability of own funds.[151].

FACTORS FOR STRENGTHENING THE IMPACT OF THE WOMEN`S PARLIAMENTARY CLUB IN POLITICAL PROCESSES IN THE ASSEMBLY

Factors for strengthening the Club's influence relate to the external aspects of its work and decision-making, which can contribute to increasing its influence in the political processes and work of the Assembly, and in particular the work of the parliamentary committees. The research focuses on the following factors: quotas; areas of activity of the Club; European integration processes; cooperation with civil and international organisations and experts; tools and mechanisms for greater information of MPs, as well as the Parliamentary TV channel.

These factors emerge from the analysis of the interviews with the women MPs in the current Assembly, which shows that the most attention is paid to quotas as a factor in increasing the number of women MPs in the Assembly and in the Club, as well as the greater representation of women MPs in parliamentary committees. In addition, a great attention is paid to the Club's cooperation with civil and international organisations and the European integration processes as a factor that facilitates the lobbying of women MPs on certain laws or policies affecting women's rights. The survey also looks at the tools and mechanisms for informing women MPs as a factor in increasing the Club's influence in drafting laws, amendments, policies or reviewing government bills. In doing so, the research seeks to identify the areas in which the Club can have the greatest impact.

151Strategic Plan of the Women Parliamentary Club 2018-2020, p. 6-15, available at https://www. sobranie.mk/dokumenti-928085e5-84ee-47c0-9162-9d6f2ff348fe.nspx (Accessed 20.3.2019).

QUOTAS FOR REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN PMS IN THE ASSEMBLY AND INCREASING THE REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN PMS IN PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES

One of the key goals of the Club`s Strategic Plan for the period 2018-2020[152], refers to the increased participation and power of women in political and decision-making processes. Within this framework, the Strategic Plan foresees amendments to several laws to increase the number of women in politics. The strategy sets the goal of making amendments to the Electoral Code **to increase quotas for women's participation in politics**, in order to achieve a **50:50** ratio. The Strategic Plan also envisages amendments to the Electoral Code for 30% of elected women in the executive branch, as well as amendments to the Government Act introducing affirmative action measures for increased numbers of women ministers and secretaries of the state. In this regard, it would be appropriate to supplement and lay down the Strategy on quotas and affirmative action measures as to increase the number of female managers in public enterprises, as well as to increase the number of women in public enterprise executive bodies[153].

If the influence that the Women`s MP Club exerts on the political processes in the Assembly is correlated with the **quotas**, i.e. with the **existing representation** of 38% in the Assembly, one gets the impression of a great influence of women in politics. However, "the activity and delivery of the promotion of women's rights and the general representation and impact of women in society do not match the figure"[154]. "The figure is higher than what is delivered as a quality, and that is where the focus should be, on delivering more than just numbers, the numbers are nice but not sufficient"[155]. According to some interviewed women MPs, quality refers to delivering results that can be felt in the public, not the quality of the MP as a person[156].

> *"When men run for the office, no one conditions them with quality. They normally get enlisted because they are men, they have a place in the society, parties, institutions. No one raises the question of quality. As if this is given. There is always the suspicion about women, that they may not be of good quality. Give us the same number of positions for men and women. The distribution of smart and not-so-smart, capable and incompetent is the same. There is a Gaussian distribution*

152 Strategic Plan of the Women Parliamentary Club, Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia 2018-2020, Skopje, 2018, available on https://www.sobranie.mk/dokumenti-928085e5-84ee-47c0-9162-9d6f2ff348fe.nspx (Accessed 20.3.2019).

153 European Commission, Proposal for a Directive of тhe European Parliament and of тhe Council on improving the gender balance among non-executive directors of companies listed on stock exchanges and related measures, Brussels, COM(2012) 614 final, 2012/0299 (COD), https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52012PC0614&from=EN (Accessed 4.4.2019).

154 I6.

155 I6.

156 I5, I6, I3.

curve. So, as smart and not-so-smart the men are, the women will be at the same level, as capable and incompetent men are, it will be the same with women", Liljana Popovska.

The interviewed women MPs are unanimous that although the quota itself is not enough, in our society there is a need for quotas for the representation of women MPs and for the political participation of women in general[157]. Hence, the quota of 50%, i.e. full equality of the candidate lists for Members of Parliament, for which "there is a signed consent of 92 Members of Parliament"[158], is a factor, but also not the only condition for increasing the influence of women MPs in political processes. Parallel to the quantitative inclusion of women, education of women parliamentarians is also needed[159], strengthening the capacity of women within political parties[160] and delivering reforms that will reflect on society[161].

One of the factors for increasing the influence of the women MPs in the decision making, i.e. in the political processes, is their representation in the committees of the Assembly. Parliamentary committees review the bills and other acts and look at the provisions of the draft laws and vote on the submitted amendments, whereby the committees may also submit their own amendments[162]. Interviewed women MPs have the impression that women in some committees in the Assembly are not represented in an adequate number, due to the fact that "a small number of women contributes to one woman having to take part in more committees"[163], but their under-representation in some Committees can also be interpreted through the question of power, that is, "the greater the power, the fewer women"[164].

With regard to the representation of female MPs in parliamentary committees (see **table 1**), the analysis of the composition of the committees in the current parliamentary mandate shows that **female MPs are the least represented in the membership of**:

• Committee on Rules of Procedure and Mandate-Immunity Issues (no female out of 8 members) and Vice-Chairwoman;

• Committee on Defense and Security (one woman out of 12 members);

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157 I4, I1, I5, I6, I3.

158 I1: „ 92 Signatures of Members of Parliament gathered, for 50% Participation of Women, i.e. full equality of candidates for MPs".

159 I2.

160 I3.

161 I6.

162 Rules of Procedure of the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia (consolidated text), Articles 139-150 https://www.sobranie.mk/content/Delovnik%20na%20RM/DelovniknaSRMPrecistentek-stAvgust13.pdf

163 I4.

164 I6.

- Committee on Election and Appointment Issues (2 women out of 12 members);

- Finance and Budget Committee (2 women out of 14 members) and Chairwoman;

- Committee on Transport, Communications and the Environment (2 women out of 10 members) and a Chairwoman and Vice-Chairwoman;

- Commission on the Political System and Inter-Community Relations (2 women out of 14 members).

The percentage representation of women MPs in the membership of these committees does **not exceed 22%**. In some committees with a low percentage of female MPs, women are nominated as Chairwoman or Vice-Chairwoman of the committee, for example in the Committee on Rules of Procedure and Mandate-Immunity Issues in which no female MP has is a member, there is a female vice-chairwoman, in the Committee on Transport, there is a Chairwoman and Deputy Chairwoman, and a Chairwoman in the Committee on Finance and Budget.

Percentage representation of women MPs in the membership from **30% to 50%** is noted in:

- Committee on Constitutional Affairs (37.5%, i.e. 6 women out of 16 members);

- Legislative Committee (42%, i.e. 6 women out of 14 members) and Chairwoman and Deputy Chairwoman;

- Standing Inquiry Committee for Protection of Citizens' Freedoms and Rights (35.7%, i.e. 5 women out of 14 members);

- Committee on Economic Affairs (30%, i.e. 3 women out of 10 members);

- Committee on Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy (40%, i.e. 4 women out of 10 members);

- Committee on Health (40%, i.e. 4 women out of 10 members) and Chairwoman and Deputy Chairwoman.

50% women MPs are represented in:

- Committee on European Affairs (7 women out of 14 members);

- Committee for Oversight of the Work of the Security and Counter-Intelligence Directorate and the Intelligence Agency (4 women out of 8 members);

- Supervision of the Implementation of Communication Monitoring Measures Committee (2 women from 4 members);

- Committee on Culture (5 women out of 10 members) and Chairwoman;

- Committee on Labor and Social Policy (6 women out of 12 members) and Vice-Chair;

- Committee on Local Self-Government (6 women from 12 members) and Vice-Chair.

In the Education, Science and Sport Committee, the percentage of women in the membership is **57%**, out of 14 members, 8 are women, with both a Chairwoman and Vice-Chairwoman. In the Foreign Policy Committee, **66%**, or 8 out of 12 members, are women. In the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, **90%** are women, i.e.9 out of 10 members are women, with women Members of Parliament being the Chairwoman and Vice-Chairwoman of the Committee.

In regards to the positions in the chairmanship of the committees, the analysed statistics show that in 10 out of 21 committees, the chairperson and/or the vice-chairperson are women MPs, respectively they have Chairwoman in 2 committees, the Vice-chairwoman are in 3 committees, and at the same time a Chairwoman and Vice-chair in 5 committees. At the same time, it should be emphasized that one of the three Vice-chairpersons of the Assembly in the current mandate is assigned to a woman, and the position of Secretary General of the Assembly is a woman too.

However, regarding the representation of women MPs in committee membership, it is noted that in 12 out of 21 committees, the representation of women MPs is below 50%, with the representation of women MPs in the membership of committees classified as "hard" areas[165] related to finance, security, inter-community relations, transport and parliamentary power is lower than 22%. A 50% or more share of women MPs is observed in membership of committees generally classified as "soft" areas, i.e. committees dealing with gender, education, culture and social issues. This position of women MPs in the work of committees

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165 Palmieri, 2011, 20.

largely coincides with the worldwide trend[166]. However, there are some exceptions to this worldwide trend in the Assembly, for example, the high representation of women in the Foreign Policy Committee's membership, which is generally characterised as a 'hard' area.

In terms of power, committees associated with greater influence in decision-making are concerned primarily with internal processes in Assembly (mandate, immunity of Members of Assembly, composition of committees, membership of public institutions' governing bodies, etc.), such as , for example, the Committee on Rules of Procedure and the Committee on Mandate-Immunity and the Committee on Elections and Appointments, do not have or have a low representation of women in membership[167]. Hence, increasing the participation of women in these committees through their membership, but also positioning in the chairmanship of committees can contribute to increasing the participation of women in all working bodies of the Assembly, but also in the administrative bodies and other bodies in public enterprises, organisations and the institutions that are elected or appointed by the Assembly. This is all the more significant in the absence of legal quotas and affirmative measures in order to increase the number of women in public enterprise management bodies. The need to increase the representation of women in these committees and in all other committees with less than 50% representation is in line with the provision of the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, according to which the Assembly in the selection of the working bodies and in determining the composition of its delegations for co-operation with international organisations and for co-operation with the parliaments of other States, it should respect the **principle of equal participation of women and men**[168].

At the same time, the importance and "weight" of the Committee on European Affairs (where female membership is 50%) and the Legislative Committee (with 42% female membership and chairperson and vice-chair) in parliamentary processes, should be emphasized. According to the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly, all draft laws for harmonising with European Union law must be considered by the Committee on European Affairs[169]. According to the Rules of Procedure, the draft laws and other acts are reviewed by the relevant working body and the

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166 Ibid, 22.

167 The Committee on Rules of Procedure and the Mandate-Immunity Issues shall, inter alia, consider questions on the grounds for termination and revocation of the mandate and the immunity of Members of Parliament, and the Committee on Election and Appointment shall, inter alia, propose the composition of the permanent and temporary working bodies of the Assembly. The Assembly, the permanent delegations of the Assembly to the international parliamentary assemblies and the Parliamentary groups for cooperation with other parliaments, also nominate members of the governing bodies and other bodies in public enterprises, the associations and institutions that are elected or appointed by the Assembly and submit proposals for election and appointment, or dismissal of officials elected or appointed by the Assembly, etc.

168 Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" No. 6/2012, 30/2013, 166/2014 and 150/2015), Article 9, paragraph 2.

169 Rules of Procedure of the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia (consolidated text) Article 86, https://www.sobranie.mk/content/Delovnik%20na%20RM/DelovniknaSRMPrecistentekstAvgust13.pdf

Legislative Committee, and the Assembly (at a plenary session) cannot discuss issues on which the parent working body (the committee) and the Legislative Committee have not taken a position[170]. It is therefore of particular importance that there is a large number of women in these two committees, as well as the co-operation of these committees with the Women`s Parliamentary Club to address the gender aspects of the laws and other acts considered by any working body.

It follows that greater influence of women MPs in the work of committees and the Assembly in general requires greater representation of women not only in the committee's presidential structure, but also in membership, especially in membership of committees that are classified as "hard" areas. One or a small number of Members of Parliament in any parliamentary committee face significant challenges in getting their vote heard. According to a survey conducted by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), lawmakers who represent a small number of members of a particular committee say they have difficulty hearing when they raise their voices about the rights that women have in their committee and at the same time they also stress the need to advocate for other issues if they are to be considered credible players in politics by their male counterparts[171]. The need for greater representation of women not only in the committee structure, but also in membership, stems from a provision in the Assembly's Rules of Procedure requiring the working body (the committee) to adopt a majority with at least one third of the members present of the total number of members[172].

According to the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly, **the composition of the working bodies (committees) is determined by a decision of the Assembly** depending on the number of Members of Parliament, the Members of Parliament not organised in a Parliamentary Group and in accordance with the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, which provides for **equal participation of women and men**[173]. Although this provision can be interpreted as guaranteeing a 50% participation of women in the membership of parliamentary working bodies, it does not apply in practice. For comparison, according to IPU data, although parliaments around the world lack statutory membership quotas and chairmanship positions in committees, the IPU recommends affirmative measures, namely to give the woman MPs an advantage if their qualifications (for example, abilities, prior experience, and especially the experience in a particular committee) are identical to those of her male counterpart[174].

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170 Rules of Procedure of the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia (consolidated text) Articles 125 and 86, https://www.sobranie.mk/content/Delovnik%20na%20RM/DelovniknaSRMPre-cistentekstAvgust13.pdf.

171 Palmieri, 2011, 27.

172 Rules of Procedure of the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia (consolidated text), Article 128, paragraph 4, https://www.sobranie.mk/content/Delovnik%20na%20RM/DelovniknaSRMPre-cistentekstAvgust13.pdf (Accessed 5.5.2019).

173 Rules of Procedure of the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia (consolidated text) Article 118, paragraph 5, https://www.sobranie.mk/content/Delovnik%20na%20RM/DelovniknaSRMPre-cistentekstAvgust13.pdf (Accessed 5.5.2019).

174 Palmieri, 2011, 22-28.

In the absence of a guarantee of equal representation of women MPs in the committees, there is a great need for closer cooperation of the Club of Women Members of Parliament with the committees, especially in those with a low representation of women MPs, in order to ensure proper addressing of the gender aspects of the laws and other issues considered by the commission.

AREAS OF ACTIVITY OF THE WOMEN CLUB OF REPRESENTATIVES

According to the 2019 Club Rules, the areas of work of the Club are: improving the status and position of women and establishing equal opportunities for women and men, protection against discrimination in the field of labor, social protection and social security, economy, health, education, security and the political system[175].

The research shows that most women MPs highlight specific areas as priorities of the Club. But some of lawmakers insist on a wider coverage of areas[176]. "Women are important everywhere, that's the idea for women to be present everywhere"[177]. From the women MPs point of view focusing on specific areas, the research shows that most overlap in highlighting two priority areas: the economic empowerment of women and the fight against violence.[178]

> *"Economic empowerment is important, the dependence is usually economic, and violence is related to dependence... a woman who is economically independent does not tolerate violence,"* **Juliana Nikolova.**

In addition to these areas, female MPs also prioritise social protection, promotion of women in rural areas and education[179].

In terms of areas where interpersonal cooperation is easier to achieve, the interviewees pointed to the areas of **labor and social policy**, as well as **health care**[180]. **Political empowerment** is cited as an area in which female lawmakers most readily reach consensus, "because here everyone has come to realise that we are needed as an ally and that no party can function alone, let alone some of us as individuals. But together

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175 Rulebook on the Organisation and Scope of Work of the Club of Representatives of the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia (4.2.2019), Article 3, available at https://www.sobranie.mk/dokumenti-928085e5-84ee-47c0-9162-9d6f2ff348fe.nspx (Accessed 22.3.2019).

176 I2.

177 I6.

178 I5, I1, I3.

179 I4.

180 I1, I2, I3, I5.

we are a force and we are becoming an increasing force".[181] According to the MPs, on the issues related to the **Budget** and **gender responsive budgeting**, the most difficult is the inter-party cooperation among the women MPs.

EU INTEGRATION PROCESSES

The women MPs' club can use the EU integration processes to assert its role in the processes in the Assembly that affect women's rights. All female MPs agree that aligning laws with European laws has a major impact on the advancement of women's rights[182]. Women MPs have a number of arguments in lobbying for specific laws that affect women's rights when those laws are linked to the European agenda and are part of a reform package to align with EU law, and with the opening of chapters in EU membership negotiations, it will be more dynamic and more expressive[183].

> *"We are adopting laws that are in the interest of improving women's rights, which probably would not be a priority if the European integration processes were not current. The Assembly ratified the Istanbul Convention, which was a challenge for other European states. Ratification would not be so quick and simple if it were not for these processes. If the Law on Prevention and Protection against Discrimination, which is very important for women's rights, was not part of the reform package to align with EU legislation, it would probably have waited for some other better times", **Maja Morachanin**.*

COOPERATION WITH CIVIL AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS AND EXPERTS

The 2019 Rulebook, as well as the 2008 Rulebook, provides for the Club to work with civil society organisations, government institutions and international institutions working in the field of gender equality[184]. All the interviewed female MPs pointed out the importance of cooperation with CSOs in terms of pointing out the need for amendments or corrections

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181 I5.

182 I5, I1, I2, I6, I4, I3.

183 I3, I6.

184 Rulebook on the organization and scope of work of the WMPs Club of the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia (4.2.2019), Article 10, paragraph 1, available at: https://www.sobranie.mk/dokumenti-928085e5-84ee-47c0-9162-9d6f2ff348fe.nspx (Accessed 22.3.2019).

to the legal solutions[185] and initiating public hearings[186]. The need for broader cooperation, organised by the MP Club, which would include women who are not MPs, i.e. women from political parties, women councilors at the local level, women from the business community, was highlighted in order to map and more easily solve the problems that concern them[187]. Most women MPs emphasized the need for cooperation with civil and international organisations and experts as to strengthen the capacities of the Club through education and support of women MPs in certain areas[188].

> *"It is especially important for women MPs to be educated in terms of hate speech. Being elected to Assembly means being prepared to face hate speech, and education is needed on how to deal with it, how to know how to resist, not to withdraw and not use their position of power for fear of being humiliated",* Daniela Rangelova.

> *"Gender budgeting is a major topic that needs support from the Ministry of Finance, as well as from the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, as well as support from civil society organisations,"* said **Gjylymsere Kasapi**.

BETTER INFORMING TOOLS AND MECHANISMS FOR WOMEN MPS

In order to make the Club of Women MPs more influential in the political processes in the Assembly, woman MPs need **better information** about bills coming from the Government or to crystallise their idea of a bill or amendment to a bill that affects women's rights. To this end, the Strategic Plan of the Club of Women MPs 2018-2020, inter alia, envisages to increase the Club's info database with studies, analysis and informations[189]. Regarding the **tools and mechanisms** used by woman MPs for getting informed, the **public debate** on the initiative of CSOs, as well as the **contacts** with the NGO sector, experts and stakeholders were identified as the most frequent information mechanisms[190]. The relevance of this type of information stems from the fact that women's rights CSOs are dedicated to issues that concern women[191]. However, it was

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185 I6, I2, I4.

186 I5, I4.

187 I3.

188 I1, I2, I4.

189 Strategic Plan of the WMPs Club, Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia 2018-2020, Skopje, 2018, available at https://www.sobranie.mk/dokumenti-928085e5-84ee-47c0-9162-9d6f2ff348fe.nspx (Accessed 20.3.2019).

190 I5, I6, I1, I2, I4.

191 I5.

recognised that a register, i.e. a database of CSOs and experts, should be established, and not to be invited the MPs choice, but rather register themselves to participate in the public debate, if it is in the field they are engaged[192]. Information and analysis from the **Parliamentary Institute**[193] are mostly used there is a need for an insight on what the legal solution to certain rights is for women in other countries[194]. Regarding the Single National Electronic Registry of Regulations (**SNER**) as an information tool it was stated that "the home minister or deputy minister should, along with the submission of the SNER bill, also represent it in the Club of Women MPs, if it concerns women's rights".[195] **Parliamentary questions** as an information mechanism are at least or not used by MPs at all, "because parliamentary questions need to be regulated differently... in the UK for example, once a week, a minute for a question, a minute for an answer and the prime minister answers all questions, not once a month with a slow pace of 10 minutes for a question and 10 minutes for response."[196] According to the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly, Members of Parliament have the right to ask the President of the Government, a member of the Government and other holders of office responsible before the Assembly for questions concerning their work or matters of their competence every last Thursday of the month. The questioning of the MPs cannot last longer than ten minutes, and the MP has the right to say whether he/she is satisfied with the answer, but not longer than for three minutes. At the same time, the MP who asked the question, after receiving the answer, has the right to ask an additional question in duration of three minutes. The answer to the oral question asked cannot last longer than ten minutes[197]. The general impression is that the parliamentary questioning mechanism for obtaining information on a particular issue takes more time than other information tools.

PROMOTION OF THE WORK OF THE CLUB OF WOMEN MPS ON THE PARLIAMENTARY TV CHANNEL

The interviewed women MPs believe that the Parliamentary TV Channel is a powerful tool for promoting the work of the women MPs Club and for promoting women's rights[198]. Parliamentary TV Channel should broadcast the outreach activity of women MPs, public debates raised by

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192 I3.

193 The Parliamentary Institute is a separate organisational unit in the service of the Assembly for research and information, https://www.sobranie.mk/parlamentaren-institut-baner.nspx (Accessed 20.4.2019).

194 I6.

195 I1.

196 I3.

197 Rules of Procedure of the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia (consolidated text) Article: 37; 39; 43. https://www.sobranie.mk/content/Delovnik%20na%20RM/DelovniknaSRMPrecistentek-stAvgust13.pdf (Accessed 5.5.2019).

198 I5, I1, I6, I4, I3.

the women MPs Club and public debates on issues affecting women's rights, as well as the addressing of the women MPs to the business sector[199]. However, Club meetings should not be public in the function of achieving party co-operation which, due to party positions, should not be shared with the public[200]. On the other hand, the promotion of the Club on the Parliamentary TV Channel can encourage a greater engagement and activity of MPs to have something to show[201], but also to raise awareness of women MPs about the work of the Club and what can be achieved through the Club[202]. This indirectly contributes to the increased role of the Club in the processes of the Assembly.

FACTORS AFFECTING PARTNERSHIP COOPERATION IN THE WOMEN MP CLUB

Factors affecting the parties co-operation in the Club relate to the internal and external aspects of its work and decision-making. From an external point of view, the research looks at the role of political parties as a factor hampering co-operation in the Club. Internally, the research reveals the solidarity (female solidarity) among female MPs as a factor in facilitating cooperation in the Club. These factors emerge from the analysis of interviews with lawmakers in the current Assembly, in which the party co-operation and consensus are equated with solidarity, and problems in party co-operation are located in party ideologies or rigid leaderships.

THE VIEWS OF POLITICAL PARTIES AS FACTORS HAMPERING CO-OPERATION IN THE WOMEN MPS CLUB

The analysis of the interviews showed that all women MPs cite the political parties as a factor that makes it difficult to co-operate in the Club. Majority of women MPs locate the problem within the **dominance of the party's stance**[203] and in the positioning of the parliamentary group

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199 I1.

200 I6.

201 I3.

202 I4.

203 I6.

coordinator.[204] If the party has a stance on a particular issue, especially if it is in the party's programmatic determinations, then it is difficult to influence it, regardless of whether any individual in the party has a different opinion.[205] "The biggest factor contributing to heavier inter-party co-operation is the centralising of the parties, that is, the party leadership is listened."[206] The most difficult in order to achieve inter-party cooperation is "where the party leadership has the most influence".[207] "Because of the party's stance, some lawmakers do not vote on their own conviction."[208] The analysis of the interviews indicates that the vertical, hierarchical positioning of political parties that lack tolerance for pluralistic views outside the positions of party leadership makes interpersonal cooperation between women MPs quite difficult.

Part of the women MPs locate the problem in **opposing party ideologies**, which contribute to the occasional disruption of the political climate and communication between the parties, which has had a devastating effect on the functioning of the Club.[209] An example of such a crisis in the functioning of the Club is the case with the adoption of the 2013 Law on Termination of Pregnancy. On June 10, 2013, the Assembly adopted a law that caused controversy in the public and was one of the most striking examples of a radical split between women MPs from the governing party and the opposition. The present case shows that "where the ideology (of the parties) is involved... Where the freedom of the woman, the woman as a person, the family, the various partnerships, where the ideological matrices of the parties point in one direction or another, or touch direction, it is there where it`s most difficult to achieve party cooperation, it is not impossible, but it is more difficult."[210] The argument that it is impossible to achieve inter-party cooperation between the women MPs is confirmed by the adoption of the amendments to the aforementioned Law on Prevention of Pregnancy in the Assembly in 2019[211].

According to women MPs opinion, the 2019 pregnancy termination law is an example of cooperation and consensus[212]. "The law on termination of pregnancy is a good example, when there is no obstruction, it is actually a way of cooperation and solidarity... although everyone was voting in a partisan manner according to their will, there were no obstructions, there was no argument against the law. Maybe there wasn't as much public support as we'd like, but there was this kind of silent support."[213]

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204 I3.

205 I4.

206 I1.

207 I3.

208 I2.

209 I5.

210 I5.

211 The promulgation of the Law on Termination of Pregnancy has not been signed by the President of the Republic of Northern Macedonia, ie the Law is not in force. The materials regarding the Law on Termination of Pregnancy are available at: https://www.sobranie.mk/materialdetails.nspx?materialId=9b372fbe-1fba-4a03-be50-7c581b65d94f (Accessed 9.5.2019).

212 I1, I6.

213 I6.

On the topic of domestic violence, despite the political games in the wording, consensus has been reached in the terminology[214]. "So, for all of these topics there general inclination, but how it is articulated politically will be impacted by the (party) ideology, how far it will go and how ... there were finesses where something or some word or expression bothered and it just got stuck."[215]

Hence, in areas where women have common interests, while solutions are not contrary to party attitudes and ideologies, consensus and cooperation among members of the Club is most easily achieved. But there are also examples of areas where parties have opposing views, and where, through informal coordination and cooperation within the Club, consensus has been reached.

SOLIDARITY BETWEEN WOMEN MPS AS A FACTOR IN FACILITATING INTER-PARTY COOPERATION IN THE CLUB

The analysis of the interviews showed that of all the researched categories, in the category of supra-partisan cooperation almost all the MPs focus on **solidarity**, as a factor that facilitates the cooperation between MPs from different political parties. The MPs emphasize the solidarity as a factor that facilitates inter-party cooperation in the Club:

- "Solidarity is a factor that facilitates cooperation, for example, I will consider whether to reply to a woman."[216];

- "For many years, the Presidency or Coordinating Body of the Club has had regular meetings where it had meetings and discussed certain laws on the initiative of any woman MP, and then agreed to lobby... We have acted together, we have had regular meetings, as well as initiating meetings of an MP colleague... not always, but very often we have been in solidarity."[217];

- "I think the impact mostly depends on showing fellow men that women have the core to stand up for women's rights, to show that there is a harmony not only in front of others but also in ourselves. That is the key factor, in order to have an impact we need to be consistent to be able to achieve it... So, how far are we willing to work outside the party, and I think we can have excellent collaboration with colleagues here... even an emotional connection"[218];

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214 I5.

215 I5.

216 I2.

217 I5.

218 I3.

- "Irregardless we have shown solidarity in informal meetings and this is visible at the Club, yet when it comes to showing solidarity in action, then party interests prevail"[219].

Some of the interviewed female MPs emphasized the solidarity between colleagues in the Club as a strong factor for reconciliation in the 2014 parliamentary crisis:

- "The Club should be used as a point of reconciliation as an informal body that helps with all the crisis issues, but also with all the issues that concern women and about which parties have different views. We can fight... We have to be unique in that."[220];

- "After some big dramas in the Assembly, it was the women MPs who first crossed the barriers and where even no hand was offered, they sat down on the table to discuss"[221].

Interview findings show that solidarity among female MPs facilitates adoption of "problematic"[222] legal solutions, preceded by informal coordination within the women MPs Club. As an example it was pointed out that:

- "At the Club we feel unity, which is very important. When we are divided among the caucuses, then we are in our own trenches, but if the interest is shared, such as the Law on Termination of Pregnancy (from 2019), despite the position of the party president, we have stopped there, and we voted for the law, but previously the theme and atmosphere within the Club were prepared ahead. So, it helps";[223]

- "We have previously agreed with women MPs that no one will usurp the topic (for protection against discrimination), that it will be a shared one and that we will all push for it. I told them (in the parent party) that I had agreed with my colleagues and that I would respect it... I would not hold a press on this subject... even though we have been doing this for years and have advocated, but there is no one to get points on this, it is important to pass and enact the Law on Prevention and Protection against Discrimination, and that is what happened."[224]

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219 I6.

220 I4.

221 I5.

222 Problematic legal solutions in this context are legal solutions whereby political parties, especially those in power and those in opposition, have opposing views.

223 I4.

224 I3.

Solidarity is the basis that enables the Club to decide by consensus, but also by its horizontal position. In this sense, solidarity is correlated with the notion of horizontal power that is built through an open, inclusive debate, but also through building personal relationships, contacts and emotional rapprochement of women MPs from different parties.

Women MPs speak of solidarity as a descriptive idea/concept for the relationships in the Club. Although solidarity as an idea or as a political concept is generally not sufficiently theoretically elaborated, the focus of of women MPs on solidarity indicates that it is possible from a descriptive concept to develop solidarity into a normative concept. Normative solidarity can be a model for relations in society. Normative solidarity can be a postulate and a resource that can be used in times of political crisis[225].

CONCLUSIONS

The research shows that in order to strengthen the role of the Club of women MPs it is necessary **to formalise** the work of the Club in terms of holding regular weekly meetings, having an agenda of activities and monitoring their implementation, having their own budget and technical support staff for the Club. This need to formalise the work calendar and to support the Club should not lead to a hierarchy of relationships within the Club itself. On the contrary, **the horizontal and consensual nature of the Club's decision-making needs to be maintained**.

In addition, in order to strengthen its influence in the Assembly, **the Club should expand its cooperation with all committees of the Assembly**. For the time being, the Rules of Procedure of the Club of Women Members of Parliament explicitly provide for cooperation only between the Club and the Equal Opportunity Commission. The need and benefit of the Club's cooperation with all parliamentary committees is twofold. First of all, the Club should expand its cooperation as all committees deal with issues affecting women. At the same time, through more frequent cooperation between the Club and other committees, their members will have the opportunity to become familiar with gender issues, but also with a culture of openness towards CSOs, inclusiveness and consensus building, which is promoted by the Club.

Parliamentary committees review bills and other acts, review the provisions of the draft law, and vote on amendments submitted, whereby committees may also submit their own amendments. Therefore,

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225 Buksinski, Dobrzanski 2005, 135.

committees are centers of power in the processes of the Assembly. Therefore, one of the factors for increasing the power of women MPs, that is, the influence of women MPs in decision-making in the political process, is their representation in the committees of the Assembly. In the absence of guarantees for equal representation of women MPs in the parliamentary committees, there is a need for **closer and more frequent cooperation between the Club and the committees, especially between the Club and the committees where there is a low representation of women MPs.**

Membership **quotas** for woman MPs **are an important factor in boosting the number in the Club, as well as contributing to increasing the representation of women MPs in the membership and chairmanship positions in parliamentary committees.** Particular attention should be paid to increasing the number of women MPs and aligning with the representation of men in committees generally considered "hard" in terms of the areas they are considering, which traditionally have a low representation of women. It is of great importance the representation and influence women have in the Legislative Committee, which reviews all draft laws and other acts in all areas. Also important is the representation of women MPs in the Committee on European Affairs, which considers all draft laws that harmonise with European Union law. **EU integration processes allow women MPs to have much stronger arguments in lobbying for certain laws that affect women's rights.** When such laws are linked to the European agenda and are part of a reform package for harmonising with EU legislation, then women MPs can have a much stronger impact. This impact can be much more pronounced with the opening of chapters in EU membership negotiations. **In line with the importance of quotas for increased participation of women MPs in the work of the Assembly, education of women MPs and strengthening of women's capacities within the parties is quite needed.** In this regard, the importance of the cooperation of the Women`s Club of Members of Parliament with civil and international organisations is particularly emphasized.

The cooperation of the women MPs Club with civil and international organisations is also highlighted **as an important factor in strengthening the Club's influence.** In particular, the current contribution of CSOs to inform women MPs on certain issues concerning women's rights, as well as to point out the need for amendments or corrections to legal solutions and initiating public debates. Gender responsive budgeting is mentioned as a specific area of such cooperation between CSOs and international organisations. There is also a need for support from civil and international organisations in dealing with female MPs with hate speech.

In order to better inform MPs about specific policies or legal and amendment solutions**, a registry or database of CSOs and experts in areas of activity should be established**. Such a database should enable CSOs and experts to register themselves to participate in a public hearing, if it is in the domain of the issue they are dealing with.

Although the Rules of Procedure of the women MPs Club provide for a wide range of areas of activity, research shows that some female MPs focus on specific areas, most of which are in the areas of economic empowerment of women and combating violence. The research also shows that consensus and cooperation among women MPs in the Club are most easily achieved in areas where they have common interests, and the solutions are not contrary to party attitudes and ideologies.

Research shows that **the clash of ideologies between political parties or the dominant stance of political leadership are the biggest obstacles to reaching a consensus in the women MPs Club.** In particular, it is an ideological conflict where the freedom of the woman, the family and the definition of partnerships are at the heart of it. **However,** despite the rivalry at the level of party ideologies, research shows that **through informal coordination and cooperation within the Club, interparty cooperation between MPs can be achieved.**

Amid the clashes between the parties, research shows that efforts to co-ordinate and co-operate within the Club should not be shared with the public. While the women MPs emphasize the great importance of the media for promoting the work of the Club and promoting gender equality, **it is still better to keep the meetings of the Club behind the closed doors in order to avoid disturbing the delicacy of the party cooperation.**

Therefore, it is very important during the process of strengthening the role and influence of the Club **to maintain the Club's political tradition of unstructured, informal meetings in which women MPs, regardless of their parties' opposing views, freely discuss and manage to achieve cross-party cooperation.**

Regarding the problem of inter-party cooperation, research shows that **solidarity among women MPs is the only and most important factor facilitating inter-party cooperation in the Club.** Solidarity is the foundation that enables the Club to maintain a political culture of open, inclusive debate, as a counterbalance to the problem of party obedience and discipline and the crisis resulting from party rigidity. Research shows that **solidarity** experiences in the Club can be used as the **basis for building a brand new political project that is based on the relationships of horizontal power, i.e. the power of inclusivity, building cooperation and decision-making in the public interest.**

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APPENDIX 1

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How to strengthen the capacities of the women MPs Club as an informal group that unites all female MPs?

2. How can the women MPs Club increase its influence in the political processes in the Assembly?

3. What tools do you use to raise awareness of government bills or to crystallise your idea of a bill or amendment?

4. How can CSOs be used to strengthen the position of the women MPs Club in advocating for women's rights in the adoption of laws and budgets, as well as in controlling the executive branch?

5. What policy areas do you consider to be a priority in terms of women's rights?

6. In which areas do women MPs most easily achieve supra-partisan (inter-party) cooperation in advocating for women's rights?

7. In which areas do women find it most difficult to achieve (supra-partisan) inter-party cooperation to advocate for women's rights?

8. What are the factors that contribute to easier or more difficult inter-party cooperation?

9. What is the impact of EU integration on the dynamics of affirming women's rights? In which areas is the impact most visible, and in which areas it is least visible?

10. Do you think the parliamentary TV channel can be used to promote women's rights and how?

GENDER BIAS AMONG THE YOUTH IN NORTH MACEDONIA:

WHAT ARE YOUTH`S PERCEPTIONS OF EMPLOYABILITY OF CANDIDATES FOR MENAGERIAL POSITIONS IN POLITICS, THE PRIVATE AND CIVIL SECTOR?

JOVANA GJORGJIOVSKA

CONTENTS

4 GENDER BIAS AMONG THE YOUTH IN NORTH MACEDONIA: WHAT ARE YOUTH`S PERCEPTIONS OF EMPLOYABILITY OF CANDIDATES FOR MENAGERIAL POSITIONS IN POLITICS, THE PRIVATE AND CIVIL SECTOR?

SUMMARY

North Macedonia is ranked 66th out of 149 countries in the 2018 Global Gender Gap Index in a group of countries, such as Romania, Venezuela, Ukraine, Singapore, Honduras and Montenegro. Although the appropriate legislation to ensure equal opportunities for participation in all spheres of social action has been continuously improving and upgrading over the past decade, data from the European Commission's 2018 Progress Report on North Macedonia indicate a relatively low level of women's participation in more spheres of social life in the country. Following the world trends in academic literature on gender bias and gender stereotyped perceptions of candidates for leadership positions, this research focused on an experimental examination of the (non)existence of gender bias among young citizens of North Macedonia (n=258), and their perceptions of gender stereotyped characteristics of candidates for leadership positions in politics, the private and civil society. According to the data, young people from North Macedonia are gender biased in favor of candidates for managerial positions in politics and the civil society, and in favor of candidates for leadership positions in the private sector. Gender stereotyped perceptions are examined in detail in the research.

INTRODUCTION

According to an August 2017 opinion poll by the International Republican Institute, as many as 61% of respondents said that politicians in North Macedonia have no ear about the needs and ideas of women (IRI 2017, 67). In the same survey, 71% of the respondents answered that for them the gender of the candidate for political office makes no difference (IRI 2017, 68). However, data from the European Commission's 2018 Progress Report on Macedonia and data from the State Statistical Office (2019) show that women's participation in social activity in North Macedonia is relatively low.

Although, on paper, the existing legislation (such as the Law on Equal Opportunities, the National Plan and the Strategy for Gender Equality) aims to provide equal opportunities for participation in all spheres of social action, North Macedonia is ranked 66th (out of 149 countries) on the Global Gender Index (World Economic Forum 2018, 10). In addition to further changes in legislation (following the "top down" approach), it is also necessary to understand citizens' perceptions of gender differences in perceptions of working ability, as well as the reasons for them. Such data would be of great use in the process of addressing gender issues down the road. A particularly important target group for introducing "bottom-up" social change is the young population (16-29 years), whose education often incorporates gender stereotypes into the curriculum itself (e.g., Kennig 2008).

It is for this reason that an in-depth understanding of the opinions of young citizens and their views on gender differences in work ability in certain fields is needed, as well as the characteristics they most often associate with successful people in managerial positions. This research project aims to create a basis for further research dedicated to this topic. The following text elaborates on the theoretical background of gender bias, as well as the local context of the research and its need. After a brief description of the methodological approach, the key results are discussed and a review was provided on them.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK - LITERATURE REVIEW

According to the latest World Economic Forum research on gender equality, the biggest gender gap appears in the field of political empowerment of women where there is a 77% gap between male and female political participation globally. In the area of economic participation and development opportunities, the gap is significantly smaller (41.9%). The lowest are the gaps in the fields of educational opportunities (4.4%) and general health (4.6%) (World Economic Forum 2018, 7). Due to lack of data on women's participation in the civil society sector, the following section presents only data on women's participation in the private sector and in global politics. In addition, there are presented key findings from relevant academic literature dealing with gender bias and gender stereotyped perceptions of senior management positions.

GENDER DIFFERENCES IN PRIVATE SECTOR PARTICIPATION

According to the latest International Labor Organisation survey in 2018, 2 billion men have actively participated in the labor market as against 1.3 billion active women in the labor market. In other words, women are rarely included in the labor market by as much as 26% of men (Beghini, Cattaneo, and Pozzan 2019, 12). The situation is similar when it comes to managerial positions in the private sector. For over 25 years, the share of women in the labor market in managerial positions globally is barely a quarter or 25-27% (Beghini, Cattaneo, and Pozzan 2019, 14).

Although the number of women in lower management positions is gradually increasing, their representation at higher levels of hierarchy is significantly lower (European Commission 2005; United Nations 2015). For example, only 16.9% of the supervisory board members of the 500 largest companies in the United States are women (Catalyst 2009). In addition, the salaries of women in managerial positions are up to 30% lower than those of their male counterparts (Blau and Kahn 2000; Arulampalam, Booth, and Bryan 2005; Weinberg, Levine, and Salmon 2004). It is also important to note that managerial positions where women are more likely to have fewer career development and promotion opportunities (Lyness and Thompson 1997), involve less authoritative decisions (Jacobs 1992; Wright, Baxter, and Birkelund 1995) and offer fewer financial benefits (e.g., stocks) (Kulich, Ryan, and Haslam 2006).

GENDER DIFFERENCES IN PARTICIPATING IN POLITICS

In politics, the numbers are similar: of the 149 countries participating in the World Economic Forum, only 17 (6%) have women in top political positions, such as president and prime minister (World Economic Forum 2018, 7). Women represent 30% in the UK Parliament 2017, 23.7% in the United States Congress (Center for American Women and Politics 2019) and 36.4% in the European Parliament (2019). Globally, women represent only 24% in national parliaments and 18% in ministerial positions (World Economic Forum 2018, 7). Taking into account the BEIS typology (Council of the European Union 1999, 15), the tendency to appoint ministers in the socio-cultural sectors is particularly important, as opposed to appointing ministers in sectors related to basic, economic and infrastructure management functions (European Commission 2010; European Institute for Gender Equality 2017).

Although academic literature suggests that voters sometimes favor male candidates for certain political positions (for example, Falk and Kenski 2006; Fox and Smith 1998), it should be borne in mind that women are more likely to run for risky positions (Ryan, Haslam, and Kulich 2010). In the UK, for example, male candidates are disproportionately represented in 'safe' elections, and female candidates are more represented in elections where victory is uncertain (Lovenduski 2005; Short 1996). Similar data was found for the United States between 1916 and 1978, when women were more likely to run for Congress in "hopeless" districts (districts where their party received less than 40% of the vote in previous elections) (Gertzog and Simard 1981). Although such analysis is not available for the latest political developments in the United States, it is worth noting that in 2019 there are positive trends: a record number of women holding political office in Congress (127, 23.7%), in the Senate (25, 25 %) and in the House of Representatives (102, 23.4%) (Center for American Women and Politics 2019).

EXPERIENCE OF WOMEN IN MANAGERIAL POSITIONS

Many studies show that the experience of women in managerial positions differs greatly from the experience of men in equally senior positions. For example, women in leadership positions are more likely to receive negative comments and low ratings than their male counterparts, even when it comes to identical behavior (eg, Eagly, Makhijani, and Klonsky 1992; Kulich et al. 2007). Psychologists often explain this gender-based assessment through the perceived inconsistency of views on what it means to be a good leader/manager and what it means to be a woman, or so called persuasion "When thinking of a managerial position, one is thinking of a man" (eg, Agars 2004; Eagly and Karau 2002; Heilman, Block, Martell, and Simon 1989; Schein 1973, 1975).

In other words, women in leadership positions are more often associated with gender stereotyped traits such as highly developed empathy, democratic leadership, good interpersonal skills, and careers for professional development. On the other hand, men in managerial positions are associated with gender stereotyped traits, such as self-esteem, resilience under pressure, persuasion and perseverance (Hays 2014; Ryan, Haslam, Hersby, and Bongiorno 2011). It is precisely the conviction that "When it comes to leadership, it is about men", many researchers identify it as one of the major obstacles women in leadership need to overcome - feminine leadership traits are perceived as valuable and important only after women leadership positions will meet traditional expectations of "masculine leadership" (Antal and Israel 1993; Vial and Napier 2018).

In practice, the conviction "When it comes to a managerial position, it is thought of a man" would mean that a women candidate for a particular managerial position would be perceived as less qualified if the post is in a "male" field of work and/or linked to gender stereotyped characteristics of male behavior (Schein 2001). Similarly, even when differences in candidate behavior are statistically controlled, women in leadership positions receive lower ratings than their male counterparts (Eagly et al. 1992). For example, while the assertive behavior (self-confident, persistent, and persuasive behavior) of a man in a managerial position would be judged appropriate, the assertive behavior of a woman in the same position would be deemed unacceptable and aggressive. Because of these judgments, women in leadership positions are often in a situation where they have to choose "between two evils": a) stereotyped female behavior that is inappropriate for a "real" leader or b) stereotyped leadership behavior that is inappropriate for a "real" woman. Violation of these social norms of behavior can lead to negative ratings and sanctions (eg, Eagly and Karau 2002; Eagly et al. 1992; Heilman, Wallen, Fuchs, and Tamkins 2004; Rudman and Glick 2001).

GENDER BIAS

Gender bias can be defined as a tendency for prejudice and/or specific attitudes towards representatives of one gender, which are based solely on the affiliation of the representatives of the gender in question. The existence of (unconscious) gender bias (and the resulting discrimination) in the labor market has been a subject of a number of studies that commonly use experimental or quasi-experimental research designs (a detailed overview of existing studies is given in Riach and Rich (2002) and Blau and Kahn (2017)).

Particularly important for this research paper are studies that confirm the existence of gender bias in recruitment, employment, and networking (Neumark, Bank and Nort 1996; Goldin and Rouse 2000; Black and Strahan 2001; Bertrand and Mullainathan 2004; Moss-Racusin et al. . 2012; Reuben, Sapienza and Zingales 2014; Baert, De Pauw and

Deschacht 2016; Sarsons, 2017). One of the few examples to do retrospective analysis of real data on gender bias in the employment process is Goldin and Rouse's (2000) study, which shows that the introduction of "blind" auditions in major orchestras in the United States increases the participation of female musicians by 25%, compared to the period during which the candidate(s) were visible to the jury during the auditions.

LOCAL RESEARCH CONTEXT

In the Global Gender Index for 2018, which ranks 149 countries in four thematic dimensions (economic participation, educational opportunities, general health, and political empowerment), North Macedonia is ranked 66th (with an index of 0.707), and it is still far from the 28th highest of the 115 countries it ranked in 2006 (index 0.698) (World Economic Forum 2018, 10). To illustrate, in 2018, Romania, Venezuela and Ukraine were ranked 63, 64 and 65 respectively, followed by Singapore, Honduras and Montenegro (North Africa 67-69) (World Economic Forum 2018, 10).

In terms of each of the four thematic dimensions, North Macedonia has the highest ranking in the field of political empowerment of women (45th out of 149 countries; index 0.241), followed by educational opportunities (68th out of 149 countries; with index 0.993) and general health (73rd out of 149 countries; index 0.976). The country ranks lowest in the field of economic participation (103rd out of 140 countries; index 0.62) (World Economic Forum 2018, 10). In other words, according to the indexes obtained, women in North Macedonia have good conditions for education and general health, while securing opportunities for economic and political participation still needs to be worked on. It is important to note that the high rank of North Macedonia in the field of political empowerment of women is mainly due to the relatively low indexes in the countries participating in the survey, rather than to the actual situation in the country (the index in this field is 0.241).

On the other hand, according to World Bank data (2019), which focuses on legal discrimination and its impact on women's employment and entrepreneurship opportunities, North Macedonia is rated at 88.13

points (out of 100 possible points), a higher score indicates less legal discrimination (World Bank 2019, 9). The World Bank survey includes 187 countries around the world, rated according to eight indicators: mobility opportunities, new employment, getting paid, getting married, starting a family and having children, doing business, managing property and getting a pension (World Bank 2019, 3-4). The average rating of the countries included in this review is 74.71 points, or 14 points lower than the rating of North Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Laos and South Africa (88.13/100) (World Bank 2019, 8).

In terms of the eight indicators, North Macedonia is rated with the highest possible score (100) in five areas: mobility opportunities, new employment, marriage, doing business and managing assets. Following are the fields of starting a family and having children (80 out of 100 possible points) and retirement (75 out of 100 possible points). The country gets the lowest score in the field of salary (50 out of 100 possible points) (World Bank 2019, 28). In other words, the legal framework in North Macedonia provides women with equal opportunities to participate in many of the fields, but steps are still needed to reduce legal discrimination in the fields of starting a family and having children, retirement and salary.

However, taking into account data from the World Economic Forum (2018) and the World Bank (2019), setting the legal framework for equal opportunities for social action does not always translate directly into practical implementation of equal opportunities. Thus, although in the last decade in North Macedonia a legislative framework has been built aiming at providing equal opportunities for participation in all spheres of social action (such as the Law on Equal Opportunities, the National Plan and the Strategy for Gender Equality, the Convention for the prevention and fighting violence against women and domestic violence), large numbers of data at the local level indicate that there is still much room for improvement. For example, according to the Gender Equality Index (developed by Reactor - Research in Action), the highest ranked municipality in North Macedonia (Skopje municipality Centar) scores only 59 out of 100 possible points. The low level of gender equality in the municipalities of North Macedonia is particularly indicative given the fact that as many as 20% of municipalities score less than 20 out of 100 possible points on the Gender Equality Index.

When it comes to women's participation in politics, according to data from the European Commission's 2018 Progress Report on North Macedonia, women's direct political participation in the country is relatively low: 7% at local government level, 13% at executive level as appointees, 18% at ministerial level and 37% in the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia (which is the only state institution for which there are legally binding quotas on women inclusion) in the executive branch (European Commission 2018, 9, 11, 13). Also, women who are actively involved in politics in North Macedonia are often discriminated against by political parties, making it difficult for them to advance to higher positions (Korunovska, Srbianko, Ilikj, and Maleska 2015, 75). In addition, there is discrimination against women in the process of recruiting for mayoral positions and municipal councils. Research results show that political

parties often give men a chance because of their perceived potential, and women are expected to first prove their ability (by completing higher education and being promoted to higher positions). Practically, this means that on average, men are given a leading position in the political parties at the age of 31, while for women this occurs between 38 and 45 years of age (Korunovska, Srbijanko, Ilikj and Maleska 2015, 75-76). This way of functioning of politics in North Macedonia is also reflected in the attitudes of the young population - young men have more confidence in domestic political institutions, and are more likely to participate in political activities and more willing to accept political office than young women. (Topuzovska, Latkovic et al. 2019, 76-77, 85).

In the private sector, women's participation is still relatively low: according to 2019 State Statistical Office, 78% of men participate in the labor market, compared to 52% of women. Disaggregated by place of residence, only 48% of able-bodied women in urban and 39% in rural communities actively participated in the labor market. Compared to the female population, as much as 68% of working-age men in urban and 71% in rural communities took part in the labor market (SSO 2019, 57-62). An additional problem highlighted by publicly available SSO data is gender stereotyping in terms of candidates' ability to work in different fields of professional activity: women are more represented in lower-paid sectors more often associated with traditionally defined "feminine" characteristics (e.g., care, courtesy, dedication to the next generations, homework, etc.), such as health, education, hospitality and the textile industry (SSO 2019, 68-69).

Taking into account the gender stereotyping of the fields of professional activity, it is not surprising that the SSO data indicate a gender pay gap: in 2014, men active on the labor market in North Macedonia earned an average of 181 denars per working hour while women earned 166 denars per working hour (SSO 2016, 23). These figures, in annual gross earnings, indicate an average gender difference of 50 thousand denars (on average 419 999 denars for employed men and 369 711 denars for employed women) (SSO 2016, 12). In other words, although women with higher education are employed, they earn less: between women and men with the same job qualifications there is a difference of about 18% in favor of men (Petreski and Mojsoska Blazhevski 2015, 1). There is also a significant maternal wage gap: women mothers on average receive a salary that is about 8% lower than that of men fathers (Petreski and Mojsoska Blazhevski 2015, 1). The situation is similar in the case of youth employment in North Macedonia - although almost every second young person in the country works for a job that is retrained and receives a lower salary than what he or she should receive if working in an appropriate job, and most exposed to this phenomenon of "underemployment" are women from rural areas who have completed higher education (Petreski et al. 2019).

Apart from the impact of gender stereotyping in the fields of professional activity, gender differences in annual gross earnings could also be explained by the traditional division of jobs between men and women in North Macedonia. According to the SSO Time Use Survey (2015b),

men in North Macedonia spend most of their time on paid work, while women spend most of their time on domestic activities. Comparing only employees of both sexes, the difference in time dedicated to homework is 9% - 14% of the time women work, and men work with only 5% of their time (SSO 2015b, 13).

A very important aspect of gender differences in social action is the representation of women in managerial positions. Only 25% of employers in North Macedonia are women, and only 4% of the boards of companies listed on the Macedonian Stock Exchange are women-led (SSO 2019, 66). These figures are particularly surprising given the fact that women represent about ⅔ of the highly educated population in North Macedonia at all educational levels (undergraduate, master's and doctoral studies) (SSO 2019, 48-54).

According to the research by Maleska and Srbijanko (2015), although there are women in managerial positions in the companies/organisations they work in, their male counterparts are more often in senior management positions. In other words, although the number of senior management positions in their sample is similar (26% of employed men and 19% of employed women), even 65% of senior management positions are filled by men (Maleska & Srbijanko 2015, 17). In addition, 74% of the female respondents and 64% of the male respondents think that men have greater opportunities for career advancement (Maleska and Srbijanko 2015, 16).

NECESSITY FOR THE RESEARCH

Taking into account the data summarised in the previous chapters, it can be concluded that the level of awareness of the Macedonian citizens about gender bias and the stereotyping that follows is relatively low. In other words, although, for example, 70% of respondents say that the gender of a candidate for high political office is not important to them (which is somewhat surprising because politics is a "male" field of work, according to traditional culture in Macedonia) (IRI 2017), data suggest gender stereotyped roles (for example, more women work in educational and medical facilities, and more men own their own businesses and are in management positions (SSO 2019)). In short, the "blindness" to gender stereotypes for managerial positions is only declarative.

Therefore, it is necessary to empirically investigate the gender bias of the citizens of Macedonia in terms of the ability of candidates for managerial positions. Information on (non)existence of (unconscious) gender bias would be a powerful indicator of the need for intensified activities in the field of educating the young population on gender bias and ways in which it can be reduced.

METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Taking into account previously summarised data and results from the world literature, which indicate the existence of gender stereotyped areas of professional leadership positions (e.g., Coffey and McLaughlin 2009; Coffman et al. 2017; Moss-Racusin et al. 2012; Riach and Rich 2006; Ryan et al. 2011; Steinpreis et al. 1999), this research aims to answer the following question:

Is there gender bias when it comes to leadership positions in three areas of social activism in Macedonia (politics, the private sector, the civil society)?

In addition, in order to examine the impact of perceptions on gender stereotyped characteristics of candidates for leadership positions, this research will also answer the question:

What are the gender stereotyped perceptions of candidates for managerial positions in politics, private sectorand civil society in Macedonia?

INSTRUMENT AND VARIABLES OF INTEREST

By adapting existing methodologies (Ryan et al. 2011; Hays 2014), the author of the research developed a questionnaire that experimentally measured: 1) gender bias regarding the suitability of candidate(s) for managerial positions in politics, the private and the civil society, and 2) the perceptions of respondents' gender stereotyped characteristics of the candidate(s) for managerial positions in the aforementioned sectors. The questionnaire was available in long and short form, with the long form measuring the two main variables of interest, and the short measuring only gender bias.

Gender bias: For each of the three sectors (politics, private and civil society) the respondents were presented with a hypothetical situation: three short biographies of candidates for managerial positions in a given sector were given and they had to select the candidate who, according to their opinion, is the most appropriate choice. The managerial positions for which respondents selected the most appropriate candidate were: mayor of a municipality in central North Macedonia (politics), president of the board of directors (private sector) and executive director of a civil society organisation (civil society). These positions were chosen because of their managerial nature, which requires active management of the human, financial and time resources available. After each of the questions where they had to choose the most appropriate candidate for the position in the sector in question, the respondents were asked an open question where they could explain the reasons for their choice.

In each hypothetical situation, of the three biographies given in random order, two belonged to a male candidate (candidates A and B) and one to a female candidate (candidate B). In each hypothetical situation, candidates A and B were equally suitable for selection, and their CVs were carefully matched for all characteristics (e.g., field of study, years of experience, hobbies, etc.), except for the gender indicated by the names used for the candidates (special attention was paid to the use of names that are usually male/female in North Macedonia). The biographies of candidates A and B were rotated between respondents, with the ultimate goal of balancing the entire sample.

Candidate C was added as a control variable in order to make the hypothetical situation more realistic (as previously explained, women are less represented on the labor market in North Macedonia). In addition, the CV of Candidate C was deliberately written as less appropriate than that of Candidates A and B, so that the right choice would still be reduced between the two equally qualified candidates (A and B), male and female. Tables 1, 2 and 3 outline the questions used to measure gender bias in the survey.

Table 1. Questionnaire for measuring gender bias in the selection process of a candidate for an executive manager in a civil society organization.

Read carefully the short CVs of the candidates who applied for a Civil Society Organisation Executive Manager. Then select the candidate you think is most appropriate for the CEO position by clicking the appropriate button.	(Candidate A) Mile Shashev (1985) holds a degree in political science and a master's degree in international relations, EU integration and diplomacy from the Faculty of Law "Justinian I" at UKIM - Skopje. He has been a member of the organisation for 10 years, and for the last 5 years he has been working as a project coordinator in the field of political science. In addition to his professional engagement in the organisation, he also works on international research in the field of EU integration. In his free time he runs on the quay and volunteers at an animal shelter.
	(Candidate B) Nina Janevska (1986) holds a law degree and holds a Masters Degree in International Law and Relations and EU Law from the Faculty of Law "Justinian I" at UKIM - Skopje. She has 6 years of experience as a coordinator of the organisation's legal program and has been an active member of the organisation for 9 years. She has extensive experience in conducting domestic and international training in many fields and is an internationally certified soft skills trainer. When she has free time, she usually devotes herself to hiking and playing the piano.
	(Candidate C) Vladimir Ilievski (1991) holds a degree in Financial Management from the Faculty of Economics at UKIM - Skopje, where he completed his Master's Degree in Strategic Human Resource Management. In the last year he volunteered in a civil society organisation in Lithuania. He has 2 years of experience as a project coordinator of the organisation, and has been its member for 7 years. In his free time he goes to the gym and paints.

Table 2. A question measuring gender bias in the election of a candidate for mayor of a municipality in central North Macedonia.

Read the brief biographies of the mayor of the candidates for a **mayor to a one of the municipalities in central North Macedonia**. Then select the candidate you think is most appropriate for the mayor's post by clicking the appropriate button.	(Candidate A) Zlatko Mishov (1970) is a graduate of the Faculty of Law "Justinian I" at UKIM - Skopje. After the undergraduate studies he goes to a three-month internship at the Ministry of Justice, where he is later employed and has been working there for 5 years. He then founded a medium-sized company that has been successfully operating in the domestic market for 16 years and has been exporting its products abroad for the last 3 years. He devotes his free time to pets.
	(Candidate B) Ilina Veleva (1972) graduated in accounting and auditing at the Faculty of Economics at UKIM - Skopje. After two years working in Germany, she returned to Macedonia where she worked as an accountant for large companies for the next 4 years. She then got employed in the municipality where she worked for the last 14 years. Of these, the last 3 years she has been Head of the Department for Legal and General Affairs, Public Affairs and Public Procurement in the Municipality. In her free time she grows plants in her yard.
	(Candidate C) Jovan Kirkovski (1980) graduated from the Faculty of Architecture at UKIM - Skopje. He has 12 years of private sector experience in architecture and urban planning, and has won 3 international awards. In his free time he travels to exotic destinations.

Table 3. A question measuring gender bias in the selection of a candidate for President of the Board of Directors of a large company (with more than 300 employees).

*Read carefully the CVs of the candidates who applied for the position of **Chairman of the Board of Directors** of a large company from North Macedonia (more than 300 employees). Then select the candidate you consider is most appropriate for the Chairman's post by clicking the appropriate button.*

(Candidate A) Agim Hasalari (b. 1969) holds a law degree and a master's degree in corporate law from the Faculty of Law "Justinian I" at UKIM - Skopje. After 3 years working in a civil society organisation, he is employed in a competitive company in the same sector and has been working there for 19 years. For the last 4 years he has been actively serving as the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the competitor company. In his spare time he reads books and swims.

(Candidate B) Vjosa Selmani (1967) holds a Master of Marketing and Corporate Financial Management degree from the Faculty of Economics at UKIM - Skopje. Twenty years ago, she did her student internship at the company, after which she was hired as a young marketeer and progressed to higher positions in the company. For the last 6 years she has been the head of the largest sector. She devotes her free time to painting and cycling.

(Candidate C) Florim Kurtishi (1973) holds a degree in Social Work from the Faculty of Philosophy and holds a Masters in Human Resource Management from the Faculty of Economics at UKIM - Skopje. He has been working in a similarly large company in a different sector for 16 years, and for the last 3 years he has been its Chief Financial Officer. When he has free time, he wants to devote himself to cooking and playing the guitar.

Gender stereotyped perceptions: For each of the three sectors (politics, private, and civil society), respondents were asked to rate one candidate (A or B, at random) according to a pre-prepared list of gender stereotyped performance-related leadership positions. (Ryan et al. 2011; Hays 2014). As in the previous section, the biographies of candidates A and B were matched for all characteristics except gender and were rotated between respondents. For each question, gender stereotyped characteristics were given in random order. Table 4 lists the gender stereotyped characteristics.

Table 4. Gender stereotyped characteristics according to which respondents rated candidates for managerial positions.

FEATURES THAT ARE MORE OFTEN ASSOCIATED WITH WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS	FEATURES THAT ARE MORE OFTEN ASSOCIATED WITH MEN IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS
Highly developed empathy	Ambition
Democratic leader	High self-esteem
Good interpersonal skills	Directness
Care for the professional development of colleagues	Good business sense
Maturity	Competitiveness
Openness for cooperation	Decisiveness
Commitment	Independence
Professionalism	Resilience in working under pressure
Developed skills to support associates	Persuasiveness
Team player	Persistence

Demographic characteristics: The questionnaire also included optional questions intended to collect data on the demographic characteristics of the respondents: gender, age, place of residence (village/town), ethnicity, highest level of education, employment status and monthly income (personal and family income of the household where the respondents live). The questionnaire last included two questions for checking respondents' attention (for example, "In order to demonstrate your focus, select number 2 in this row").

DATA COLLECTION METHODOLOGY

The research is based on a quantitative methodology and a survey as a research tool. Data collection was carried out using the online "Qualtrics" system where the survey questionnaire was put. The main phase of data collection lasted 14 days in March and April 2019.

TARGET POPULATION AND SAMPLING STRATEGIES

The target population in this study is all citizens of North Macedonia aged 16-30. Due to the limited resources and time frame, the research is based on a targeted and convenient sample.

During the data collection, 270 civil society organisations (58 of which youth organisations) were contacted, with a request to further share the questionnaire to potential respondents. In addition, a link to the questionnaire was posted on 14 active Facebook groups where potential respondents are members, as well as on the private profiles of the research author's collaborators. The questionnaire was also forwarded to a list of Erasmus coordinators with a request to be shared with the teams they coordinate. Several Facebook ads were also published calling for participation in the survey, which totaled 171,926 impressions within 10 days.

SAMPLE

713 respondents began filling in the questionnaire, out of which 282 respondents answered over 70% of the questionnaire (12/17 questions). Demographic data questions (eight in total) were recent and optional, so missing data did not affect the main variables of interest.

Of the n=282 respondents who answered all mandatory questions, 24 were excluded from the final analysis who incorrectly answered the attention check questions. Therefore, the final sample consisted of N=258 respondents. The sample description was made according to the data of the respondents who filled in the non-mandatory demographic questions.

RESEARCH ETHICS

The study involved people aged 16 to 30 years of age whose participation did not require parental permission. In addition, basic information about the survey was shared on the first page of the questionnaire and all respondents were asked to electronically express their consent to participate in the survey.

In order to minimise the possible deliberate response to questions aimed at concealing gender bias, gender bias was not mentioned in the call for participation in the research and the questionnaire itself. Instead, the purpose of the research was concealed and presented as "examining youth attitudes to the labor market in North Macedonia, namely the impact of educational qualifications and job skills on the job application process" (quote directly taken from the first page of the questionnaire). After completing the questionnaire, respondents were informed about the main variable of interest (gender bias), while emphasizing the discrepancy in the previously shared data, in order to reduce the possible 'contamination' of the sample of potential respondents by respondents who had already completed the survey. Such manipulation and concealment of the purpose of the research was minimal and had no negative consequences on the respondents, thus meeting all ethical principles for research projects (European Science Foundation 2011).

METHODOLOGICAL CONSTRAINTS

Due to the lack of official and publicly available channels for communication with potential respondents, the survey relies on data collected from a targeted and convenient sample of respondents. In addition, the assessment of the sample's representativeness is hampered by the lack of official population size and demographic characteristics.

Given this, it is important to note that self-selection of respondents is possible (Bethlehem 2010), despite the author's efforts to include as many young people from Macedonia as possible in the research. Since the calls for inclusion in the survey mentioned attitudes about the labor market in Northern Macedonia, one should not exclude the possibility that potential respondents who do not actively participate in the labor market

(e.g., students, students, youth falling into the NEET category[226]) did not participate in the research (or stopped responding to the questionnaire during participation). In other words, it is possible that only young people who are actively interested in labor market developments in Northern Macedonia may be included in the survey. This assumption can be further supported by the characteristics of the sample.

When it comes to the use of an online questionnaire and its possible negative effects on data accuracy, it is important to note that the author used a random technique of possible "answer paths" to balance the main variable of interest (gender bias) across sample and to control for the effect of variables that were not the focus of the research (for example, influence on field of study, experience abroad, career choice, hobbies, etc. characteristics of candidates for managerial positions). Additionally, two control questions were used to check respondents' attention to reduce the effect of possible filling out the questionnaire without actively reading and participating in the research. Also, the possibility of sensitising the respondents to the actual topic of the research as well as the disadvantages of self-reporting techniques cannot be surpassed with certainty (Rosenman, Tennekoon, and Hill 2011). Lastly, when analysing the results of the research, it should be borne in mind that the questionnaire used was first adapted for use in North Macedonia, so there was little opportunity for detailed piloting and testing of its psychometric characteristics.

RESULTS

SAMPLE DESCRIPTION

Of the 228 respondents who answered non-mandatory demographic questions, 60% (n=136) were female, 39% (n=89) were male, and 1% (n=3) answered "other". The average age of the respondents was 24 years of age (M=24.21, SD=3.12). 92% (n=209) of the respondents live in the city and 8% (n=18) in the village. Chart no.1 gives an overview of the sample distribution by age group. Chart no.2 gives an overview of the sample distribution by ethnicity.

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226 The NEET category includes youth who are not employed or are not included in the educational system/additional training (in English: Not in Employment, Education or Training, where the NEET abbreviation comes from).

Chart 1. Overview of sample distribution by age group.

43%
26-30 years
(n=98)

21%
16-20 years
(n=49)

36%
21-25 years
(n=81)

Chart 2. Overview of sample distribution by ethnicity.

7%
Other ethnic com-
munities (Roma,
Serbian, Turkish,
Vlach and Bosniak)
(n=15)

2%
Albanian
(n=5)

2%
Other
(n=5)

89%
Macedonian
(n=202)
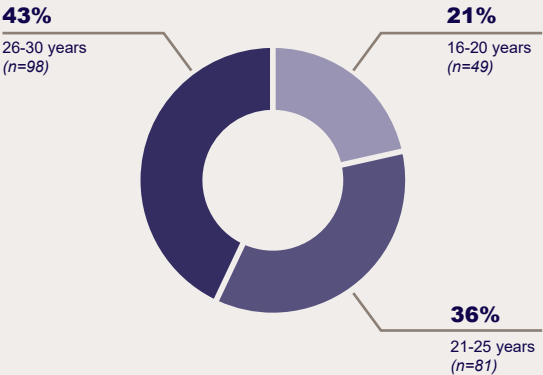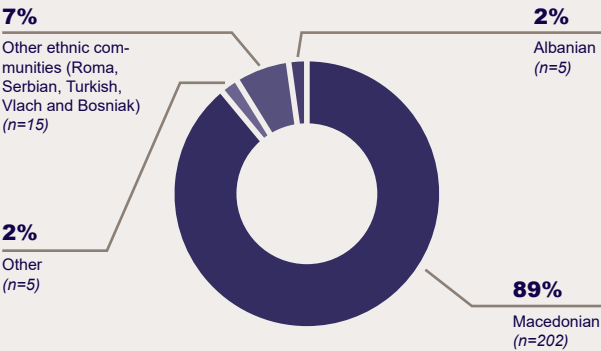
In terms of the highest level of education they have completed, the largest number are those who have completed undergraduate studies (39%; n=90) and secondary education (30%; n=69). The majority of respondents (44%; n=100) are employed full time. A detailed overview of the sample distribution by education and work status is given in Charts 3 and 4.

Chart 3. Overview of sample distribution according to the highest level of education.

2%
Other
(n=5)

5%
Elementary
education
(n=12)

22%
Master studies
(n=51)

39%
Undergraduate
studies
(n=90)

30%
Secondary
education
(n=69)
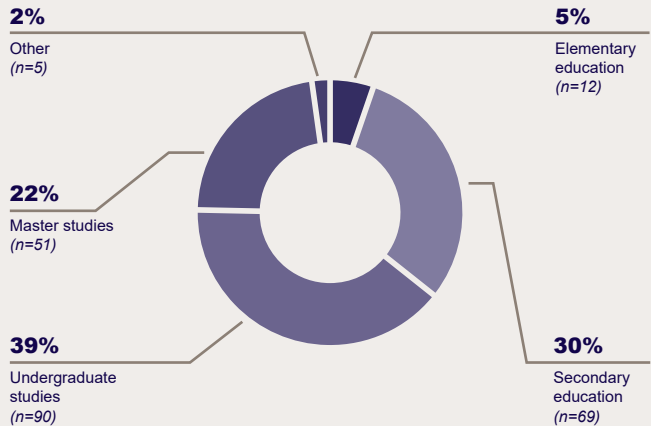
Chart 4. Overview of distribution of sample by employment status.

10%
Unemployed
(n=22)

12%
Pupils
(n=27)

4%
Part time employment
(n=8)

18%
Students
(n=41)

1%
Interns
(n=2)

2%
Volunteers
(n=5)

44%
Full time employment
(n=100)

7%
Temporary
employment
(n=15)
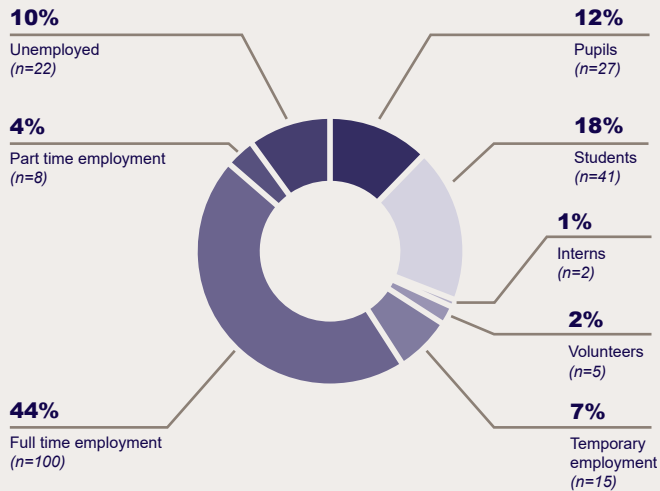
Almost one third of the respondents (29%; n=65) have monthly incomes of 0 to 5,000 denars, and one fifth (20%; n=44) have monthly incomes higher than 30,000 denars. The majority of respondents live in households where the total monthly income is between 45,000 and 60,000 denars (23%; n=53) and between 30,000 and 45,000 denars (23%; n=52). A detailed overview of the sample distribution by the average monthly personal income of the respondents in the last 6 months and the total monthly income of the household where the respondents live is given in Charts 5 and 6.

Chart 5. Overview of the sample distribution according to the average monthly personal income of the respondents in the last 6 months.

20%
Above 30.000 den.
(n=44)

29%
0 to 5.000 den.
(n=65)

9%
25.000 to
30.000 den.
(n=20)

7%
5.000 to 10.000
den.
(n=15)

11%
20.000 to
25.000 den.
(n=25)

16%
15.000 to
20.000 den.
(n=35)

8%
10.000 to
15.000 den.
(n=19)

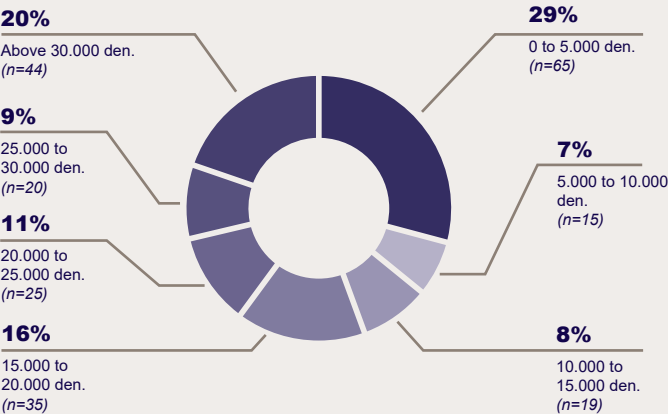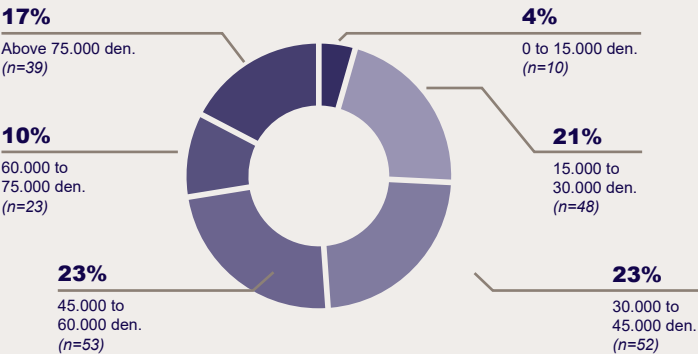**Chart 6. Overview of the sample distribution according to the total monthly income of the household in which the respondents live.**

17%
Above 75.000 den.
(n=39)

4%
0 to 15.000 den.
(n=10)

10%
60.000 to
75.000 den.
(n=23)

21%
15.000 to
30.000 den.
(n=48)

23%
45.000 to
60.000 den.
(n=53)

23%
30.000 to
45.000 den.
(n=52)

GENERAL FINDINGS

Quantitative findings on gender bias: Female candidates are the more frequent choice of respondents in hypothetical situations related to civil society and politics, while in the situation related to the private sector, candidate A is the most frequent choice of respondents. In addition, there is no correlation between the gender of the respondents and the gender of the candidates they consider appropriate for the given leadership positions in all three sectors. Also, candidate C, which was included in the survey with the intention of serving as a control variable, was selected from 20 percent of respondents in all three sectors.

Quantitative findings on gender stereotyped characteristics: When analysing the results of gender stereotyped characteristics of candidates in all three sectors together, no statistically significant differences emerged between candidate A and candidate B.

Qualitative Findings: According to open-ended questions, gender is not one of the key factors in selecting a candidate. Most frequently mentioned are field experience, educational profile and age of candidates, as well as international experience and the way candidates spend their leisure time, respectively their hobby choices.

FINDINGS ON THE CIVIL SOCIETY

Quantitative findings on gender bias: In the hypothetical situation requiring respondents to select a candidate suitable for a CSO executive, the female candidate is by far the most common choice of respondents, chosen by as many as 46.5% of respondents. Compared to that, candidate A was selected by 31.8% of the respondents. Candidate B was last, selected by 20.9% of the respondents.

Quantitative Findings on Gender Stereotyped Characteristics: When it comes to a managerial position in the civil society, there are no major differences in the majority of the characteristics evaluated between candidate A and female candidate B. However, it is important to note that for the vast majority of features, the range of marks given by Candidate A is greater than the range of marks given to Candidate B. In other words, the perception of the candidate's characteristics seems more uniform than the perception of the candidate.

Statistically significant differences between candidates' perceived characteristics are observed in characteristics that are often stereotyped as "typically female" - candidate B is rated with higher ratings of characteristics such as peer professional development, good interpersonal skills, developed support skills towards associates and behavior as a team player. In addition, it is surprising the female candidate B's higher rating of directionality, which is usually defined as "typically male". Details on the average ratings of the candidates for a senior management position in the civil society, as well as the differences between them, are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Average ratings of the candidates for managerial position in the civil society. * Denotes the characteristics where the differences are statistically significant, p < ,05.

Characteristics	Candidate A	Female Candidate Б	Difference
Ambition (M)	4,07	4,06	0,014
High self-esteem (M)	3,26	3,53	0,27
Highly developed empathy (F)	3,36	3,33	0,027
Care for peer career develop-ment* (F)	2,67	3,25	**0,581**
Democratic leader (F)	3,17	3,32	0,156
Directness* (M)	2,64	3,22	**0,580**
Good business sense (M)	3,62	3,65	0,026
Good interpersonal skills* (F)	3,31	3,752	**0,443**
Maturity (F)	3,81	3,68	0,132
Competitiveness (M)	3,29	3,54	0,260
Decisiveness (M)	3,5	3,62	0,120
Openness for cooperation (F)	3,31	3,74	0,426
Commitment (F)	3,81	4,12	0,298
Proffessionalism (F)	3,88	3,98	0,094
Developed Skills to Support As-sociates* (F)	3,07	3,57	**0,499**
Independence (M)	3,83	3,81	0,023
Resilience in working under pres-sure (M)	3,00	3,26	0,264
Team player* (F)	3,02	3,52	**0,497**
Persuasiveness (M)	3,21	3,29	0,075
Persistence (M)	3,69	3,69	0,005

Qualitative findings: 165 respondents answered the open question about the reasons for selecting a candidate for a managerial position in the civil society (CSO executive director). It is interesting to note that although in this hypothetical situation the female candidate is in favor of 14.7%, a relatively small number of respondents (n=9) cite the gender of the candidates as crucial in their choice. Here are some of the original quotes.

> *"The last two CV`s are very similar, but between a man and a woman I always choose a woman."*

> *"To be completely honest, it's always fascinating to me when a woman succeeds in areas dominated by men."*

> *"More women need to run organisations, even though I'm a man."*

The majority of the respondents often cite the characteristics of the candidates that were balanced between the candidates and the respondents as key factors in the selection. For 86 respondents, the candidate's experience in the organisation was crucial to their decision, selecting the candidate with the longest experience. For 32 respondents, the candidate's educational profile was crucial, but for this feature there appeared several streams of responses that preferred different educational areas (human resources management, economics, legal and political studies). For 12 respondents, the hierarchical level of the candidate's previous positions is extremely important, with emphasis on experience with program coordination (as opposed to project coordination). The candidate's hobby is mentioned by 11 respondents with different streams of answers. Ten respondents preferred the younger candidate precisely because of his age. For nine respondents, international experience is important in selecting the right candidate, and soft skills are crucial for six. A few source quotations are listed to illustrate.

> *"I chose the youngest candidate because usually young people due to lack of experience do not even have the opportunity to gain such experience."*

> *"Due to the fact that he is capable with people and has soft skills, which is crucial to the work and the success of a CEO, I think he is a better choice than the other two candidates who have extensive experience but in the field of research."*

> *"I don't think anyone needs to have a management degree to be a capable manager. It would give preference to thematic professionals who are trained to perform managerial functions (not managers, to train them on the topic of work)..."*

> *"Mountaineering and the piano are activities that empty the mind and body of frustration. By doing so he knows how to maintain a balance in self-control and behavior that makes him calm to return to work under pressure, conflicts or difficulties working with the team, and thus have a successful job."*

"The fact that she volunteers in an animal protection organisation speaks to her sincere need to contribute socially which, in my opinion, is really important when it comes to a CSO executive."

"Unlike the other candidates, this candidate is additionally volunteering and working out on a research job, which is a huge indicator that he believes and wants to do what he does. It is an indicator of the candidate's intrinsic motivation."

"Personally for me, it is also a great addition to what she does in her spare time, unlike the other candidates who spend their free time for their own development, she once again advocates for others, in this case - animals."

Only two of the respondents stated in their answers that the information provided is not sufficient to make a final decision. However, based on the information provided, some respondents have broader assumptions about the candidates.

"She doesn't seem to be demotivated or moving out of the country."

"It gives the impression of a versatile person, not just professionally oriented."

"According to what is written, it seems to me as a serious and ambitious person and a person who can succeed in setting goals. The other candidates look artificial to me and I think they won't be the right choice."

FINDINGS ON THE POLITICAL SECTOR

Quantitative findings on gender bias: In the hypothetical situation requiring respondents to select a candidate suitable for the mayor of a municipality in central Northern Macedonia, the female candidate is again the most common choice of respondents, chosen by 40.9% of the respondents. Compared to her, candidate A was selected by 37% of the respondents. Candidate B was last, selected by 22% of the respondents.

Quantitative findings on gender stereotyped characteristics: When it comes to leadership positions for mayoral candidates, there are no statistically significant differences in the evaluated characteristics between candidate A and candidate B. Details of the average ratings of candidates for mayor and the differences between them, are given in Table 5.

Table 5. Average ratings of candidates for mayor.

Characteristic	Candidate A	Candidate Б	Difference
Ambition (M)	4,04	3,91	0,136
High self-esteem (M)	3,79	3,75	0,033
Highly developed empathy (F)	3,21	3,14	0,076
Care for peer career development* (F)	3,05	3,10	0,043
Democratic leader (F)	3,20	3,18	0,022
Directness* (M)	3,33	3.32	0,018
Good business sense (M)	3,88	3,88	0,003
Good interpersonal skills* (F)	3,52	3,55	0,028
Maturity (F)	3,88	4,00	0,120
Competitiveness (M)	3,44	3,38	0,056
Decisiveness (M)	3,84	3,62	0,224
Openness for cooperation (F)	3,51	3,71	0,206
Commitment (F)	4,19	3,88	0,310
Proffessionalism (F)	4,01	3,84	0,178
Developed Skills to Support Associates* (F)	3,21	3,44	0,225
Independence (M)	3,87	3,95	0,079
Resilience in working under pressure (M)	3,65	3,48	0,174
Team player* (F)	3,23	3,16	0,062
Persuasiveness (M)	3,55	3,41	0,150
Persistence (M)	4,03	3,88	0,136

Qualitative Findings: 117 respondents answered the open question about the reasons for choosing a certain candidate for a managerial position in politics (mayor of a municipality in central North Macedonia). Although the female candidate has a slight advantage of 3.9%, a small number of respondents (n=4) cite the gender of the candidates as an important factor in their selection, which is not always in favor of the candidate. Two source quotations are listed to illustrate.

"I think the female candidate is pushing the party forward, which irritates me."

"She is the right choice for mayor and we need to change the view that only a man can be a mayor, president and so on. And the woman has the right to be in office and I think it will be the one that moves the country forward."

Almost all respondents (n=113) cite the candidate's professional experience and field of work (which rotated between candidates and respondents) as the key reason for selection. However, there are different types of responses: for some respondents (n=45) key reason is work experience in public administration, for others (n=23) most important are the knowledge of architecture and urban planning, and the third ones (n=17) consider the experience as an entrepreneur and owner of a company exporting overseas as crucial. Some source quotations are listed to illustrate.

"The candidate is familiar with municipal work as a longtime employee, and his education and experience in economics would make him a good and reasonable budget manager."

"He is already familiar with the work and there will be no need to rebuild his capacity again, which can be quite hard and take a long time."

"Being an architect, I suppose he will not allow buildings to be built 10 meters from one from another."

"The region in question needs infrastructure development and construction expansion to bring economic growth to that region, and the mayor with all his knowledge, experience and success can contribute to it, especially to building cultural buildings with larger cultural elements for greater authenticity."

"In reality, there is no one who can deservedly be a mayor in RNM (a member of one of the 6 big parties), but in a hypothetical world where one has the opportunity to be one and have the power alone to do something in this rotten system, I would go with a person with knowledge in the field of urban planning and design, because many settlements in this country are in

alarming condition in that sense, unsuitable for their growth or negative growth... I am maybe biased because I'm an architect, but in an idealised world I'd want some of my colleagues to deal with the policies of settlements that have been dictated by the different individual interests for two decades contrary to the ideas of the common good of urban planning."

"He has work experience in public administration, which is important for the mayor's office, and he currently has a successful private company exporting overseas. This indicates that he knows how to lead the organisation, knows what problems the business sector is facing and can more easily understand and work to improve the public services provided by the municipality."

"He has experience in both public administration and a private company. He knows how to start and develop new things, which would be a prerequisite for a successful politician. The second candidate has experience in administration, but does not show much self-initiative. The architect would only get into the race if it was an urban environment. The central area is predominantly rural and his qualities will not add so much value."

"Because I think it is necessary for every mayor to have basic knowledge on human rights, so that as a representative of the municipality he can make a decision based on the law, and not on his own will, as many do, and still no one regulates it."

"The architect hardly looks like a partisan parasite, mostly a professional."

For almost a one third of respondents (n=34) owning a business raises questions about the degree of commitment to the municipality and possible conflicts of interest, but these two questions are interpreted in several different ways. Original citations are given for illustration.

"A man who is familiar with the weight of running his own business, managing people and positioning them in the right jobs, as well as a man who, above all, I believe would put the interests of citizens rather than personal ones, given that personal interests are likely to have been more than accomplished. One who does not see this position of mayor as an opportunity for further impoverishment of the people, but on the contrary, enriching the city and social life in as many ways as possible."

"Others have private companies and are inadequate. There will not be enough commitment to the municipality, and there may be a conflict of interest."

"A person who is good in his private business will be good in public office as well."

The candidate's hobby is mentioned by six respondents with different streams of answers. A few source quotations are listed to illustrate.

> *"The desire to travel to interesting places indicates an open spirit for new ideas and perceptions."*

> *"The other two want to take exotic trips and have their own companies - engagements that, in my opinion, would be more focused on, they`d less dedicated to the work in question."*

> *"There is a huge need for a mayor who knows how to respect animals and take care of their proper treatment."*

> *"His hobby of traveling to exotic destinations proves that he is good at making a team that works even when he is not present."*

FINDINGS FOR THE PRIVATE SECTOR

Quantitative findings on gender bias: In the hypothetical situation requiring respondents to select a candidate suitable for the position of Chairman of the Board of Directors of a large company (with more than 300 employees), candidate A is the most frequent choice of respondents, selected by 41.7% of respondents. Following is the female candidate that was selected by 37.7% of the respondents and then candidate C, who was selected by 20.5% of the respondents.

Quantitative findings on gender stereotyped characteristics: When it comes to a managerial position in the private sector, the biggest differences appear in the evaluated characteristics between candidate A and candidate B. Similar to the civil society data, it is important to note that for most of the characteristics, the range of ratings given to candidate A is greater than the range of ratings given to candidate B. In other words, the perception of the female candidate's characteristics seems more uniform than the perception of the candidate.

The female candidate receives statistically significantly higher scores on a range of characteristics that are often defined as "typically feminine": highly developed empathy, maturity, openness to cooperation, dedication, professionalism, developed peer support skills, behavior as a democratic leader and as a team player. On the other hand, the male candidate receives statistically significantly higher scores on several characteristics that are often defined as "typically masculine": ambition, high self-esteem, good business sense, competitive spirit, determination, self-reliance, resourcefulness under pressure, persuasiveness and perseverance. The details of the average ratings of the candidates for a senior management position in the private sector, as well as the differences between them are given in Table 6.

*Table 6. Average ratings of candidates for a senior management position in the private sector. * Denotes the characteristics where the differences are statistically significant, p < ,01.*

Characteristic	Candidate A	Candidate Б	Difference
Ambition (M)	3,33	4,38	**1,047**
High self-esteem (M)	2,94	3,87	**0,931**
Highly developed empathy (F)	2,37	3,31	**0,942**
Care for peer career development* (F)	2,53	3,25	0,725
Democratic leader (F)	2,59	3,42	**0,836**
Directness* (M)	2,68	3,49	0,815
Good business sense (M)	3,07	4,07	**1,001**
Good interpersonal skills* (F)	2,85	3,69	0,840
Maturity (F)	3,02	4,20	**1,174**
Competitiveness (M)	3,00	3,94	**0,944**
Decisiveness (M)	3,05	4,11	**1,067**
Openness for cooperation (F)	2,64	3,78	**1,131**
Commitment (F)	3,25	4,34	**1,085**
Proffessionalism (F)	3,046	4,28	**1,236**
Developed Skills to Support Associates* (F)	2,62	3,64	**1,013**
Independence (M)	3,00	4,10	**1,110**
Resilience in working under pressure (M)	2,85	3,82	**0,966**
Team player* (F)	2,68	3,52	**0,843**
Persuasiveness (M)	2,97	3,87	**1,000**
Persistence (M)	3,24	4,30	**1,054**

Qualitative findings: Qualitative findings: 85 respondents answered the open question about the reasons for selecting a particular candidate for a managerial position in the private sector (chairman of a large company board). Interestingly, although in this hypothetical situation the male candidate has a slight advantage of 4%, none of the respondents cite the gender of the candidates as a key factor in their choice. Long-term experience (n=47), candidate`s educational profile (n=17), and company loyalty (n=10) (characteristics that rotated between candidates and respondents) were most commonly cited. For nine respondents, the leadership potential of the candidates is important, and for five respondents the key is to give an opportunity to candidates who have not been in high positions so far. A few source quotations are listed to illustrate.

"The female candidate is already a part of the company and she has evolved into it. She already has a managerial function and it would be a logical progress to assume greater responsibility."

"Because he has worked there for a long time, he wants to work as chairman of the board, he has a good relationship with the workers and he knows how to run the company."

"You can see he has dedicated himself to the company - his job is important, not the success by any means."

"There has been a career progression from low to high - that is an indication that he is a good worker."

"He seems as a person with the potential to make a difference in the company."

"He has all the necessary qualifications he needs and he has not been in such a high position so I would give him a chance."

"The position will be challenging for him and he will want to move forward and prove himself, and the other two, although more knowledgeable, will find it harder to accept change."

A frequently cited factor in selecting candidates is (not) working in a competitive company (n=25) and it is interpreted in different ways. Some source quotations are listed to illustrate.

"Although I initially feel that the female candidate has the better qualifications for the position, second candidate`s work in a competitive company gives him additional market information that is important for the company's good positioning and progress."

"The candidate who worked in a competing company is a risky choice of being selected because of corporate secrets (of both companies) and potential contracts that prohibit him from moving from one company to another in the same sector."

"I chose this candidate only because of his previous experience as a board chairman in a competing company."

"The other two candidates are not safe options because they come from a competitive environment."

"The candidate has not been previously in a competitive firm position that would endanger company data."

"Being a president of a competitive management board is a HUGE asset because he can easily transfer experiences to improve the new job."

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this research was to test the existence of gender bias among young people in North Macedonia when it comes to leadership positions in three areas of social activities (politics, private sector, civil society). In addition, the research also addressed the impact of gender stereotypes on the perception of the characteristics necessary for successful management positions in North Macedonia. Taking into account the starting point (lack of research focusing on the (non)existence of gender bias amongst young people in Northern Macedonia and the reasons for this), the author aimed at a basic assessment of gender bias that would provide the basis for further research on gender bias subject.

Before discussing the results of the research, it is necessary to note once again that targeted and convenient sampling strategies were used, with the vast majority of respondents being highly educated young people living in urban environments (more on research limitations access in the Restrictions section). Therefore, the results of this research should serve only as a basis for further in-depth research on gender bias and gender stereotyped perceptions of candidate characteristics for managerial positions.

In spite of a large number of studies in the world of academic literature that indicate the existence of gender bias (in favor of male candidates) in the young population (eg Moss-Racusin et al. 2012; Reuben et al. 2014; Sarsons 2017), the results in this research do not give a clear picture. Except for the hypothetical situation regarding the civil society (where the female candidate's advantage is 14.7% over the next most frequently selected candidate), the differences in the respondents' choice of hypothetical situations concerning the mayoral position and the managerial position in the private sector are relatively small (3.9% and 4% respectively). These data are particularly interesting given the results for gender stereotyped characteristics of candidate(s), where, in general,

no statistically significant differences between candidate A and candidate B occur. Similarly, in their responses to optional open-ended questions, respondents rarely cite gender as an important factor in their selection.

In addition, contrary to previous findings (Neumark et al. 1996; Goldin and Rouse 2000; Baert et al. 2016), this study did not find a correlation between the gender of the respondents and the gender of the candidates they consider appropriate for the given managerial positions in all three sectors, which could be partly explained by the characteristics of the respondents (majority of young and (highly) educated people living in urban areas), who are often associated with greater gender equality concerns (Munoz Boudet, Petesch, and Turk 2013). Also, the selection of candidate C by one fifth of respondents in all three sectors was unexpected, especially when considering previous research (eg, Haslam and Ryan 2008). This result could be explained by the respondents' perception of the characteristics that were intended to mark candidate B as less appropriate for selection: although initially intended to reduce the likelihood that candidate B would be selected, the characteristics included in the questionnaire (e.g., lack of experience, less familiarity with the events in North Macedonia due to volunteering abroad, "profane" tendencies, working in another sector) in some cases achieved the opposite goal, i.e. made the candidate C equally attractive to be selected s well.

In the hypothetical situation related to the selection of a suitable candidate for a managerial position in the civil society, the female candidate was a more frequent choice of respondents - as many as 46.5% of them elected her as the CEO of a civil society organisation, with a 14.7% advantage over the next most frequently selected candidate. It is important to emphasize that the civil society sector is the only field in which respondents emphasized the gender of candidates as an important factor in their selection. In addition, gender bias in favor of the female candidate may be partially explained by the perception of the candidate's gender stereotyped characteristics, where she receives higher ratings of characteristics, such as caring for peer professional development (on average, a higher rating of 0.581 than the candidate A), good interpersonal skills (on average, higher score of 0.443), developed supportive associate skills (on average, higher score of 0.499) and behavior as a team player (on average, higher score of 0.497). The only "bounce" feature, because it is often gender stereotyped as male, is the directness where the candidate gets a higher score of 0.58. In other words, women in the civil society in North Macedonia are perceived as better communicators and team players, more caring for co-workers and more direct (a perception probably due to the public appearances of a large number of civil society representatives in North Macedonia over the past few years). It should be borne in mind that much of the recruitment of respondents was through communication with CSOs and their membership, so this perception of women in leadership positions in the civil society sector may also stem from the direct environment of the respondents and the role models that they meet.[227]

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227 Although originally planned, the questionnaire did not include a question about the sector in

However, it is worth noting that in both domestic and world academic literature dealing with gender bias, women's participation in the civil society sector has not been explored, and thus no comparison can be made with previous findings.

In the hypothetical situation related to the political leadership position (ie, the mayor of a municipality in central North Macedonia), the female candidate was again most often selected (this time, with a lower advantage of 3.9%). The low difference between the candidates is also reflected in the assessments of gender stereotyped characteristics, where there is no significant difference between the grades of candidate B and candidate A. Gender as a factor in the selection of candidates is rarely mentioned in the answers to optional open-ended questions (although the political sector is the only one where the candidate's gender is directly linked to negative comments). When interpreting these results, one should take into account the characteristics of the sample of respondents (Munoz Boudet et al. 2013), so it is not surprising that the selection frequency of candidate A and candidate B have similar assessments of gender stereotyped characteristics. The findings of this research are particularly interesting given that 71% of respondents in the International Republican Institute (2017) claim that for them, the gender of a candidate for political office makes no difference in deciding whom to vote for. In addition, findings on gender discrimination within parties (Korunovska et al. 2015), as well as data from the last three cycles of local elections, are important for interpreting the findings of this research. Thus, for example, in 2009, only 13 female candidates (3.6% of the total number of candidates) were running for the elections, none of whom received a mayoral position (against 85 mayors out of 352 candidates, 24.15%). In 2013, 29 female candidates ran for office (7.6% of the total), of which only four (13.8% of candidates) won the mayoral position (against 76 mayors out of 351 candidates, 21.7%). In 2019 there were 15 female candidates (6% of the total), six of which (40% of the candidates) won the mayoral position (against 74 of 245 candidates, 30%). In other words, according to the findings of this survey, a female candidate for mayor would have a slight advantage among young voters, although the general trend of local elections in the country is changing very slowly.

Only in the hypothetical situation related to the private sector, candidate A was more often selected as appropriate (with a slight advantage of 4% over the female candidate). Given the research from world literature (for example, Hays 2014) and data on gender structure of the private sector in North Macedonia (e.g., SSO 2019), this result is expected. However, in the context of this research, the slight advantage of Candidate A is surprising when one considers the differences between the candidates on gender stereotyped characteristics and the fact that gender as a factor is not mentioned at all in the open-ended questions. The private sector female candidate received significantly higher scores on a range of characteristics that are often defined as "typically female": highly

which the respondents operate professionally. Because of this, no more detailed conclusions can be drawn about the possible impact of their level of familiarity with each of the sectors on their perceptions of candidates for managerial positions.

developed empathy (0.942 points, on a scale of 1 to 5), maturity (1.174 points advantage), openness to collaboration (1,131), dedication (1,085), professionalism (1,236), developed associate support skills (1,013), behavior as a democratic leader (0,836), and as a team player (0,843). On the other hand, the male candidate received higher marks on several characteristics that are often defined as "typically male": ambition (1,047), high self-esteem (0,931), good business sense (1,001), competitive spirit (1,944), determination (1,067).), autonomy (1,110), work under pressure (0,966), persuasion (1,00) and perseverance (1,054). Such higher ratings of the female candidate on 17 of the 20 characteristics included in the survey contrast with the candidate's low preference for a managerial position in the private sector. In other words, although the female candidate receives higher marks on the majority of features important for effective leadership, the male candidate has a slight advantage when it comes to the selection of the respondents. In a situation where all other variables are equal among the candidates, this contrast between the perception of the female candidate's ability to work and the small advantage in choosing the male candidate gives indications of the existence of gender bias.

In the general analysis of the findings of this research and the assessment of its significance for the role of youth in Macedonian society, it is important to note that the degree of gender bias among the respondents is relatively low, except in the hypothetical situation related to the civil society. Taking into account the demographic characteristics of the sample, the findings of this study can be interpreted as a sign of increased awareness of youth in gender issues, as well as their future role as a potential catalyst for social change.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE RESEARCH FIELD AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Despite all the limitations of the research approach, this research makes several important contributions to the literature on women's participation in social action in North Macedonia. The current literature on women's participation in social activities in North Macedonia focuses only on conscious and explicit self-reporting techniques when it comes to respondents' attitudes. The key contribution of this research is precisely the experimental verification of the degree of gender bias in a convenient sample. In other words, this research for the first time experimentally examines the existence of implicit, i.e. unconscious and unintentional gender bias. An important contribution to this research is the examination of gender stereotyped perceptions of the personal characteristics of candidates for managerial positions.

In terms of opportunities to further develop the research approach and conduct future research, improvements are possible in three main directions that will further enhance the quality of potential results. Official data on the young population in Macedonia are needed to ensure the

representativeness of the sample. Further more, additional development and refinement of the research instrument is needed as to ensure full adaptation of the Macedonian population. In order to increase the reliability of the data and its usability in institutional policies, it would be ideal to use official recruitment channels to engage as many young people as possible in the research. Thus, institutional policies that would be developed based on the results of future research would rely on comprehensive analysis of current perceptions of youth in North Macedonia.

CONCLUSION

The main purpose of this research was to test the extent of implicit gender bias in a convenient sample of young citizens of North Macedonia, as well as a deeper understanding of gender stereotyped perceptions of personal characteristics among candidates for leadership positions. The findings point to differences between the three sectors included in the survey (civil society, politics and the private sector).

In the civil society sector (the only one in which the gender of the candidate is mentioned as a positive factor in the answers to the open questions), the gender bias in favor of the female candidate for the top position is the highest (14.7% advantage over the next most frequently elected candidate). This data, together with the high ratings of gender stereotyped characteristics that are more often associated with feminine behavior, speaks to a clear picture (according to respondents) of the required characteristics of persons in managerial positions in the civil sector (caring and direct, good communicators, team players), which is more in line with the "feminine" way of governing.

In politics (where the gender of the female candidate was mentioned in both positive and negative connotations in the open-ended questions), gender bias in favor of the female candidate is relatively low (3.9% advantage over the next most frequently elected candidate). In addition, there were no statistically significant differences in the gender stereotyped characteristics of the candidates. These findings can be interpreted as a step towards changing traditional attitudes in North Macedonia that "politics is a men's business".

In the private sector (where gender was not mentioned at all in the answers to open-ended questions), the findings point to conflicting views. Although the female candidate receives higher marks on the majority of the features (which would be expected to translate into a general managerial eligibility rating), candidate A has a slight advantage (4%). In other words, such findings provide indications of gender bias in favor of the male candidate, despite higher ratings of characteristics associated with the successful performance of a leadership position that the female candidate receives.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The Ministry of Education and Science, in cooperation with the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy and other relevant institutions, should work on strengthening gender equality teaching and learning policies and introduce comprehensive sex education as an important factor in achieving gender equal opportunities for participation.

- The Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, together with the relevant institutions, should work on increasing women's participation in decision-making processes at national and local level by introducing quotas.

- The Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, together with the relevant institutions, should work on increasing women's participation in the labor market, and in particular at senior management levels.

- The Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, together with the State Statistical Office and other relevant institutions, should introduce the practice of collecting gender-disaggregated and publicly available data at all levels of public administration, local and central government, as well as in the private sector and civil society, together with information on the type of professional engagement, position level and salary/remuneration amount.

- The Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, in collaboration with other relevant institutions, should conduct regular national surveys to assess the attitudes of the population towards gender bias and the implementation of gender equality policies, the results of which will be publicly available.

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SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS AND THEIR IMPACT ON THE POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN THE REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA

BLAGICA PETROVA

CONTENTS

5 SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS AND THEIR IMPACT ON THE POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN THE REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA

INTRODUCTION

One of the important challenges in the field of political participation is equality. Unequal political participation and unequal representation in political life call into question the legitimacy of democratic processes in a society. A number of factors influence political participation. Among the most pervasive factors contributing to inequality in political participation is gender in terms of the degree of participation of women in politics and in social trends versus men.

This research paper aims to deepen research and scientific thought on gender inequality in political participation, more specifically examining socio-economic factors and their impact on the political and civic participation of women in the Republic of North Macedonia. The paper is an attempt to identify all relevant socio-economic factors affecting women's political participation, to examine factors that inhibit or encourage participation, and to provide appropriate recommendations to relevant actors as to encourage more active participation of women in political and social flows in our country.

The relevant socio-economic factors that have been taken into account in carrying out this research are women's economic (in)dependence, their social capital, access to adequate infrastructure, their free time and (de) motivation for political and civic participation. The aim was to get as clear a picture as possible of understanding, interpreting and practicing political and civic participation, for which individual semi-structured interviews were conducted on a total of 54 women across the country.

The motive for conducting this research lies in the complexity of the topic for which there is very little data, analysis and research in our country and is expected to be a strong basis for future in-depth research and analysis. The implementation of this research paper is made possible and supported by the Westminster Foundation for Democracy.

Political participation is a key catalyst in the democratisation process of a society, it promotes development and advances the well-being of citizens. Political participation contributes to the creation of a healthy democratic society in which citizens communicate their wishes, needs and interests to decision makers. Political participation is a mechanism for setting real social goals that satisfy the desires and needs of all citizens by directly addressing them to decision makers. (Sidney Verba, Norman H Nie 1972, 3-5; Sidney Verba, Kay Lehman Schlozman, Henry E. Brady 1995, 37.)

The concept of political participation, its understanding and interpretation in theory are very broad and have deepened throughout history in line with world trends in socio-economic and technological development. Sidney Verba and Norman H. Nie explore political participation as activities directed directly at government structures, decision makers, and/or the specific decisions they make, that is, in their theory, they focus on institutional political participation. Barnes and Kaase later deepen the theoretical debate by introducing active citizen participation in the definition, in order to extend this concept today with the advent of the Internet and digital media, including new forms of online political participation (Van Deth 2016).[228]

In the last two decades, many theorists have conceptually and terminologically more precisely defined political participation by distinguishing between conventional and civic participation, i.e. participation that is directly related to formal political action within institutions, such as voting in elections, engaging in political campaigns and activist groups and participation that is indirect or "latent" and involves volunteering, i.e. active involvement within the communities to promote them. (Dejaeghere & Hooghe 2009, 723-732; Joakim Ekman, Erik Amna 2012, 283-300.)

Not only is democracy inconceivable without the opportunity for citizens to actively and freely participate in democratic processes, but in the long run, political participation fosters social development, teaching citizens responsibility for maintaining and nurturing democracy (Verba, Schlozman & Brady 1995, 1). Democratic systems, especially in those so-called new democratic countries which includes the Republic of North Macedonia, are faced with countless challenges affecting the promotion of democratic processes by encouraging the political participation of all citizens, regardless of their demographic, socio-economic and cultural background differences.

Among the most generalised factors that contribute to inequality in political participation within these models are socio-demographic and socio-economic factors such as education, personal income, social class, gender and age. Although gender is a broad social construct, yet when it comes to the gender divide in political participation, literature often implies a degree of participation of women versus men.

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228 https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/9781118541555.wbiepc171 (Accessed 31.5.2019)

GENDER GAP IN POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Recent research on the gender gap in political participation on a global scale indicates that the gender gap tends to narrow, and even has a negative trend in some civic and political activities, such as protests and so-called political consumerism, which involves a selective approach to the choice of products and services offered by the market (Dalton 2002; Micheletti, Follesdal and Stolle 2004; Norris 2002). But this is not the case with conventional political participation where there is a serious gender gap at the global level.

According to most studies, the explanation for the small progress in encouraging women's participation in public and political life globally is due to several reasons: the lack of sufficient leisure time due to domestic obligations, their poor socialisation in politics, the small social capital, discrimination in the labor market and in education, their unrepresentation in the sphere of politics as a profession, marginalisation in dominantly male-dominated parties. (Randall 1998, 109-125; Rule 1981, 60-77.)

Becker's theory of how the household is created shows that, in general, women have more options to use their time compared to men, i.e. raising children and additional responsibilities at home. This theoretical direction is closely linked to the so-called "classical type" of households, where the husband is the one who determines the best possible outcome for his wife's time allocation. (Becker 1965, 493-517.)

Even in modern households, where the woman's decision-making power within the family depends solely on her bargaining power, the situation is no different. In modern households, the bargaining power of women within the family implies only certain domains of control. Women in so-called modern households enjoy absolute control over home and family care, while more important decisions, such as child education, are still under the control of men. (Eckstein and Lifshitz 2012, 18; Basu K. 2006, 1361-1373.)

In relatively new democracies, such as the Western Balkan countries, where patriarchy is dominated, the decisive power within the family still rests with the man. In that sense, if the family is a micro-community, then women's political participation in such countries is minor at the micro-level but also at the institutional level. Despite efforts, at the European Union level, the representation of women in national parliaments is only 30.2%.[229] Western Balkan countries in particular face a serious gender gap in political participation. Despite the measures introduced to reduce the gap, such as the introduction of quotas, women's representation in politics in these countries is still at an uneven level. The transition in the Republic of North Macedonia has contributed to a serious widening of the gender gap between men and women, and today the country still faces discrimination and systemic inequality in terms of political participation, especially when it comes to female representation at the executive

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229 http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2019/635548/EPRS_BRI(2019)635548_
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level.[230] 2015 Reactor Survey, "Women in Politics"[231] shows that there is still discrimination within the parties, the linearity of the female candidates proposed and their choices, that women are still the ones taking care of the home and the family, and that gender equality is still seen as a "women's issue".

Therefore, the purpose of this research paper is to investigate and clarify the relationship between the political (non)inclusion of women in North Macedonia and the socio-economic factors that limit participation, such as informal care and unpaid housework, economic (in)dependency, social capital, infrastructure, leisure and motivation.

In examining the impetus for more active political participation, the theory sets out several models that incorporate relevant variables, that is, factors that influence the process. Sidney Verba and Norman H. Nie's (1972) Socio-Economic Model (SEM) treats employment, education, and personal income as factors that may encourage or limit political participation in a society, and certainly include socio-demographic characteristics. As the theoretical debate deepens, these basic models expand and create new ones that study the driving and limiting factors of political participation. The socio-economic model in theory was later extended to the so-called Civic Voluntarism Model, developed by Verba, Schlozman and Brady, which is widely applied in the research field. In addition to anticipating socio-economic factors, this model also includes motivation as an important factor for political participation. Later in 1995, these authors create the model of existing resources, which is closely related to socio-economic factors, i.e. time, money and skills, which are strongly linked to the socio-economic status of the individual. (Sidney Verba, Kay Lehman Schlozman, Henry E. Brady 1995, 271-294; Sidney Verba, Norman H. Nie 1972, 13-17.)

In this research paper, we invoke existing theoretical models of examining the impact of political participation to create an authentic model that is relevant to the context of the Republic of North Macedonia. We use the factors that predict these models to examine the relationship between women's political participation on the one hand, and other socio-economic factors that are relevant to our context, on the other.

The dependent variable of the research subject is the level of political participation of women in Macedonia. As important independent variables that influence political participation in this paper we analyse: unpaid domestic work and informal care, educational attainment, economic (in) dependence, social capital, infrastructure, leisure time and motivation.

The International Labor Organisation's Convention on Paid Homework, aimed at recognising the significant contribution of domestic workers to the global economy, defines domestic work as a set of activities within

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230 http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2018/625139/EPRS_BRI(2018)625139_ EN.pdf (Accessed 31.5.2019)

231http://rodovreactor.mk/media/publications/%D0%96%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%B8%D1%82%D 0%B5_%D0%B2%D0%BE_%D0%BF%D0%BE%D0%BB%D0%B8%D1%82%D0%B8%D0%BA% D0%B0%D1%82%D0%B0__MK.pdf (Accessed 31.5.2019)

a household and more specifically covers home care and the care of the elderly, the younger and less powerful family members. The same Convention emphasizes that domestic work is still underestimated globally and is primarily carried by women and girls. (Domestic Workers Convention 2011, No. 189.)

Over the years, many theorists and researchers have discovered a close link between domestic unpaid work and informal care and the political participation of women. Many of them explain the under-representation within institutions and state bodies through the power of the traditional role of women in families, which implies the role of a housewife and carer for older and younger family members. This factor, to a greater or lesser extent, significantly inhibits the political participation of women, both politically active with the ambition to position themselves in the higher ranks of parties or within state bodies, as well as politically inactive women to whom this factor contributes for their lesser exposure to public life, less opportunity for political association, and thus less interest and ambition for active participation. (Verba, Almond 1965; Andersen 1975, 439-454; Conway, Ahern, and Steuernagel 2004, 17-31; Dolan, Deckman, and Swers 2010.)

CEDAW: The United Nations Committee finds that globally, in addition to cultural differences, the unequal distribution of household responsibilities and family care, as well as the lack of public services, significantly affect women's political participation. (CEDAW 1997, No. 23: Article 7.)

The data obtained from the few analyses and surveys on the topic of civil and political participation of women in the Republic of North Macedonia show that there is an interdependence with unpaid domestic work and informal care with the political participation of women. As one of the four main factors that hinder parity in politics, according to Reactor's research (2015)[232], is homework and family care. One of the problems in this analysis is the double burden of work (at home and in the workplace), along with the lengthy and inflexible engagements that are part of political and public life. According to this study, politically active women make far more personal compromises compared to men.

In the Republic of North Macedonia, according to data from the latest Time Use Survey 2014-2015[233] of the State Statistical Office, employed women between the ages of 20 and 64 spend three times as much time on household chores than men, while unemployed women of the same age spend almost five times as much time on household chores compared to men. Overall, unpaid housework and informal care are significant limiting factors for women's political participation in the Republic of North Macedonia.

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232 The four main factors that hinder the achievement of parity in the politics of RNM, according to the research, are: Political parties obstruct and discriminate against women; Limited number of proposed candidates and a short list of potential candidates; Women are still the ones who mainly take care of household chores and children; Gender equality is still exclusively considered a "women's issue". See p. 75: http://rodovreactor.mk/media/publications/%D0%96%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%B8%D1%82%D0%B5_%D0%B2%D0%BE_%D0%BF%D0%BE%D0%BB%D0%B8%D1%82%D0%B8%D0%BA%D0%B0%D1%82%D0%B0__MK.pdf

233 http://www.stat.gov.mk/PrikaziPublikacija.aspx?id=58&rbr=599 (Accessed 31.5.2019)

In examining political participation, whether male or female, the level of education in literature is defined as an influential factor. The findings of many authors suggest that the degree of education has a direct effect on the degree of civic participation, that is, the higher the education the individual has, the greater the civic participation but also the conventional political participation (Verba 1995; Berinsky & Lenz 2011, 371; Nie, Junn and Stehlik-Barry 1996, 182). An additional explanation is that education is a resource, that is, through it people acquire skills, and thus confidence in communicating with decision makers and contributing to the community, as well as professional involvement in politics.

"Education has a completely different effect on democratic enlightenment, developing a cognitive ability that enables citizens to understand the compromises that are needed in the long run for democracy." (Nie, Junn and Stehlik-Barry 1996, 6)

In the Republic of North Macedonia, women are dominant in the field of education, i.e. 60.5% of the total number of persons having obtained a Master of Science degree in 2018 are women, the percentage of graduates in 2017 is 57.5% and the number of women who have defended a doctoral dissertation in 2018 is 58% of the total. (SSO, 2017.)

But on the other hand, it is important to compare these findings with those of Reactor (2015) in a survey of women in politics in the Republic of North Macedonia showing that 64% of women councilors surveyed hold a university degree compared to 45% of men councilors and even 15% of female counselors have a master's or doctorate compared to 9% of male counselors. [234] Additionally, if we take into account the data from the same survey that 58% of the employed advisers are experts, scientists or professors, this is only the case with 37% of the male counselors, as well as the gender pay gap in RNM, which is 12%[235] and shows that for the same job women earn less than men, we can single out the level of education as an indicator of the unequal criteria for professional development of women, i.e. the participation of women in politics, but also in the labor market in general it acquires a higher level of education, which is not the case with men.

As a phenomenon, the feminisation of poverty in the literature has attracted a particular attention in the last three decades. Terminologically, female poverty is defined in a broader context, which includes not only lower income in the form of salaries and passive incomes, but also limited access to private and public goods, levels of social exclusion and subjective needs, such as self-esteem, choice, dignity and power. (Fukuda-Parr 1999, 99-103; Chant 2006, 202.)

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234 See p. 30-33.

235 http://www.financethink.mk/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Policy-Brief-15.compressed-1.pdf (Accessed 31.5.2019)

In Razavi's opinion (1999, 417), such a widespread view of female poverty is crucial because the amount of income in monetary terms is not a sufficient indicator of female poverty and neglects its more essential aspects, such as the power to control the important decisions they make that directly or indirectly affect the lives of women. This means that besides including labor market participation, property acquisition and other forms of monetary gain, it also includes decision-making power in the personal and family spheres as well as in the sphere of public life. The economic independence of a woman is very closely related to her emancipation as a political entity, and therefore in this scientific and research paper, economic independence will be analysed with particular care.

Based on a woman's decisions about her working status in the so-called "traditional" household in which the husband supports the family, she will enter the labor market only if the husband's salary does not reach a satisfactory threshold (Becker, 1965). But even in modern households the situation is not far off. In modern households women have decision-making power only on marginal issues and it depends on their bargaining power directly related to the above-mentioned subjective aspects and access to public and private goods. (Eckstein and Lifshitz 2012; Basu K. 2006.)

The latest report of the Commission for Equal Opportunities of Men and Women in Macedonia for 2017 states that employment in the Republic of North Macedonia is characterised by a very unfavorable gender structure. But according to a number of studies, it is more worrying that there is a large percentage of inactive female population, and the reasons for that inactivity can be largely traced back to household responsibilities and child and adult care.

The brief report of the European Parliament's Research Service (2018), as well as the regional research on the inclusion of women from the Western Balkans into socio-economic life, have identified several barriers and disincentives to women's participation in the labor market, such as: gender labor market gaps, especially in the business sector, women's poor access to land and property, access to resources, especially financial services, and the considerable time spent on unpaid domestic labor and informal care, which is also due to an insufficiently accessible child and adult day care infrastructure.

According to the SSO Labor Force Survey 2017, there is a huge gender gap in terms of economically active persons, in particular employers and employees on their own account and those who run their own business or are owners of their own shops, or are owners of their own agricultural property and employ or do not employ other persons. Out of the total number of employers, only 22.5% are women and only 18.4% are women employed on their own account.

On the other hand, the 2015 Reactor survey[236] on women in politics, as well as a World Bank analysis suggest that women who are politically

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236 See p. 24-30.

active are additionally burdened with the unequal distribution of household responsibilities between women and men within the family. This double burden of working at home and in the workplace prevents more women from being politically active.

The social capital determines the nature of interpersonal relationships, and in the context of socio-economic, political and cultural life it is an important resource in the development and progress of a person. When it comes to social capital, one is referring to the relationships that a person builds with other people in their environment and those relationships are the key source of his/her advantage. Therefore, social capital is seen as an individual and collective life investment that is expected to benefit more or less in the foreseeable future. (Portes 1998, 1-24; Bourdieu 1986, 241-258.)

Social capital, according to most theories, is made up of social relationships and social norms and is present in all spheres of society, such as the family, communities and the state. In this context, horizontal links are created that often refer to support, acceptance and solidarity within communities and smaller social groups and vertical links, called power links, and refer to the relationship between citizens and institutions. Important for this paper are the structural and cognitive aspects of social capital, where the former relates to social relations and relationships and the exchange of information (predominantly in the field of employment), while the latter relates to generally accepted norms, values and positions. (Woolcock 1998, 51-208; Putnam 2008, (1): v-viii.)

In any case, at the individual level, the size of social capital is important. As Putnam (2000, 18-19) puts it, the essence of social capital lies in social relationships and those relationships affect the productivity of the individual and the community as a whole. The more an individual invests in social capital through various social networks, communities, and social structures, the more he or she can enjoy the benefits of social capital and achieve goals that are otherwise impossible to achieve.

But by examining social capital according to its structure, theory establishes binary in its nature, and it can be defined neither as an absolute benefit to a citizen or society, nor as an absolute negative phenomenon (Rubenson 2000). On the one hand, it can mobilise citizens and encourage collective action, have a flow of useful and important information, but on the other, it can also foster nepotism, corruption and deeper class stratification, especially in countries with disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds. and the political scene, as in the Republic of North Macedonia. This is, among other things, geographically determined, that is, the value of social capital depends on the social location of the link-making, where stronger networks can always suppress actors' social capital from other inferior networks (Edwards & Foley 1997, 677). In addition to the geographical factor, social capital is determined by other factors as well. Social capital as well as capital in economic terms implies the investment of resources (such as time, labor, money, etc.) with the expected market benefit (Lin 2001, 3).

So, if we look at the available empirical data on economic independence and social (in)equality, as well as the dominant patriarchal environment in our country, we can conclude that women in the Republic of North Macedonia have less opportunity to build and enrich social capital compared to men. In the empirical analysis of socio-economic determinants of women's participation in the labor market in the Western Balkans, the Chapter of the Republic of North Macedonia found that as many as 21.65% of married women reported that they spend very little time with people outside their family, and 68.74% spend relatively enough time with people outside the family. (Abazi-Alili H., Atanasovska V., Angjelkovska T. 2016, 175.)

When it comes to infrastructure from the point of view of women's political participation, it usually refers to infrastructure connectivity, i.e. public transport, as well as the availability of kindergartens and institutions for the care of the elderly and people with disabilities.

According to the State Statistical Office, total preschool childcare facilities in Macedonia cover between 11% and 20% of the total number of children at that age (SSO, 2009 and 2013). Also important is that as many as 26 municipalities out of 81 in the Republic of North Macedonia do not have a public kindergarten.[237] As for public transport, except in Skopje, in other cities it is almost non-existent and people often use taxis or private cars. According to data obtained by the Ministry of Interior, about 10% of total motor vehicle owners are women, while over 70% of total owners are men.[238]

One of the recommendations of most gender gap research in the Republic of North Macedonia concerns infrastructure upgrading and improvement, providing more accessible and better quality services. Specifically, the recommendations relate to better rural-to-urban infrastructure connectivity, more kindergartens and foster care centers, as well as more accessible services of this type, given the female unemployment rate and low wage rates for employed women. (Reactor, 2015, 81-82; Abazi-Alili H., Atanasovska V., Angjelkovska T. 2016, 207-210.)

According to the Brady, Verba, and Schlozman (1995, 271-294) Existing Resource Model, leisure is an important factor for political participation, which is not about the socio-economic advantages of an individual, but much more about life circumstances. According to the analysis of these authors, leisure time is not directly related to the level of education and the size of income, but leisure time is largely determined by life circumstances, such as employment, marital status, number of children, etc."

Leisure time is closely linked to the number of children... a politically active person who spends an hour an hour a day on socially useful activities, if it had children, it would reduce their activity to even one hour per week...

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237 http://www.rodovindeks.mk/ (Accessed 31.5.2019)

238https://www.facebook.com/reactormkd/photos/a.185840851516978/1523104477790602/?type=3&theater (Accessed 31.5.2019)

of course, in this case it is important whether this person is a man or a woman. An employed woman loses more of her free time by devoting herself to children than a man and, consequently, she would reduce the time for political participation. ”(Verba and Schlozman (1995, 285)).

According to the State Statistical Office reports, women aged 20-64 in the Republic of North Macedonia, on average, spend three hours more per day on household chores and informal care than men of the same age, and one hour less than men on leisure activities (SSO, 2014-2015).

Literature prescribes several factors that (de)motivate citizens' participation in political processes. Starting from the theory of rational choice, which assumes that an individual is rational in his choices and actions, political participation is predetermined by the analysis of the viability of his investment in the form of time and other resources such as money, education, social capital, etc. (Dalton 2008).

But on the other hand, an individual does not exist in isolation, but in constant interaction with the environment and the community. Hence, the motivation for political participation reduced to self-interest or some monetary and non-monetary gain is not sufficient and the theory goes beyond individual motivation, taking into account collective motivation, i.e. motivation within the communities (Dalton, 2008).

Also, an individual's motivation for political participation stems from the degree of exposure to political activity within the family, how often politics is discussed or political participation within the family is practiced (Lawless and Fox, 2013). In the Republic of North Macedonia, 70% of young women rarely or never follow politics, and in general, young people are mostly informed by television and the Internet, but also by talking to friends and in the family environment (Korunovska, Srbijanko et al, 2011; Latkovic, Popovska, Serafimovska, Cekikj 2013).

All of the above theoretically elaborated factors belong to the group of socio-economic factors, which we consider to be of great importance globally when it comes to women's political and civic participation and are applicable in the context of the Republic of North Macedonia as well. Therefore, examining the impact of these factors on the political and civil participation of women in our country is the focus of this research paper. We believe that the findings and recommendations of this research paper will contribute to fostering more active and proactive political and civic participation.

METHODOLOGY

Due to the nature of the research topic of this paper and the inability to provide sufficient data for testing predetermined variables and preparing a quantitative analysis, a qualitative methodological approach was used for the purpose of this research paper which included narrative presentation and interpretation of the findings. Choosing this methodological approach allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the context and the factors that influence women's political participation.

The research technique used in this research paper is an individually semi-structured interview. Semi-structured interviews allowed for greater freedom in examining and deepening the relationship between the identified variables and the main variable unpaid homework and informal care, as well as identifying other factors that may be essential and influential.

A questionnaire was designed to conduct individual interviews in which the questions were divided into several categories in order to examine the assumed variables in more detail. The questions referred to demographic data such as age, ethnicity, place of residence (village/town), degree of education, economic (in)dependence, further questions on examining the structure of social capital, access to infrastructure, utilisation issues of leisure time and issues of motivation for political and civic activity, or inactivity of women.

The sample is provided mainly by targeted selection through contacts. Part of the sample is provided by the 'snowball' method where a small group of respondents allowed us to contact other respondents in order to obtain as much diversity as possible in the sample. The total number of respondents is 54, from 24 to 64 years of age, out of which: 32 Macedonian, 10 Albanian, 8 Roma, 2 Turkish, 1 Serbian and 1 Vlach. In terms of place of residence, we surveyed 38 women that live in the city and 16 women that live in the village. Out of the total number, 18 respondents are employed in the business sector, 6 in the public sector, 4 in the civil sector and 4 of them are professionally engaged in politics and are a part of different political parties. Of the others, 19 are unemployed and 3 are retired.

The semi-structured interviews were conducted in the field from 15.4.2019 to 25.4.2019. Prior to the beginning of the interviews, all interviewees were presented with an informed consent form for the interview, stating the conditions under which the interviews would be conducted, the purpose for which they were conducted, the personal data protection policy, the manner of using and processing the data. After the presentation, all 54 respondents gave their consent by signing the informed consent form.

The limiting factors of this research paper are the time and resources for implementation, the limited amount of available quantitative data on the research subject and the number of respondents. Due to the short time and limited resources, the number of respondents is small and no comparative analysis of the data is possible. The limited amount of data also did not allow for the quantification of the data, i.e. the production of statistics relevant to the quantitative analysis.

PROVIDED DATA

As relevant demographic characteristics of this research paper, we distinguish the geographical determinant in terms of urban and rural residence, and ethnicity, as an important component of a multiethnic society such as the Republic of North Macedonia.

Table 1. Sample distribution by ethnicity

Ethnicity	No. of respondents	No. of respondents in percentage (%)
Macedonian	32	59,3 %
Albanian	10	18,5 %
Roma	8	14,8 %
Turkish	2	3,6 %
Vlach	1	1,8 %
Serbian	1	1,8 %
Total	54	100 %

Of the total number of respondents, 54, the distribution of the sample by ethnicity reads: 32 are Macedonian, 10 Albanian, 8 Roma, 2 Turkish, 1 Serbian and 1 Vlach (table 1).

Regarding the geographical determinant, 16 out of the total number of respondents live in the village and 38 live in the city.

Table 2. Sample distribution by education level

Level of education	Number of respondents	Number of respondents in percentage (%)
No education	5	9,4 %
Elementary	6	11,1 %
Secondary	22	40,7 %
High	1	1,8 %
Academic	12	22,2 %
Masters	8	14,8 %
Total	54	100 %

According to the level of education, out of the total number of respondents who responded to the questionnaire, 5 have no education and are almost illiterate (9.4%), 6 have completed primary education (11.1%), 22 respondents have completed secondary education (40, 7%), 1 have completed high education (1.8%), 12 have completed academic education (22.2%) and 8 have master's degrees (14.8%) (Table 2).

It is important to make a distribution of the sample by employment and sector, where 18 out of the total number of respondents are employed in the business sector (33.3%), 6 in the public sector (11.1%), 4 in the civil society sector (7.4%), and 4 of them professionally deal with politics and belong to different political parties (7.4%). Of the rest, 18 are unemployed (33.3%) and 3 are retired (5.6%) (Table 3).

Table 3. Distribution of sample by employment and sector

Emplyment and sector	Number of respondents	Number of respondents in percentage (%)
Politics	4	7,4 %
Civil society	4	7,4 %
Public sector	6	11,1 %
Business sector	18	33,3 %
Retired	3	5,6 %
Unemployed	19	35,2 %
Total	54	100 %

A field questionnaire was conducted in order to obtain more comprehensive data on socio-economic factors affecting women's political participation in the Republic of North Macedonia. The questionnaire was thematically divided into 5 areas, namely economic (in)dependence, social capital, infrastructure, leisure and motivation. Each area is comprised of multiple sub-questions that cover several aspects that are relevant to the analysis.

The first area of study is the economic (in)dependence of women through which we analysed the status of women in the labor market, their property ownership and additional personal income. Of the 54 women, 19 are unemployed (35.2%), and only 17 of them own property, 5 (9.3%) of them own a car and only 5 of them own an apartment or house. Only 3 (5.5%) of the total number of women have additional passive income based on royalties or rent, and only 3 of them have their own business. It is important to note that only one of the employed women is the sole contributor to the family budget, and on average women account for 39.7% of total family income, meaning that the male is the dominant contributor to the family budget.

The second area of question concerns social capital, and the purpose of the questions was to obtain data on the size and structure of social capital of the respondents. The questions were about who the respondents spend most of the day with and what topics they were discussing, how much time and with how many friends they spend time outside the home and which topics are most discussed, as well as profiling the dominant circle of respondents support. Of the total number of respondents, 14 often talk about politics at home and with friends, 8 of them very rarely talk about elections only, and 32 respondents do not discuss politics at all with family or friends. Support for the work they do for almost all respondents comes from family and friends.

The third area of interest is access to infrastructure. This area aims to examine how many of the respondents have access to the infrastructure, how much they use the foster care facility in particular, and how much it is actually available to them. When asked, public transport and foster care centers, such as kindergartens, nursing homes, day care centers for people with disabilities, were identified as infrastructure of interest for this analysis. All respondents responded that they had access to the infrastructure and that they would, if necessary, use or would use it in the future, except for nursing homes and day care centers for persons with disabilities that they considered to be not quite accessible.

Through the fourth area of questions, we examined the free time available to women and how they spend it, what the distribution of household chores is, and how they would spend it if they had more free time available. Of the total number of respondents, 23 responded that they had very little free time during the day, i.e. from 1 to 3 hours (40.7%), 12 responded that they had relatively sufficient free time of 4 to 7 hours per day (22.2%), 7 responded that they have plenty of free time or are free all day (13%), and 13 women answered that they do not have any free time (24.1%) (Table 4).

Table 4. Sample allocation according to leisure time

Free time (in hours)	Number of respondents	Number of respondents in percentage (%)
1-3	22	40,7 %
4-7	12	22,2 %
7>	7	13 %
Does not have free time	13	24,1 %
Total	54	100 %

Regarding the redistribution of household chores, 44 of the respondents answered that all household chores belong to them alone, and only 10 of the respondents answered that household chores were evenly distributed among family members. Regarding the time spent on homework, in these 10 cases of equal distribution of homework, respondents responded that they spend on average 3 hours on homework, compared to their husbands, who spend only 1 hour, and the other 44 respondents on average they spend 4 hours a day on homework. Respondents reported that home and family responsibilities were predominantly theirs, while yard and shopping responsibilities belonged to their husbands.

The fifth area consists of questions concerning the motivation for political and civic participation. The purpose of the questions is to examine the motivating and inhibiting factors for female political and civic participation. Of the total number of respondents, 8 (14.8%) were members of a political party and 4 (7.4%) were members of a civil society organisation. When asked what they consider to be political and civic participation, out of 54 respondents, 27 (50%) do not distinguish between political and civic participation. The other 27 (50%) respondents associate political participation with political parties and civil society with humanitarian actions or membership in a civil society organisation.

When asked if they think women can contribute if they get involved in politics, 49 (90.7%) out of 54 answered that they can contribute, while the other 5 (9.3%) think that women cannot contribute if they get involved in politics. On the other hand, when asked if they would engage in political and civic activities, 21 (38.9%) respondents answered that they would not engage in civic or political activities, 30 (55.5%) would, but only in civic activities, and only 3 (5.5%) respondents, who have not yet been a member of a political party, stated that they would also join a political party.

Table 5. Overview of political and civic participation

Form of participation	No. of respondents	Number of respondents in percentage (%)
Membership in a political party	8	14,8 %
Membership in a civil society organisation	15	27,8 %
Volunteering	8	14,8 %
Participate in home councils and similar meetings	12	22,2 %
Voting in elections	52	96,3 %
Participation in protests	8	14,8 %

The table above is an overview of the political and civic participation of the total number of respondents. Of these, only 8 were members of a political party (14.8%), 15 were members of a civil society organisation (27.8%), of which only 8 respondents volunteered (14.8%), and 12 respondents participated in a home council or meetings of the local community (22.2%). Almost all of them (52.3%) voted in the elections, while only 8 (14.8%) participated in the protests.

The most common answers to the question of not joining a political party or protests were: I do not care about politics, I do not believe in political parties because of ideological differences, i.e. there is no political party in whose ideology and way of working I believe. When asked what needs to change, i.e. what should be different than at the moment to be more politically and civically active, the most common answers are that a new political option is needed, more transparent work of parties and institutions, more free time, higher salaries and pensions, greater benefit from their involvement and fewer party manipulations. As the main drivers of political and civic participation, respondents emphasized injustice, inequality and the desire to help vulnerable groups of citizens.

From the above said, we can conclude that the sample is small but at the same time heterogeneous, encompassing women living in diverse socio-economic contexts, which enables us to further analyse the state of women's political and civic participation more fully taking into account all socio-economic factors, such as economic (in)dependence, social capital, infrastructure, leisure and (de)motivation. In the following chapters, we present and analyse the findings of interviews conducted with women across the Republic and hope that they will contribute to a better understanding of the motivating and limiting factors for Macedonian women participation in politics.

DATA ANALYSIS

The data obtained from the semi-structured interviews gave us a clearer insight into the understanding of political and civic participation in our country, the motivation of Macedonian women for political and civic participation, as well as the factors that influence the motivation for more active involvement. The impact of socio-economic factors on women's political participation in the Republic of North Macedonia was closely analysed.

## 1. UNDERSTANDING POLITICAL AND CIVIC PARTICIPATION

Political and civic participation are concepts that overlap in their essence, while both signify citizen participation in social and political issues within the community. The key difference is that political participation refers to activities aimed at influencing the governing structures of government and making their decisions, and civic engagement involves implementing activities aimed at contributing to the improvement of the community.

What can be highlighted as an important finding is the lack of information and knowledge about what constitutes political and civic participation, how it can be achieved and how it is possible to participate in political and social trends. All of the politically inactive respondents responded that they are not politically active and regularly vote in elections, but some of them, who claim to not be civically active, also stated that they volunteered occasionally. From the responses obtained through structured interviews, we estimated that 21 out of the total number of respondents do not understand the difference between political and civic participation and do not know concrete examples of political and civic activities, 19 of the respondents moderately know the difference, indicating participation in a political party as political participation, and participation in humanitarian actions and organisations as civic participation. The other 14 respondents are excellent at delineating what is political and civic participation and are willing to discuss the topic further.

Given the sample's heterogeneity in terms of education, place of residence, social capital and the sector in which they work, it was important to examine how women understand and interpret political and civic participation. Most of them, with the exception of the politically active, include political and civic participation, meaning party campaigning, such as rallying, handing out flyers and posters, as well as attending regular party meetings at the party headquarters. The civic activities mentioned by the respondents were voting in elections and participating in humanitarian actions. Other activities, such as volunteering or any community contribution, civic, local and national initiatives, were hardly mentioned.

According to the findings of this research, the most important factor affecting understanding of political and civic participation is social capital, which is closely linked to women's economic independence. It can be noticed that the respondents who understand most the political and civic participation are raised in families with higher education, where politics is often discussed, opinions and positions are exchanged. Most of their mothers have completed secondary and tertiary education and are economically independent. These respondents also spend time with friends who are mostly university graduates, are economically independent, and with whom they discuss and talk politics. The circle of support for these women, besides family, is also friends, and their social capital is greater. These women lead a more independent life, that is, they are mostly employed and live separately from the larger family circle.
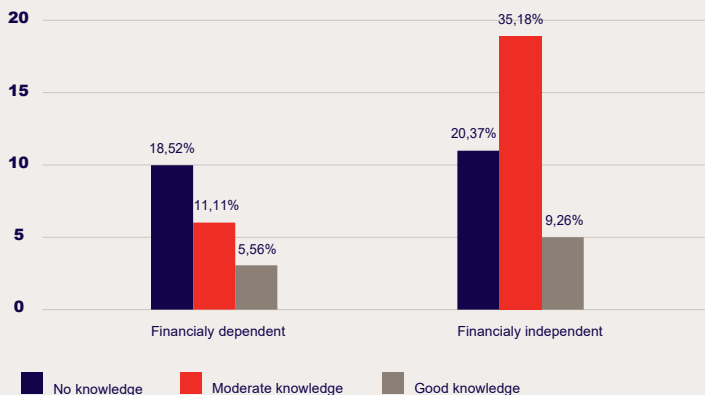
On the other hand, women who have the least understanding of political participation are raised in very low-educated, predominantly working-class families, where politics are rarely or never discussed. Their mothers throughout their lives are mostly housewives or in low paid jobs, and occupations inherited by their daughters. These women are traditionally educated and the traditional female role is accepted by them as a social norm. These women live a more independent life, live with a wider family circle, and mostly receive support from their husbands and family. Friends are not supportive of these women and their social capital is largely lower.

The level of education of women is an important factor in understanding political participation in our case, as the higher the level of education of the respondents, the more clearly they define and distinguish the activities that involve political and civic participation. The cross-tabulation (Chart 2) can show the impact of the level of education on understanding political and civic participation.

Chart 2. Overview of education level and understanding of political and civic participation
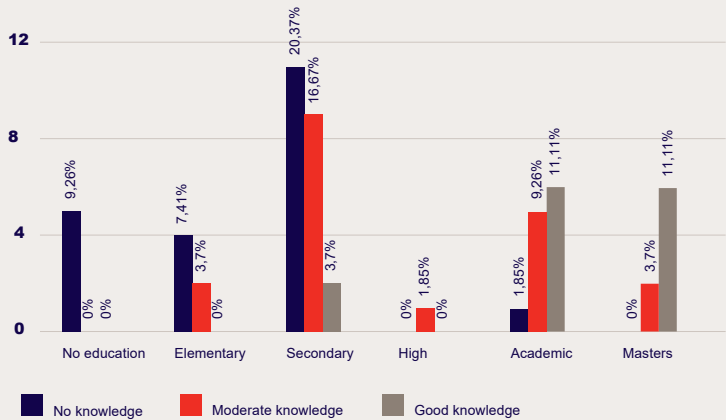
Regarding the place of residence, female respondents living in the village understand far less the political and civic participation than female respondents living in the city. Almost all respondents living in the village, under political and civic participation, only involve political party membership, attending rallies organised by political parties, and visiting party headquarters. The picture below is a cross-tabulation that provides a clear picture of the impact of the place of residence on understanding political and civic participation.
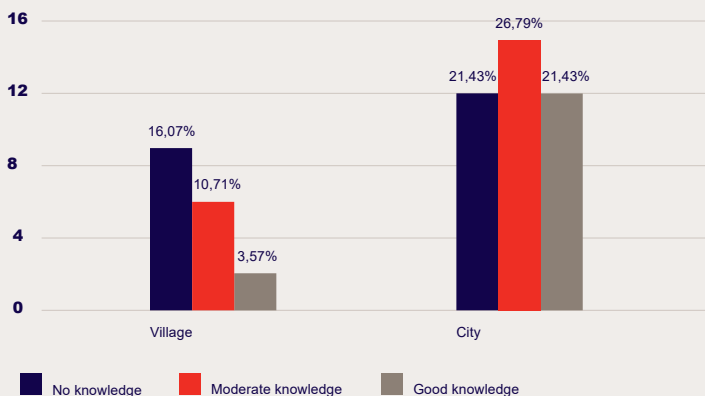
In terms of ethnicity, Roma respondents showed the least understanding of political and civic participation, which is essentially a consequence of the lowest level of education in this ethnic community, while there is a small but not significant difference between Albanian and Macedonian respondents. difference in the more fundamental understanding of political and civic participation. The analysis also showed that age does not play an important role in understanding political and civic participation.

2. DISTRIBUTION OF HOMEWORK AND FREE TIME IN FAMILIES

Distribution of domestic work and leisure time within families is still done on the basis of traditional and patriarchal female roles in households. The findings show that even today the burden of housework as well as the care of older and younger family members belongs to women. The majority of the respondents, 44 out of 54, responded that their home responsibilities and care for the home and the family belong entirely to them.

"I've been carrying this family for 20 years on my own, alone. No one helps me even though I go to work, and my husband is unemployed."[239]

"No, homework is my job and we know it. Men go to work, we work at home."[240]

"It is known, the woman is around the household. Men can't do that."[241]

There`s a small number of respondents (10) who claim that obligations are evenly distributed within the family, but when one considers the time they spend on these responsibilities and the time spent by husbands, it cannot be said at all that the obligations are evenly distributed. When asked how much time these women spend on home and family care, they said they spend an average of 3 hours, as opposed to their husbands, who spend only 1 hour on average. On the other hand, on the question of which obligations belong to them and which to their husbands, these respondents answered that they tend to all the domestic obligations, and their husbands tend the duties regarding the yard and shopping.

"The responsibilities are divided with us. My husband helps me a lot, he will shop for me and if needed he will make the salad. ...I spend about 3 hours and he does about 1 hour of homework."[242]

Out of these 10 respondents who responded that their responsibilities and time were evenly distributed within the family, only 4 indicated that this division was between them and their husbands, while others were respondents sharing responsibilities with their mothers, grandmothers, or mother-in-law or assisted by outsiders who are predominantly women.

If we analyse the profile of women whose domestic labor is distributed, we can conclude that these are highly educated women, predominantly from the Macedonian ethnic community, economically independent and raised in families whose members have the same or similar profile. It is important to note that all 5 politically active respondents belong to this category of women, who have a declarative separation of domestic responsibilities within the family, but there is a presence of outsiders as additional support.

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239 Interview no. 4.

240 Interview no. 14.

241 Interview no. 18.

242 Interview no. 22.

Politically active respondents believe that they do not restrict their homework, even though they devote more time than other family members. But unlike other women, these respondents use external assistance as an additional mitigating circumstance, are economically more independent and, as a percentage, are more likely to have homework and family care within the home unlike politically inactive women, due to their greater career growth potential compared to their husbands.

"It's not about free time and homework, my community in which I see countless injustices motivates me, but everyday internal party squabbles are the biggest problem for me to reach higher post."[243]

"For me, the biggest obstacles are being young and being a woman. I have daily obstacles from colleagues about how I got here, that I don't have enough skills and knowledge and so on."[244]

Brady, Verba, and Schlozman's (1995) theory that leisure time is not directly related to the level of education and the size of income, but that leisure is largely determined by life circumstances, such as employment, marital status, number of children etc., is also confirmed in our case. It is common for employed women and women who are politically and socially active to have a higher level of education and greater economic independence, but when asked how much free time they have for personal needs, most of them respond that they almost do not have it once they have completed all domestic and family obligations. Asked if they would have more free time how would they use it, they responded that they would use it again for homework, which is not the case with employed women, who would spend their free time walking, socialising with friends and for travel.

"I have the whole day for me. If I have more time, I'd finish better my homework."[245]

"With more time I will clean more and be around my children more."[246]

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243 Interview no. 8.

244 Interview no. 2.

245 Interview no. 7.

246 Interview no. 52.

On the other hand, the unemployed respondents say that they have free time all day, but when asked about their personal free time, exempted from domestic and family obligations, they say that they almost do not have it. However, in addition to financial status, marital status, number of children, etc., in our case, women's perception of leisure time is also important, what that means and how it can be used differently instead of only for domestic duties. The perception of leisure time these respondents have plays an important role in the dynamics of their lives, in the creation of their lifestyles and in their behavior and actions.

3. MOTIVATION FOR POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

The motivation for women's involvement in politics or civic activities is very low. Very few of the respondents have volunteered, were members or members of a civil society, or to a religious community. Even lower is the number of women, 8 out of 54 respondents who were or are members of a political party and have made a small contribution. Most women say that their lack of participation in political and social trends is not due to their free time, but to their motivation and lack of information.

Dalton's theory (2008) of rational choice in our context proves to be correct. An individual is rational in choices and actions and political and civic participation is predetermined by the worth of their investment in the form of time and other resources, such as money, education, social capital, etc., as well as collective motivation, motivation within the community. In our case, women's individual rational choice is predetermined by their financial independence. Economically dependent women and those with significantly lower incomes declare that they do not engage in political and civic activities because they have no personal benefit from such involvement.

"Nowadays you can`t do anything without membership in a political party. In order to succeed in our country, you must be a party member."[247]

"I would only be involved in civic activities organised by an association, in some humanitarian activities, to help children and the sick. Never in a party, is to no avail, everyone minds solely their own interests."[248]

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247 Interview no. 40.

248 Interview no. 36.

"Why get involved, I have no benefit from that. No one hires me, everybody wants a party membership. I also got one and it's futile if you have no one there."[249]

But to understand the benefit in the broader sense of the word, there`s a lack of greater political and civic education in this category of women. They also say that in order to engage more actively politically and civically, they need to have an income or a higher income than the current one. Particularly impressive is the Roma community, where women live in the greatest poverty. 3 out of 8 Roma women stated that they are more prepared to engage in political activities, and that they would even get involved in a political party for personal benefit in the financial sense. Unlike them, other economically more stable women, when thinking about the benefits of political and civic participation, actually think much more about collective benefits.

"I will get involved, wherever needed, even in a party if need be, as long as there are jobs, employments."

Given the fact that most of the respondents stated that they would be involved in CSOs, humanitarian action or volunteering, and would never join a political party or protest, we can generally conclude that the motivation for participation stems from their social status as a socially predetermined role. Therefore, they choose to engage in activities that are based on caring for and helping vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, activities that are a continuation of their domestic and family responsibilities, i.e. home and family care.

"I am involved and I volunteer at my child's school. I sew curtains and help decorate the school on occasions like Easter, or a school`s patron day."[250]

"Women are creative and need to get involved in activities that suit them best, for example in some kraft workshops or decorating, and they can also help with the children if needed."[251]

"I can get involved, and I would, but only in an organisation for orphans or children with disabilities. Nowhere else!"[252]

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249 Interview no. 34.

250 Interview no. 39.

251 Interview no. 44.

252 Interview no. 29.

Regarding the type of political and civic participation, most of the respondents would be involved in the unconventional type of political participation, meaning that they would join a civil society organisation, volunteer and engage in humanitarian activities. But none of the politically inactive would join a political party and many would not protest. When asked why they would not join a political party or protest, the answers were: I do not care about politics, I do not believe in political parties because of ideological differences, i.e. there is no political party in whose ideology and way of functioning I believe.

Asked if they think women can contribute if they get more involved, almost all, i.e. 49 out of 54 respondents answered that they can contribute, and the reasons are that women have the same capacities as men, that are more creative, more responsible, more organised, more intelligent and are more empathetic. But when asked if they would get involved personally, almost all of the respondents answered that they would not get involved, even though they consider that women could contribute more than men.

> *"They can, they can do more than men, they just need to be given a chance and better support. They are more creative, more ambitious and resourceful, they are more organised."*[253]

Politically active women are generally motivated to grow in their careers and advance politically, but internal party conflicts are obstacles they face on a daily basis, as well as gender and age discrimination.

> *"I am a Roma woman and I would not run for a Roma party because women are always discriminated in the Roma parties. Once they offered me to be on the list, but I refused because I know what's going on inside. They will put women on the lists to meet the quota and then give these women to sign Statements that they are relinquishing their position in order to give the place to the men in the party."*[254]

In addition to internal party conflicts, the family is also cited as a limiting factor because they are often forced to compensate between the private and professional spheres, which is especially the case for younger respondents. They are even ready to give up their careers, but only if their partner progresses further in their career and financially.

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253 Interview no. 28.

254 Interview no. 8.

"It depends, if my husband is making more progress, for example, being a minister or tuns some other office, it is normal for me to step back and take care of my home and family."[255]

"I will give up for the sake of my children and family. I don't have any children now, but I don't know what it will be like in the future."[256]

Generally speaking, collective motivation is an important segment of the respondents. In order to get more involved in CSOs, humanitarian action or volunteering in the community, most of the respondents indicated that they would be involved without thinking if their girlfriends were involved too. In addition, they would be involved if they were directly called and invited to engage in such activities by CSOs, activists or other organisers. Most of the women who are not politically active when asked if their close friends join a civil society organisation, volunteer, protest, join a political party or participate in a house council meeting would they also join, the answer is that in such case they would also get involved. This indicates low self-initiative and need for a broader support front.

The lack of information is an important factor for participation. Each second respondent, in response to the question of why she was not involved in a CSO or religious community or volunteered, responded that she had not been informed of the opportunities offered to her and that she would get involved if someone directly called or invited her to get engaged.

"If my friends get involved, so will I. We go everywhere together. But not for all activities. I will get involved in volunteering and humanitarian aid but organisations need to be more active, for us to know what they are doing, as they are very passive. They need to come, to tell us that there's something, somewhere where we can get involved."[257]

When asked what needs to change, that is, what should be different than at this moment, to be more politically and civically active, respondents with higher levels of education and greater economic independence responded that a new political option, more transparent work and more free time are needed, whereas, respondents with less education and greater economic dependence responded that they would be included if there were higher salaries and pensions, greater benefit from their involvement and less party manipulations.

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255 Interview no. 2.

256 Interview no. 3.

257 Anonymous respondent no. 49.

CONCLUDING CONSIDERATIONS

- According to the opinion of the respondents, most women in the Republic of North Macedonia understand political participation as membership in a political party, attending rallies and attending meetings at party headquarters, and understand civic participation as a participation in humanitarian actions. In terms of understanding, social capital and the level of education play the most important role. Women with higher education and greater social capital, in terms of the level of education of family members and friends, understand and define political and civic participation better and they are able to make a clearer distinction. Respondents who understand most the political and civic participation are raised in urban areas and in families with higher levels of education, where politics is often discussed, opinions and positions are exchanged, their mothers are mostly with secondary school education and university degrees and economically independent. The circle of support for these women, besides the family, are also friends who often talk about politics and thus their social capital is greater. These women lead a more independent life, that is, they are mostly employed and live separately from the larger family circle. Women, however, who least understand the meaning of political and civic participation are raised in rural, with significantly lower level of education, predominantly working-class families, where politics are rarely or hardly discussed. Their mothers are mostly housewives or in low paid jobs, that are often inherited by their daughters. These women have more traditional upbringing and the traditional female role is accepted as a social norm. These women live a more dependent life, with a wider family circle, and mostly receive support from their husbands and close family members. Friends are not a supportive element for these women and their social capital is largely lower. Age does not play a significant role in defining political and civic participation.

- The double burden of workload and care for the home and the family is an undeniable fact for the Macedonian woman and is an important factor for her political and civic participation. In terms of the profile of women who claim that domestic labor is shared within the family, we will note that these are highly educated women, predominantly of the Macedonian ethnic community, economically independent and raised in families whose members have the same or similar profile. It is important to note that out of 10 respondents who claim that household responsibilities are shared within the family, 5 are politically active respondents and there is a presence of outsourced supporters. With a better and more equitable distribution of household chores within the family, politically active women would have more free time allowing for more

professional political growth, and others could use their time by joining a CSO or initiative.

- For Macedonian women, leisure time is not directly related to the level of education and income, but leisure time is largely determined by life circumstances, such as employment, marital status, number of children, etc. This factor is also important for women's political and civic participation. Unemployed women have the problem of distinguishing leisure time between housework and leisure time for personal needs, and often the latter is overlooked. In these women, the socially predestined role is strongly rooted. They see the time spent at home as leisure, and for leisure time for personal needs almost do not even think about. If these women had more free time, they would use it again to complete their homework, which is not the case with employed women who would spend their free time walking, socialising with friends and traveling.

- Women's individual rational choice is predetermined by their financial independence. The greater the class stratification, the greater the willingness of women to engage in political and civic activities, but only if they have a specific financial benefit. Economically dependent women and those with significantly lower incomes would be politically and civically more active if that involvement had direct implications on their quality of life through their employment or family member employment, increased pensions, and more. Their expectations of political and civic participation are mostly material, which implies given their financial dependence, and their focus is solely on personal benefit, unlike others who are more economically stable and for whom the benefit is a collective good, not just employment. This is especially the case for the poorest women, who are much more willing to engage in even conventional political activities, and would also join a political party because they see greater personal benefit.

- In general, almost all respondents think that if women were more actively involved in politics, they would be even better and more successful than men because they think of women to be more creative, more responsible, more organised, more intelligent and more empathetic. But women do not have such a perception of themselves and therefore would not engage in conventional political activities, but only in humanitarian actions and initiatives. This personal perception is largely due to the socially predetermined female role and the low percentage representation of women in Macedonian politics.

- Collective motivation is an important segment of the respondents. Women in the Republic of North Macedonia would engage in civic and political activities if their friends were involved too and if they are informed and directly invited to participate.

- For Macedonian women with a higher level of education and greater economic independence, in order to have political and civic participation, there is a need for a new political option, better transparency of institutions and more leisure time, while for Macedonian women with lower degree of education and higher economic dependency, in order to become more actively involved, it is necessary to have higher salaries and pensions, greater benefit from their involvement and less party manipulation.

- Politically active women are generally motivated to grow in their careers and advance politically, but intra-party conflicts are the obstacles they face on a daily basis, as well as gender and age discrimination. Apart from intra-party conflicts, family is also a limiting factor and they are often forced to compensate between the private and professional spheres, which is especially the case for younger respondents. They are even ready to give up their careers, but only if their partner makes higher progress in his career and contributes more financially to the family budget.

- What motivates politically active women to get involved and thrive is injustice, inequality in society, and their desire to help vulnerable groups of citizens.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For Civil Society Organisations:

- CSOs should invest their capacities in providing Macedonian women with knowledge of political and civic participation, which includes how they can get involved and what the benefits of active participation are.

- The civil society sector should promote the self-recognition of women as important political and social actors and encourage their more active involvement in the social and political trends in our country.

- The civil society sector should inform women about their activities and the opportunities they offer, encourage them directly into socially responsible activities and do so through personal contact with the community.

- CSOs should promote women leaders, who will serve as role models for other women and encourage greater political and civic participation.

- CSOs should work with political parties to tackle gender stereotypes and discrimination against women within parties and work to strengthen the capacity of women in parties and to motivate them to advance in their political careers.

- What needs to be explored in the future is whether, how and to what extent the socially determined role of women in the Republic of North Macedonia determines the motivation for political and civic participation and defines the extent and type of political and civic participation.

For institutions:

- Ensure recognition of the double burden of housework and informal care and care for women and adopt policies and measures to overcome unequal distribution of household and family responsibilities.

- Advocate for institutional recognition, reduction and redistribution of female unpaid housework and care.

- Develop, follow up, and monitor relevant indicators for objective 5.4. from the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that address the recognition and appreciation of unpaid housework, fostering and care.

- • Improve infrastructural fostering capacity, but also design and finance a special program for health care, care for the elderly and children, and foster and care for people with disabilities.

ANNEX 1.

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR EXAMINING THE IMPACT OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS ON WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN THE REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA

Demographic characteristics

Ethnicity

Age

Place of residence

Degree of education

Economic (in)dependence

Unemployed

A 1.1. How long have you been unemployed?

A 1.2. Have you been actively looking for a job? If not, why?

A 1.3. Are you familiar with self-employment measures and have you considered using them?

A 1.4. Within the family, where are their basic incomes and at what average amount?

A 1.5. Do you have property in your name - apartment, house, business, land?

A 1.6. Do you have passive income on your behalf - rent, dividend, percentage of earnings, etc.?

Employed

B 1.1. Are you employed and in what sector?

B 1.2. How long have you been waiting for a job and how have you found a job?

B 1.3. How much is your salary - 8,000-12,000; 13 000-18 000; 18 000-24 000; 24 000-30 000; over 30 000?

B 1.4. What is the total family income, on what basis and on what average?

B 1.5. Do you have property in your name - apartment, house, business, land?

B 1.6. Do you have passive income on your behalf - rent, dividend, percentage of earnings, etc.?

Social capital

C 1.1. How many members does your family count and list the members you live with?

C 1.2. What age, level of education, and occupation do your family members (mother, father, brother/sister, father-in-law, mother-in-law) have?

C 1.3. Who do you interact with most within your home and family?

C 1.4. Is your family discussing politics and how often? (hardly ever discussed, very rarely, rarely, relatively often, very often)

C 1.5. Who do you most often communicate with outside your home and what topics do you most often discuss?

C 1.6. How many friends do you have and what is their profile (level of education, occupation, etc.)?

C 1.7. How much time do you spend together, how do you spend your time together, and what topics do you most often discuss?

C 1.8. Do you receive support from others for what you do, what motivates you, and how?

Infrastructure

D 1.1. Do you have access to public transport, do you use it, how often and for what purposes?

D 1.2. Do you have access to fostering infrastructure such as kindergartens, nursing homes, etc.? If not, would you like it to exist and under what conditions would you use it?

D 1.3. Do you use foster care centers? If not, why and under what conditions would you use them?

Leisure time

E 1.1. Do you have free time and how much time you have left in the day?

E 1.2. If you do, how do you manage to secure your free time?

E 1.3. What activities do you do most of your free time?

E 1.4. If you had more free time, how would you use it, on which/what kind of activities?

E 1.5. Which household chores belong to you do and which are your spouses or other family members?

E 1.6. How much time of your day is spent on your household chores, and how much do other family members?

E 1.7. What household chores do you spend most of the day on and how do you manage to organise them?

Motivation

Unemployed and employed:

F 1.1. What is, in your opinion, political and civic participation and list a few examples?

F 1.2. Do you think women can contribute if they get more involved? Why yes/not?

F 1.3. Would you be involved/are involved in politics and civic activities and how? Why yes/not?

F 1.4. Is there a civil society organisation and/or religious community in your vicinity and are you a member of any of them? Why yes/not?

F 1.5. Are you a member of a political party? Why yes/not?

F 1.6. Have you ever volunteered? Why yes/not?

F 1.7. Do you attend home council meetings? Why yes/not?

F 1.8. If your friends and relatives attend home council meetings, get involved in the organisation, and volunteer, would you? Why yes/not?

F 1.9. Do you vote in elections? Why yes/not?

F 1.10. Do you go to protests? Why yes/not?

F 1.11. If you had more free time, would you become involved in any of the activities mentioned above?

F 1.12. What do you think should be different than at the moment to be more active?

Civic activists, NGO members and women who are professionally engaged in politics:

G 1.1. What is your motivation for political and civic participation?

G 1.2. What are the obstacles (if any) you face in terms of your political participation?

G 1.3. Are you motivated to advance your career, i.e. to join a political party, to apply for councilor, mayor, president, prime minister, chair of political party, etc.?

G 1.4. If the answer is yes, what motivates you, if the answer is no, what demotivates you?

G 1.5. What motivates you the most to be active?

G 1.6. Do you have a family member, friend or other person that encourages and supports you to be active?

G 1.7. Why do you think you are personally more socially engaged?

G 1.8. Would you ever run for or accept to run for a position (councilor, parliament member, etc.)? If yes/no, why?

G 1.9. What do you think would help you to become more active?

G 1.10. Would you be more actively involved in politics if you had more free time (joining a political party, running for office, volunteering, etc.)?

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FOOTNOTES

1 It implies adequate expertise, professional background and experience in same or similar positions.

2 Stems from the formal position and hierarchical authority of the organisation.

3 Personal status, reputation, credibility, membership in elite organisations.

4 Associated with the founding status or ownership stake/shares in the company.

5 This index shows the change that occurs in the current year compared to the previous year (i.e., academic year).

6 This index shows the change that occurs compared to the base year (2010/11).

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