IN/VISIBILITY OF WOMEN IN POLITICS[*]

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Abstract

This paper discusses the process of participation and representation of women in political institutions, with special reference to the situation in Serbia. The paper represents an attempt to answer the question of how to increase the number of women active in political life and how to achieve both descriptive and substantial representation, which is necessary for the increase of women's political power. The influence of certain political factors, primarily political parties' nomination and selection, on the growing number of women who decide to run for political office, is analysed.

Key words: women, political participation, political representation, Serbia.

НЕ/ВИДЉИВОСТ ЖЕНА У ПОЛИТИЦИ

Апстракт

У тексту се разматрају проблеми процеса партиципације и репрезентације жена у политичким институцијама, са посебним освртом на ситуацију у Србији. Рад представља покушај да се одговори на питање шта све утиче на то да број активних жена у политичком животу порасте и како, поред дескриптивне, остварити супстанцијалну репрезентацију, неоподну за повећање политичке моћи жена. Анализира се утицај појединих политичких фактора, у првом реду партијске селекције и номинације, на пораст броја жена које одлучују да уђу у политичку трку и кандидују се за политичке функције.

Кључне речи: жене, политичка партиципација, политичка репрезентација, Србија

INTRODUCTION

Politics has always been viewed as men's fight to gain power. The levers of power are designed, managed, and controlled by men. However, the twenty-first century demonstrates a more common perception advocating for an increased women's participation in political institutions that might significantly change the nature of representative democracy and revive and improve the system of management and decision making. Women's participation in political institutions is a complex and multidimensional process that, at the institutional level, may be manifested as promotion of gender awareness and formation of women-appropriate representative bodies. In the field of representation, it may involve continuous election of women to parliament, encouragement of their candidacies, and promotion of gender equality in the electoral legislation.

This text deals with the issues relating to the factors that determine the rise of the number of active women participants in the political life and the results of the latest research in this regard. Over the last two decades, the number of women representatives in parliaments has been growing steadily on a global level, consequently leading to a specific transformation of the position of female population from all walks of life. The first assumption is that the presence of women candidates during elections or women who design public policy affects the level of political involvement of women in at least two ways. First, the political issues relating to the status of women, debates and campaigns, as well as the enactment of the law, may be more easily accomplished with more women in parliaments. Second, women candidates and those already participating in the government are role models and they serve as a powerful symbolic tool or confirmation that politics is not only a man's game. The second assumption is that women's participation in political campaigns and running for office causes greater interest in the election race among the female public, demonstrating better efficiency and ability to win the votes of the female electorate.

REPRESENTATION IN POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

Political representation is a complex process that encompasses the representation and negotiation on identities, interests, ideas, values, perspectives, and experiences of a group within the political institutions. The representation includes symbolic argumentation, status, aspirations, and legitimacy to participate in political decision-making. The gender in negotiation has a special role in political representation and includes two key issues: what women represent and how they are to be represented. The first issue contains an ideological dimension, ideas, and beliefs including an interest-related functional dimension and a social one relying on identity. Female representatives have a twofold role, acting on behalf

of the women by whom they have been elected and on behalf of the political parties that nominated them.

Key political, economic, and ideological factors contributing to insufficient representation of women in political institutions include female lack of interest in politics, challenged by a double burden of professional and household activities, conservative ideas about the role of women in society, a negative public image of women politicians, masculine character of political institutions, and a lack of support for women aiming to engage in politics. The absence of women from political and public life shall be understood both as part of a global discriminatory process and the result of prevailing stereotypes and prejudices about female candidates for political functions. Cultural representation of women's participation in politics undergoes a process of evolution, exhibiting an ever-increasing number of female politicians over the previous 20-year period. Women still face systematic biases within the context of electoral bodies and the structure of political parties. Based on comprehensive reference sources in this section, it may be concluded that the influence of political factors on female underrepresentation in this field is the most studied (Matland, 1998). A comprehensive study of female participation in politics in 110 countries across the world, in the period from 1975 to 2000, confirms a number of key assumptions (Kenworthy, Malami, 1999). First, a positive influence of proportional elective systems on a larger number of women in parliaments has been established. Second, the stability of democratic procedure is initially a factor of no influence, but the influence is manifest in the long run, leading to the increase in women's political representation. Third, national gender quotas, being applied in many countries, have a positive effect on female presence in political institutions. The number of women in parliament is higher in countries with greater district magnitude and closed electoral lists, allowing the parties to be more successful in the election race and providing the chance for women to win against their political opponents. Some researchers state that a higher electoral threshold is more appropriate for women, i.e. the one that reduces the number of parties in parliament and provides incoming parties with more room for inclusion of their respective candidates, either on a voluntary basis or by way of quotas (Matland, Montgomery, 2003; Mateo Diaz, 2005).

A proportional election system is considered a crucial factor in the part of political theory, leading to the recruitment of a greater number of women in assemblies (Matland, 1998; Pajvančić, 2012). Such election systems are characterized by list candidate nomination and election of a greater number of MPs in one constituency, resulting in more realistic prospects that both genders will be equally represented in parliament. In addition, closed and strictly structured lists of candidates, with a reserved third place, followed by each subsequent third place, in the case when the quota is set at a minimum of 30% for candidates of the underrepresented

gender (double quota on the list), provide greater prospects for women to win the parliamentary mandate (Pajvančić, 2012). It is also necessary to observe the rule to assign the mandates won by a list of candidates in the order the candidates' names are given in the list. Moreover, when the mandate of an MP of the underrepresented gender expires, that mandate is to be given to a person of the underrepresented gender, as well (triple quota) (Pajvančić, 2012). The selection, nomination, and running for political office by political parties and support from party leaders constitute the last important steps in the promotion of women's political participation. Based on the current practice, the question is whether it is easier to convince the voters to elect a female candidate or to encourage parties to nominate more women at the top of electoral lists. A minority position of women in politics relates directly to the minority status of women in a patriarchal society (Dahlerup, 1988, p.279). Specific mechanisms of change underlie the initiatives that are aimed at changing the minority position. They comprise selection, nomination, and candidacy of women, introduction of electoral quotas and the existence of laws and institutions dedicated to gender equality. They depend upon the minority's willingness and capacity to mobilize resources and to become organized and institutionalized in the struggle to improve its status (Dahlerup, 1988, p. 296). The efforts to improve political representation are commonly focused on system-related barriers and constraints that determine the proposed female candidates for political functions. Surprisingly little attention has been paid to methods and the character of candidate selection. Many political parties start at the local level, which is a springboard for the major channels of political promotion. For women, participation in local government represents a necessary requirement for progressing towards higher-level political functions. Therefore, the method of local-level candidate selection directly affects women's empowerment. Based on the extensive longitudinal study examining the influence of 68 political parties on the representation of women, conducted in 12 developed industrial countries across the world in three time points, i.e. in 1975, 1985, and 1989, four key factors have been identified: organizational structure of the party, party ideology, party activities, and the rules pertaining to gender of the candidates (Caul, 1999). The latter two factors exert direct influence, while party organization may act in three ways – through centralization, institutionalization, and localization of nominees.

Organizational structure of a party is a key factor for successful application of gender quotas and the method of their implementation (Kenny, Verge, 2012). However, effectiveness of quotas depends largely upon the type of electoral system. A quota gives priority to the number, not the position of the candidate on the electoral list. Hence, quotas function best in closed lists in proportional systems in which mandates of elected female candidates are regulated by law. These mandates require parties to position women high on the list, and not low, where they have no chance

of being elected. Quotas operate better in large constituencies with more candidates, since in units with one or two candidates only those ranked highest on the list – and these are usually men – are the ones to be elected. When compared to the national level, quotas are easier to accept and implement at the party level. As regards higher levels, it is still unclear what may be done to actually accomplish parity. The examples of France, which legally obliges parties to equally include women and men candidates, and Great Britain, which introduced a bill in 2000 requiring the parties to adopt measures against gender discrimination, suggest that the accomplished results are still modest. It is obvious that systemic intervention in the electoral process is required in order to reach the desired proportion of women, and that it is far easier to achieve better results in less developed areas.

The most common problems at the centre of the study of political representation pertain to the following questions: why does a large number of women in legislative bodies not always result in the policy that is gender sensitive and eligible for women? Why does statistical presence of women not facilitate their cooperation and coalition between representatives of different political parties? Do women really represent women in parliament and how? In other words, the majority of theoretical discussions and empirical researches have been dedicated to the issue of the relation between descriptive and substantive representation. Does proportional gender representation entail better representation of women's interests, or does substantive representation entail better representation of minority demands? Most studies established a sound link between the number of women in parliament and the policy aimed at preserving women's rights and addressing the issues associated with family and child protection (Childs, Withey, 2004). Quantitative presence of women is a prerequisite for qualitative changes in the process of political decision making, primarily through their greater motivation to promote and fight for the realization of women's human rights and interests. It was found that an increase up to 30% in the number of women in parliament, which is sufficient to reach a critical mass, elicits qualitative changes in the patterns of the dominant institutional culture and value-normative social framework.

The role of political parties is of special importance since they control the number and the character selection of female representatives in parliament, determining whose voices will be heard and who will be the role model of female participation. However, it should be borne in mind that women politicians find themselves in a specific, ambivalent position, constrained between two types of expectations. They have to prove themselves and act as males, while still maintaining their difference from males. They are triple representatives – they stand for voters, the party, and the female population. They do not automatically, *a priori*, advocate only the interest of other women, but also advocate the ideas and

ideology of the party they belong to. Researches confirm that personal characteristics and experiences of some women representatives are critical for the feminization of politics and, taken by importance, precede party selection mechanisms (Chaney, 2006). These women are characterized by a successful combination of professional experience and political office. It is believed that specific political socialization within a family, activism potential, and a Promethean attitude towards society form a specific profile of a woman who is interested in active participation in public life and in changing the stereotypes about female politicians (Čičkarić, 2006, p.165).

Critical mass studies suggest that the percentage of women in an institution is a key factor in the modelling of their behaviour. However, female critics of this concept find it insufficiently developed, in terms of both theory and methodology (Krook, Childs, 2006). It is deemed that even in the minority women can still protect female interests by acting as critical actors (Childs, 2008). The criticism primarily addresses the situations when, even if the number of women reaches critical mass, there are no changes in the ruling politics (Childs, Withey, 2004; Lovenduski, 2000). The main argument of the critics is the need to modernize the approach to the study of substantive representation by making micro-level analysis the centre of research that relates to the questions of how representation occurs and what the critical actors are doing about it. The goal is to delve deeper into the context, identity, and attitudes that may motivate and improve substantive representation.

Mapping of contents of parliamentary debates highlights the traditionally female topics, encompassing the issues of birth and childcare, gender division of productive labour, and structural position of women in the society, and the traditionally feminist ones, relating to decision making about childbirth, abortion, domestic violence, sexual harassment, and misogyny. There is strong disagreement between sexes on all these matters relating to the treatment of gender issues, but this cannot justify the priority of descriptive representation. The question is whether the interest concept is adequate, since it gives equal treatment to men and women and reduces gender equality to equality in the labour market. Representation does not imply mere inclusion of women in political bodies, but a shift in the male way of doing politics and representation. It is the feminist awareness, not gender, which elicits the response of the institutions, so it is more effective to choose more feminists, not women (Tremblay, Pelletier, 2000, p. 397). One of the preconditions in the sphere of women representation is to mobilize the widest possible circle of gender-sensible people. Therefore, a prominent thesis in recent years has been that the presence of a strategic partnerships or a triangle of power by and between representatives in parliament, female activists in the movement and women's organizations, and women present in the public administration and political

structures, is one of the most important conditions for the transformation of passive into active representation (Halsaa, 1998; Mazur, 2002).

The model of gender difference institutionalization in representative democracy implies a clear strategy and a great number of initiatives to be undertaken on the road to final realization. The first one is to ensure that political parties nominate women for flagship positions by means of internal quotas, the zipper system, or electoral lists, enact laws that penalize the party failing to nominate women on electoral lists, as well as provide support from party peers, encouraging the women to run for political office. Second, there have to be active women networks and caucuses of female politicians that are fighting and lobbying for women's interests and older women politicians have to be involved in mentorship programmes. The third initiative necessitates the accommodation of procedural parliamentary mechanisms, business hours, speakers' lists, and debating rules to the needs of women and the introduction of the laws ensuring representation of women's interests and the existence of parliamentary commissions appointed to supervise the topic of gender equality.

PATTERNS OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

In the last two decades, there has been a sudden surge of interest in the research on political participation of women, which is partly driven by their growing participation in political institutions. In the mid-20th century, European socialist countries registered the highest level of female parliament representatives in the world. The primacy was upheld until the 1980s when the participation equalled the numbers registered in Scandinavian countries. The percentage drastically reduced to a mere 8.4% in the 1990s, at the time of post-socialist transition, whilst Scandinavian countries recorded a rise to 35%. Nowadays, the number of women elected in parliaments in Eastern Europe equals the number in Asian, African, and Latin American countries, but it is substantially lower compared to some EU countries (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2014). Regional differences in female participation percentage are largely due to contextual factors directly impacting the creation of the model of political participation. Economic, social, political, and cultural barriers are present in all environments, and the impact thereof is determined by the type of political organization, electoral system, political culture, level of economic development, and cultural heritage of the country. Low-level female participation in political and public life is primarily the consequence of socio-economic conditions, gender segregation in the labour market, differences in earnings, and feminization of poverty. It is followed by an imbalance between professional and family obligations, unpaid work and economic aging, women's involvement in "grey economy", and the "triple" burden on women, as well as reduction in state welfare support. Another group of equally important factors includes educational

background, professional affiliation, and social capital of a family, which define the level of interest and establishment of women's individual capacity to engage in politics.

According to some authors, the lack of self-confidence, ambition, and competence constitute decisive psychological factors affecting women's decision to join the electoral race and run for political office (Lawless, Fox, 2007, p.148). When assessing the performance of the candidates, both men and women rely upon the same factors, but women more rarely consider meeting these criteria. Women doubt their capacity, knowledge, and experience and rarely enjoy party support (Lawless, Fox, p.85, 97). These findings are significant since they suggest that women, despite equal qualifications, education, and social capital to men, are primarily of low self-confidence and lack the wish to take risks and compete (Fox, Lawless, 2011, p.59). Even women with good political connections in parties are not ready to repeat their candidacy and win the support of voters (Fox, Lawless, 2010, p.322).

Political factors have a major influence on the level and extent of women's political participation. First of all, it is the manner in which the issue of gender equality is interpreted and treated in political parties. Contextual and ideological factors are the most common ones and they refer to different definitions of the status of women within a party agenda, prevailing standpoints on the issue of gender equality and respect for human rights, and the level of social development and political freedoms. These is followed by organizational factors, as the most widespread, pertaining to the internal organization of a party, the manner management and female groups to exert pressure and lobby are selected, and the visibility of female party leaders in decision-making positions. Institutional-legal factors follow, including the type of electoral system, legislative and constitutional frame, and prescribed quotas, on the national and/or the party level. Quite often women are active in political parties during election campaigns, but when the nomination of candidates and mandate distribution are concerned, they are not represented in adequate numbers. Informal relations deeply rooted in masculinized political culture that help maintain constant low-level female political power are considered to impact the selection of candidates the most. After all, throughout history political parties have been patriarchal structures that ignored the interests and demands of women, undergoing the slowest change out of all actors at the political scene.

Three inter-party factors: candidate selection, party magnitude, and party ideology and two non-party ones: party competence and public presence of women, are of key importance for the establishment of gender balance. Large parties may include women on electoral lists since, although not top-positioned, they have a chance to be elected. In addition, only left-wing and green parties nominate more women for the representative

functions, thus contributing to the issues relating to women status and gender equality being put on the parliament agenda. However, in most countries, political parties exist as conservative organizations, not engaging too much in the promotion of gender balance in representative institutions. Political parties in Scandinavian countries are the only ones that consequently perform their function by use of the quota system as a measure for raising the level of female political participation. Some authors believe that the model of supply and demand in the political market is of crucial importance in understanding the process of political recruitment of women, in which the supply includes individual resources and motivation and the demand refers to party selection and nomination (Norris, Lovenduski, 1995). Required qualifications include the level of education, party work, legal experience, speaking skills, financial resources, political connections, and organizational skills. The ensuing result is the equilibrium between two groups of factors; women are the ones to provide the *impetus* for greater motivation and resources, whilst the party elite are expected to acquire and apply the measures intended to increase both women candidates and women at the top of the party hierarchy. However, contrary to the economic market, the political market does not operate by simple establishment of equilibrium between supply and demand. Gender ideology exerts a strong influence on political supply and demand; female nomination has been artificially repressed and further reflected through underrepresentation of women at all levels of decision making. For example, family relations may substantially facilitate female candidacy but, as a rule, these women are the daughters and wives of high-profile politicians that once were or still are in power. In this way they compensate for the lack of resources and various support networks that men have, especially for funding political campaigns in pre-election run.

When it comes to leadership positions, only 11% of leadership positions are held by women in worldwide political parties. Research on the behaviour of political parties in Europe confirms a proportional correlation between women leaders of political parties and the number of women in parliament (Kittilson 2006, p.37). More women in leadership positions in a party allow for greater mobility towards leading positions in decision-making institutions. However, it should be pointed out that the capacity for mobility plays a very important role and represents a comparative male advantage, since it allows better access to resources. Women enter politics at older age, and rarely from professions related to law and economics. Therefore, their resources and opportunities to advance are rather limited (Lawless, Fox, 2007, p. 148). Progress of women in their career is hindered by a specific "glass ceiling" in their professional life. The "glass ceiling" syndrome implies invisible, but almost impermeable barrier, dividing women from the positions of influence, and represents a major reason for their sparse presence in key political positions (Lorber, 1994, p.227). Women are prevented from advancing in their career due to artificial barriers based on stereotypes

and prejudices in attitudes and they do not solely pertain to the top of the power pyramid, but also to the central control position, especially regarding minority groups. A career path usually begins with participation at lower political levels, leading to the accumulation of knowledge, experience, and resources indispensable for further progress, but often ends there, with no possibility for women to continue their progressive climb on the political scale.

CASE OF SERBIA

In all post-socialist countries, state paternalism and masculine democracy are hallmarks of the dominant cultural policy that determines gender identities, in both the public and the private sphere. The absence of feminist criticism of this policy and a visible feminist culture among upper-class women appear to be additional factors, hindering the entrance of a greater number of women into politics and the formation of the space for articulation of their interest in public policies. For example, women's behaviour in the parliaments of post-socialist Europe is specifically characterized by the lack of a common platform and their following of the instructions from political parties or parliamentary groups (Galligan, Clavero, 2008, p. 149). Most countries justify this by the fact that there were no feminist movements and women's organizations that could put pressure on political parties to accept a gender-sensitive policy as a part of a party's agenda and program.

On its way toward achieving a complete, substantive female equality in political life, Serbia has to go through the process of real modernization, i.e. long-lasting processes of structure transformation and value-oriented normative social frameworks. Changes in society, institutions, political parties, non-governmental sector, culture, education, and the media are still insufficient for the creation of conditions that would enable greater promotion and integration of women in political life. Unwillingness and inability of the governing structures to implement economic and political changes and carefully design the strategy for social development, in which the issue of female status would be given an equal treatment, as all other issues do, are some of the most visible hindrances (Blagojević Huhgson, 2012). The presence of an authoritarian political culture and a patriarchal value system, intolerance, failure to understand diversity, primitivism, sexism, and misogyny both in the public and in the private sphere significantly affect female status (Blagojević, 2011).

One of the crucial factors preventing women's participation pertains to the character of the political and the party system. Women are often active in political parties during election campaigns, but when the nomination of candidates and mandate distribution are considered, they are not represented in adequate numbers. Political parties in Serbia, whether they are social-

democratic, left-wing, right-wing, or liberal, rely on established patriarchal and traditional organizations that do not pay enough attention to the interests and demands of the female population. Under such circumstances, women stand a minimal chance to be nominated for political office and further advance within the hierarchy of their party's organization. A major obstacle of female participation is the sexism of institutions, enabling public policies to advocate for the needs of one gender, at the expense of the other (Lovenduski, 2005, p.53). Continuous balance of gender relations within an institution is one of the key things to be focused on when researching the policy of female participation.

The contours of a specific female model of political behaviour of women in Serbia may be defined on the grounds of synthetic analysis of the results of several studies completed in previous years, addressing the issue of participation in politics (Vuković, 2009; Baćanović, Pajvančić, 2010; Open Parliament, 2013). Typical patterns are the following: resignation about the existing state of society and the work of politicians in power; lower voter turnout, less involvement in the organization of elections, electoral commissions, electoral boards and observation; marginalization in the process of a party's nomination and inclusion in the lists for important positions; minor role in decision making in political parties; exclusion from political campaigns and public appearances; lack of ambition and self-confidence for professional political engagement, and mistrust of and lack of cooperation with other women actors in the political process.

Political parties are the most responsible for an increased female political participation. Consideration of the gender perspective is an uncommon practice of political parties when creating public policy. Political parties engage declaratively and assume a rather conservative stance when addressing the issue of gender equality, commonly reducing women to their reproductive role. The issue of gender equality has been imposed and adopted within the domain of observance of the regulations, institutional mechanisms, and provision of formal women's participation, but not at the level of solving gender-conditioned problems or advocating for female interests that appear in everyday activities. Within this context, the global concept of gender equality should be accommodated to local needs and current problems within a specific environment. If there were more discussion on the topic of women's employment, health, and education, the concept of gender equality would be better recognized and would attract more attention. Even politically active women often fail to see the need to formulate a gender-sensitive policy, expressing the tendency to deny the influence of certain political decisions on both men and women.

The position of women in political parties may be viewed based on the rank and importance that women's networks and forums have in the organization of political parties, followed by the membership structure and the way leaders of women's organization are elected. The crucial

points affecting the status of female members of a political party are connections with other bodies of a political party, funding, and cooperation with non-governmental organizations, trade unions, and governmental bodies dealing with the issue of gender equality. In most cases, women's organizations exist only formally, with no active participation in and influence on the work of the party, thus remaining quite invisible to the media. As for female politicians in Serbia, one comes to the conclusion that women in politics face the problem of insufficient presence in the media and the lack of public prominence. They are represented in the National Assembly and hold a number of executive functions; however, the impact of the "glass ceiling" is clearly recognizable, as a form of vertical segregation and a set of artificial, informal, and unwritten rules, preventing women from reaching the most responsible executive functions and, along this line, greater power in political life. There are more women in political parties in total in comparison to the ones actually appearing in public, being nominated, running for office, or just performing public functions. The case study in Vojvodina from 2009 showed that only 14% of women who are members of political parties were nominated for elections, mostly at the local level (Baćanović, Pajvančić, 2010).

The question is whether there is a real willingness of political parties to facilitate female participation in political decision making. In order to encourage more active participation of women in the bodies of political parties, a mechanism has been devised that introduces interparty quotas as follows: all bodies of a political party must include 30% of female members and 30% of women must hold the executive positions in that party. It is believed that this percentage of women holding positions in political parties and, therefore, being elected to representative bodies, sends a clear message that women are welcome in political and party life, that they have their role, rights, and responsibilities, and that their participation in leadership and decision making is of public interest. For some time, Austria, Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, and Great Britain have been implementing party-based quotas, with 40% of female participation in representative bodies, in most of these countries. At the same time, Belgium, Portugal, Slovenia, and Macedonia have both party- and law-prescribed quotas; the number of women representatives in parliaments in these countries is much smaller, but still larger compared to the countries that do not use the quota mechanism for promotion of women in the institutions of representative democracy. However, there are still three problems in quota implementation: party support is lacking, 30% of female candidates does not necessarily imply the same percentage of female nominees, and the replacement of nominated women withdrawing from the race by other women is not regulated.

The results of the study on the influence of women in the Serbian National Assembly, conducted in 2013 among the members of "Open

Parliament", forming a part of a broader study on the issue of control function of the Assembly, confirmed that women enter parliamentary circles less easily, that they are underrepresented in positions of the heads of parliamentary groups, chairwomen of the boards, and the members of international organizations, and that they are excluded from the matters of security, finance, and economy. There is only one chairwoman (SPS – *Socialist Party of Serbia*) out of 15 parliamentary groups; in all other cases, men hold presiding functions. The largest parliamentary parties, the Democratic Party (DS) and the Serbian Progressive Party (SNS) were careful to meet the quota requirement of 30% of women on electoral lists, but women's chances of entering the Assembly are still small as their number increases only after the hundredth position on the list. The study results also confirmed the existence of another form of discrimination concerning communication, gender-biased language, inappropriate conduct, and gender-based disrespect, in both formal and informal practices. Every fifth female MP complained about the jokes of her male peers and comments made on her account; still, there is no right to object and appeal against such conduct. In the opinion of a number of women MPs, an increased share of women in the Assembly is associated with the decline of power of these institutions, giving rise to the executive power (Open Parliament, 2013). This is exactly why some women MPs advocate increased female participation, not only within the structures of legislative bodies, but also in the executive branch and even beyond, and, perhaps most importantly, outside the political institutions in the management boards of companies and corporations, as is the case in all Scandinavian and some Western European countries (Open Parliament, 2013).

The influence of women in parliament largely depends on the number and determination of those who are elected to fight for women's interests. A frequent and probably inappropriate remark of the feminist movement is that the women elected to parliament became surrogate men, that they are socialized inside parties that are male-dominated organizations, that they are difficult to tell apart, and that, apart from personal promotion, there is no use from their work. It is true that women in parliament step on male territory since it is the institution ruled for centuries by gender-related prejudices and stereotypes. However, a large number of factors impact the real influence women will have, ranging from political-economic context, standing procedures of assembly operation, to political experience and the reached critical mass in parliament. For example, it has been observed that the composition of less than 15% of female MPs tends to adopt a typically male pattern of behaviour, coming from traditionally male professions such as economics and law. Another generally accepted opinion is that women perform better when engaged in board meetings than during session debates. The practice of the German Parliament is a good example of an attempt to overcome female marginalization and enhance their

political participation. When a woman asks for the floor, she is automatically moved to the top of the list above male speakers. This practice is now spreading outside the parliament, which is a good indicator of the impact of women's voice and understanding of women's perspective. The Scandinavian countries have gone even further in the elimination of discrimination against women's interests by means of a long-established practice of addressing women's issues and through support to women's initiatives in all legal debates provided by male MPs. Even the manner of running political campaigns, major topics, and the style of presentation were changed in favour of a "softer" policy, oriented towards the improvement of everyday living conditions.

CONCLUSION

Greater participation of women in legislative and executive branches of government results in faster adoption of mechanisms of gender equality. A larger number of women MPs highlights the issues of social justice; more women in ministerial positions promotes a more significant presence of women's organizations and their influence on political parties. However, degendering of institutions should be taken more seriously than mere placing of women in higher positions in the public and the private sector, since it does not warrant the observance of equal rights in the decision-making process. Degendering of institutions primarily implies degendering of political elite and it is implemented via actors in institutions, whose programs are focused on women through institutional inclusion of gender-related topics in all areas.

The prevalent issues for future research in this field include how to achieve substantive representation and create conditions for its realization. To resolve these issues, the scope and conditions in which all female political manifestations operate should be taken into consideration, together with the ones operating within the parliaments, governments, and ministries, both as a part of the women's movement and civil society and as membership in political parties. All actors play an equally important role in the constitution of substantive female representation on all levels: local, regional, and national.

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НЕ/ВИДЉИВОСТ ЖЕНА У ПОЛИТИЦИ

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Резиме

Родно преговарање игра посебну улогу у политичком представљању и обухвата кључно питање − како жене треба да буду заступљене у политичким институцијама? Приликом проучавања политичке репрезентације центално место добијају проблеми који се односе на следећа питања: зашто више жена у законодавним телима не резултира увек политиком која је родно осетљива и пријемчива за жене? Зашто веће присуство жена не олакшава сарадњу и коалицију између представница различитих политичких партија? И да ли жене заиста представљају жене у парламенту? Другим речима, питање односа између дескриптивне и супстанцијалне репрезентације је предмет највећег броја теоријских дебата и емпиријских истраживања.

Да ли пропорционална заступљеност по полу значи боље представљање женских интереса или бољу заступљеност мањинских захтева? Кључно питање

је да ли већа партиципација жена у политичким телима резултира и променом мушког начин вођења политике?. Један од главних предуслова промена у сфери заступљености жена јесте мобилизација ширег круга људи који су родно сензитивни. Трансформација пасивне у активну репрезентацију подразумева присуство стратешког партнерства или троугла моћи између представница у парламенту, активисткиња за женска права и жена присутних у администрацији и структурама јавне политике. Међутим, још увек низак ниво учешћа жена у политичком и јавном животу резултат је, пре свега, социоекономских услова, родне сегрегације на тржишту рада, платних разлика и феминизације сиромаштва. Ништа мање значајну групу фактора представљају ниво образовања, стручна оспособљеност, друштвени капитал породице, који детерминишу степен заинтересованости и индивидуалних капацитета жена за укључивање у политику.

Политички фактори имају велики утицај на ниво и обим политичке партиципације жена. На првом месту, то је начин на који се питање родне равноправности тумачи и третира у политичким странкама. Када посматрамо политичку сцену у Србији, долазимо до закључка да жене имају проблем са невидљивошћу у медијима и институцијама на свим нивоима. Оне су заступљене у Скупштини и на неколико извршних функција, међутим, јасно се препознаје утицај "стакленог плафона", као облика вертикалне сегрегације, који их спречава да напредују у каријери. Мрежа неформалних односа и неписана правила не дозвољавају женама да се кандидују на најодговорније функције и постигну већу моћ у политици.