

## GENDER EQUALITY IN THE REPRESENTATIVE POWER OF LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT IN RUSSIA\*.

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Effective solution of actual problems in the socio-economic, political, cultural spheres depends on the direct activity of the authorities, which are designed to regulate and protect modern social relations. To this end, in the central and local authorities a balanced application of the intellectual and professional potential of the staff of both the male and the female half of the population is required, based on equal rights in filling positions and exercising powers.

Ensuring gender correlation and equality in the system of public authorities of local (municipal) self-government represents the actual topic of the study due to the maximum "proximity" of this level of government to the population and the diversity of its activities: protection of life and health, school and pre-school education, budget, taxation, property management, housing and communal services, transport, consumer services, landscaping, etc. The complexity and daily importance of these issues contribute to the development of the interest of representatives of both female and male parts of the municipal community in their effective solution. As indicated by M.A. Kashina, representatives of both sexes should be able to benefit from the results of socio-economic development equally, and the state should act as a guarantor of these opportunities<sup>200</sup>.

The European Charter of Local Self-Government of 1985, ratified by the Russian Federation, does not contain specific provisions on the equality of women and men with participation in local authorities, regarding issues of the status of elected officials as the jurisdiction of national law. The Constitution of the Russian Federation in part 3 of Article

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<sup>200</sup> M.A Kashina., *Gender policy in modern Russia: objective and subjective prerequisites*, in *Personality. Culture. Society*, 2006, T. VIII. Issue 2 (30), p. 158.

19 enshrines the provision on equal rights and opportunities for women and men, including in the political sphere. The current legislation of Russia contains an indication that citizens have equal rights to exercise local self-government, as well as the right to elect and be elected, including regardless of gender.

Enforcement of the right to local self-government arises from the residence (stay) in a particular territory of the population as a whole and a single person. The Russian Federation is a multinational republic, including small ethnic groups, indigenous people with their own traditions and way of life. In this regard, the essential feature of representative power in Russia is the consideration of the interests of the population and local historical (cultural) traditions.

As a rule, preserving and developing the identity of a specific territory, solving its most important labor, cultural, spiritual, educational problems, working with the younger generation can and should take place with the active participation of the female part of the municipality due to more flexible personal, business and psychological qualities of a woman aimed at sympathy, understanding, persuasion, willingness to compromise. Women bring additional competences to the work of the authorities, which are not peculiar to men<sup>201</sup>.

Analyzing the place of women in power the law scientists A.A. Akmalova and V.M. Kapitsyn notice “in Russia the availability of local self-government and its significant social orientation contribute to the formation of a space where the female gender role can be fully represented”<sup>202</sup>.

The close connection with the family and the household explains the spread of the practice of realization in the professional-political sense of a female deputy namely in the staff of the local representative authority, that is, in the framework of her place of residence.

The business self-realization of women in self-government bodies is often facilitated by the experience of their participation in associations (parties, associations, unions, foundations, and other organizations), which operate in areas constituting, *inter alia*, the content of issues of local importance. In other words, such social work is a certain political

<sup>201</sup> «Women Leaders in Politics»/Fund "Human Capital" - <http://hcap.ru/women-in-politics/>

<sup>202</sup> A.A. Akmalova and V.M. Kapitsyn, *Women in the system of governance and self-government* - <https://docplayer.ru/133596-Zhenshchiny-v-sisteme-vlasti-i-samoupravleniya.html>.

resource for a female deputy<sup>203</sup>.

An analysis of the composition of the representative bodies of the municipalities of one of the subjects of the Russian Federation - the Kursk Region, located in the Central Federal District, and Moscow - the capital of Russia, led to the following conclusion.

In the municipal election campaigns of the Kursk region, which took place in 2016 (Single voting day in Russia), approximately the same number of men and women participated. The age of most candidates is from 40 to 59 years old, education is higher or secondary vocational, field of activity is agriculture, trade, housing and public utilities, public services, health care, social welfare, education and culture<sup>204</sup>. However, in the city representative bodies (councils and dumas) women have been elected from 7% (with a fixed number of 14 deputies) to 46% (15 deputies). At the same time the average quantitative value of female participation in the deputy activities of urban districts (Kursk, Zheleznogorsk, Lgov, Shchigry, Kurchatov) is 24,6%. In three out of ten urban communities, women have been elected as chairmen of the elected body. We point out that in the previous convocation of deputies (2011-2016, 2012-2017) of these municipal formations, the participation of women has been 4,5% more.

Active deputy participation of women in city councils is noted in the municipalities of Moscow, where local self-government is exercised in the intra-city areas: municipal and urban districts and settlements. In a number of assemblies women's membership prevails (60%-92%). Some of them are heads of metropolitan municipalities. Muscovites live in an atmosphere of a wide range of career and economic opportunities, they are at the crossroads of information, many of them associate work with the idea of "doing what they like", which allows them to realize the ability of personal initiative in the professional world.<sup>205</sup>

Most women deputies are also represented in the village councils. There are areas where women make up 95-99% of the deputies (for example, out of 10 members only 1 male). This is explained by the law on a fairly high (90%) share of representatives holding their posts on a non-permanent basis, that is, on a voluntary basis or free of charge, acting as a *face and voice of the population*, as well as features of a modern Russian province with a

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<sup>203</sup> N. N. Kozlova, *Deputy corps of the Central Federal District: gender dimension*, in *Woman in Russian society*, 2016, n. 4 (81), p. 58.

<sup>204</sup> "Voters of the Kursk region proceeded to vote" - <https://er.ru/news/146112/>

<sup>205</sup> M. Arutyunyan and O. Zdravosmyslova, SH. Kuril'ski-Ozhven, *Image and legal experience: Legal socialization in a changing Russia*, Moscow, The Whole World Publishing House, 2008, pp. 183 and 189.

low average income of population, insufficiency of skilled jobs, lack of stable income, forced outflow of able-bodied men to major cities for earnings.

Elections to the Russian municipal self-government bodies are held both according to the proportional system (party lists) and the majority electoral system (single-mandate and multi-mandate constituencies). A person who does not have sufficient managerial experience can make a deputy's political career easier within the framework of party membership, since the voter relies on the authority and political attitudes of the party. And this applies to both female and male candidates. Thus the work of both at the municipal level in local branches of political parties, including in governing bodies, contributes to their election as deputies of city councils and dumas. Acting independently, without having the necessary support of public associations and the population, it is difficult to become a deputy in large settlements.

In small territories (rural settlements), a majority system is preferable, where, for example, a single multi-mandate constituency is formed, when voters vote not for the party, but for the *merits* of specific candidates, a person who is usually familiar with local needs and will not ignore them. The most active part of them is women (teachers, doctors, educators, social and cultural workers, technical employees, retirees), whose election to power provides the solution to both their own and general (municipal) socio-economic problems. Thus, the type of the municipality, the state of its material base and financial resources, population, the total potential of the territory (economic, scientific and cultural), the traditional way of life and methods of management of residents are the main parameters for determining the gender ratio of personnel of local representative power .

As a result, we note that the gender personnel policy of the modern Russia Federation is characterized by the rejection of compulsory quoting of women's seats in the structures of representative power (that is, the sex ratio in the electoral list is an internal affair of the party); the absence of a special law on guarantees of equal rights and opportunities for men and women; imperfect organization of election campaigns by women candidates, difficulties in realizing a political career in the framework of self-nomination.

**Abstract:** La Costituzione della Federazione Russa sancisce la parità di diritti e opportunità per donne e uomini, anche nella sfera politica. La legislazione attualmente vigente in Russia dispone che i cittadini hanno uguali diritti di partecipare al governo locale, nonché

il diritto di eleggere ed essere eletti, anche a prescindere dal genere.

In Russia Il sistema delle autonomie locali è socialmente predisposto alla formazione di uno spazio in cui il ruolo del genere femminile può essere pienamente rappresentato. Tuttavia, occorre prendere atto nella Federazione Russa non c'è un livello di rappresentanza di genere garantito, in termini di numero di seggi riservati alle donne e il rapporto tra i sessi nella lista elettorale è un affare interno del partito; l'assenza di una legge speciale sulle garanzie di uguali diritti e opportunità per uomini e donne; l'organizzazione imperfetta delle campagne elettorali da parte di donne candidate, rendono difficile per le donne realizzare una carriera politica senza l'appoggio organizzativo del partito di riferimento.

**Abstract:** The Constitution of the Russian Federation in part 3 of Article 19 enshrines the provision on equal rights and opportunities for women and men, including in the political sphere. The current legislation of Russia contains an indication that citizens have equal rights to exercise local self-government, as well as the right to elect and be elected, including regardless of gender.

In Russia, the availability of local self-government and its significant social orientation contribute to the formation of a space where the female gender role can be fully represented.

We note that the gender personnel policy of the modern Russia Federation is characterized by the rejection of compulsory quoting of women's seats in the structures of representative power (that is, the sex ratio in the electoral list is an internal affair of the party); the absence of a special law on guarantees of equal rights and opportunities for men and women; imperfect organization of election campaigns by women candidates, difficulties in realizing a political career in the framework of self-nomination.

**Parole chiave:** parità di genere – autonomie locali – elezioni comunali.

**Key words:** gender equality – local self-government – the municipal election.