

# PECULIARITIES OF OBSERVING THE PRINCIPLE OF GENDER EQUALITY DURING LOCAL ELECTIONS IN UKRAINE

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## **Abstract**

The article analyses the peculiarities of the observance of the principle of gender equality during local elections in Ukraine. The authors noted the international legal regulation of the principle of gender equality, the peculiarities of the regulation of this issue in the electoral legislation, and showed the basis on which local elections in Ukraine take place. Based on the analysis of local elections in Ukraine, the peculiarities of observing the principle of gender equality in electoral practice are shown. A comparative analysis of the features of the application of gender quoting during local elections in 2015 and 2020 and their impact on the level of gender representation in local government bodies in Ukraine was carried out. The authors come to the conclusion that the legislative regulation of gender equality in elections has its place, but it should be supplemented by the formation of a high level of electoral culture of voters, for which gender equality during elections should become the norm of social and political life.

**Key words:** *gender equality, elections, local authorities, gender quotas, Ukraine.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

The problem of compliance with the principle of gender equality is quite relevant in the modern civilized world, where democratic principles are followed, fair treatment is ensured for all people as a whole, and equal opportunities and rights are provided for everyone. As one of the most influential international organizations of modernity, the UN, rightly asserts, the elimination of various forms of discrimination contributes to the provision of basic human rights.

The participation of women in politics, as well as granting them the opportunity to make decisions related to the sphere of management, is important for the development of the state and society. It is worth noting that at today's stage of human development, females really play an important role not only in the political sphere, but also in many others. This is a significant achievement, especially if we compare the current situation with the one that existed in past centuries. Such broad involvement of women in various spheres of public life is ensured by special mechanisms, international agreements, conventions, and national legislations of most countries of the world. All these methods aim to ensure compliance with the principle of gender equality.

At today's stage of human development, women are actively involved in politics. A significant fraction of females not only use their passive right to vote, but also become heads of governments, countries and organizations. Today in the political arena there are many influential women politicians who carry out their activities on an equal footing with men. The world's leading economic organizations, based on numerous studies, have come to the conclusion that gender equality in the formation of government bodies is a prerequisite for the balanced development of society and the prosperity of small and medium-sized businesses.

The fact that for the dynamic, balanced development of the world community, it is necessary to listen to all opinions also becomes important. In this context, it is worth taking into account that women are half of the world's population. Therefore, in order for the authorities to be able to objectively represent the interests of the entire population of the country and make fully justified decisions, they must necessarily include women on an equal basis with men.

An important component and prerequisite for ensuring gender equality in politics is the creation of equal conditions for men and women during elections. Females should be actively involved in the electoral process, using active and passive electoral rights. At the same time, global and Ukrainian electoral practice testifies that the issue of electoral gender equality is not always followed, often ignored and requires special mechanisms to ensure it. This additionally actualizes the issues we have chosen for research and requires a comprehensive scientific study of gender equality during elections and the mechanisms for ensuring it in Ukraine.

## **SCIENTIFIC APPROACHES AND RESEARCH METHODS**

The methodological basis of the study is the use of the following approaches to studying the issue of gender equality during elections: functional, according to which we considered gender equality and democracy as interconnected phenomena, the effective functioning of which is impossible without each other; valuable, on the basis of which we analysed the mechanisms for ensuring gender equality during elections not as formal procedures, but as a form of exercising the electoral rights of citizens regardless of gender, a qualitative characteristic of the level of democracy of the social order.

An important methodological component of the work is the theory of new institutionalism, which made it possible to consider elections as a complex of formal and informal principles and rules that determine and regulate the electoral activity of an individual; explain the difference between the norms of Ukrainian legislation on ensuring gender equality and models of domestic electoral practice; show the role and importance of formal and informal institutions in ensuring gender equality during elections in Ukraine. Also, the work is based on the ideas of structural functionalism, which made it possible to clarify the structural components of the principle of gender equality during elections and to reveal their role in ensuring the democracy of the election institution. The methodology of the work is based on the principles of interdisciplinary, historicism, integrity, logical consistency, impartiality, objectivity and completeness.

General scientific, empirical and logical research methods were used within the approaches outlined above. The system method made it possible to consider the principle of gender equality as a complex phenomenon. The use of the structural-functional method contributed to the clarification of the structural elements of the principle of gender equality and their role in maintaining the equality of women and men during elections. The evolution of women's struggle for the right to vote was analysed using the historical method. The comparative method made it possible to show the differences between the features and effectiveness of gender quotas during the 2015 and 2020 local elections.

Using empirical methods, the legal and practical component of gender equality during elections was investigated. In particular, the method of document analysis made it possible to work out the main legal acts that ensure the effectiveness of the principle of gender equality in elections. The effectiveness of the principle of gender equality and the number of women elected to representative bodies during the 2015 and 2020 local elections in Ukraine was determined using the method of statistical data analysis. We also actively used such logical methods as analysis and synthesis, induction and deduction. The choice of the specified methods made it possible to carry out a comprehensive study, to answer the research question and research hypothesis.

**Research question:** how effective are the mechanisms for observing gender equality during local elections in Ukraine?

**Research hypothesis:** the mechanisms for observing gender equality during local elections in Ukraine are effective and provide equal opportunities for men and women to exercise passive suffrage.

### **SOURCE BASE AND STATE OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH OF THE PROBLEM**

International legal acts (codes, declarations, conventions), which implement the legal regulation of the principle of gender equality in the field of politics and the electoral process, became the source base for our scientific research. It is, in particular, about normative legal acts of the UN [Convention 1952; Convention 1979; International 1966], Venice Commission [Code 2002; Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters: Guidelines 2002; Code 2008; Declaration 2006; Report 2020] and a number of other international institutions [Balanced 2003; Convention 1950].

To analyse the specifics of the legal regulation of gender equality in Ukraine, the relevant domestic legal acts were used. It is primarily about the Election Code of Ukraine [Vyborchyi 2019], the Law of Ukraine «On Local Elections» [Pro mistsevi 2015], the Law of Ukraine «On Political Parties in Ukraine» [Pro politychni 2013] and some other normative legal acts of Ukraine [Pro vdoskonalennia 2005; Pro zabezpechennia 2005]. Considerable attention in our research was paid to the practice of observing gender equality in local elections in Ukraine. Therefore, data on local elections in Ukraine in 2015 and 2020 became an important component of the source base of our research. In order to determine the level of observance of gender equality by the political parties of Ukraine, we analysed the electoral lists for the Regional and City Councils of the following regions of Ukraine: Lviv [Lvivska miska rada. Vyborchi 2015; Lvivska miska rada. Vyborchi 2020; Lvivska oblasna rada. Vyborchi 2015; Lvivska oblasna rada. Vyborchi 2020], Kharkiv [Kharkivska miska rada. Vyborchi 2015; Kharkivska miska rada. Vyborchi 2020; Kharkivska oblasna rada. Vyborchi 2015; Kharkivska oblasna rada. Vyborchi 2020], Kherson [Khersonska miska rada. Vyborchi 2015; Khersonska miska rada. Vyborchi 2020; Khersonska oblasna rada. Vyborchi 2015; Khersonska oblasna rada. Vyborchi 2020] and Vinnytsia [Vinnytska miska rada. Vyborchi 2015; Vinnytska miska rada. Vyborchi 2020; Vinnytska oblasna rada. Vyborchi 2015; Vinnytska oblasna rada. Vyborchi 2020].

An even more important indicator of the effectiveness of the mechanisms for ensuring gender equality is the results of elections by gender. Therefore, the results of the 2015 and 2020 elections to Regional and City Councils became an important part of our source base: Lviv [Lvivska miska rada. Obrani 2015; Lvivska miska rada. Obrani 2020; Lvivska oblasna rada. Obrani 2015; Lvivska oblasna rada. Obrani 2020], Kharkiv [Kharkivska miska rada. Obrani 2015; Kharkivska miska rada. Obrani 2020; Kharkivska oblasna rada. Obrani 2015; Kharkivska oblasna rada. Obrani 2020], Kherson [Khersonska miska rada. Obrani 2015; Khersonska miska rada. Obrani 2020; Khersonska oblasna rada. Obrani 2015; Khersonska oblasna rada. Obrani 2020] and Vinnytsia [Vinnytska miska rada. Obrani 2015; Vinnytska

miska rada. Obrani 2020; Vinnytska oblasna rada. Obrani 2015; Vinnytska oblasna rada. Obrani 2020] областей.

The relevance of the issue of gender equality in general, and its observance in the political sphere in particular, in modern science is worth noting. At the same time, a little less attention of scientists is attached to such an aspect of the issue as electoral gender equality. The issue of gender equality in Ukraine is even less researched, and the level of its observance during local elections in our country has remained outside the attention of scientists and requires thorough research rigins and stages of the studied movements and answer research questions.

### **INTERNATIONAL REGULATORY AND LEGAL MECHANISMS FOR ENSURING THE PRINCIPLE OF GENDER EQUALITY IN THE ELECTION PROCESS**

Equality of rights and freedoms of women and men is one of the fundamental constitutional principles, which is enshrined at the legislative level of most countries of the world. Furthermore, its observance is fundamental for the activities of many intergovernmental and non-governmental international organizations. The ability of women to actively participate in elections and politics is guaranteed by the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of 1966 [International 1966], the European Convention on Human Rights of 1950 [Convention 1950], the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women of 1979 [Convention 1979] and others. In addition, it is worth mentioning the Convention on the Political Rights of Women of 1952, approved by the UN General Assembly, which established the right to vote for women in all elections on an equal basis with men, and also guaranteed the protection of this right [Convention 1952].

Research and conclusions of the Venice Commission, which relate specifically to election problems, have an important impact on the election process. In particular, the Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters with two additional documents, one of which is directly related to ensuring the principle of gender parity in elections, is considered exemplary in this area [Code 2002]. In July 2002, the Venice Commission adopted guidelines for elections. The commission paid attention to the equality and parity of sexes. In particular, the document states that various gender quotas do not contradict the principle of gender equality, as they establish the necessary minimum representation of a particular sex in party lists at elections [Code 2002].

An explanatory report adopted by the Venice Commission in October 2002 supplements this provision. The document notes: in order to take all the necessary measures to promote gender equality in the electoral process, a certain provision in the state constitution is necessary. If the corresponding principle is not enshrined in the constitution, then such actions will contradict the principle of equality. In addition, Article 25 states that in an electoral system with closed lists, gender parity can be ensured in case that the number of women and men is equal. But in case when there is a ranking vote or a vote against the party, proportionality in the composition of the

elected body may be violated. This is because there is no guarantee that voters will give their votes equally to women and men [Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters: Guidelines 2002].

A significant achievement in the field of gender equality is the Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe «Balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making», adopted on March 12, 2003. The document states that women constitute more than half of the world's population and, accordingly, a significant part of the electorate. That is why their participation in elections and, as a result, in the political life of their country, is a necessity. Therefore, the Council of Europe in this document enshrines recommendations to member states of the organization to promote a balanced representation of both sexes, ensure the possibility of exercising the right to vote for women and men, enshrine the necessary provisions in national legislation, etc. In addition, in the annex to the document, the Council of Europe obliges member states to consider the possibility of legislative reforms in order to create equal conditions for representatives of both sexes in local, regional, national and supranational elections [Balanced 2003].

Another important document in this area is the Declaration on women's participation in elections, adopted in 2006. The document notes that in order to achieve the principle of gender equality, such measures as alternation of representatives of the sexes in electoral lists, ensuring a balanced share of representation of women and men, refusal of registration for parties that did not comply with this principle, and application of other sanctions can be applied [Declaration 2006].

Article 38 of the Code of Good Practice for Political Parties also refers to the principle of gender equality. It notes that, taking into account the practice and principles of international law, all parties must take measures aimed at ensuring compliance with the principle of gender equality. This applies both to the appointment to party positions and the formation of electoral lists. The article condemns gender unequal representation and encourages gender parity in all countries of the world [Code 2008].

It is also worth noting that the on Electoral Legislation and Electoral Administration in Europe allows the introduction of gender quotas for parliamentary candidates, as they contribute to a balanced representation of both sexes in elections [Report 2020].

### **LEGAL REGULATION OF THE PRINCIPLE OF GENDER EQUALITY DURING ELECTIONS IN UKRAINE**

Ukraine is also included in the list of countries that take measures to ensure parity in the electoral process. As a relatively young country on the world political stage, Ukraine has made significant progress in the field of gender equality. As the researchers note, the situation in this area is improving every year. Today, many females are actively involved in participating in elections, and henceforth, in state management. Back in the 2000s, Ukraine began implementing reforms to ensure equal rights and opportunities for women and men in the political sphere. In July 2005, the President

of Ukraine signed a decree «On improving the work of central and local executive bodies to ensure equal rights and opportunities for women and men» [Pro vdoskonalennia 2005]. In the same year, the law «On ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men» was approved [Pro zabezpechennia 2005]. Ukraine has also ratified a number of international documents that regulate issues of gender equality during elections.

In 2013, the Law on Political Parties in Ukraine introduced a gender quota of 30% [Pro politychni 2013]. However, compliance with these quotas was negatively affected by the fact that no sanctions mechanism was implemented. That is, the parties could decide at their own discretion whether to comply with this provision or not. At the same time, in order to encourage political forces to observe gender equality and apply the 30% quota when forming electoral lists, a mechanism of additional funding in the amount of 10% of its annual volume was introduced.

The Law of Ukraine on Local Elections, adopted in 2015, provided for the establishment of a gender quota to ensure the principle of equal elections. Article 4 of the law states that the sexes must be represented by at least 30% of the total number of candidates on the lists [Pro mistsevi 2015]. The amendments to the Law «On Political Parties» of 2019 contain the provision that the quotas of at least 30% of the total number of party representatives of a certain gender on the list must be fixed in the party charter. Such a quota determines the smallest share of women's and men's representation in electoral lists at all levels of elections [Pro politychni 2013].

The next electoral reform, which also related to the field of gender equality, was carried out in Ukraine on July 11, 2019, when the Parliament of Ukraine adopted the Election Code. In paragraph 12 of Article 154, the principle was introduced, according to which at least 2 representatives of each gender should be in each of the quinary party lists at the elections. If the number of candidates is not a multiple of 5, then party representatives of different genders must alternate in the last positions. This principle is applied in national and regional elections, as well as in the formation of unified and territorial electoral lists of parties [Vyborchyi 2019].

The negative thing is that the Election Code, like the 2013 law, does not provide any sanctions for non-compliance with the relevant provisions. The authors of the project proposed to introduce a mechanism according to which the Central Election Commission (CEC) can deny a party registration in elections if men make up more than 60% of its electoral list. However, the deputies did not support such an initiative. Although Article 230 of the Code states that in case of violation of the procedure for nominating candidates, the CEC will refuse to register candidates [Vyborchyi 2019]. It should be borne in mind that the implementation of this gender quota does not guarantee that the share of women in the parliament will be at least 40% of the total number of parliamentarians in the parliamentary elections. However, it significantly increases the chances of females to enter the parliament.

## FEATURES OF OBSERVING THE PRINCIPLE OF GENDER EQUALITY IN THE ELECTORAL PRACTICE OF UKRAINE (ON THE EXAMPLE OF THE 2015 LOCAL ELECTIONS)

Local elections were held in Ukraine on October 25, 2020. The study analysed whether the political forces adhered to the principle of gender equality in the electoral process. The main focus is on the elections to the Regional and City Councils of four cities representing different regions of Ukraine: Lviv (Western Ukraine), Vinnytsia (Central Ukraine), Kharkiv (North-Eastern Ukraine) and Kherson (Southern Ukraine). In this way, we will be able to compare indicators of compliance with the principle of gender equality and the share of females in local elections in different regions of Ukraine. In addition, the results of the local elections held in Ukraine on October 25, 2015 were analysed. Thus, we will be able to investigate how the number of women in the composition of political forces and local representative authorities has changed over the past 5 years. It will also make it possible to find out how effective the mechanisms for ensuring gender equality have been.

In the 2015 local elections, political forces had to ensure the representation of women in their party lists at the level of 30% of the total number of candidates [Pro mistsevi 2015]. However, the gender quota was not mandatory, so there were many violations. A total of 1,072 females and 2,296 males took part in the elections to the Regional Councils of Lviv, Vinnytsia, Kharkiv and Kherson in 2015. In Lviv, 300 women and 661 men took part in the Regional Council elections. In Vinnytsia, 249 women and 586 men took part in the Regional Council elections. In Kharkiv, there were 443 female representatives and 894 male representatives in the party lists at the Regional Council elections. In Kherson, there were 80 female and 155 male candidates for the Regional Council. The share of women relatively to the number of candidates on the electoral list was 31.21% in Lviv, 33.13% in Kharkiv, 29.82% in Vinnytsia, and 34.04% in Kherson [Kharkivska oblasna rada. Vyborchi 2015; Khersonska oblasna rada. Vyborchi 2015; Lvivska oblasna rada. Vyborchi 2015; Vinnytska oblasna rada. Vyborchi 2015]. Thus, the smallest share of women in the elections to the Regional Councils of the studied cities in 2015 was in Vinnytsia.

**Table 1. Peculiarities of observing the principle of gender equality in local elections of 2015 in Ukraine (elections to Regional Councils)**

Regional Council	Number of male candidates	Number of female candidates	% of female candidates
Lvivska	661	300	31,21 %
Vinnytska	586	249	29,82 %
Kharkivska	894	443	33,13 %
Khersonska	155	80	34,04 %
<b>In total</b>	<b>2296</b>	<b>1072</b>	<b>31,83 %</b>

Source: authors

In Lviv, 16 political forces took part in the Regional Council elections in 2015. Of them, 6 parties did not comply with the principle of gender quotas. The share of women was less than 30% in the list of candidates of the All-Ukrainian Association «Svoboda», political parties «Yedynyy tsentr», « Narodnyy Rukh Ukrayiny», «Nash Kray», «Syla lyudey». In addition, the political force «Opozytsiynnyy Blok» did not present a single female representative in its list of candidates [Lvivska oblasna rada. Vyborchi 2015]. In Vinnytsia, at the Regional Council elections in 2015, 7 parties used gender quotas in the formation of electoral lists, while 5 violated this principle (political parties «Yevropeyska solidarnist», «Nash Kray», «Obyednannya SAMOPOMICH », «Ukrayinske obyednannya patriotiv – UKROP », as well as «Ahrarna partiya Ukrayiny») [Vinnytska oblasna rada. Vyborchi 2015].

In Kharkiv, in the Regional Council elections in 2015, the share of women made up 30% of the total list of candidates in 4 political forces: «Blok Darta Veydera», «Nash Kray», «Opozytsiynnyy blok» and «Syla lyudey». There were no female representatives in the list of candidates of the «Blok Darta Veydera» political party [Kharkivska oblasna rada. Vyborchi 2015].

In Kherson, at the Regional Council elections in 2015, 4 political parties also failed to comply with the principle of gender quotas. This is the «Vseukrayinska partiya dukhovnosti ta patriotyzmu», the only representative of which was a man, as well as «Yevropeyska solidarnist», «Syla i chest» and «Vidrodzhennya» [Khersonska oblasna rada. Vyborchi 2015].

During the elections to the Regional Councils selected by us for the study of the regions in 2015, the largest share of women was on the electoral list of the political force « Liva opozytsiya» in the city of Vinnytsia - 46.67%. That is, men and women were almost equally represented in the electoral list of this party. At the same time, the political parties « Opozytsiynnyy blok» in the elections in Lviv, «Blok Darta Veydera» in Kharkiv and «Vseukrayins'ka partiya dukhovnosti ta patriotyzmu» had the lowest share, which was 0% [Kharkivska oblasna rada. Vyborchi 2015; Khersonska oblasna rada. Vyborchi 2015; Lvivska oblasna rada. Vyborchi 2015; Vinnytska oblasna rada. Vyborchi 2015].

In 2015, 1,120 female representatives and 2,251 male representatives took part in the elections to the City Councils of Lviv, Vinnytsia, Kharkiv and Kherson. In Lviv, 280 women and 582 men took part in the elections. In Vinnytsia, 266 women and 514 men took part in the City Council elections. In Kharkiv, there were 321 women and 693 men on the party lists. In Kherson, 253 women and 462 men were candidates for the City Council. The share of female representatives was slightly higher: 32.48% in Lviv, 35.38% in Kherson, 31.66% in Kharkiv and 34.1% in Vinnytsia [Kharkivska miska rada. Vyborchi 2015; Khersonska miska rada. Vyborchi 2015; Lvivska miska rada. Vyborchi 2015; Vinnytska miska rada. Vyborchi 2015].

**Table 2. Peculiarities of observing the principle of gender equality in the local elections of 2015 in Ukraine (elections to City Councils)**

City Councils	Number of male candidates	Number of female candidates	% female candidates
Lvivska	582	280	32,48 %
Vinnytska	514	266	34,10 %
Kharkivska	693	321	31,66 %
Khersonska	462	253	35,38 %
<b>In total</b>	<b>2251</b>	<b>1120</b>	<b>33,22 %</b>

Source: authors

In Lviv in 2015, at the City Council elections, the following parties violated the principle of balanced gender representation: «Vseukrayinske obyednannya Batkivshchyna», «Narodnyy Rukh Ukrayiny», «Nash kray», «Opozytsiynyy blok», «Ukrayinske obyednannya patriotiv – UKROP». In the city of Vinnytsia, the only political force that did not meet the 30% quota was the «Ukrayins'ke obyednannya patriotiv – UKROP». In Kharkiv, such parties became «Blok Darta Veydera» and «Syla lyudey», and in Kherson - «Yevropeys'ka solidarnist», «Blok Darta Veydera» and «Vidrodzhennya». [Kharkivska miska rada. Vyborchi 2015; Khersonska miska rada. Vyborchi 2015; Lvivska miska rada. Vyborchi 2015; Vinnytska miska rada. Vyborchi 2015].

It is worth noting that in Kherson in the 2015 local elections, the share of female candidates relative to the total number of candidates for the City and Regional Councils was the highest - 35.38% and 34.04%, respectively [Khersonska miska rada. Vyborchi 2015; Khersonska oblasna rada. Vyborchi 2015].

In 2015, the political party «Nash Kray» violated the principle of gender quotas most often in the elections to the Regional and City Councils. In addition, the share of women was often less than 30% in the electoral lists of the parties «Yevropeyska solidarnist» («Blok Petra Poroshenka Solidarnist»), «Opozytsiynyy blok», «Blok Darta Veydera», «Syla lyudey», «Ukrayins'ke obyednannya patriotiv – UKROP», «Narodnyy Rukh Ukrayiny» ta «Vidrodzhennya». The «Liva opozytsiya» party had a fairly high proportion of women during the elections to Regional Councils (Political Party «Nova derzhava») - 46.67% in Vinnytsia and 41% in Kherson. [Kharkivska miska rada. Vyborchi 2015; Kharkivska oblasna rada. Vyborchi 2015; Khersonska miska rada. Vyborchi 2015; Khersonska oblasna rada. Vyborchi 2015; Lvivska miska rada. Vyborchi 2015; Lvivska oblasna rada. Vyborchi 2015; Vinnytska miska rada. Vyborchi 2015; Vinnytska oblasna rada. Vyborchi 2015].

The largest share of women in the elections to the Regional and City Councils in the electoral lists was in the «DemAlyance» party in the city of Lviv - 66.67%, which indicates the predominance of female representatives. At the same time, there were no women on the electoral list of the «Blok Darta Veydera» political force in the cities of Kharkiv and Kherson [Kharkivska miska rada. Vyborchi 2015; Kharkivska oblasna rada. Vyborchi 2015; Khersonska miska rada. Vyborchi 2015; Khersonska oblasna rada. Vyborchi 2015; Lvivska miska rada. Vyborchi 2015; Lvivska oblasna rada. Vy-

borchi 2015; Vinnytska miska rada. Vyborchi 2015; Vinnytska oblasna rada. Vyborchi 2015].

A relatively small number of parties had women as their first candidate. In the elections to the Regional Council in Lviv it was «Samopomich», in Kharkiv it was «Samopomich» and the «Liva opozytsiya» («Nova derzhava»), in Vinnytsia it was the «Vseukrayinske obyednannya «Batkivshchyna», and in Kherson it was the «Soyuz livykh syl». In the 2015 City Council elections in Lviv, all political forces were led by men, in Kherson women led the parties «Yevropeyska solidarnist» and «Sotsialisty»; «DemAlyans», «Nova polityka» and «Sotsialisty» in Kharkiv; and «Hromadyanska pozytsiya» in Vinnytsia. That is, most often women led such political forces as «Samopomich» and «Sotsialisty» [Kharkivska miska rada. Vyborchi 2015; Kharkivska oblasna rada. Vyborchi 2015; Khersonska miska rada. Vyborchi 2015; Khersonska oblasna rada. Vyborchi 2015; Lvivska miska rada. Vyborchi 2015; Lvivska oblasna rada. Vyborchi 2015; Vinnytska miska rada. Vyborchi 2015; Vinnytska oblasna rada. Vyborchi 2015].

However, it is worth noting that the thirty percent quota is not enough to ensure a balanced representation of the sexes in the elected bodies, especially in the absence of a mechanism of sanctions in case of violation of the relevant provision. In addition, a more effective indicator of compliance with the principle of gender equality is not so much the presence of female candidates on electoral lists as the number of women who were elected as a result of the public expression of will.

Thus, in Lviv in 2015, 16.67% of women were elected to the Regional Council relative to the total number of deputies, and 26.56% to the City Council. In Vinnytsia, these indicators are 10.84% and 16.67%, respectively, in Kharkiv - 18.33% of women were elected to the Regional Council, and 21.43% to the City Council. In Kherson, the share of women is 17.19% and 24.07%, respectively. A fairly clear trend can be traced to the fact that in 2015 the share of women in City Councils was greater than in Regional Councils [Kharkivska miska rada. Obrani 2015; Kharkivska oblasna rada. Obrani 2015; Khersonska miska rada. Obrani 2015; Khersonska oblasna rada. Obrani 2015; Lvivska miska rada. Obrani 2015; Lvivska oblasna rada. Obrani 2015; Vinnytska miska rada. Obrani 2015; Vinnytska oblasna rada. Obrani 2015].

**Table 3. Percentage of elected women based on the results of the 2015 local elections in Ukraine (elections to Regional and City Councils)**

Region	% of elected women, Regional Council	% elected women, City Council
Lvivska	16,67 %	26,56 %
Vinnytska	10,84 %	16,67 %
Kharkivska	18,33 %	21,43 %
Khersonska	17,99 %	24,07 %

Source: authors

## FEATURES OF OBSERVING THE PRINCIPLE OF GENDER EQUALITY IN THE ELECTORAL PRACTICE OF UKRAINE (ON THE EXAMPLE OF THE 2020 LOCAL ELECTIONS)

Local elections in 2020 were held in accordance with the new election code, which was discussed earlier. Therefore, in comparison with the previous local elections, there were certain changes in the representation of sexes in the electoral lists.

1,717 female representatives and 2,161 male representatives took part in the elections to the Regional Councils of Lviv, Vinnytsia, Kharkiv and Kherson in 2020. In Lviv, there were 480 women and 541 men candidates. In Vinnytsia, 304 women and 375 men took part in the Regional Council elections. In Kharkiv, there were 560 women and 767 men on the party lists. In Kherson, 373 women and 478 men were candidates for the Regional Council. Therefore, the share of women relative to the total number of candidates in the Regional Council elections in Lviv was 47.01%, in Vinnytsia - 44.77%, in Kharkiv - 42.20%, and in Kherson - 43.8%. That is, almost half of all candidates are female. The highest indicator is in Lviv, and the lowest in Kharkiv [Kharkivska oblasna rada. Vyborchi 2020; Khersonska oblasna rada. Vyborchi 2020; Lvivska oblasna rada. Vyborchi 2020; Vinnytska oblasna rada. Vyborchi 2020].

**Table 4. Peculiarities of observing the principle of gender equality in the 2020 local elections in Ukraine (elections to Regional Councils)**

Regional Council	Number of male candidates	Number of female candidates	% female candidates
Lvivska	541	480	47,01 %
Vinnytska	375	304	44,77 %
Kharkivska	767	560	42,20 %
Khersonska	478	373	43,83 %
In total	2161	1717	44,28 %

Source: authors

In each region, there were certain violations in the formation of voter lists for the City Council elections in the context of observing gender equality. The violations were committed by the political forces «Holos» and «Duhovna Ukraina» in Lviv, and «Nash Kray», «Syla i Chest», «Ukrayinska partiya chesti, borotby z koruptsiyeyu ta orhanizovanoyu zlochynnisty» in Vinnytsia. «Partiya Shariya» also did not comply with the election code in the elections to the City Council in the cities of Kharkiv and Kherson [Kharkivska miska rada. Vyborchi 2020; Khersonska miska rada. Vyborchi 2020; Lvivska miska rada. Vyborchi 2020; Vinnytska miska rada. Vyborchi 2020].

The political party «Yevropeyska solidarnist» violated the principle of gender quotas most often, namely three times, during the elections to the City Council. In addition, this principle was violated twice by the political forces «Nash Kray» and «Sluha Narodu» [Kharkivska miska rada. Vyborchi 2020; Khersonska miska rada. Vyborchi 2020; Lvivska miska rada. Vyborchi 2020; Vinnytska miska rada. Vyborchi 2020].

The smallest number of female representatives in the elections to the City Council was on the electoral list of the political force «Partiya Shariya» in the elections in Kharkiv. The share of women was 20% of the total number of party members on the electoral list. The largest share of women was represented in the electoral list of the party «UDAR (Ukrains'kyi Demokratychnyy Al'yans za Reformy)» - 56.25% [Kharkivska miska rada. Vyborchi 2020; Khersonska miska rada. Vyborchi 2020; Lvivska miska rada. Vyborchi 2020; Vinnytska miska rada. Vyborchi 2020].

Among some parties, there was a tendency to place female representatives at the end of each quinary. Thus, men had a certain advantage by being in higher positions. This phenomenon is visible in the electoral lists of the political parties «Nash Kray», «Opozytsiyna platforma - Za zhyttya», «Blok Kernesha - Uspishnyy Kharkiv», «Hromadskyi rukh Narodnyy kontrol», «Nam tut zhyty» and several others in the 2020 elections both to regional and City Councils. At the same time, some parties alternated representatives of different genders in their party lists. These are such political forces as «Vseukrayinske obyednannya Batkivshchyna», «Varta», «Vseukrayinske obyednannya Svoboda», «Samopomich», «Sluha Narodu», «Propozytsiya», etc. However, at the elections in Kherson, «Vseukrayinske obyednannya Batkivshchyna» placed females in the last two positions of each of the five [Kharkivska miska rada. Vyborchi 2020; Kharkivska oblasna rada. Vyborchi 2020; Khersonska miska rada. Vyborchi 2020; Khersonska oblasna rada. Vyborchi 2020; Lvivska miska rada. Vyborchi 2020; Lvivska oblasna rada. Vyborchi 2020; Vinnytska miska rada. Vyborchi 2020; Vinnytska oblasna rada. Vyborchi 2020].

It is also worth noting that «Partiya Shariya» to some extent ignored the new principle of gender quotas. In particular, in the elections to the Kharkiv City Council, there was not a single female representative in the top ten list of candidates. A similar situation existed in the city of Kherson. There, only two women were represented among the top ten in the City Council elections. Thus, it significantly affected the share of women in the electoral lists of this political force - 20% and 31.25% in the respective cities. This indicator is significantly lower than the average level of representation of women in the studied cities [Kharkivska miska rada. Vyborchi 2020; Khersonska miska rada. Vyborchi 2020].

In addition, there was such a phenomenon as the placement of 4 female representatives and 1 male representative in one quinary, which is also a violation of the election code. In particular, this is how parties such as «Yevropeyska solidarnist», «Nash Kray» and «Sluha Narodu» formed the list at the elections in the city of Kherson [Khersonska miska rada. Vyborchi 2020; Khersonska oblasna rada. Vyborchi 2020]. This phenomenon shows that the principle of gender equality can be violated both in relation to female representatives and in relation to the male representatives. However, it is important that such violations do not occur in the upper parts of the electoral list, but in the lower ones.

The increase in the gender quota in 2020 had a significant impact on the share of women in the list of selected candidates. In particular, in Lviv there were 26.19% of women elected to the Regional Council, and 28.18% to the City Council. In Vinnytsia, this figure was 26.2% and 31.48%, respectively. In Kharkiv, the share of elected women was the highest - 28.33% among those elected to the Regional Council, 35.71% - among those elected to the City Council. In Kherson, these shares were 21.88% and 24.07%, respectively. The highest rate of elected women among the studied cities is in Kharkiv, and the lowest is in Kherson [Kharkivska miska rada. Obrani 2020; Kharkivska oblasna rada. Obrani 2020; Khersonska miska rada. Obrani 2020; Khersonska oblasna rada. Obrani 2020; Lvivska miska rada. Obrani 2020; Lvivska oblasna rada. Obrani 2020; Vinnytska miska rada. Obrani 2020; Vinnytska oblasna rada. Obrani 2020].

**Table 6. Percentage of elected women according to the results of the 2020 local elections in Ukraine (elections to Regional and City Councils)**

<b>Region</b>	<b>% of elected women, Regional Council</b>	<b>% elected women, City Council</b>
Lvivska	26,19 %	28,18 %
Vinnytska	26,20 %	31,48 %
Kharkivska	28,33 %	35,71 %
Khersonska	21,88 %	24,07 %

Source: authors

### **COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE FEATURES OF OBSERVING THE PRINCIPLE OF GENDER EQUALITY IN THE ELECTORAL PRACTICE OF UKRAINE (ON THE EXAMPLE OF THE LOCAL ELECTIONS OF 2015 AND 2020)**

Comparing the indicators regarding the election of deputies according to the gender principle in the local elections of 2020 with the corresponding indicators in 2015, it can be said that the share of elected female representatives has increased significantly. If 5 years ago it fluctuated between 10.84%-26.56%, then in the 2020 elections the minimum indicator was 21.88%, and the maximum was 35.71% [Kharkivska miska rada. Obrani 2015; Kharkivska miska rada. Obrani 2020; Kharkivska oblasna rada. Obrani 2015; Kharkivska oblasna rada. Obrani 2020; Khersonska miska rada. Obrani 2015; Khersonska miska rada. Obrani 2020; Khersonska oblasna rada. Obrani 2015; Khersonska oblasna rada. Obrani 2020; Lvivska miska rada. Obrani 2015; Lvivska miska rada. Obrani 2020; Lvivska oblasna rada. Obrani 2015; Lvivska oblasna rada. Obrani 2020; Vinnytska miska rada. Obrani 2015; Vinnytska miska rada. Obrani 2020; Vinnytska oblasna rada. Obrani 2015; Vinnytska oblasna rada. Obrani 2020].

**Table 7. Comparative analysis of the number of elected women based on the results of local elections in 2015 and 2020 in Ukraine (elections to Regional Councils)**

Region	% of selected women, 2015	% of selected women, 2020
Lvivska	16,67 %	26,19 %
Vinnytska	10,84 %	26,20 %
Kharkivska	18,33 %	28,33 %
Khersonska	17,99 %	21,88 %

Source: authors

**Table 8. Comparative analysis of the number of elected women based on the results of local elections in 2015 and 2020 in Ukraine (elections to City Councils)**

Область	% of selected women, 2015	% of selected women, 2020
Lvivska	26,56 %	28,18 %
Vinnytska	16,67 %	31,48 %
Kharkivska	21,43 %	35,71 %
Kharkivska	24,07 %	24,07 %

Source: authors

It is also worth noting that in 2020, the number of parties headed by women increased significantly. In particular, in the elections to the Regional Council in Vinnytsia, a woman headed the “Ukrainska stratehiya Hroysmana” party. In Lviv, the first candidates of political forces «Varta», «Yevropeyska solidarist», «Za maybutnye» were female representatives. In Kharkiv, women led the parties «Blok Svitlychnoyi Razom», «Yevropeyska solidarist», «Partiya Shariya» and «Sluha Narodu». In Kherson, women became leaders of such parties as “Pariya Zelenyh” and “Blok Volodymyra Saldo”. In total, women led 9 political forces in the Regional Council elections in 2020. [Kharkivska oblasna rada. Vyborchi 2020; Khersonska oblasna rada. Vyborchi 2020; Lvivska oblasna rada. Vyborchi 2020; Vinnytska oblasna rada. Vyborchi 2020].

In the 2020 City Council elections, female representatives led 8 parties. In Lviv, such political forces were «Vseukrayinske obyednannya Batkivshchyna», «Ukrayins’ka Halys’ka Partiya», «Nash Kray», «UDAR (Ukrayins’kyy Demokratychnyy Al’yans za Reformy)». In Vinnytsia, women became the first candidates in the «Rukh Spravedlyvosti» and «Partiya Shariya» parties. In Kharkiv, female representatives became the heads of the “Bloku Svitlychnoyi Razom» and «Holos». In Kherson, all parties were headed by men [Kharkivska miska rada. Vyborchi 2020; Khersonska miska rada. Vyborchi 2020; Lvivska miska rada. Vyborchi 2020; Vinnytska miska rada. Vyborchi 2020].

In 2015, in the elections to regional and City Councils, women led 5 and 6 political forces, respectively. The share of parties led by women, relative to the total number of political forces that participated in the elections, was 8.62% in the elections to the Regional Council and 8.45% in the elections to the City Council [Kharkivska miska rada. Vyborchi 2015; Kharkivska oblasna rada. Vyborchi 2015; Khersonska miska rada. Vyborchi 2015; Khersonska oblasna rada. Vyborchi 2015; Lvivska miska rada.

Vyborchi 2015; Lvivska oblasna rada. Vyborchi 2015; Vinnytska miska rada. Vyborchi 2015; Vinnytska oblasna rada. Vyborchi 2015;].

In 2020, the indicator increased to 18% and 10.67%, respectively [Kharkivska miska rada. Vyborchi 2020; Kharkivska oblasna rada. Vyborchi 2020; Khersonska miska rada. Vyborchi 2020; Khersonska oblasna rada. Vyborchi 2020; Lvivska miska rada. Vyborchi 2020; Lvivska oblasna rada. Vyborchi 2020; Vinnytska miska rada. Vyborchi 2020; Vinnytska oblasna rada. Vyborchi 2020]. This shows that thanks to the introduction of gender quotas, women became more actively involved in the electoral process and political life.

**Table 9. Comparative analysis of the number of political parties headed by women according to the results of local elections in 2015 and 2020 in Ukraine (elections to Regional and City Councils)**

Local elections	Elections to the Regional Council		Elections to the City Council	
	Number of parties led by women	% of parties headed by women	Number of parties led by women	% of parties headed by women
Elections of 2015	5	8,62 %	6	8,45 %
Elections of 2020	9	18 %	8	10,67 %

Source: authors

According to the results of the elections in 2015 and 2020, it can be argued that the most frequent violations of the principle of balanced gender representation were committed by the political forces «Yevropeyska solidarist» and «Nash Kray». The 2020 elections were positively influenced by the fact that, compared to the local elections of 2015, fewer political forces violated the principle of gender equality when forming their electoral lists. In particular, in the Regional Council elections in 2015, 19 parties did not comply with the quota principle, which was 32.76% of the total number of parties that participated in the election process. In 2020, violations were committed by 11 parties, which is 22% of the total number of registered electoral lists of political parties [Kharkivska miska rada. Vyborchi 2015; Kharkivska miska rada. Vyborchi 2020; Kharkivska oblasna rada. Vyborchi 2015; Kharkivska oblasna rada. Vyborchi 2020; Khersonska miska rada. Vyborchi 2015; Khersonska miska rada. Vyborchi 2020; Khersonska oblasna rada. Vyborchi 2015; Khersonska oblasna rada. Vyborchi 2020; Lvivska miska rada. Vyborchi 2015; Lvivska miska rada. Vyborchi 2020; Lvivska oblasna rada. Vyborchi 2015; Lvivska oblasna rada. Vyborchi 2020; Vinnytska miska rada. Vyborchi 2015; Vinnytska miska rada. Vyborchi 2020; Vinnytska oblasna rada. Vyborchi 2015; Vinnytska oblasna rada. Vyborchi 2020].

At the Regional Council elections in 2015, 11 violations of the quota principle were committed, which is 15.49% of all registered voter lists [Kharkivska miska rada. Vyborchi 2015; Kharkivska oblasna rada. Vyborchi 2015; Khersonska miska rada. Vy-

borchi 2015; Khersonska oblasna rada. Vyborchi 2015; Lvivska miska rada. Vyborchi 2015; Lvivska oblasna rada. Vyborchi 2015; Vinnytska miska rada. Vyborchi 2015; Vinnytska oblasna rada. Vyborchi 2015]. In 2020, violations of the principle of gender equality were committed by 7 political forces out of 75 registered, which is 9.33% [Kharkivska miska rada. Vyborchi 2020; Kharkivska oblasna rada. Vyborchi 2020; Khersonska miska rada. Vyborchi 2020; Khersonska oblasna rada. Vyborchi 2020; Lvivska miska rada. Vyborchi 2020; Lvivska oblasna rada. Vyborchi 2020; Vinnytska miska rada. Vyborchi 2020; Vinnytska oblasna rada. Vyborchi 2020]. That is, in the last local elections, a larger number of parties used the principle of quotas when forming their electoral lists than in the elections held in 2015.

In addition, in 2015, three political forces, namely «Opozytsiynyy blok» in the elections to the Lviv Regional Council, «Vseukrayinska partiya dukhovnosti ta patriotyzmu» in the elections to the Kherson Regional Council and «Blok Darta Veydera» in the elections to the regional and City Councils Kharkiv and Kherson City Councils did not include women in their electoral lists at all [Kharkivska miska rada. Vyborchi 2015; Kharkivska oblasna rada. Vyborchi 2015; Khersonska miska rada. Vyborchi 2015; Khersonska oblasna rada. Vyborchi 2015; Lvivska oblasna rada. Vyborchi 2015]. На місцевих виборах 2020 року в досліджуваних нами регіонах партій, у списках яких відсутні жінки, не було [Kharkivska miska rada. Vyborchi 2020; Kharkivska oblasna rada. Vyborchi 2020; Khersonska miska rada. Vyborchi 2020; Khersonska oblasna rada. Vyborchi 2020; Lvivska miska rada. Vyborchi 2020; Lvivska oblasna rada. Vyborchi 2020; Vinnytska miska rada. Vyborchi 2020; Vinnytska oblasna rada. Vyborchi 2020].

In general, it is worth noting that in 2020, women were much more actively involved in the election process. If we compare the results of the 2015 and 2020 elections, it is worth noting that the introduction of the new principle of gender quotas in the formation of party lists is really effective and contributed not only to a significant increase in the share of women in party lists, but also to the election of a significantly larger number of women to local authorities.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The principle of gender equality is an important principle of the electoral process in all democratic countries of the world. Ensuring gender parity in the electoral process contributes to increasing the number of women in political life, which is an important factor in the democratic development of society. Compliance with the principle of balanced gender representation is ensured and monitored in most countries of the world. In order to guarantee gender equality in elections at the state and party levels, various mechanisms are used, the most common of which is gender quotas. The various gender quotas are temporary and promote balanced gender representation on electoral rolls. In general, gender quotas are applied in more than 130 countries of the world. However, they are effective only if there is a mechanism of sanctions for viola-

tion of the quota principle. It is important when implementing gender equality policy not to forget that granting privileges to one gender should not limit the opportunities and rights of another, otherwise it violates the very principle of equality.

Ukraine has ratified all key documents related to gender equality. At the local elections of 2015, a gender quota of 30% was introduced in Ukraine. And already during the 2020 local elections, the new electoral code introduced a quota of 40%, which stipulates that each quinary must have at least two representatives of each sex.

Based on the results of the research, we conclude that gender quotas in Ukraine are quite a necessary phenomenon, as they ensure a minimum share of women's representation. However, a negative phenomenon is the lack of sanctions, due to which there are some parties that do not comply with gender quotas. At the same time, it is positive that, compared to 2015, the share of parties that did not comply with the gender quota in local elections in 2020 has significantly decreased.

As evidenced by the results of the 2020 local elections in Ukraine, the established gender quota is quite effective, because it not only ensures a gender-balanced representation of women in the electoral lists of political parties, but also positively affects the share of women elected to local authorities. A positive factor that significantly influenced the election results was the fact that most parties adhered to the principle of gender quotas. This made it possible to ensure the representation of women in electoral lists at the level of more than 30% in 2015 and more than 40% in 2020. The gender quota that was used in the 2020 elections is significantly more effective than the gender quota adopted in 2015. This is due to the fact that it does not allow women to be included in the lower part of the electoral list, but forces representatives of both sexes to alternate. Thus, getting into the transitional part of the electoral list, women have more chances to be elected. However, it is worth noting that the share of women elected to local authorities is quite low, but this indicator has a growing tendency. In 2020, it increased by 10% compared to 2015.

The fact that in 2020 the number of female representatives who became leaders of political parties in the elections to Regional Councils of the studied regions increased is also positive. In particular, if there were 11 of them in 2015, then in 2020 there were 17 of them.

Comparing the local elections of 2015 and 2020, it can be concluded that the increase in gender quotas leads to an increase in the share of women in representative authorities, which contributes to gender parity in politics. And, despite some violations of the principle of balanced gender representation, it is worth noting that Ukraine is moving in the right direction in terms of achieving gender parity in the electoral process. At the same time, it is also important to form a high level of political and electoral culture of citizens, which will contribute to the formation of sustainable ideas about the equality of men and women in all spheres of social life in general, and in the political sphere, in particular.

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