Attitudes Towards Women’s Political Participation in Ukraine

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NDI Ukraine
Overview

• Women are severely underrepresented in Ukraine’s political life, particularly at the national level and sexism remains common in public discourse
• And yet, if you stop a woman in the street in Ukraine and ask if she is a victim of sexism or discrimination, you are likely to hear the answer ‘No’
• NDI has used multiple research methods to try to answer some key questions:
  – Are women underrepresented because voters will not vote for them?
  – Do women associate themselves with political life?
  – Is the notion of gender balance in elected institutions unpopular?
  – How do political parties exercise their role as gatekeepers?
  – What do women leaders themselves say about the barriers they face?
Methodology

Several research methods were used around the October local elections:

1. **National face-to-face surveys**
   - April 15 – May 16, 2015 (sample: 5,842)
   - November 28, 2015 – January 5, 2016 (sample: 6,396, 833 conducted using tablets)
   - This enabled an experiment in Kyiv (607 interviews) to test reactions to male and female images

2. **Analysis of candidate nominations and election results**

3. **Implicit Association Tests**
   - Two tests were conducted back to back: family vs career and family vs politics
   - 150 participants per city prior to each round of voting (750 total):
     - Kherson, Lviv, Odesa, Zhytomyr (October 18 – 22); Zhytomyr (November 8-9, second round)
   - In addition, the research team contacted the participants after the local elections to ask about their actual voting behavior

4. **In-depth Interviews with women leaders:**
   - 5 potential aspirants who decided not to seek nomination
   - 5 who sought nomination but did not get it
   - 5 who were nominated but lost
   - 5 who won
Are women underrepresented because voters won’t vote for them?
Different reasons are given for the fact that there are fewer women than men in elected office in Ukraine. Which, if any of the following statements do you agree with? (q41)

- Political parties are more likely to nominate men than women: Agree 76, Disagree 14
- Family duties don’t allow women time to run for office: Agree 64, Disagree 25
- Ukrainians are more likely to vote for men than women: Agree 56, Disagree 29
- Women have less access to resources to campaign: Agree 55, Disagree 25
- Women are less interested in politics than men: Agree 49, Disagree 37
- There are not enough qualified women for elected office: Agree 26, Disagree 60
When deciding which candidate to vote for in the local elections, what is important to you? (q14) (select up to three)

- The honesty of candidate: 63%
- Their program/the promises they make: 44%
- Experience in civic activism: 33%
- The political party that nominates them: 22%
- Education: 21%
- Age: 15%
- The region they come from: 11%
- Business experience: 7%
- Military experience: 4%
- Gender: 12%
Voters’ reactions to women candidates (IDIs)

- Almost every respondent said they did not feel any negative attitudes towards female candidates by the voters.
- Discrimination was more often directed at the candidates' age (too young) or party affiliation, rather than their gender.
- Some respondents said their gender helped them with voters because women were perceived to be less prone to corruption, more concerned with the public good, and more aware of the specific problems of the community.
  - “I myself have never voted for a woman. There is a stereotype that men are probably stronger, a little more ambitious.” Female, Vinnitsa, considered nomination but did not seek it.
  - “There are certain stereotypes of perception still, but there is no negativity.” Female, Zaporizhzhia, sought nomination but did not get it.
  - “There was more prejudice by age, experience or by family ties.” Female, Kyiv, considered nomination but did not seek it.
  - “I've heard many times people questioning my age and asking me why I was doing this. They said I was too young.” Female, Zaporizhzhia, ran for election and lost.
  - “Young voters absolutely do not look at gender, rather they evaluate the individual. This is a good change. I think that in the next elections the situation will improve, there will be more women and people will vote for them.” Female, Vinnitsa, ran for election and lost.
  - “I was told that I was young, so I have to change something to show that I can deliver... The fact that I'm a woman, it helped, they also said that I'll think about people who need help, the elderly, the children and their education”. Female, Vinnysia, ran for election and won.
  - “I think that voters were more loyal to women candidates than to men.” Female, Kyiv, ran for election and lost.
Kyiv Experiment

The 607 Kyiv respondents had their responses recorded on a tablet device, enabling the randomization of questions and answers.

They were told: “Each of the following pictures is a lawyer who decided to get involved in politics to fight corruption.“ and asked: “On a scale of 0 to 10 how likely would you be to vote for this person?”

Each respondent was then shown three pictures from one of the two groups (men or women). Therefore the participants were not aware that this was a gender experiment.

*There was no significant difference in the ratings for male and female images.*
Do women associate themselves with political life?
Implicit Association Tests

• This is the first time that this method has been used to look at attitudes towards gender in Ukraine
• We did it because conventional research tools often provide ambiguous results:
  – Responses to some questions are increasingly progressive
  – There are few differences between the views of men and women on most gender questions in surveys
  – It is not clear to what extent these responses are real and drive actual voting behavior
• IATs enabled us to measure:
  – The extent to which women and men associate women with political life
  – Whether there are differences between the explicit and implicit associations of women and men with different roles
  – Whether actual voting behavior reflects these attitudes or not
Key Results

• Most people do not associate women with political life
• Most people associate women more than men with family life
• Associating men with political life does not prevent people from voting for a woman candidate
• There were fewer gaps between implicit and explicit attitudes than expected
• Strong explicit resistance to women’s political participation exists but it is rare (14% of our sample)
• Overall, these respondents want a more equal distribution of gender roles in family, professional and political life
Gender and Politics

(Implicit)

Men <------------------------------------> Women

Men <------------------------------------> Women
Gender and Politics

By Gender

(Explicit v. Implicit)
Mayoral Election Results - Zhytomyr

First Round

- Serhiy Sukhomlyn (M) | BPP: 28%
- Liubov Tsymbaliuk (W) | Batkivshchyna: 26%
- Sydor Kizin (M) | Svoboda: 11%
- Natalia Chyzh (W) | Samopomich: 11%
- Natalia Leonchenko (W) | Opposition Bloc: 7%
- Other Candidates: 18%

Second Round

- Serhiy Sukhomlyn (M) | BPP: 55%
- Liubov Tsymbaliuk (W) | Batkivshchyna: 45%
Votes for Women Candidates (Zhytomyr)

*Both Rounds (Explicit v. Implicit)*

![Graph showing votes for women candidates in Zhytomyr, comparing explicit and implicit votes for men and women.](image-url)
Is the notion of gender balance in elected institutions unpopular?
In your opinion, who is/should be more involved in political life, men or women? (q38, q39)

- Mostly men: 50 (Current Situation), 9 (Actual Preference)
- Men significantly more than women: 35 (Current Situation), 15 (Actual Preference)
- Men slightly more than women: 6 (Current Situation), 22 (Actual Preference)
- Men and women equally: 5 (Current Situation), 38 (Actual Preference)
- Men slightly less than women: 1 (Current Situation), 1 (Actual Preference)
- Men significantly less than women: 1 (Current Situation), 2 (Actual Preference)
- Mostly women: 0 (Current Situation), 1 (Actual Preference)
In your opinion, who should be more involved in political life, men or women? Men and women equally (q39)

- National: 38
- CENTER/NORTH: 35
- Kyiv: 34
- EAST: 38
- NE Border: 31
- Kharkiv: 38
- Mariupol: 52
- SOUTH: 30
- Kherson: 26
- Odesa: 27
- Izmail: 32
- WEST: 45
- Lviv: 37
In your opinion, what would be the ideal percentage of women in the parliament? q22

These results are from NDIs April-May 2015 national survey. The average response to q21 asking about the current proportion of women in parliament was 10% (2% lower than the actual).
Since May there is a 6% increase in the number of respondents saying 41-50%.

Responses were similar in a separate question about local councils. (q36)
If there was an equal balance of men and women in elected office, in your opinion, would there be:

- **More focus on your everyday concerns**
  - Yes: 56
  - No: 18

- **Less corruption**
  - Yes: 33
  - No: 30

- **Fewer opportunities for men**
  - Yes: 25
  - No: 48

- **Fewer qualified leaders**
  - Yes: 10
  - No: 63
The role of political parties as gatekeepers...
## Total Candidates Nominated by Party with Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Renaissance</td>
<td>10,297</td>
<td>6,252</td>
<td>60.7%</td>
<td>4,045</td>
<td>39.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opposition Bloc</td>
<td>15,598</td>
<td>9,543</td>
<td>61.2%</td>
<td>6,055</td>
<td>38.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volya</td>
<td>2,331</td>
<td>1,454</td>
<td>62.4%</td>
<td>877</td>
<td>37.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Batkivshchyna</td>
<td>25,950</td>
<td>16,235</td>
<td>62.6%</td>
<td>9,715</td>
<td>37.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People's Force</td>
<td>2,821</td>
<td>1,777</td>
<td>63.0%</td>
<td>1,044</td>
<td>37.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samopomich</td>
<td>4,535</td>
<td>2,910</td>
<td>64.2%</td>
<td>1,625</td>
<td>35.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radical Party</td>
<td>17,569</td>
<td>11,348</td>
<td>64.6%</td>
<td>6,221</td>
<td>35.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Alliance</td>
<td>460</td>
<td>297</td>
<td>64.6%</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>35.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Svoboda</td>
<td>12,795</td>
<td>8,549</td>
<td>66.8%</td>
<td>4,246</td>
<td>33.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BPP-Solidarnist</td>
<td>27,885</td>
<td>18,968</td>
<td>68.0%</td>
<td>8,917</td>
<td>32.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Gender Quota Compliance of Party Lists

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party List</th>
<th>Compliant Lists</th>
<th>Non-Compliant Lists</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Samopomich</td>
<td>94% (200)</td>
<td>6% (12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volia</td>
<td>86% (83)</td>
<td>14% (14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Alliance</td>
<td>85% (22)</td>
<td>15% (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renaissance</td>
<td>84% (703)</td>
<td>16% (54)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Batkivshchyna</td>
<td>83% (523)</td>
<td>17% (144)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opposition Bloc</td>
<td>83% (107)</td>
<td>17% (108)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People’s Force</td>
<td>79% (521)</td>
<td>21% (223)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radical Party</td>
<td>72% (404)</td>
<td>28% (177)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Svoboda</td>
<td>70% (518)</td>
<td>30% (347)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BPP-Solidarnist</td>
<td>60% (3424)</td>
<td>40% (1112)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 4536 (212 + 97 + 26 + 347 + 847 + 631 + 136 + 794 + 581 + 865)
BPP-Solidarnist

Candidates Nominated for Oblast/City/Raion Council Lists

**Men Candidates**
- Total: 68.0%
  - Oblast: 80.8% (1389)
  - Oblast Center: 73.7% (927)
  - City of Oblast Significance: 67.0% (2629)
  - City of Raion Significance: 63.5% (3243)
  - Raion in City: 62.1% (627)
  - Raion: 68.3% (10153)

**Women Candidates**
- Total: 32.0%
  - Oblast: 19.2% (331)
  - Oblast Center: 26.3% (1292)
  - City of Oblast Significance: 33.0% (1868)
  - City of Raion Significance: 36.5% (382)
  - Raion in City: 37.9% (4714)
  - Raion: 31.7%

**Total Candidates**
- 27,885
  - Oblast: 1,720
  - Oblast Center: 1,257
  - City of Oblast Significance: 3,921
  - City of Raion Significance: 5,111
  - Raion in City: 1,009
  - Raion: 14,867
Oblast Council Results
Percent of Seats Held by Women

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>% of contested</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More than 30% women</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20% - 30% women</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10% - 20% women</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 10% women</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only men</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elections not held</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## City and Raion Council Results
### Percent of Seats Held by Women

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>% of contested</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More than 30% women</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20% - 30% women</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10% - 20% women</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 10% women</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only men</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repeat elections will be held</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elections not held</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In Depth Interview Results

5 women who did not seek nomination
5 women who sought nomination but did not get it
5 women who were nominated but lost
5 women who were nominated and won

Respondents were interviewed in October and November 2015 they come from a diverse groups of parties in the following regions: Zaporizhzhia, Kyiv, Lviv, Vinnitsa, Kirovograd and Aleksandria
Motivators: Public Service

- Desire to improve the community, provide better living conditions for future generations and accomplish a specific goal or project:
  - “Over the years you gain experience, and you can't stay indifferent, as you see how the laws are changed for the worse... and this is what pushes you to get into politics and begin to influence it”. Female, Kirovograd, ran for election and lost
  - “If I walk the same streets, if I have exactly the same problems with household appliances burning down because of these electrical current fluctuations, if because of the new tariffs I have nothing to pay with, who but me should be defending the interests of people such as myself?” Female, Zaporizhzhia, sought nomination but did not get it
  - “I was supported by the congregation, the Father also asked me to enter the election to somehow control the process of land distribution”. Female, Kirovograd, sought nomination but did not get it
  - “Even in a nightmare I would not have dreamed that I'd ever go into politics. Because no one instilled in me a sense of respect for authority - as if it was something bad. But with these projects I now work on, I knew I could only fulfill them with the support on the regional level”. Female, Vinnytsia, ran for election and won
  - “I wasn't thinking of leadership. I was thinking more about how I could be useful”. Female, Vinnitsa, ran for election and lost
  - “I did not want to be in the Kyiv Parliament. I wanted to change what I can with this team”. Female, Kyiv, considered nomination but did not seek it
De-motivators: Parties

- “I know party leaders, but I have not seen clearly stated programs or positions”. Female, Lviv, considered nomination but did not seek it
- “In this case the party system stopped me. Because since 2010 I have seen enough of the party system - when three people negotiate behind the MPs backs. Many people come there with some personal goals - someone makes a career, someone is trying to get the budget tenders” Female, Zaporizhzhia, considered nomination but did not seek it
- “I realized that it will be all fiction. Even if I would win as a candidate, I knew that I would then be asked to give way to other candidates. As there was such a mechanism in previous elections.” Female, Vinnitsa, considered nomination but did not seek it
- “Leaders make decisions behind closed doors and the rest of the faction is supposed to follow along” Female, Zaporizhzhia, considered nomination but did not seek it
- “They have programs but they also play backstage games. I would join a party which would have clear rules of the game for everyone and a clear program” Female, Lviv, considered nomination but did not seek it
- “I don’t like all those behind the scenes games and dirt... I don’t want someone to organize everything for me and then tell me what to do, I don’t want to be a piece that plays secondary role in unclear schemes.” Female, Vinnitsa, considered nomination but did not seek it
Relationship with the party

- Almost all respondents were approached by others, before they made the decision to participate or not in the elections:
  - “We were considered by different political forces. In particular, I was approached by five different parties”. Female, Vinnitsa, considered nomination but did not seek it
  - “I was told ‘you must run,’ and I agreed” Female, Zaporizhzhia, ran and lost
  - “I liked this team very much. I was surprised and pleased to hear directly from the leader.” Female, Zaporizhzhia, ran and won
- The parties’ policies played a crucial role in the decision to run:
  - “I realized that if you want to really change something, then one is as good as none. You must join a team. It should be a team, adhering to the same principles and the same thoughts as you.“ Female, Kirovograd, ran for election and lost
  - “I was nominated by the party to work on social issues... they are really defending the needs of simple, ordinary people. They are not cut off from life”. Female, Kirovograd, ran for election and lost
  - “There was no other way to get elected than with a political party, so I chose a political party which had women among the leadership”. Female, Vinnitsa, ran for election and lost
Feedback on the 30% Gender Quota

- The quota for the registration of the party was important. In order to pass this barrier and to be registered, the parties tried to meet these standards. Some did better than others. Female, Zaporizhzhia, sought nomination but did not get it

- “In the last elections only 20% of those who were in top of parties lists were women. So I can say that gender quota worked but partially. We’ve got better result but still not good.” Female, Lviv, considered nomination but did not seek it

- “[The quota] is positive. But the law is imperfect because there are no punishments or sanctions for not following quota. One court said that there should be sanctions, another said that shouldn’t.” Female, Vinnitsa, considered nomination but did not seek it

- “As an ordinary citizen who does not have legal training, I cannot understand the explanation of the Central Election Commission... It is not written there that it is recommended to nominate up to 30%, it says that there must be at least 30% . That’s not a recommendation but a demand.” Female, Zaporizhzhia, considered nomination but did not seek it

- “I realize that without the 30% gender quota there would be mostly men again and there wouldn’t be so many women.” Female, Vinnitsa, ran for election and lost

- “Why only 30% Why not 50/50?” Female, Kirovograd, ran for election and lost

- “We need minimum 50% women in Verhovna Rada. I am not a feminist, I worked in a factory for many years and I know that women can be better leaders and achieve better results holding major posts than men. But our women are not allowed to hold high posts for some reason.” Female, Zaporizhzhia, ran for election and won
Reasons for winning and losing

• “Those who worked in their district, who spoke to people, they won.” Female, Vinnytsia, ran for election and won
• “People really saw that we were a team, despite internal party competition, we went as a team. And this is what people need now. Not fighting or vilification of each other, but teamwork.” Female, Vinnytsia, ran for election and won
• “We only had three and a half weeks. It is very little time to meet with residents of the district and have a proper campaign.” Female, Vinnitsa, ran for election and lost
• “I lacked a strategy. If I am going somewhere, I must understand where I'm going. I can not go just for the sake of moving. I need the big picture.” Female, Kyiv, ran for election and lost