

Challenges and specifics of women's career development in local government in times of peace and war

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INTRODUCTION

Relevance. Every year, World Economic Forum evaluates progress in achieving gender quality among about 150 countries. According to 2022 report, the global gender gap (differences in the situation of women and men) has achieved 68.1%. This means that if such trend persists, the world will achieve full equality only in 132 years¹. The least inequality between genders is observed in health care and education; the most, in economic opportunities and political participation of women and men. There is a robust link between gender equality and level of economic development in the country: economically capable countries are more gender-equal. Traditionally, Iceland and the Nordic countries are leaders among achieving equality, while among continents the first rank is taken by North America. The data of Global Gender Gap Index demonstrate the progress of women in leadership on public posts during the recent years. Among women who headed states all over the world, it was for the longest periods in Germany, Iceland, Dominican Republic, and Ireland. On the global level, the average share of women on minister posts had grown almost two-fold from 2006 until 2022, having increased from 9.9% to 16.1%. In a similar manner, the average share of women in parliaments had grown from 14.9% to 22.9%. But the biggest gender problem of the year was the situation on the labor market labeled as crisis which is just unfolding. This year, Ukraine has one of the worst positions in the whole history of this index calculation (Global Gender Gap Report 2022), ranking 81st among 146 countries. Female representation in Ukrainian politics is traditionally low; economic participation and opportunities for women have also significantly decreased. Women were forced to leave the labor market; they also have smaller incomes and are less represented on the legislative level and leadership positions.

Object of the study: women on elected and non-elected/administrative posts in local government in Dnipro region.

Subject of the study: identifying specifics of women's career development in local government in the times of peace and war.

Study methodology and methods: based on the use of conceptual foundations of ethno-methodological and phenomenological sociological theory. The abovementioned methodology framework envisages the

¹ [WEF GGGR 2022.pdf \(weforum.org\)](#)

use of quality methods for a sociological study. The chosen study method is narrative in-depth interview. When analyzing the obtained results, comparative strategy of “minimal” and “maximal” contrast was used, i.e., highlighting similar content constructs in narrative texts as well as typical constructs for different biographic episodes. Reflexive projective method of “unfinished sentences” was also used, which allowed to document generally widespread ideas, associations, stereotypes and perception frame structures.

Theoretical sample: The selection of informants for the study was done according to the criterion of involvement in work on different levels of local government on both elected and non-elected posts. In particular, the following women were surveyed: two representatives of an elected local body on the regional level (regional council MPs); two representatives of an elected local body on the community level (village councils); eight representatives of non-elected posts in local government, namely administrative employees of different levels (from an expert to head of structural unit). Study participants represent different communities in Dnipro region.

Interview tools: The interview guide consisted of five blocks of questions common for all groups of informants, with some variations in questions on professional activities (for elected/non-elected posts). A separate block of the study is a concise analysis of legislation on the functioning of local government bodies in Ukraine.

The period of the study: January-March 2023. The study was conducted with regard to the security situation in the country and under the condition of non-disclosure of study participants’ personal data.

SECTION 1

MOTIVATION FOR WOMEN'S PROFESSIONAL FULFILLMENT IN THE SYSTEM OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The experience of study participants in local government varies from 20 years to less than a year: some women have a long professional experience on different posts, both elected and non-elected ones, administrative jobs on different levels of local government, and some participants have been in local government for less than three years, starting from the period of most recent local elections in 2020. This variation of individual experience has expanded the opportunities for analysis of women's self-realization in local government as it allows to factor in the age criterion, the impact of long period in such professional environment in combination of unprejudiced "fresh" outlook on the local government system in general and the opportunities available for contemporary Ukrainian women. Among study participants involved in local government on elected posts (MPs on different levels) there are those elected via party lists and also via majority system.

Previous work experience of survey participants varies a lot - some of them immediately after completion of their studies started their career in local government upon recommendations of their friends, acquaintances or relatives or due to their own interest in this field; some surveyed women had experience of project work in political or adjacent fields or in providing public services; and some women used to work in commercial fields.

The motivation of women's involvement in local government is an important study question. The process of decision-making about choosing a job is regulated by both external and internal factors (or motivators). Most often this pertains to evaluation of external situation, own opportunities and situation, correlation of selected work with the acquired profession, own interests and inclinations. As a result of obtained data, the following was documented. Among study participants, internal motives for choosing a profession dominate, namely its social or internal significance; enjoyment the work brings; opportunities to communicate; managing other people; at the same time, external motivation (earnings, aspiration for prestige, fear of condemnation and failures) is almost not manifested among women who participated in the study.

When asked “What motivated you to start your professional activities in local government?”, the survey respondents mostly stated they aspired for helping positive change, getting involved in the development of community they live in, they wanted to contribute to modernization and improvement of community life, i.e., the motivation to participate in the functioning of local government was based on emotional involvement, feeling close to local community life, interest in an active position both as citizen and as expert. Besides, among motives for choosing local government for career were work experience in public sector, project initiatives, adjacent activities in political field and therefore confidence in own competences that can serve as the foundation for successful work in local government. Separately, several participants noted that they chose this field because it is socially protected, guarantees comfortable working hours and conditions for a woman with children compared to private sector where putting in extra hours is often needed and working schedule is hard to plan. It was also mentioned that local government was chosen upon recommendation of the closest circle.

“The first reason was that my daughter was entering first grade and I needed more time, fewer working hours than in retail.” (Interview No. 2)

“My sister worked in regional state administration and offered me to also join and try.” (Interview No. 4)

“I believed that at the time rather interesting processes were happening in Ukraine associated with decentralization, development and strengthening of local self-governance. I believe that these processes are important and if there is an opportunity to get involved in them, it is an interesting experience.” (Interview No. 6)

“... the motivation was that I wanted to take full responsibility for certain vectors of regional development and not expect that somebody should do something but instead take this initiative up and start managing.” (Interview No. 7)

“As I was interested in principle, the functional tasks before me were relevant to my profession, I wanted to try and see how I can fulfill myself in these activities, so I decided to try.” (Interview No. 8)

“... the goal was the development of democratic institutions in our community because on many posts of our communities there were people who had already worked several years with different mayors and, in our opinion, this work hadn't always been done with regard to democratic foundations of citizens' free access to governance.” (Interview No. 9)

“But first of all the importance of what I do. I can influence big masses of people and somehow improve their level of life.” (Interview No. 10)

“The only thing that motivated me is trying to at least somehow help fellow villagers.” (Interview No. 11)

Most surveyed women noted that they can assess their activities in local government as a favorable working regime which totally satisfies them at the present moment, pointing to good ambience in the team and comfortable communication with colleagues. At the same time, some women referred to stress situations which complicate work; some study participants also noted that they can't evaluate their working regime as favorable, especially now in the context of war.

“This is unpaid work, it is believed to be public employment; formally it is sessions of the regional council, working in regional council commissions, working with voters - the way the MP regulates, corrects and develops that. So it is hard for me to say whether working conditions are favorable or not, because mostly it depends on the MP. I don't consider my work as efficient as I'd have liked or imagined it to be. That is why I don't know how to rate it, favorable or unfavorable. It's just that in the context of war it is a totally different story.” (Interview No. 6)

“... it is hard to answer, in all categories. That is, I can't say the conditions are favorable and comfortable, unfortunately... this is more competitive ambience, in the authorities, it disrupts your own pace and rhythm... This is the behavioral factor for these work conditions being not too favorable. Because, unfortunately, the culture and understanding how MPs should cooperate with regional council employees are lacking...” (Interview No. 7)

“The ambience is the team is really great, and most probably this is one of the main factors why, long or short it may be, for six years I have been continuously working in this place and actually I haven't thought about changing the job for now.” (Interview No. 8)

At the same time, when rating their satisfaction with the salary amount, we should note that women working on non-elected administrative posts in local government (*note: work on elected posts in local government is performed on free of charge basis*) expressed different opinions: some women claimed that the salary amount for their work is not an important factor at all; some pointed out they had been happy with the salary before the war but now the situation has grown

complicated due to more financial expenditures for daily needs; and some participants stated that their salaries are low and cannot satisfy all needs.

When asked if study participants have an opportunity to work according to individual arrangements (flexible working hours, remote work), some surveyed women noted they didn't have that chance (mostly those working on non-elected posts in local government in village communities). Women working in municipal councils on administrative posts noted that they have these opportunities, citing their previous experience during COVID lockdown, and also in the current context during the previous year in the first months of war on a permanent basis, and also in mixed mode with some remote component depending on the security situation at a given time. Study participants representing elected bodies of local government in the regional council pointed to permanent opportunity to work remotely since the beginning of the war; a study participant who is a village council MP said their community worked only in-person, without a possibility for online voting while some responsibilities allow remote work.

When answering the question whether their service in local government is considered prestigious, the respondents were divided. There were opinions that on the one hand their surroundings treat work in local government as prestigious; on the other hand, some acquaintances, relatives and friends rate this kind of employment as "neutral", sometimes expressing doubts whether they should continue working in local government with the salary lower than average compared to commercial sector (mostly this opinion, the respondents believe, is popular among younger age group). At the same time, some women recalled that sometimes work in local government is treated by some people as stereotypically envisaging involvement in corruption schemes - or on the contrary as work that has to ensure solutions to all problems emerging among community residents, even those beyond the remit and of private nature. It is also worth noting that some participants who represent local government on the village level recalled that prestigiousness of their posts is rated differently depending on which community they represent.

*"My personal vision is that now it is [considered prestigious]... if we talk to experts from other municipal authorities, those who work in the city, in other communities, in other councils, it's all different. The salary is also different. It depends on which community it is, how capable it is of providing salary, stationary, Internet, etc. to the employee."
(Interview No. 2)*

"... it also depends on the community you are working in, who you work with, on the team, and when you arrive at some events you say where you work, and there could be a community that has earned itself a name, and everyone goes, how cool is that you work in this community, it is so prestigious." (Interview No. 3)

"Generally yes, but it depends on the field. Among older generation this job is considered very prestigious, and among youth to the contrary." (Interview No. 4)

"It seems to me it's fifty-fifty. Because due to some people local government has too many associations with corruption among the public. There are stereotypes that everyone who works there is engaged in some corruption schemes. But some have the same stereotype about you: if you work in local government, you are like a God on that level." (Interview No. 7)

"So it's six years and sometimes people ask me if I like it there. Why don't you want to change something? That is, sometimes they ask me if I want to switch to some commercial field. You have some experience, maybe if you worked for a private company you could earn more." (Interview No. 8)

"It seems to me that these activities have prestige but even exaggerated... Somehow it is perceived over the top because all residents for some reason believe that local MPs get salary for their work even though it is not true. Everyone believes that MPs have unlimited opportunities and that is why people believe that MPs should put their own physical and financial efforts into solving issues." (Interview No. 9)

When asked if there are favorable pre-requisites in the Ukrainian society for women's more active engagement in politics, all study respondents noted that in their opinion there are now enough conditions for women's self-fulfillment in politics and generally more prominent impact of women. It was noted that for expansion of women's political leadership a range of legislative initiatives has been adopted, which favored more women's representation in national and local authorities. Study participants also separately noted that with the beginning of full-scale war women's activity in absolutely all fields of Ukrainian societal life has grown: from volunteering and civic activities to women's self-realization in military and defense field, which has started getting positive feedback in public eyes.

"... in my opinion, in our community, for example, we have favorable atmosphere for women's participation in politics. Because we have many women on posts in executive authorities and there have been female community mayors." (Interview No. 9)

"I can't say this has radically changed 100 per cent, but before it was more of an exception than a norm. And now the society has got used

to it. That there are women, women go to combat, and women volunteer. So a female MP or a public servant, an official - this is not an exception anymore.” (Interview No. 8)

“Actually I think it has been like that for several years. Political leadership of women thrives, and this depends also on quotas which Verkhovna Rada adopted, if I am not mistaken... Before, it was one or two women everyone knew in the regional council and they worked with an all-male team, but now there are more of these women, which shows that female leadership in local government is growing and there are more women on leadership positions.” (Interview No. 7)

It is worth noting that the experience of study participants demonstrates the advantage of emotional and altruistic motivational core in the involvement in local government, which is based on pro-active stand of women aspiring to join positive changes on different levels of local government. It is interesting to note that these positions were demonstrated by women from different age groups and different levels of communities (both in villages and in the regional council).

SECTION 2

GENERAL IDEAS OF WOMEN ABOUT PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES IN THE SYSTEM OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

For a long time, politics has traditionally been treated as a purely “male” field. In “traditional” system of values, the constructed image of “housewife” contradicts an active role of women in politics and therefore the latter often faces judgment from the society in the form of stereotypes. However, the division of professional activities by gender in contemporary labor market context more and more often becomes conditional, and free access to any profession facilitates the achievement of gender equality in the society.

In this block of questions, statements about widespread ideas and intentions of women participating in local government were offered. The chosen study method was unfinished sentences. It allows to document generally widespread ideas and associations, stereotypes and frame structures of the specifics of professional self-realization in local government.

General ideas. Professional self-realization in governance is determined not by a single motive calling to action but by a range of many motivating factors. Stereotypes creating a false perception and causing certain resistance against achieving set goals significantly impact the intentions of professional self-fulfillment. That is why let us first define dominating general ideas about women’s professional self-fulfillment in politics.

For example, when asked to finish the sentence *“Leadership posts in communities/administration are mostly occupied by...”* most informants answered “men”. Among answers, there were some statements like *“fifty-fifty, both men and women”* (Interview No. 3), *“this is not about gender”* (Interview No. 5). However, the dominant opinion was that it is men who occupy leadership posts. Some respondents complemented this sentence, clarifying that they mean top-level senior posts while lower-level managerial positions are as a rule given to women. Mostly “less significant” spots are filled according to certain rules while more influential posts are distributed according to “political feasibility”².

² Жарова Л. «Хто їм не дає?»: усе про перешкоди для жінок у політиці. URL: <https://genderindetail.org.ua/season-topic/polityka/hto-im-ne-dae-use-pro-pereshkodi-dlya-zhinok-u-polititsi-134900.html>

“Men occupy top-level senior posts. Mid- and lower level is predominantly women.” (Interview No. 4)

“Leadership posts... Unfortunately it’s men, but I would add that the lower is the local council level, like a community or a village mayor, there are lots of women, even more women there, it seems to me. There is a greater percentage of women there than, well, in bigger communities. On those leadership posts it is like that.” (Interview No. 6)

As for achieving professional success in local government system, most informants also noted men had better changes for a career there, explaining that women also had household obligations to fulfill.

“You understand, I believe it is most probably men. A woman has things to do both at work and at home, she has a family. It is a bit easier for men because they don’t have to wash clothes, clean the house, and cook. They don’t have to look after children. They have more time for professional development, for themselves than women. Men have more opportunities for career advancement than women. Women are swamped in household duties.” (Interview No. 11)

In the opinion of informants, women achieve professional success in social and humanitarian fields more often or just as often as men.

“... if we divide governance in communities, village councils and village mayor positions into categories, most would belong to female domain. Humanitarian departments, social field. They are more for women. Even though there are men in humanitarian departments, we have men in the department for education. But it is more for women, there is little technical side to that.” (Interview No. 2)

“I believe it is equal for both men and women. Men and women have the same opportunities.” (Interview No. 4)

Conservative and judgmental stereotypes can be the reason for false ideas about the possibility to achieve professional self-fulfillment in governance. For example, in one unfinished sentence the respondent had to list gender stereotypes about female leaders in Ukrainian society. The answers of informants contained a rather widespread stereotype that *“a woman obtains a post thanks to the help of influential representatives on a higher level”*, i.e., serves as their protegee.

"There are stereotypes - I'll immediately say that I don't support them. I don't have such stereotypes but I often heard them from my colleagues and even from men. I'll tell you what I heard: 'She obtained the post because she had been very close friends with someone' [laughs] but I know for sure that this person got the post because she deserved it and her level was a perfect match for the post. There are conversations like that and they happen very often."
(Interview No. 4)

"They are about a woman being unable to achieve success in political field. That is, she surely has to be connected with someone."
(Interview No. 7)

The following gender stereotype documented in this block of questions is contemptuous attitude to the professionalism and leadership qualities of a woman on governance post. It is worth noting that this stereotype is widespread not only in local government but generally pertains to prejudiced attitude to women leaders in different fields of society.

"Women who have no other things to do or women who are much too active. There is a somewhat contemptuous angle." (Interview No. 6)

"And the second one is that there is not enough professionalism or certain competence. It's maybe not that much about gender but I faced that, like women are not cut out for this field." (Interview No. 8)

"They [stereotypes] still persist. When I hear my colleagues talk, sometimes they would say - if a man were the head, he would decide or do better. A woman is much too tolerant. A man would bang his fist on the table and it would be alright." (Interview No. 11)

Among important qualities and character features necessary for political activities and success in professional leadership career in general (*author's note: regardless of gender*) study participants named the following: goal-orientedness, aspiration for leadership, quick decision-making, ability to objectively assess the situation, energy and organizational qualities, and decisiveness.

"Goal-orientedness. Character traits more to the male side."
(Interview No. 1)

"... both for men and women it is probably aspiration for leadership, ability to objectively assess the situation and make decisions quickly." (Interview No. 3)

“This person must be unbreakable, you understand? I mean, no amount of begging or nagging should distract from his or her goal.” (Interview No. 4)

“Being active and good at organizing.” (Interview No. 6)

“Decisiveness.” (Interview No. 9)

Adherence to gender parity. A current important topic is the adherence to gender parity in the political field. The attitude to quotas in politics among the public is ambiguous. For example, according to the results of the national survey, as of May 2018 52% of Ukrainians believed that both men and women should be equally involved in political life. The candidate's gender as a factor in voting is significant only for two to three per cent of respondents³. To determine the attitude of study participants to gender parity, they were proposed to continue/finish the following sentence: *“Adherence to gender parity in local government is...”* Among answers, there are the following: *“a growing trend” (Interview No. 7); “a norm” (Interview No. 8); “an important aspect” (Interview No. 3); “satisfactory” (Interview No. 9); “I believe it’s fifty-fifty. We have women driving cars, harvesters, and buses. I understand the gender aspect of politics and gender priorities but I believe that women and men are on equal terms.” (Interview No. 11)* As we can see from the answers received, among participants there is a widespread idea about adherence to gender balance in politics; however, there were also statements defined as doubting: *“I believe it is there [author’s note: the respondent means the adherence to gender parity]. If you take the city council in general. But when I was at decision-making sessions and meetings, at city council sessions - there are more men there” (Interview No. 10); “No, it is not there in my opinion.” (Interview No. 4)*

The following sentence that had to be complemented also pertained to ideas about adherence to gender parity, namely the number of women on leadership posts on the regional and local level. According to UNDP study of 2021, “the general share of women on leadership posts in the world is about 29%. At the time, France, Belgium, Italy and Denmark introduced gender quotas according to which there should be no less than 30 to 40 per cent of each gender working in a company.”⁴ A significant portion of studies shows that the amount

³ A quote from: Жарова Л. «Хто їм не дає?»: усе про перешкоди для жінок у політиці. URL: <https://genderindetail.org.ua/season-topic/polityka/hto-im-ne-dae-use-pro-pereshkodi-dlya-zhinok-u-polititsi-134900.html>

⁴ Quote: Women occupy only 29 per cent of senior posts. Що не так із гендерною рівністю в компаніях та що робити URL: <https://life.pravda.com.ua/society/2022/12/29/252071/>

of women on leadership posts in Ukraine is growing, albeit slowly. In Ukraine, 59 per cent of all leadership posts are occupied by men and 41 per cent, by women. This has been taken from the study “Women and Men on Senior Posts in Ukraine: 2017-2020” conducted by Ukrainian Center for Social Data.”⁵ These data pertain to the share of women on leadership posts generally, in different fields, not just politics. In 2021, *Slovo i Dilo* analytical portal presented an infographic in the changing number of Verkhovna Rada MPs by gender during the years of Ukrainian independence.⁶

In the current (9th) convocation of the Verkhovna Rada, there are 440 MPs: out of them 348 are men (79.1%) and 92 are women (20.9%) (see Fig. 1). This is the best result during the times of independence, the center researchers claim.



Fig.1. Trends in the number of female MPs in Verkhovna Rada, 1992-2021 (according to Slovo i Dilo portal data)

There are 38.94% of women and 61.06% of men on key posts - city, town and village mayors and deputy mayors in the local community and secretaries of local councils. This is according to the survey conducted by Association of Ukrainian Cities in April-May 2020 in the framework of USAID project “Policy for Ukraine Local Self-Governance” (PULSE) jointly with the project “Strengthening Democracy and Trust on Local Level in Ukraine”. 839 communities from Association of Ukrainian Cities participated in the survey, among them 363 cities, 233 towns and 243 villages. On senior elected posts in the cities, there are much fewer women than men. In particular, there are only 8.53% of women among

⁵ Quote: Women occupy 41 per cent of leadership posts in Ukraine. URL: <https://suspihne.media/120141-zinki-zajmavut-41-kerivnih-posad-v-ukraini/>

⁶ 30 років Незалежності: як змінювався гендерний склад Верховної ради. URL: <https://www.slovovidio.ua/2021/08/23/infografika/polityka/30-rokiv-nezalezhnosti-yak-zminyuvavsya-hendernyi-sklad-verhovnoyi-rady>

city mayors; instead, there are 91.47% of men. Among town mayors, there are 14% of women and 86% of men; and among village mayors, almost 32% of women and 68% of men.⁷ There is an observable trend: the lower the level of local government is, the more women are represented there.

Let us determine the general ideas of study participants about the number of women on senior posts on regional and local level. The analysis of obtained data shows correlation with general results in Ukraine provided above.

“There are few. But I am not ready to answer what is the reason for that.” (Interview No. 1)

“About the same with men.” (Interview No. 3)

“On low-level posts, there are more women... I mean the rank of the post, that is, if it is a big leadership post it would be a man, and at a smaller managerial post it would predominantly be women.” (Interview No. 4)

“... the lower is the local council level, like a community or a village mayor, there are lots of women, even more women there.” (Interview No. 6)

“Not enough” (Interview No. 8)

“On the local level, there are more women. And on the regional level, what I already know - it's fifty-fifty.” (Interview No. 12)

Barriers for professional fulfillment. Even despite the attempts to adhere to democratic values, namely equal rights and opportunities, for Ukraine a range of unsolved gender issues remains relevant. Among them are stereotypes, violence against women, unequal participation of men and women in the decision-making process, difference in job compensation, and quantitative advantage of men on senior posts. One of the study objectives was to explore latent barriers limiting career advancement of women in local government. These invisible and officially undefined barriers are denoted by the term of “glass ceiling”⁸.

At first, let us define general ideas about the problems women face in the course of professional self-realization in local government. As we can see from the answers of informants, the problem is in the society and in particular male

⁷ Серед мерів і сільських голів жінок у півтора раза менше, ніж чоловіків. URL: <https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-society/3110745-sered-meriv-i-silskih-goliv-zinok-u-pivtora-raza-mense-niz-colovikiv.html>

⁸ Шевченко З.В. Словник гендерних термінів. URL: <http://a-z-gender.net/ua/sklyana-stelya.html>

colleagues not perceiving a woman as a competent expert but instead only seeing a gender marker. This rather widespread prejudiced attitude is especially frequently applied to young experts, like in “Miss, fix us some coffee and tea” (a quote from **Inna Khomych**, director for legal issues at Nova Poshta Center LLC).⁹

“That men don’t really treat a woman as a leader” (Interview No. 1)

“First of all they treat her as a woman and only then as a professional” (Interview No. 3)

“No understanding among male leaders” (Interview No. 7)

“Family problems” (Interview No. 9)

“I can tell a lot here. I haven’t worked on a managerial post but it seems to me that there are problems associated with you being a man or a woman. Most probably they face a lack of understanding and full cooperation between levels of management - that is, to achieve something you have to explain things to a boss on a higher level in very much detail what you want, how and why, for example you can’t manage something in time, you need more people, all this has to be somehow explained. It is very hard to undergo all that.” (Interview No. 4)

One of the questions to document the principles of “glass ceiling” concerned defining barriers for professional fulfillment. Several informants immediately noted that there are no obstacles at all or they “only exist in our heads” (Interview No. 3). Among those who defined some barriers on the way to success, the first one mentioned was the balancing between “family” and “work”:

“... there are no obstacles! You put on your heels and move! But what holds a woman back, possibly also myself, what is it? Family and children. Because I understand that if I go for a leadership post - even now I practically don’t live at home and even if I do, I am constantly with some papers, writing something, I take phone calls all the time and my messenger is heated...”

Then the informant (*administrative employee of the village council*) complements her answer by a question whether she wants to have a leadership post and speaks about her unwillingness to achieve professional recognition. It

⁹ Форум жіночого лідерства: як зруйнувати стереотипи. URL: <https://yur-gazeta.com/golovna/-forum-zhinochogo-liderstva-yak-zruynuvati-stereotipi.html>

is also worth noting that in villages traditional values are recognized more; according to those, a woman is first a “housewife” and a “keeper of the family hearth” and only then a woman fulfilled professionally.

“Do I want this? It is for the woman to choose whether she’ll leave her children on a nanny, grandma, husband, whoever and move forward. Or maybe she remains a woman and a mother and instead pushes her husband to advance in his career... If I want to become an elected head, I’ll do that, but I don’t want it. I am quietly sitting here and hope that I won’t forget how to braid my daughter’s hair.” (Interview No. 2)

“I would say it’s children and family, and the need to combine it all. Because that work in local government is rather intense and requires work not only in the working hours. Work in the working hours. For MPs and also structural divisions, local councils, municipal executive committees and so on, there’s rather a big workload there. In some divisions it requires working in the off hours. So children and family can surely be a deterring factor.” (Interview No. 6)

“It is being married, having children.” (Interview No. 9)

“It is family. A woman is a woman. Sometimes woman puts her family first.” (Interview No. 12)

However, not only the noted “work-life balance” problem is significant; there are also stereotypes about a woman’s professional fulfillment. Several study respondents pointed to this problem:

“We need to change stereotypes about women’s efficiency on leadership posts.” (Interview No. 7)

“Well, some stereotypes. Well, maybe sometimes it’s even ageism.” (Interview No. 8)

“Maybe this stereotypical attitude to women. This idea. That women are not concentrated, it is hard for them to make decisions, they are all over the place. It is harder for them. There are such stereotypical opinions. Our society still believes that a man makes decisions, he can concentrate, not be distracted by anything and just do his work. And a woman would keep thinking and worrying about everything, and she also has children and she has to cook borsch. There is an opinion like that. So I think that there are some stereotypical ideas.” (Interview No. 10)

Support of awareness-raising campaigns. The last questions in this block were about the support of women in elections by national and local awareness-raising campaigns and creating social advertising to explain quotas and gender parity in politics. As a result we can state the lack of awareness among women about such campaigns. Almost all participants answered that they don't know about such awareness-raising campaigns either nationally or locally.

"No, I haven't seen anything like that." (Interview No. 1)

"I haven't seen anything like that, maybe I don't pay enough attention, I don't care." (Interview No. 4)

"I don't know about such campaigns." (Interview No. 5)

"National awareness-raising campaigns? I can only remember Tymoshenko and that Natalya, what's her last name? I don't remember anymore. Well, women for peace, God, it's Korolevska!" (Interview No. 6)

"Local awareness-raising campaigns about the support of women are mostly oriented at small party groups of women." (Interview No. 7)

"In my opinion, there are no such campaigns, I don't know about anything locally." (Interview No. 9)

"Only on paper, to be honest. Actually, in real life I haven't seen anything like that." (Interview No. 11)

As a conclusion one should note that professional fulfillment of women in local government has crucial significance for enforcement of gender equality, expansion of women's rights and opportunities and facilitation of inclusive space for professional growth. Despite current positive dynamics in the formation of equal opportunities society women still face numerous problems, including widespread social stereotypes, cultural barriers, contempt for professionalism and leadership qualities, equality in job compensation, and achieving balance between work and personal life. To overcome these challenges, consolidated joint efforts are needed including support from the government, NGOs, national and local awareness-raising campaigns.

SECTION 3

CAREER FULFILLMENT OF A FEMALE LEADER IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Career fulfillment of women has always been and still is a challenging dilemma: how do you find a balance between your own professional fulfillment and care for your family? “Traditional ideas and norms, deeply rooted in androcentric culture replicated for centuries, do not envisage encouragement and support of women’s career aspirations. The advantage is on the side of men,” Svitlana Oksamytna notes.¹⁰ Indeed, for Ukrainian society conservative values of culture (a study according to Schwartz methodology) are rather resilient and do not lose their relevance. However, the results of national survey “Identity. Patriotism. Values” (17-18 August 2022) conducted by Reyting sociological group manifest a shift towards the values of self-determination and openness for change, which are contrary to conservative values (traditionalism and conformism). In gender dimension, the researchers note that “for men encouragement, achievement and wealth (power) are more important values, while for women those are safety, traditionality, conformism, universalism, and kindness.”¹¹ That is why women’s professional fulfillment in the context of contemporary value system acquires such significance. This block of questions directly aims to study women’s career fulfillment in local government.

Career fulfillment. The first question concerned the definition of their career fulfillment by participants themselves. Most answered that they feel fulfilled and have opportunities to achieve their goals in professional career. The answers varied among young experts and more experienced ones.

“I believe that I have all opportunities to be fulfilled. I can use them more or less but I don’t feel limits in my opportunities for this fulfillment.” (Interview No. 6)

“Being 24 years of age, I consider myself fulfilled.” (Interview No. 10)

“Yes. I can’t live without this anymore. I have become so engrossed. I sit at home and write reports on civil protection because I must. I

¹⁰ Оксамитна С. Жінки і кар'єра: власна чи чоловікова? Інша оптика : гендерні виклики сучасності. Київ : Смолоскип, 2019. - С. 101-116. URL: <https://ekmair.ukma.edu.ua/items/baff7af2-20f1-4a54-b391-231b366a67f0>

¹¹ Сімнадцять загальнонаціональне опитування: ідентичність. Патріотизм. Цінності (17-18 серпня 2022). URL: https://ratinggroup.ua/research/ukraine/s_mnadcyate_zagalnonac_onalne_opituvannya_dentichn_st_pat_otizm_c_nnost_17-18_serpnja_2022.html

*won't be able to live without that. I have got very used to it.”
(Interview No. 11)*

Among those who don't consider themselves fulfilled there were the following answers when the respondents noted that they haven't completely achieved their goals or they face obstacles in their professional fulfillment:

“I believe that in this field I am not completely fulfilled because of barriers that exist because of age. But I believe this stage to be a step, an important step for further career. But this career won't be in the regional council.” (Interview No. 7)

Naturally, a successful career is impossible without studying and constant self-improvement. One of informants (*author's note: she has recently been promoted*) talked about the need for lifelong learning and constant accumulation of new knowledge.

“I believe that you should constantly fulfill yourself, find out something new and interesting because we aren't fixed in one place and some new aspects, trends, and integrations keep appearing all the time. We are growing!!” (Interview No. 3)

When asked “Have you been promoted in the system of local government?”, most interviewees gave a positive answer: *“category promotion by one level” (Interviews No. 1, 2, 4, 5)*. It is also worth noting that participants talked about promotion last year or two years ago. One young expert pointed out she had been promoted immediately after starting work.

“I had one. Last month I came to the lowest-level post, leading expert in youth and gender policy department, and I was promoted to head expert. I moved a bit higher.” (Interview No. 10)

*“Yes, even this year I have had a promotion. Now I have a new post, acting head. A lot of new information now, we are growing.”
(Interview No. 3)*

Another participant also pointed to a positive trend in introducing gender parity; she noted that the number of women running for posts is growing and a woman was elected as the head of village council. Naturally, the growth is small but in the framework of the study it is interesting that the respondents themselves point it out. Before, the report mentioned gender asymmetry in

governance in Ukrainian society: women mostly occupy managerial posts on local (lowest) level of governance.

“Yes. I was a secretary. And then I ran for elections. And I would like to provide an example of gender policy. During the first elections in 2015 there were five candidates, out of them four men and one woman. At the 2020 elections there were two women and six men running for the post of village mayor; a woman was elected again, and she had a landslide victory. I am sure there will be three women running for the following elections.” (Interview No. 11)

“I can’t say exactly now. In about three years. For two or three years I had certainly been on a leadership post, but it is mid-level. These are not top posts but...” (Interview No. 8)

In the second block, one unfinished sentence concerned typical ideas of respondents about people who most often occupy managerial posts. Most said it was men, though there were answers “equally”, “fifty-fifty” or “this doesn’t depend on gender”. In this block, a statement was introduced that the study respondents were to accept or deny. When asked “Do you agree that men are appointed to managerial posts more frequently?” positive answers were given in all interviews except one which said “I don’t believe so” (Interview No. 5).

It is interesting to analyze reasons why men occupy leadership posts more often than women. The list of provided reasons is similar and has the following variants:

1. Family and household duties:

“This is first of all due to the fact that women actually, a woman chooses her family, not work” (Interview No. 2)

“I believe that there is a connection, there are several factors, first of all a woman always has a family, and this slows her further growth down. My opinion is that few women will keep moving higher and higher, they stop on some level and stay there.” (Interview No. 4)

2. Prejudiced attitude to professionalism and leadership qualities:

“Because women are not perceived as leaders” (Interview No. 1)

“... women deal more with their family, and as for work... they have less chances, even if you look at the way tasks are divided between men and women, it is

“... men are more decisive and are faster at decision-making. Women ponder and compare more, so they are a bit not that fast at decision-making. They have more nuances in their decisions, and men see things in black and white.” (Interview No. 3)

much easier for men to prove themselves, that is why it seems to me that men dominate. Even if in the beginning you take a woman and a man who used to occupy the same posts, a man can much easier, much faster showcase himself and move to a higher post than a woman. Because a woman deals with, say, some documents, routine tasks, secretarial work in general. And men are more about doing negotiations, having meetings, some other things. So they even have much more communication than women.” (Interview No. 8)

3. “Male circle” of communications. Informal communication network

“I believe that all these bosses are a community of sorts, a club where mostly men communicate. The issues are solved in this way, this one supports that one and so on, there are fewer women there and that is why it works out like that.” (Interview No. 4)

“What is the reason for that? It seems to me that for men it is easier to solve issues with men. That’s what I believe, and they can simply rely on women, delegate implementation to women and be sure that it will be done to the highest standards. But solving highest-level issues for men - it is easier to do that with men, that’s what I think.” (Interview No. 6)

“What is the reason for that? It is hard to immediately say, but as an assumption - all this depends on the head of the whole local government body. It depends on who he can easier find common grounds with and agree about cooperation, who he can talk to the way it is comfortable for him... They appoint women for organizational posts. For leadership posts with the right of signature, with power and management of organizational departments, men are appointed because it is easier to find common grounds with them and speak to them using the tone and behavior that he is used to.” (Interview No. 7)

“Yes, I agree. In my opinion, it is because they have opportunities to gain more experience because women do lose some time on maternity leave, and also because leadership posts for men are based on the number of connections they have, and as women sometimes leave this system for some time they have fewer of those connections, I believe. Now many things are decided on the level of informal communication. Because a lot of things are urgently decided over the phone.” (Interview No. 9)

Family or career? When analyzing answers about reasons why men occupy leadership posts, women named the need to take care of the family as one of the factors. It is totally logical that unmarried women and women with grown-up children noted that they manage to keep work-life balance and their family members rarely complain that they pay too much attention to their work. When analyzing answers there were several cases when respondents noted that the problem of balancing between “career” and “family” became the reason for family conflicts and even a divorce.

*“It is very hard... Yes, my husband and I divorced because of that.”
(Interview No. 1)*

“Presently I am also alone. Myself and two children. And this is my whole world. So when I engage in civic activities, my family loses me. Then I come back. For some time I am a mother.” (Interview No. 2)

“This is not a problem. The only thing they complain about is that when I have a tense unsuccessful day I come home very angry, and they are all hiding from me.” (Interview No. 4)

“Naturally, this happens. Because an MP doesn’t have a fixed schedule and you can do some things in the evening - like attend events or go “on the ground”. This is not a nine-to-five job, it could be from nine to nine, or from three p.m. until midnight... Sometimes when you are even with your family or close friends, they can tell you that you think too much about your work, but that’s more emotional, it doesn’t really have an impact, but I think that it has much more impact for MPs in the national parliament.” (Interview No. 7)

To conclude, we can document the following reasons for low level of career fulfillment among women:

- significant amount of household duties and care for family;
- in the beginning of career path, women are more prone to lag behind on lower levels (due to maternity leave and household duties);
- doing routine work (document circulation, secretarial duties).

An ideal form of career-and-family balance is the understanding that family can be viewed as a form of life fulfillment for a woman along with a professional career. However, such understanding is more relevant for traditional values in culture unlike the values of self-actualization and fulfillment of potential talents.

Success stories. Motivators of career fulfillment. An especially important factor in professional fulfillment are success stories of well-known public figures.

Success stories are rather often used for motivation and inspiration. Participants were asked the following question: *“Who among female political leaders can you name as an example you follow?”* It was envisaged they could name both Ukrainian and international women political leaders.

Among famous Ukrainian female political leaders named by participants were *“Yulia Tymoshenko” (Interviews No. 2 and 4), “Tetiana Korniakova. She used to be a prosecutor general and deputy prosecutor general and had senior posts in similar law enforcement institutions” (Interview No. 6); “Yulia Hryshyna and Olha Stefanishyna” (Interview No. 7), “Iryna Heraschenko” (Interview No. 8), “first lady Olena Zelenska” (Interview No. 9).*

Among international political leaders, the answers were: *“Margaret Thatcher” (Interviews No. 3, 7), “Queen Elizabeth II” (Interview No. 10), “Catherine, Princess of Wales” (Interviews No. 5, 9), “Angela Merkel” (Interview No. 6), “President of European Parliament and Hillary Clinton” (Interview No. 7), “Prime Minister of Finland” (Interview No. 8), “Michelle Obama”, “Brigitte Macron” (Interview No. 9).*

When defining character features a woman on a leadership position needs, the respondents noted “male” qualities: *“male character traits, a strong hand, being active” (Interview No. 2), “severity, confidence, being active” (Interview No.1), “a person should be charismatic, able to lead people” (Interview No. 3), “severity in a good way, not being manipulated by all sorts of requests” (Interview No. 4), “uncompromising, able to stand one’s ground, diplomatic” (Interview No. 8), “decisiveness, independence in views, principled, honest, responsible” (Interview No. 9), “goal-oriented, motivated” (Interview No. 12).*

One informant named a rather extraordinary character trait: the ability to manage a male team, i.e., an ability which is rather rarely defined among women.

“that character trait is the ability to manage men. So that men respect and listen to you, and so that male subordinates feel efficient on their posts.” (Interview No. 6)

Another respondent talked about the balance in character traits defined most probably by a certain situation in management:

“... if we talk about emotionality, which is more favorable for a female character, a woman without emotions on a leadership position is bad, but an emotional woman is also bad... So you

shouldn't always be radical and you shouldn't always agree to everything. So that is why lots and lots of traits are needed like emotionality, confidence and being adamant, as well as objective thinking.” (Interview No. 7)

Mentorship. The last question in this block concerned the idea of networking with women's NGO sector, women's solidarity and mentorship for young female leaders. Mentorship is defined as an opportunity for professional fulfillment with recommendations from a more experienced colleague with her own success story. This means constant interaction and support (moral, psychological) of an experienced and professionally fulfilled person with someone who is just at the start of their career path.

Researchers from CIPD (Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development) define the following main characteristics of mentorship:

- using mentorship as an additional form of professional development;
- aiming at individual career management and improvement of professional skills;
- aiming to solve personality problems;
- willingness to achieve both corporate and individual goals.¹²

Mentorship can be both informal and officially implemented by NGOs. Actually, the introduction of mentorship concept is the intentional establishment of informal communication circle that male leaders are known for. By the way, the respondents noted that informal communication is the actual reason for men more frequently occupying leadership posts.

Almost all study participants were not aware of mentorship concept but during the conversation they expressed their interest and even willingness to introduce mentorship programs in local communities. Several interview quotes to confirm that follow below:

“That's a good idea to show on a living example for the young generation how all this is done.” (Interview No. 3)

“The idea is interesting, I haven't even heard about such projects being implemented.” (Interview No. 4)

“Yes, of course I would support it. Because now I am head expert at the department for youth and gender policy. And, honestly speaking. As for gender policy, even the word 'gender' is very rarely used. And we have no events on gender issues but we really need

¹² Поліщук І. Система менторства як механізм розвитку професійного потенціалу державних службовців в Україні // Актуальні проблеми державного управління. - 2015. - №. 4. - С. 135-139.

those. We would surely support that, and I would be the first who would either initiate or support that.” (Interview No. 10)

“That would be cool... I’ll tell what I know, and somebody recommends to me how to act in a given situation. Somebody would make a mental note. It is better to learn from others’ mistakes, not from your own.” (Interview No. 11)

One respondent talked about ambivalent attitudes to the establishment of mentoring organizations for political leadership. She underlined the usefulness and importance of having *“like-minded people in a female circle”, “a circle for support and further development”* but noted that establishment of such mentorship organizations for women would, in her opinion, lead to the increase of confrontation and distancing between women and men.

“... establishing purely female organizations, purely female leadership, purely female vector - it looks like creating a counterweight... when do we stop dividing people into men and women... women getting together into female groups somehow separate themselves from men.” (Interview No. 6)

In conclusion, based on this block of questions we should note that establishment and introduction of mentorship programs is a mechanism to engage women into politics, to form a career path for young female leaders, to overcome consequences of discrimination and to create actual equality of opportunities for professional fulfillment,¹³ but Ukrainian politics is still at the initial stage of development and dissemination of information about such projects trickles down depending on the level of politics - the least information is found on the local level.

¹³ Марценюк Т. Гендерна політика Європейського Союзу: загальні принципи та найкращі практики. - 2015.

SECTION 4

SEXISM AND GENDER STEREOTYPES ABOUT WOMEN IN THE SYSTEM OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The following block of questions in the study was dedicated to the problems of gender stereotypes and sexism in the system of local government. Gender stereotypes as typified ideas about men and women are predominantly manifested as role images legitimizing various roles and types of activities for men and women in public opinion and also as stereotypes of gender traits, i.e. psychological and behavioral characteristics of men and women. As a rule, current gender stereotypes, being resistant and rigid, perform the role of robust regulators of social behavior. The most deeply-rooted are those prescribed to women: unlike men, they allegedly have a passive and reproductive position, which nominally puts a woman into a subordinate position according to which she has to be submissive and dependent. Therefore, gender stereotyping often causes “gender discrimination”. The latter is noted in Article 1 of the Law of Ukraine “On ensuring equal rights and opportunities for men and women” in the following way: “this means actions or inaction expressing any differentiation, exception or privileges based on sex if they aim to limit or make it impossible to recognize, use or implement rights and freedoms for women and men on an equal basis.”¹⁴

Presently the construct of “gender-based discrimination” has been complemented by a new way of manifestation, sexism. The Recommendation from Committee of Ministers in the Council of Europe is now the only international document defining sexism. In particular, the document stresses that despite gender equality standards approved on international, national and local levels, their implementation remains not enforced enough; different manifestations of sexism are reasons and consequences of gender inequality. Sexism as defined by Council of Europe is “any act, gesture, visual representation, spoken or written words, practice or behaviour based upon the idea that a person or a group of persons is inferior because of their sex” (according to CM/Rec(2019)11 on preventing and combating sexism).¹⁵

¹⁴ Закон України №2866-IV від 08.09.2005 «Про забезпечення рівних прав та можливостей жінок і чоловіків». URL: <http://zakon4.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2866-15>.

¹⁵ Preventing and Combating Sexism: CM/Rec (2019) adopted by the Committee of Ministers in the Council of Europe on 27 March 2019. URL: <https://rm.coe.int/cm-rec-2019-1-on-preventing-and-combating-sexismukr/1680968561>

It is especially significant to ensure equal participation of men and women in local government because it is there that women start their path in politics, and local politicians are first of all responsible for finding political solutions to citizens' needs which are then reflected on the national level. Recognizing negative impact of sexism on achieving equality between women and men, Council of Europe defined preventing and combating manifestations of gender stereotypes and sexism as their strategic goals in the framework of gender equality strategy.

With regard to the aforesaid, our object of analysis was internal reflection of women in the system of power relations and local government on circulating gender stereotypes and present discrimination. When directly asked if they faced in their professional activities any humiliation, devaluation or offense due to being a woman, most informants adamantly objected to that:

"Thank God, I haven't faced anything like that." (Interview No. 1)

"No, not a single time." (Interview No. 2)

"No, no, never." (Interview No. 5)

"No. Personally I haven't. Actually, I haven't seen any examples of that among people around me." (Interview No. 8)

"No. This hasn't happened. Really, it hasn't. On the contrary. In our team I am the youngest so everyone really likes how I look, everyone is interested. Where I buy clothing and how I put make-up on my eyes. That is why I haven't yet faced any humiliation. We have only one man in our team, maybe that's why it hasn't happened." (Interview No. 10)

"No. Never." (Interview No. 12)

Such negations also concerned various manifestations of economic and professional impact like reduction of bonuses and additional payouts based on gender, unjustified requirements for work, additional tasks or unrealistic deadlines:

"No, not a single time. I have an all-woman team." (Interview No. 2)

"No, this hasn't happened." (Interview No. 3)

*“No, this hasn’t happened to me only because I am a woman.”
(Interview No. 4)*

“Due to the fact I am a woman - no.” (Interview No. 6)

“This also hasn’t happened.” (Interview No. 8)

*“Unrealistic deadlines sometimes happen. But this is not due to the fact that I am a woman. This is due to the specifics of my work.”
(Interview No. 12)*

The position of women reflected in the interview generally confirms the results of the survey conducted by Rejting sociological group in late February 2021, “Gender Roles and Stereotypes”, which showed that 56% of respondents believe that inequality between women and men as well as discrimination in Ukraine are a rare phenomenon¹⁶.

However, among informants there were those who faced discrimination and sexism in the course of their professional activities. The subjective experiences of humiliation among several surveyed women are rather illustrative:

“Well. Not like real offenses, but devaluation and some lack of respect, yes... Yes, even recently. But this is done more to show that the council allegedly does something. They give you tasks which are not rational at all, and then you write them down, execute them and they attribute those to themselves as if it was their work.” (Interview No. 7)

“Yes. Mostly when I worked as a secretary, there were negative remarks about my work. When my boss had problems at home, he’d come to work and pour all this anger and negative emotions on his subordinates. He was a man. This is not a woman. He’d come to work drunk after some event - and it would even get to physical touching, in a sexual sense, I mean. This also happened... Yes. I came from work with bruises. There were all sorts of things... For 15 years I worked as a secretary [author’s note - before being elected to the current post] and never got a bonus. The boss believed that as a secretary I have a high salary. This also happened.” (Interview No. 11)

These quotes with interview fragments confirm humiliation and violence against women in different manifestations in the course of professional activities

¹⁶ Гендерні ролі і стереотипи (4 березня 2021) URL: https://ratinggroup.ua/research/ukraine/gendernye_rol_i_stereotipy.html

in local government. Though most women we surveyed pointed to the lack of prejudiced gender-based attitude in the professional field, the survey among Ukrainian female politicians on different levels of power and political activities revealed that sexism is a very widespread phenomenon in Ukraine. The most widespread types of violence named by female politicians were the following: humiliation in social networks and the media, 62%; psychological violence, 59%; sexism, 59%; verbal offenses, 58%; sexual harassment, 47%¹⁷.

It is very interesting that during the interview the subjective component went into the foreground, first of all meaning subjects women associate discrimination and humiliation with. For some respondents, the situations with offenses and humiliation were associated not with condescending attitude from men but with similar attitude from women occupying higher leadership posts:

“... and my boss is a woman and maybe something in me irritated her.” (Interview No. 7)

“There weren’t any radical things like that. There was a remark about my nails. But that’s a subjective story. Director [a woman] once said: don’t post photos on work page where your nails and hands are visible, because that’s terrible and tasteless, I’ll cut them off. It was said a bit jokingly but I understood she didn’t like that.” (Interview No. 10)

Therefore, in the course of research we identified **internal misogyny** in the system of local government, i.e., women’s intolerance to other women or features considered “feminine” in the given culture.

Internal misogyny can have different manifestations, for example:

A woman places herself in opposition to other women with the following typical discourse objectivation of such behavioral strategy: *“I am not like them, I am not just interested in clothes”; “Unlike them, I am a real woman because I can cook”, etc.*

Women make sexist jokes about other women with the following typical discourse objectivation of such behavioral strategy: *“Nothing doing, she’s a blonde, there’s that joke about blondes”, etc.*

Women devalue other women’s aspirations and achievements with the following typical discourse objectivation of such behavioral strategy: from *“I am*

¹⁷ According to the data from La Strada analysis of situations of violence against women in politics covering the period of 2010-2018. URL: <https://www.wfd.org/2018/08/06/violence-against-women-in-politics-case-study-ukraine>

not one of those who sits with children, I am career-minded [like a man]" to "She is not a real woman, she doesn't even have children", etc.

Women have increased demands towards other women with the following typical discourse objectivation of such behavioral strategy: *"it's her fault she was unable to keep her husband."*

Women doubt professionalism of other women with the following typical discourse objectivation of such behavioral strategy: *"a woman who drives is like a monkey with a grenade."*

Women are suspicious and distrustful of other women with the following typical discourse objectivation of such behavioral strategy: *"it is easier for me to communicate and be friends with men than women".*

There is unhealthy competition among women with the following typical discourse objectivation of such behavioral strategy: *"Nothing doing, she'd do anything to get what she wants."*

Women ignore female viewpoints with the following typical discourse objectivation of such behavioral strategy: *"What she can know about football?!"*

Women engage in victim-blaming and slut-shaming with the following typical discourse objectivation of such behavioral strategy: *"a normal woman anticipates danger", "I wouldn't get into such a spot", "it's her fault she wore that kind of outfit".*

Women transfer blame to a woman with the following typical discourse objectivation of such behavioral strategy: *"she stole a man", "she doesn't have her own man so she craves those with other women".¹⁸*

Therefore, some of our informants directly or contextually verbalized internal misogyny in the system of local government, its most widespread forms being juxtaposition, suspicion and distrust, competition, and sexist jokes. We'll pay special attention to the last aspect as rather often sexist jokes are associated with harassment (a form of discrimination including any unwanted and annoying physical and verbal behavior which offends or humiliates a person or violates their private life¹⁹), its extreme form being jokes of sexual nature. Some informants stated there was nothing like that in their professional field:

"This hasn't happened." (Interview No. 3)

¹⁸ Внутрішня мізогонія. Що нас змушує ненавидіти інших жінок. URL: <https://www.projectkesher.org.ua/news/vnutrishnia-mizohiniia-shcho-nas-zastavliaie-nenavydity-inshykh-zhinok/>

¹⁹ Шевченко З. Словник гендерних термінів. Черкаси: видавець Чабаненко Ю., 2016. URL: <http://a-z-gender.net/ua/xarasment.html>

"No. Everyone restrained from that." (Interview No. 5)

"Really, no." (Interview No. 6)

"No." (Interview No. 12)

However, another part of women stressed on constant mocking and jokes of sexual nature, both from men and women [*author's note: this can be considered a manifestation of internal misogyny*]:

"Oh, yes, yes." (Interview No. 7)

"Constantly... Both from men and women. I won't be too modest here, I am a beautiful woman and everyone keeps either 'complimenting' me or making hints of sexual nature." (Interview No. 4)

"Such jokes happen, yes. Not in my team, but in general. Let's say, these are people we see sometimes, so I did see things like that, there are some jokes and mocking, things like that towards women." (Interview No. 8)

"I've seen that." (Interview No. 9)

"We have jokes of sexual nature in our team as well, but they are mutual. They are not wicked, and we never cross the line but we can say something of that sort. This is not malicious." (Interview No. 2)

Harassment, humiliation and gender-based discrimination in society are a reflection of gender stereotypes we can classify into several groups:

- masculinity-femininity stereotypes, which include normative ideas about somatic, psychological and behavioral features typical for men and women. Masculinity-femininity stereotypes also clearly stipulate the dominating position of men and the submissive and dependent one of women;
- stereotypes about men's and women's work which strengthen the idea that a woman's work is of servicing nature and a man's work, of managing one. Here we can also clearly trace male domination and underappreciation of women's intellectual abilities. Just like in interpersonal relations, at work woman should also submit and play a secondary role;
- stereotypes associated with the distribution of family and professional roles, ideas that for woman the most important social role is that of a housekeeper and mother so she should stay in private sphere of life, and men

are to be included in social life, be professionally successful and responsible for providing for the family.

- attractiveness stereotypes are associated with evaluation of men's and women's appearance²⁰.

In the framework of the study, there was an objective to identify those gender stereotypes that women themselves are able to catch using reflective practices. In the system of local government, the function of gender stereotypes is associated with hierarchization and establishment of power relations, so it is manifested very explicitly as power is traditionally perceived as male environment. Masculinity and its characteristics (being active, decisive, aspiration for victory, confidence, strength, independence, severity, courage, etc.) are, on the one hand, equalized with power, and on the other hand, have a higher ranking in power context than femininity.

During the survey it was documented that all the abovementioned groups of stereotypes keep circulating in the system of local government. Though when asked "Have you noticed the application of gender stereotypes towards your colleagues?", most answered negatively, at the same time there were women who pointed to specific manifestation of stereotypes in the professional field:

"It happens that, for example, it also didn't happen to me personally, but when hiring I know that when we had young girl candidates, they were asked if they plan to get married and have children in the nearest year." (Interview No. 8)

"It happened to my colleague who is a technical employee. My direct supervisor also said: you're a woman, do I have to explain to you what else you should do?" (Interview No. 9)

"I think I've noticed that. A new employee came to our team, she had long white hair, puffed-up lips and really childish behavior. This story is also about her. But there was this attitude towards her: what can Yulia know if she looks like a little girl even though she is 38. But now she has demonstrated that she is a good expert so the attitude has changed a bit." (Interview No. 10)

"Yes. If I were a man, we could be in the same crowd and have common interests. But there is nothing common with a woman - I don't drink, smoke or go fishing. In the evening I have to run home because there's washing and cooking to be done." (Interview No. 11)

²⁰ Ткалич М. Психологія гендерної взаємодії персоналу організацій Автореферат дисертації на здобуття наукового ступеня доктора психологічних наук. К., 2016. URL: http://psychology-naes-ua.institute/files/pdf/avtoreferat_tkalich_1461816267.pdf

Interview fragments confirm that in the system of local government there is a partial stipulation of dominating situation of men and dependent and submissive one of women (masculinity-femininity stereotypes) and evaluation of men's and women's appearance (attractivity stereotypes).

In public opinion, there are rather resilient stereotypes about men's and women's work (stipulated idea that a woman's work is of servicing nature and a man's work, of managing one) and stereotypes associated with distribution of family and professional roles (stipulated idea that for a woman a significant social role is that of a housekeeper and a mother while domination in public space is reserved for a man). To confirm stereotypical perception of professional roles, women were asked if there was a distribution into "purely female" and "purely male" fields. As a result, though most women stressed that this distribution was conditional, they still verbalized culture-determined ideas about behavior and character traits of men and women working in this or that field:

"It is mostly associated with femininity, with character traits. That women are elected. It is most probably women because we are more gentle and patient." (Interview No. 5)

"I've seen that but it was an opposite thing - that men were chosen for a purely female field and this was a bit surprising." (Interview No. 4)

"Well, different things happen in life and professional surroundings, but it seems to be that we as women are responsible for the way we look, the way we perceive things and the way we convince." (Interview No. 7)

"Well, probably yes. We mostly have men in land commission and financial commission, and for example in my commission for MP activities there are no men at all." (Interview No. 9)

"I agree that there is a distribution of sorts. Because for women it is easier to communicate so they go into fields where you have to interact with people. It is easier for them there. But maybe this is my stereotype." (Interview No. 10)

"I believe that there is surely a distribution into purely male and purely female, but in local government I wouldn't say there is a significant distribution into male and female segments. There can be different requirements for a man and a woman. As candidates. But it depends on the boss." (Interview No. 11)

“Well... Medicine - no. The social sector, when it is about children, maybe a woman will manage that better. Where you have to work with children and families in dire life circumstances. Maybe a woman will be more practical there because she will use not just her knowledge but also her heart.” (Interview No. 12)

Therefore, the results of in-depth interview series confirm clear ideas about gender distribution of roles in the system of society's professional stratification among women in the system of local government. The negative consequence of the above is that political activity of women is condemned by “traditional values” because it contradicts the housekeeper image and doesn't leave time for “full-fledged” care for the household and family. This leads to unequal treatment of women and men in politics, shifting focus from evaluating their professional activities to the stress on due performance of gender-conditioned roles. In the media, this phenomenon is observed in the way articles are created and presented as well as in the method of constructing interviews. The media's attention to politicians' wives also plays a negative role; in popular opinion, they become associated with the image of a woman in politics. Highly educated photogenic housekeepers with elegant taste who left their job to take care of the family and support their husbands who are politicians make anti-heroines out of real women politicians who “left their families for the sake of career”²¹.

Therefore, in our opinion it would be reasonable to do the following to overcome the manifestations of women's discrimination and humiliation documented in the system of local government: to introduce efficient gender strategies of HR policy in the system of local government; to develop practical mechanisms of women's rights protection in the situation of gender-based discrimination and sexual harassment at work; and to develop programs and trainings with officials to prevent possible gender-based discrimination.

²¹ «Хто їм не дає?»: усе про перешкоди для жінок у політиці. URL: <https://genderindetail.org.ua/season-topic/polityka/hto-im-ne-dae-use-pro-pereshkodi-dlya-zhinok-u-polititsi-134900.html>.

SECTION 5

WOMEN IN THE SYSTEM OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF WAR

The last block of the study was dedicated to analyzing changes that affected women in the system of local government with the beginning of full-scale invasion and introduction of martial law. It is believed that war normally exacerbates patriarchal stereotypes, so presently Ukrainian women have got a double burden. At the same time, according to T. Martseniuk, during the eight years of war (the war in Ukraine has been ongoing since 2014) the situation with women's involvement in public and political life has changed. Now women are more visible in social processes, e.g. in politics, security and defense sector. In public opinion, more support for gender equality is also observed²². To confirm or refute these statements, we focused on the following questions in our interview:

“How did the war start for you personally?”

It is important to note that for most women full-scale invasion became an unexpected and stressful factor which is confirmed by the following interview quotes:

*“At first I couldn't believe that. I was confused. On the same day I understood I have to keep working and not give up so I ran to work.”
(Interview No. 1)*

“My mood wasn't depressed, it was more confused. Even though the war had been discussed a lot, there was information about it. But nobody believed that.” (Interview No. 2)

*“Oh, February 24... that was very scary... Well, we didn't want to believe in that but we understood what it was. Because they kept mulling over this situation on television... we immediately turned the TV on, saw all that and didn't want to believe. We didn't want to believe that... I didn't know what to do - cry, run, or whatever else.”
(Interview No. 3)*

“This was in the morning, I didn't let my child go to school and fell into a mental torpor. For two months, I didn't leave my bed, didn't cook or wash, didn't clean - it was a real torpor.” (Interview No. 4)

²² Не хочуть бути жертвами: як війна змінює українських жінок і ставлення до них в Україні та світі. URL: <https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/feminizm-hender-viyna-ukrayinski-zhinky-bizhenky/32221558.html>

*“Well, the first day for me was, I can’t say it was very calm, but maybe it was my emotions or understanding what was actually happening.”
(Interview No. 8)*

Being unprepared for war, first of all psychologically, but the willingness to act and consolidate are demonstrated by numerous sociological surveys in Ukraine conducted after the full-scale invasion.

“Have you thought about resigning and going abroad?”

Gradus Research analyzed the dynamics of migration moods among Ukrainians since the first days of full-scale invasion. It is noted that almost a half of those who had left their permanent place of residence already came back. The war of Russia against Ukraine radically or significantly changed the life of most people - this is a claim of 82% of respondents. And even though 61% of Ukrainians stayed at their permanent place of residence, others were forced to move to safer places. Out of those 82% migrated within Ukraine while 18% moved abroad. Most migrants are residents of eastern regions²³.

As for migration moods among surveyed women, the overwhelming majority didn’t plan to go abroad at all and argued their viewpoint by professional education, understanding their leadership position and responsibility:

“I don’t see myself anywhere except Ukraine... When there are certain people, they have to stay where they are. How do they say? Like ship captains... I see a lot of people similar to myself, they feel that until there is a life threat we have to be here... I plan to be in Ukraine. And I will work.” (Interview No. 6)

“You understand that if you give up your mandate now, other people will enter the regional council who were down the list. And I have already checked out who that could be. Unfortunately, these people are not going to make authorities healthier, it’s going to be corrupted people all over again.” (Interview No. 7)

“In the beginning of December I had certain fears. Well, I had some thoughts about options but I immediately rejected them because I don’t see my activities abroad at all. As a human, a professional and an employee, I see my future only in Ukraine.” (Interview No. 9)

“About resigning, yes. About leaving, never in my life.” (Interview No. 12)

²³ Кожен третій українець став мігрантом за 11 місяців війни, - дослідження Gradus Research. URL: https://lb.ua/society/2023/02/02/544550_kozhen_tretyy_ukrainets_stav.html

“In your opinion, has the war brought any rethinking of a woman’s place in Ukraine?”

Operational gender analysis conducted by UN Women and CARE (analysis is grounded on a series of surveys and interviews with people in 19 regions of Ukraine on 2-6 April 2022 and covers the gender dynamics of the crisis) demonstrates that gender roles in Ukraine are changing. While many men lost their jobs and went into military service, women are mastering new roles and working on several jobs to compensate for lost family income. Women also play a vital role in humanitarian response in local communities. At the same time, with the closure of schools, due to high demand for volunteer work and absence of men the burden of unpaid work women are forced to perform has significantly grown. A move away from gender equality principles is already obvious in the context of a prolonged crisis. War increases unemployment among the whole population, which will probably push women towards unprotected, unofficial economy sectors and cause poverty growth²⁴. The change of woman’s place and role in the context of war is also noted by the participants of our study:

“Yes, yes... it has changed that a lot. Rather strongly. In principle, women are morally strong. In some cases they are even physically stronger, actually.” (Interview No. 1)

“They say that men defend and we women are in the rear.” (Interview No. 4)

“I think it did, very strongly. It even seems to me that we aren’t aware of that, as if not aware of that anymore, but we already understand how much women now have to bear.” (Interview No. 6)

“Probably yes. And now I think that new roles will open: a female military, a female paramedic, a female volunteer. And this is something you can already see in real life.” (Interview No. 7)

“I believe that a woman’s stand has become stronger, namely for women, even though it’s war and they say it’s man’s business. But women manifested themselves very prominently and strengthened their positions.” (Interview No. 8)

“Well, presently I believe one can put an ‘equal’ sign, a woman equals a man.” (Interview No. 12)

²⁴ Україна: Новий звіт структури ООН Жінки та організації CARE підкреслює непропорційний вплив війни на жінок та спільноти меншин (4 травня 2022 р.). URL: <https://ukraine.un.org/uk/180993>

That is, the surveyed women point, on the one hand, to the important role of women in the rear, but on the other hand, stress on actualization of “new” gender roles, which are traditionally associated with male work, e.g. a female military. This statement is also confirmed by objective statistics. According to Minister of Defense Oleksii Reznikov who spoke at the 6th Ukrainian Women’s Congress (2 December 2022), in the Armed Forces there are “59,786 women, out of them 41,000 are military and almost 19,000 are civilian employees. Cf: as of 20 July 2022, Ukrainian army had 38,629 women. About 5,000 women are in the frontlines, participating in combat; out of them, 10% of women are in territorial defense, which is a part of Armed Forces structure. Since February, 101 women were killed, 50 went missing, and over 100 were injured. Over 350 women received state rewards, two of them posthumously.”²⁵

Despite the dangerousness of such life choice, i.e., becoming a military, most women we surveyed support cancellation of restrictions for women in military services and expansion of the list of posts for female military, referring to personal choice of each woman:

“Yes, I support that. I believe we can go anywhere. Women, I mean. This will discipline the guys. Women know how to keep things in order.” (Interview No. 11)

“Yes, women in Ukrainian army are a rather big force. It seems to me, this demonstrates real power, as if the whole of Ukraine stood up and it really motivates, it is crazy stuff.” (Interview No. 6)

“I support that. This is my personal opinion. A long time ago I dreamed to go to the army.” (Interview No. 12)

It is also worth noting that informants mentioned possible negative consequences of such initiative. In particular, Interview No. 10 documents the danger of future demographic crisis and decrease of Ukrainian population, namely due to women’s active participation in combat:

“We have to understand biological differences and that there is a gene pool, and it will be necessary to restore it. And if women go to war and we lose them, it will then cause a demographic crisis.” (Interview No. 10)

²⁵ Міністр оборони: сьогодні українські жінки можуть добре реалізуватися у ЗСУ. URL: <https://womenua.today/news/ministr-oborony-sogodni-ukrayinski-zhinky-mozhut-dobre-realizuvatysya-u-zsu/>

One of the study objectives was to determine the specifics of changes women faced in local government with the beginning of armed aggression. That is why when asked, *"How did the specifics of your work change with the beginning of Russia's armed aggression?"* most women pointed to the increase in the amount of professional obligations, especially in work with socially vulnerable population strata:

"Naturally, it changed. Radically... We are missing one employee now. She went on maternity leave so I am now on two posts." (Interview No. 2)

"Yes, yes, it changed. I was more in charge of cultural events, and now it is more about volunteering, social campaigns, social art, supporting people so that they forget about all that for a while, there are lots of IDPs and I search for some assistance for them, also providing some psychological support." (Interview No. 3)

"Well, I'd say the following: about six months ago, maybe a bit less, my tasks changed because of course the war made some significant corrections. And we needed to help, so I can say, we have re-oriented more towards helping." (Interview No. 8)

Working with internally displaced persons and the military has become the most relevant for women in local government of Dnipro region. This is logical as Dnipro region is actually close to the frontlines. At the same time, since the beginning of the full-scale invasion the region has had the most registered IDPs. As for volunteering, women associate that with their own active civic stand and performance of professional obligations:

"Yes, we help. We transport things. We search for humanitarian aid and contact people so that somebody helps us arrange places for IDPs. "Well, of course we do. They may be collecting masking nets somewhere, so we'd bring some." (Interview No. 12)

"We cook and wash clothing. We had a military unit here, we took their clothing and brought home, then washed, dried, ironed and mended it, plus cooked food... I bought a potbelly stove out of my own pocket and sent it to the frontlines." (Interview No. 11)

"At first the change was radical; I worked in a utility organization which started working as a shelter for IDPs. We took people in, and in parallel I collected assistance for the Armed Forces. Then we functioned as a hub accepting humanitarian aid and giving it out to

thos IDPs who lived on the territory of our community.” (Interview No. 9)

The war brought changes not only in the women’s work specifics but in the very system of local government. It is important to note that full-scale invasion enabled to assess the readiness of state system to efficiently act in a crisis and also to see possible vectors of further modernization. Among surveyed women, *Interview No. 6* highlighted the lack of coordination in actions of local government in the beginning of the war:

“In my opinion, this was first of all lack of coordination. On the other hand, military administration was established and it tried to influence that lack of coordination for some time. Well, if we had a clear hierarchical structure, maybe it wouldn’t be that flexible but it would be more manageable, and here everyone was confused.” (Interview No. 6)

As for the possible vector of changes, the opinions of surveyed women were different: some pointed to positive aspects in the functioning of local government system:

“It seems to me that lately... everything has been well. No radical changes are needed. Enough freedom was provided for local government to develop. And people and country will live better when people govern themselves in their city, their home, their community.” (Interview No. 5)

Others pointed to problematic issues (lack of human resources in public governance and administration, complicated bureaucratic system, drawbacks of administrative and territorial reform) and voiced their hopes for quality transformations:

“I think they will happen [author’s note - changes]. I can’t say which ones, but it’s obvious they will happen. Well, competent people are working on that. I think these people, each of them does their work in their field.” (Interview No. 3)

“I would like to have authority given back to the councils, what they had before. Well, now many issues can be solved only by the head, without the involvement of MPs, at the head’s discretion.” (Interview No. 9)

"I'd like to kill the red tape. And dig it deep into the ground. That's my golden dream, it has been like that as long as I work." (Interview No. 11)

"To bring rayons back. Because this is terrible. Agglomeration is terrible. What they did in reorganizing... Our rayon is 170 km away. But there is still dependency on the rayon center, so there's all that." (Interview No. 12)

And the last questions of our interview were dedicated to women's prospective view into the future. In this context all surveyed women noted that they associate the future with Ukraine's victory and rebirth of the nation; as for their own story, further plans were associated with an active civic stand:

"A dream... There's only one now. I dream for the war to end. I am sure that we'll be able to quickly bounce back, we are a strong nation in that aspect." (Interview No. 1)

"Victory! This... this is the only thing for the sake of which we live, we wait for this victory and work for that, each in their own place, we stand for our integrity and do everything possible for that." (Interview No. 3)

"My dream is probably the same as every Ukrainian's and not just Ukrainian's, for the war to end with our victory and for us to start reconstruction, renovation." (Interview No. 4)

"Well, we probably all have the same dream - it is our victory, it is liberation of our territory from the occupiers." (Interview No. 8)

Therefore, summing up the last block of the interview one should note that full-scale military aggression of Russia against Ukraine became a challenge for the whole society and system of public governance in general. During the year of war, since February 2022 until today, the Verkhovna Rada adopted scores of laws impacting the activities of local government, including those of women in the governance system. Professional roles and statuses underwent significant changes. Leadership potential and civic activism of Ukrainian women in the system of local government became a subject for discussion at the webinar held under the aegis of joint project by All-Ukrainian Territorial Community association and SALAR International "Support of Decentralization in Ukraine - 2nd Phase" and UN Women program "Advancing Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment through Decentralization Reform of Ukraine". When discussing the role and participation of women in local government during the war, the participants listed a huge amount

of work vectors they now cover, which also concern vulnerable population groups (both IDPs and local residents) and the military²⁶. Besides, the support provided by active women goes well beyond the boundaries of their communities. It was also telling that community representatives cared not only about execution of urgent operational tasks but also talked about strategic needs and their inclusion in the restoration of communities and arrangement of long-term partnerships.

²⁶ Роль та участь жінок у місцевому самоврядуванні під час війни. URL: <https://hromady.org/rol-ta-uchast-zhinok-u-miscevomu-samovryaduvanni-pid-chas-vijni/>

SECTION 6

SOME INFORMATION ABOUT LEGISLATION ON FUNCTIONING OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN UKRAINE AND COMPARISON WITH MAIN MODELS IN OTHER COUNTRIES

There are several models which significantly differ from each other by principles of local government formation, nature of its relations with national government, and interaction of representative and executive bodies in the system of local government.

The first model is municipal (Anglo-Saxon), which emerged in the UK and was then borrowed by many countries. Some characteristic features of this model are the following:

- significant autonomy of local governance bodies;
- no authorized representatives of the central authorities locally who would control local governance bodies;
- a range of local government officials are elected;
- local governance bodies can do only things directly envisaged by the law, which is the so-called positive principle of legal regulation;
- the activities of local government are mostly controlled indirectly, i.e., through central ministries, plus there is also strict judicial control.

The whole territory of the UK is divided into counties, unitarian formations and constituencies. UK local body structure includes a council and a team of officials. Each county and constituency has a council formed, which consists of the president and councillors. A political feature of UK local governance, compared to many other countries, is the actual delegation of council functions to its committees (commissions). Only councils carry power in the system of UK municipal governance. The authority of other divisions in municipality offices is viewed as derivative. The main feature of UK local governance is councils combining functions of general governance and operational activities.

The second model is bipolar, which includes Roman-Germanic, continental, French (France, Italy, Poland, Bulgaria, Turkey, Senegal, etc.),

popular in the countries of Europe, Africa, Latin America and the Middle East. The following features are characteristic for this model:

- compared to Anglo-American model, there is a higher degree of centralization and also vertical subordination;
- combination of local self-governance and direct state governance locally;
- local self-government bodies are allowed to do everything not prohibited by the law, which is a negative principle of legal regulation.

The continental model can exist on all subnational territorial levels (except the lowest) or only on the lowest level. In particular, in France local governance is regulated by the Republic's Constitution, Principal Code of administrative and territorial formations, French Administrative Code of local governance and the Code of communes. There are three levels of power organization locally: communes, departments, and regions. Italian Constitution envisages that communes, provinces, metropolitan cities and regions are autonomous formations, which have their own statutes, authority and functions according to the principles laid out in the Constitution. All regions in Italy are divided into two categories: regular (their status is determined by the regular law) and special (their status is not the same and is regulated by special constitutional laws). Five Italian regions have a special status, and their autonomy is wider.

The Polish model of voivodeship - powiat - gmina, which is similar to administrative and territorial structure of Ukraine is worthy of our attention as it was an example for our decentralization reform. The main difference between two models is that in Poland on the level of powiats there are no authorities with controlling functions like rayon state administrations in Ukraine. A legislative body in the powiat is the powiat council; an executive body is the powiat board, which performs its functions with the help of powiat's organizational units, i.e., starosty and other organizational units, which function in the fields of education, medicine, social welfare, culture, and infrastructure. Starosty is headed by a starosta elected from powiat council MPs. The system of local governance in Poland functions based on subsidiarity principle. This means that a basic unit of local governance is gmina, which solves all issues concerning gmina's internal life. Powiat only performs those duties that gmina is unable to cover²⁷. In Poland,

the service in local government bodies is regulated by the Law “On local government employees”. In Poland, the main obligations of local government official are to execute public tasks with regard to the interests of society and individual citizens. The Polish approach to types of local government employees by appointment criteria is the following. Polish local government officials are hired according to the results of elections based on appointment and labor agreement. Local government employees are hired to administrative posts, including managerial and auxiliary ones. The list of elected and appointed posts is provided in the Polish law. The elected posts include, for example, that of the head of gmina (mayor, city president). The appointed posts include that of deputy head of gmina (mayor, city president). Other local government employees work under labor contracts. A labor contract is concluded for a determined period or indefinitely. In case the person is hired on the post for the first time, the labor contract is concluded for a determined period, no longer than six months²⁸. In Poland, employees of communal institutions, gmina auxiliary departments, communal budget departments and budget institutions of local government are also persons covered by the Law. The provisions of the Polish law do not cover hired employees in local governance bodies whose legal status is defined separately. A common feature between Ukraine and Poland is the appointment on posts in local government bodies according to open competition results. However, according to Ukrainian law draft, the persons appointed to a post of local government official would be the first and the second (if available) candidate according to competition results.

The third model is Iberian (widespread in Spain, Brazil, Mexico and Portugal), which is very close to the continental model and envisages that local governance is performed by publicly elected representative bodies of local government (e.g., councils) and respective main officials of the local government (e.g., mayors, prefects) who are simultaneously heads of respective councils and their executive institutions and are approved by central authorities as representatives of national power in respective administrative and territorial units with the right of control over council activities. For example, Spain has the following links of national governance: Central government, autonomous regions, provinces, island councils, constituency cities, districts, unions of municipalities, municipalities, and submunicipal governance. In Portugal,

²⁸ <https://rpr.org.ua/news/sluzhba-v-orhanakh-mistsevoho-samovriaduvannia-ukrainy-ta-polshchi-v-chomu-riznytsia/>

according to the Constitution elected bodies of local government are established on the level of parishes, municipalities and administrative regions. The number of officials in Portuguese local government differs: as a rule, it is between a few and several tens of MPs.

The fourth model is mixed (widespread in Austria, Russia, and Germany) and characterized by features of Anglo-American and continental models. It is worth noting that in research, local (communal) government in Germany is singled out as an independent municipal system. In Germany, there are three conditions of legal regulation for local government: federal legislation, legislation of certain lander and legal relations adopted by citizens themselves. The main unit of political and territorial organization of lander are communities. In Austria, a lande as a federation subject is given a right to have its own constitution. The executive power in each lande is delivered by a government of the respective lande. A community with population of at least 20,000 can be given an independent status (municipal legal status).

The fifth model, “Soviet” one, is preserved in this or that form in Vietnam, Korea, China, and Cuba. The characteristic features are the following: 1) based on rejection of power distribution and no recognition of full power of representative bodies bottom-to-top; 2) all councils are national authorities on respective territories; 3) the council elects another national collegial body, an executive committee which is simultaneously subordinate to this council and to the executive committee of the higher level.

Along with that, constitutional and legal regulation of local government and self-governance issues in different countries is not the same.

In Ukrainian legislation, the functioning of local self-governance bodies is regulated by a range of legislative acts. In particular, those include: the Constitution of Ukraine as the main source of law for local self-governance, which contains regulations stipulating the main grounds and principles of local government organization in Ukraine; the Law of Ukraine “On local self-governance in Ukraine”²⁹; the Law of Ukraine “On Local Elections”³⁰; the Law of Ukraine “On service in local self-governance bodies”³¹; the Law of Ukraine “On status of MPs of Local

²⁹ Про місцеве самоврядування... | від 21.05.1997 № 280/97-ВР (rada.gov.ua)

³⁰ Про місцеві вибори | від 14.07.2015 № 595-VIII (rada.gov.ua)

³¹ Про службу в органах місцев... | від 07.06.2001 № 2493-III (rada.gov.ua)

Councils”³²; the Law of Ukraine “On Preventing Corruption”³³; and also the ratified European Charter of Local Self-Government³⁴. The abovementioned laws are valid at the moment of this report’s publication, with regard to amendments made in the recent years. A separate group of law sources for local self-government is legal acts adopted by local self-government bodies and their officials. These are Statutes of territorial communities; decisions of local councils determining the procedure of ownership, disposal, use and management of communal property; decisions on adoption of local budgets; and other legal acts adopted by local self-government bodies.

It is also worth noting that the work of local self-government system constantly improves; even now, in the context of martial law there is movement and initiatives aimed at improving current legal foundation of local government functioning. In particular, Verkhovna Rada committee for organization of national and local governance, regional development and city-building informs that in November 2022 the parliament approved in the first reading law draft No. 6504 on service in local self-government bodies, which is supported by all local government associations and EUAM and aims to regulate the work of local self-governance bodies according to the European standards³⁵.

The subjects of local self-government legal relations can be conditionally divided into two types. The first type of subjects of legal relations in local self-government includes those that have the right to approve decisions (or participate in the approval of decisions) on local issues. These are territorial communities as primary subjects of local self-government; elected bodies and officials of local self-government; heads of self-governed territorial formations and heads of rayon, regional, city rayon councils vested with their own competence to solve issues of local significance. The second type of subjects of legal relations in local self-government includes those that facilitate the implementation of local self-governance in this or that form, interact with the subjects of local self-governance law vested with authority to solve issues of local significance in different aspects of their activities, which concern rights and interests of self-governed territorial formations. This type of participants in legal relations of local self-governance includes bodies of public self-organization, associations and unions of self-governed territorial formations and their authorized representatives (local councils

³² Про статус депутатів місцевих рад | від 11.07.2002 № 93-IV (rada.gov.ua)

³³ Про запобігання корупції | від 14.10.2014 № 1700-VII (rada.gov.ua)

³⁴ Європейська хартія місцевого самовряду... | від 15.10.1985 (rada.gov.ua)

³⁵ Новини комітетів - Парламент працює над імплементацією європейських норм у сфері служби в органах місцевого самоврядування - Офіційний портал Верховної Ради України (rada.gov.ua)

or heads of villages, towns, cities), national bodies, civil associations; enterprises, institutions and organizations functioning on the territory of self-governed formations³⁶.

One of the factors that influenced the opportunities for involving women in governance was the reform of administrative and territorial structure towards decentralization. The respective decentralization reform led to agglomeration of territorial communities; therefore, the number of local councils diminished. If in 2015, there were local elections to 9,831 village and town councils with 131,989 MPs elected, in 2020 such elections were held for 1,051 councils with 23,894 MPs of village and town councils elected. According to Decree No. 807-IX of Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine “On establishment and liquidation of rayons” of 17 July 2020 the previous 490 rayons subordinate to regions were amalgamated into 136 rayons³⁷. As a result of the reform, there was significant expansion of authority and possibilities for local self-governance bodies, which indirectly encouraged the inclusion of more women in the political processes and their participation in decision-making in communities, therefore providing a further impetus for expanding gender equality in Ukrainian society.

For the first time the regulation on gender quota was included in election legislation in 2015, having approved the Law of Ukraine “On local elections” where Article 4 stipulated that “representation of persons of the same sex in candidate lists for local council MPs in multiple-mandate election constituencies has to amount to no less than 30 per cent from the total number of candidates in the election list. All local party organizations as subjects of the election process have equal rights and opportunities to participate in respective election process according to the procedure and within the limits established by this Law.”³⁸. At the same time, there was no specific requirement about the place in the list and no sanctions were envisaged for non-adherence to the abovementioned gender quota.

The following significant step was the approval by the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine in 2019 of Election Code which entered into force on 1 January 2020, and some amendments were introduced in this document in July and September

³⁶ https://maup.com.ua/assets/files/lib/book/teor_misc_samovryad_2017.pdf

³⁷ Постанова Верховної Ради України «Про утворення та ліквідацію районів». Відомості Верховної Ради України (ВВР), 2020, № 33, ст. 235. URL: <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/807-20#Text>.

³⁸ Закон України «Про місцеві вибори». URL: <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/595-19#Text>

2020. In particular, Article 219 of the Election Code envisages that “during formation of single and territorial election lists, the party organization shall ensure the presence in each five (spots from one to five, six to ten, etc.) of each election list of both men and women (no fewer than two candidates of each gender). If the party organization forms single and territorial election lists with the number of candidates, which is not in multiples of five, the candidates last on the list (between one and four) are to alternate by gender³⁹. Therefore, persons of the same gender in party election lists of MP candidates for community councils with at list 10,000 voters have to amount to no less than 40 per cent. A positive aspect is the difference from the Law of 2015 - the Election Code includes gender requirements to the procedure for proposing candidates. The violation of this procedure causes refusal to register election lists; therefore, for the first time there is a possibility of sanctions for violating gender quotas in party election lists. Respectively, for MP candidates to councils with fewer than 10,000 voters Article 220 of the same document stipulates that parties are to ensure representation of no less than 30 per cent of persons of the same gender from the total amount of candidates to the respective council⁴⁰.

Ukrainian Women’s Fund in partnership with National Democratic Institute (NDI) conducted gender monitoring of local elections and surveyed 10 experts on gender issues⁴¹. As a result of 2020 local elections women amount to 37% among all MPs in local councils of different level. According to information from the CEC, at the stage of registration there were over 100,000 women in party lists (45%). However, later some women withdrew their candidacies from elections and the share changed to 43%. There were also cases when lists with gender quota violations were still registered. For example, according to CEC in almost 17% (1354 out of 7943) registered party lists gender quotas were not met. In fact, territorial election commissions had no right to register such lists. Besides, unproportional placement of women and men in the “upper part” of the lists was unfavorable for the election of women. For example, even though there were 43% of women in party lists, among leaders of single and territorial lists there were only 16% and 21% women respectively⁴².

³⁹ Виборчий кодекс України. 2020. URL: <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/396-20#Text>

⁴⁰ Виборчий кодекс України. 2020. URL: <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/396-20#Text>

⁴¹ <https://uwf.org.ua/news-11916/?fbclid=IwAR2bQQEGE4jz19RqtRYf74rTtPUj-HVFMVCVY3SBv7iUM2SSkose5PF0Pxzo>

⁴² <https://uwf.org.ua/news-11916/>

In general, according to public survey results (November 2020, held by Democratic Initiatives fund named after Ilko Kucheriv⁴³) we clearly see that political field is the one where women are discriminated the most. From the list of almost 10 social fields, 29% women and 20% men selected politics as the field where women are discriminated the most (with labor market ranking second). To a similar question about discrimination of men in politics only 3% men and 2% women answered positively. The introduction of gender quotas helped general improvement of the situation with the representation of women in local self-government, but presently there are still significant disproportions in the possibilities of women's fulfillment on leadership positions.

⁴³ <https://dif.org.ua/article/perevagi-ta-vikliki-zastosuvannya-gendernoi-kvoti-pid-chas-mistsevikh-viboriv-2020-roku-v-ukraini>

CONCLUSIONS

Let us make the general conclusions out of the conducted study. Women's career fulfillment in the system of local government is an urgent need for creation of inclusive space of social justice, equality of rights and opportunities for each one to achieve professional success. The analysis of conducted interviews allowed us to document a range of problematic cases which, regardless of positive changes in Ukrainian society with adherence to equality of rights, are still present in the system of professional relations.

One of such problems is gender asymmetry on leadership positions of a higher governance level. While in Ukrainian society the total number of women exceeds that of men (54% to 46% respectively), there are much fewer of them in national and local politics. Unproportional representation of women on leadership positions has been documented on all levels of governance. For example, in the current (9th) convocation of the Verkhovna Rada, there are 440 MPs: out of them 348 are men (79.1%) and 92 are women (20.9%), and this is the best results during all years of Ukraine's independence. On key posts - city, town and village mayors and deputy mayors in the local community and secretaries of local councils - there are 38.94% of women and 61.06% of men. The most frequent source of gender asymmetry is latent discrimination and ideas about traditional roles of a woman dominant in public opinion. Among barriers for achieving professional fulfillment, women leaders noted the following: stereotypes associated with prejudiced attitude to professionalism and leadership skills of women; the need for finding balance between work and family care; and an informal system of relations, the so-called "male circle" of communication which limits access to resources and opportunities. Low level of support for the idea of gender parity in politics using national and local awareness-raising campaigns is also a notable factor.

An alternative to informal system of relations between male leaders is the introduction of mentorship program for young female experts in local government system. Mentorship programs help to form the necessary professional skills to overcome barriers young female experts face in the political arena and to fully realize their professional potential. Joining with experienced mentors who can provide advice, feedback and support they will be able to obtain valuable information and knowledge helping the young peers' fulfillment

in professional career. Moreover, these programs can help overcome consequences of discrimination, ensuring safe and favorable communication space for women to speak about their problems, share their experiences and learn from each other. Almost all study participants were not aware of mentorship concept but during the conversation they expressed their interest and even willingness to introduce political mentorship programs in local communities.

The study's object of analysis was internal reflection of women in the system of power relations and local government on circulating gender stereotypes and present discrimination. Most informants adamantly denied the facts of humiliation, devaluation and offenses based on their gender. Such negations also concerned various manifestations of economic and professional impact like reduction of bonuses and additional payouts based on gender, unjustified requirements for work, additional tasks or unrealistic deadlines. However, among informants there were those who faced discrimination and sexism in the course of their professional activities. In the course of study results analysis we identified internal misogyny in the system of local government, i.e., women's intolerance to other women or features considered "feminine" in the given culture. Sexist jokes, devaluation of other women's aspirations and achievements, suspicion and distrust along with competitiveness are typical discourse forms for objectivation of such behavioral strategy. Interview fragments confirm that in the system of local government there is a partial stipulation of dominating situation of men and dependent and submissive one of women (masculinity-femininity stereotypes) and evaluation of men's and women's appearance (attractivity stereotypes).

As for practical recommendations, to overcome the manifestations of women's discrimination and humiliation documented in the system of local government it would be reasonable to do the following: to introduce efficient gender strategies of HR policy in the system of local government; to develop practical mechanisms of women's rights protection in the situation of gender-based discrimination and sexual harassment at work; and to develop programs and trainings with officials to prevent possible gender-based discrimination.

The last block of the study was dedicated to analyzing changes that affected women in the system of local government with the beginning of full-scale invasion and introduction of martial law. As for its results, the participants

pointed to the changes in the specifics of their work, greater workload, human resources shortage in the system of governance and administration, complicated bureaucratic system, and drawbacks of administrative and territorial reform.

It is worth noting that achieving equal rights and opportunities and creating an inclusive space for women's professional development in local government will help not only a more efficient and democratic governance system but also positively influence the development of civic sector, economy, and social field in general. To achieve this goal, systemic changes are needed to raise public awareness about supporting women's participation in politics. The idea of mentorship for women for the development of their professional potential and career fulfillment is also an important one.