

II. МІЖНАРОДНИЙ ДОСВІД ПОЛІТИЧНОЇ УЧАСТІ ЖІНОК

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NORDIC WOMEN'S MOBILIZATION AND EMPOWERMENT IN POLITICS

Nordic¹ women's relatively high representation in politics is a fairly recent historical development. As a matter of fact, Nordic women had to wait until the 1970s to make a breakthrough into parliamentary politics (meaning more than 10 per cent women of the MPs). Still, in all Nordic countries women had received suffrage by 1920. Finland was, however, an exception: Finnish women entered the formal political arena earlier than women in the other Nordic countries. Already in the first democratically elected parliament in Finland (1907), women constituted ten per cent of the elected assembly, which was an exceptionally high starting level for women's political representation in a national parliament.² Very few women were represented in national assemblies in the other Nordic countries before the second World War. In Sweden the 10% threshold was reached in 1953, in Denmark in 1966, in Norway in 1973, and in Iceland in 1983. Until the early 1970s, a higher proportion of women participated in elective politics in Finland than elsewhere in Europe, although this gap bet-

¹ By the «Nordic countries» is referred to Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden.

² In Finland, universal, direct and equal suffrage and eligibility for office in parliamentary elections was granted simultaneously for both sexes in 1906. Finnish women were the first women in Europe to gain the right to vote and the first women in the world to win the right to stand in elections for the national legislature.

ween Finland and the other Nordic countries was closed over the course of the decade (Bergqvist et al. 1999; Bergman 2002).

The 1970s and 1980s marked the beginning of a new phase in the political mobilisation of women in the industrialised countries of the West. Activities were channelled both to feminist and other social movements (such as the ecological and anti-nuclear power movements, the peace movement, the student movement, the sexual liberation movement etc.), to a lesser extent also to political parties and trade unions. However, in many Western countries the activists of the new women's movement avoided or rejected participation in established or traditional «patriarchal» politics in the 1970s and early 1980s. In the Nordic countries a different pattern prevailed. This was especially the case in Norway, Sweden and Finland, where women's political activities were channelled both through the new social movements and into the traditional or established political organisations. In particular, the women's sections of the political parties were fairly independent and influential and were often influenced by ideas originating in the new feminist movement (Bergman 1999).

The 1970s were a turning point in women's political representation in the Nordic countries resulting in a substantial growth of women's representation in political elites. During the following decades women achieved a major presence in decision-making at all levels and in all areas of political life. In particular, women's share in national and local politics increased rapidly. Between 37 and 45 per cent of the Members of Parliament in Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden are currently women. Today, Sweden tops with 45 per cent women and 55 per cent men in the parliament. In an international perspective the Nordic figures are very high. The average share of women MPs in the democratic parliaments of the world is currently only 15 per cent (Statistics from IPU).

However, we have to note that in recent years, a number of other countries have rapidly come closer to the Nordic countries in the ranking lists of equal representation in parliaments by women and men, including some European

countries (the Netherlands, Spain, Belgium, Germany) as well as countries from the so-called third world (Rwanda, Costa Rica, Argentine, Mocambique, South Africa). Thus, the top position of the Nordic countries is no longer self-evident. Indeed, we may ask whether we have reached a «glass ceiling» in the Nordic countries in this respect (Freidenvall 2005)?

Despite the growth in women's political mobilisation, participation and representation, politics in the Nordic countries continues to be hierarchically structured and stratified according to gender. Women are still underrepresented in the core bodies of political power, such as the political and strategic elites consisting of leading politicians, leaders of major organisations and corporative bodies as well as senior civil servants and experts. However, women are considerably better represented in the higher echelons of the political bodies than in academia or, especially, in business (see, e. g., Skjeie & Teigen 2003). Yet, from an international point of view, a discussion of how Nordic women have achieved their present political status appears more challenging both theoretically, politically and strategically, than an analysis of the reasons for women's continuing underrepresentation in political life. Therefore I will next discuss some of the explanations for women's political success in the Nordic countries.

Explanations for a high representation of women in Nordic politics: structural and agency-oriented approaches

Traditional explanations for Nordic women's political position have focussed on structural factors, such as the political system, socio-economic structures etc. For example, an election system based on proportional representation rather than on a majority rule where only one seat is available per an election district, has often been considered as one reason for the electoral success of Nordic women. However, proportional representation alone cannot account for the increase in women's political representation. The openness of the candidate nomination procedure, allowing women to push from inside the political parties, is another important factor. Moreover, the party composition has been considered to play a role: left-wing and liberal parties as well as so-

me new party formations, such as Green parties, tend to recruit more women than right-wing parties. Socio-economic factors are also often referred to: it has been argued that women's representation in politics is higher in countries where the level of women's employment and education is high and where public care arrangements allow women to combine family obligations and employment or other public activities. However, the empirical findings are not totally convincing: e.g., countries such as Germany and the Netherlands have a relatively high representation of women in politics, although women's employment figures are relatively low. The Nordic welfare state model, with its strong emphasis on general egalitarianism in a society (e.g., social, economic and regional equality) may well be a factor that promotes also equality between women and men in politics. In a strong welfare state with public care as one corner-stone, it may easily be argued that women due to their traditionally strong role in care and education are needed as «experts» in politics.

Since the 1990s, the bulk of research on gender and politics carried out by both Nordic and other feminist scholars has focussed upon above-mentioned structural explanations. More recently, this strand of research has been challenged and complemented by alternative perspectives. Scholarly attention has also to be paid to the role of women's agency, i.e. collective actions through women's organisations and networks, both within and outside the political parties, aiming at increasing women's political empowerment. What has been done within politics, including demands for gender quotas or recommended target goals for women's representation? What effect have such policies and reforms had? Today quotas is a popular instrument to increase women's representation in politics: 81 countries in the world have introduced quotas. In most of those countries, where women's share in parliament exceeds 30%, some form of quota regulations have been used, either party quotas or candidate quotas in elections (Freidenvall 2005). In the Nordic countries. Norway is the best example of following a quota strategy (cf. Rogg's contribution; see also Bergqvist et al. 1999).

Nordic scholars have emphasised that in order to get women mobilised and empowered in politics activities from «inside» have to be combined with pressure from «outside». There is a need both for a strong civil society, with radical and feminist oriented women's movements on a grass-roots level and for women's organisations attached to the formal political structures (e. g., women's party-political associations, sections or networks). Women in elite positions within the higher echelons of politics need women in civil society and within the parties to constantly remind them of women's issues. In a power position one tends to adapt to the formal power structures and easily «forgets» the importance of women's issues.

I want to give one example of the significance that women's activism on the grass-roots level can have on formal politics: In 1991, women's representation in Swedish Parliament declined for the first time since decades. This caused huge protests by women and a loosely organised network, called the Support Stockings, threatened to establish a Womens Party if women's position in politics was not improved. This «strategic threat» proved to be effective: the major parties in Sweden were forced to act and introduced a quota system on the party lists for parliament elections («every second seat for women»). As a result, women's share in parliament grew in the following elections, being today 45 per cent of the MPs.

Concluding Remarks

With regard to women's presence within the political system, the Nordic countries are the most inclusive societies in the world. The major wave of women's entry into electoral politics and various social movements occurred in the 1970s and 1980s. Since then, the gender imbalance in political participation has diminished or disappeared. From the 1980s onwards this trend has been followed by an increase in the number of women as political activists and leaders on both the local and national levels. The introduction of quota rules in several political parties and in appointed public bodies has facilitated women's political empowerment. These changes have been due both to an increased gender awareness among the voters and conscious efforts by the po-

litical actors within the parties and other political bodies. The legitimacy of women's political activities and of gender issues in general has increased in parallel with the growth of their participation in legislation and policy-making. Male power is questioned and criticised more openly than before both within the political parties and in electoral politics. Gender is today a visible and explicit issue in Nordic politics as a response to women's demands as party activists and voters and as a consequence of collective demands from women's organisations and the gender equality apparatus within the state administration.

I have been able only to a limited extent to discuss the question of why more women are needed in politics. Does women's increased political participation and numerical representation imply any change in the contents and definitions of politics, in the political process or in the political outcome? I argue that women do make a difference – if they participate in politics in larger numbers than merely as symbolical tokens. A certain level of «critical mass» of women is needed in order to change the political agenda. The experience from the Nordic countries shows that issues such as child-care and gender equality policies, policies against violence and sexual assaults against women, have entered the political agenda as a result of women's increased presence in politics. Moreover, in the Nordic countries we have noted that not only does the contents of politics change, but also the general political culture and behaviour of political actors towards each other is affected as well. It is therefore important to increase the number of women in politics not only for the reason of equality and democracy, but also because of a need to change the contents and practice of politics. This would simultaneously benefit society as a whole.

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УЧАСТЬ ТА ПОВНОВАЖЕННЯ ЖІНОК ПІВНІЧНИХ КРАЇН У ПОЛІТИЦІ

Анотація

Широке представництво жінок Північних країн в політиці є достатньо новим історичним явищем. Значний прорив у парламентську політику (мається на увазі представництво в парламенті на рівні 10% депутатів) був здійснений лише в 1970-ті роки. Водночас право голосу жінки усіх Північних країн отримали ще до 1920 року. Першими стали жінки Фінляндії, які отримали право голосу, а також право бути обраними в законодавчі органи в 1906 році (право голосу – першими в Європі, право бути обраними – першими у світі). І вже в першому демократично обраному парламенті Фінляндії жінки становили 10% парламентарів. В інших Північних країнах представництво жінок в національних парламентах до часів Другої світової війни було дуже незначним. 10%-й бар'єр було подолано у Швеції 1953 року, в Данії – 1966-го, Норвегії – 1973-го і Ісландії – 1983 року. До початку 1970-х років частка жінок, що брали участь у політиці загалом і у політич-

них виборах зокрема, у цьому регіоні була вищою за всі інші країни Європи.

1970-ті і 1980-ті роки стали новою фазою в політичній мобілізації жінок в індустріалізованих країнах Заходу. У Північних країнах політичну активність жінок спонукали не лише нові соціальні рухи (екологічний рух, рух миру, студентський рух та ін.), як було в більшості західних країн, а й традиційні політичні організації (зокрема, жіночі секції політичних партій були практично незалежними і часто піддавалися впливу ідей, що зароджувалися в феміністському русі).

1970-ті стали поворотним пунктом в жіночому політичному представництві Північних країн, що позначилося значним зростанням частки жінок у політичній еліті. В наступні роки жінки досягли вагомого впливу в процесі прийняття рішень на всіх рівнях і в усіх сферах політичного життя.

Сьогодні від 37 до 45% парламентарів у Данії, Фінляндії, Норвегії і Швеції становлять жінки. Перше місце посідає Швеція: 45% жінок у парламенті, тоді як середня частка жінок у парламентах демократичних країн світу становить усього 15%. Та навіть незважаючи на високу політичну мобілізацію жінок, політика у Північних країнах залишається ієрархічно структурованою і стратифікованою відповідно до статі. Жінки досі недопредставлені в політичній владі, насамперед у політичній і стратегічній еліті. Водночас цікаво відзначити, що жінки набагато краще представлені тут у найвищих ешелонах влади, ніж, наприклад, у бізнесі.

Одним з факторів все ж високого представництва жінок у політиці Північних країн є виборча система, що базується на пропорційному представництві (а не на мажоритарній системі), де кожний виборчий округ має лише одне місце для свого представника. Іншим чинником є відкритість процедури висунення кандидатів. Значний вплив мають також соціально-економічні фактори: представництво жінок зазвичай є вищим у країнах з високим рівнем зайнятості і освіченості жінок, де суспільні обставини дозволяють жінкам поєднувати

сімейні обов'язки і роботу або ж інші суспільні заняття (цікаво, що у таких країнах, як Німеччина і Нідерланди, де представництво жінок у політиці є вагомим, рівень зайнятості жінок є досить низьким).

Ще одним чинником є система соціального захисту з її загальним наголосом на егалітаризмі (напр., соціальна, економічна, регіональна рівність). Значна увага у дослідженнях приділяється колективним діям жіночих організацій і мереж як всередині, так і поза політичними партіями, спрямованим на зростання участі жінок у політиці. У багатьох країнах із значним представництвом жінок у вищих ешелонах влади використовується принцип квот. Найкращим прикладом такої стратегії є Норвегія.

Скандинавські вчені наголошують, що для мобілізації жінок і залучення їх до політики необхідно поєднувати дії «зсередини» із тиском «ззовні». Необхідними є як сильне громадянське суспільство з радикальними жіночими рухами феміністського спрямування, так і жіночі організації, прикріплені до політичних структур (напр., жіночі партійно-політичні асоціації, секції чи мережі).

Досвід Північних країн показує, що існує ціла низка питань (напр., догляд за дітьми і політика гендерної рівності, політика проти жорстокості і сексуального насилля над жінками й ін.), яким було приділено належну увагу передусім у результаті підвищеного представництва жінок у політиці. За таких умов змінюється не лише зміст політики, а й загальна політична культура і поведінка політичних діячів один до одного. Таким чином, збільшення представництва жінок у політиці є надзвичайно важливим для суспільства явищем не лише як показник рівності і демократії, а й як каталізатор зміни змісту і практики політики.