

Position of Women in Public Administration in Slovak Republic - the Case of Municipal Offices



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A B S T R A C T

Women present half of population in Slovak republic. Their position in society is still changing. Historical evidence shows, that despite of the same abilities of men and women, the position of women in society is often linked with taking care of children and household. Following the questionnaire survey results, this paper shows some similar trends of women position in private and public sector, especially the case of municipal offices as a part of public administration in Slovak republic.

KEW WORDS: *women, education, private and public sector, Slovak republic, EU*

Introduction

Social role of women predetermined their position in everyday occurrence. Women are often linked with taking care of children and household. It is still rare to be a female top manager, head of department or politician. Nowadays, equality between women and men is one of important European Union's (EU) objectives. According to EU research there is still a 15% pay gap between women and men which arises from structural inequalities such as segregation in work sectors. On average, 30% of entrepreneurs in the EU are women. In accessing finance and training, women often face greater difficulties than men. (Council

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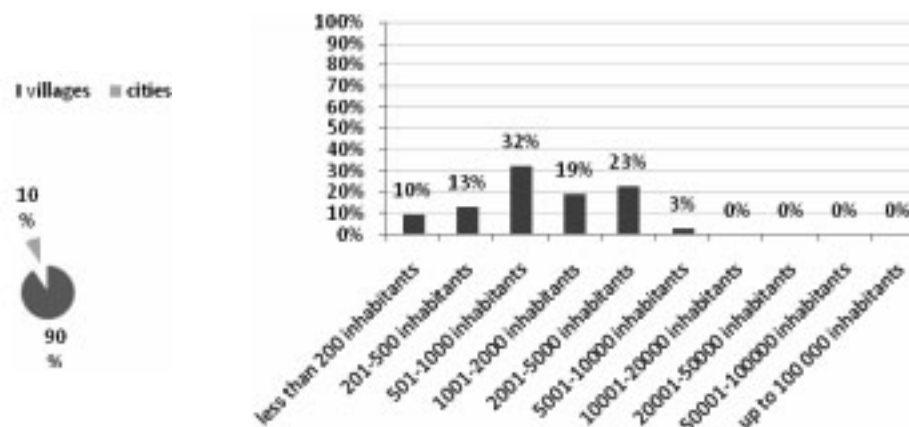
Directive 2004/113/EC, 2004) And what is the situation in public sector? To obtain a broad view at this question we realized a questionnaire survey. The questionnaire was anonymous and was submitted to municipalities' representatives.

The Questionnaire Survey

The questionnaire was divided in four parts. The first one identified the structure of respondents – if the respondent is a village or a city, what are the location, the size and the altitude of the municipality in the question. The second part was focused on finding out the total number of employees of the municipal office and the proportion of women employed. The third part contained questions about the age and position structure of its women employees. The last part of the questionnaire detected some characteristics of women performance quality and performance approach.

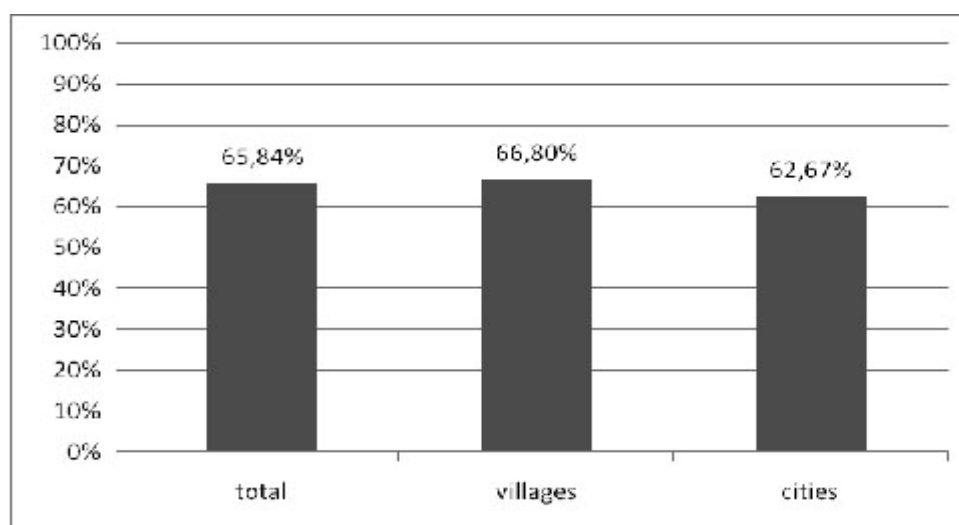
The structure of respondents is following (Figure1). Up to 90% of respondents are villages. In general, 98% of municipalities in Slovak republic are villages. Figure 1 shows the most current size of respondents. We can observe that the majority of respondents (up to 73%) are municipalities with less than 2 000 inhabitants. It is also similar to Slovak structure of municipality size categories. A lot of small municipalities with small number of inhabitants are characteristic for Slovak republic. This fact is known as disintegrated residential structure. Therefore, this questionnaire survey can be considered as relevant.

Figure 1: Structure and size of respondent municipalities



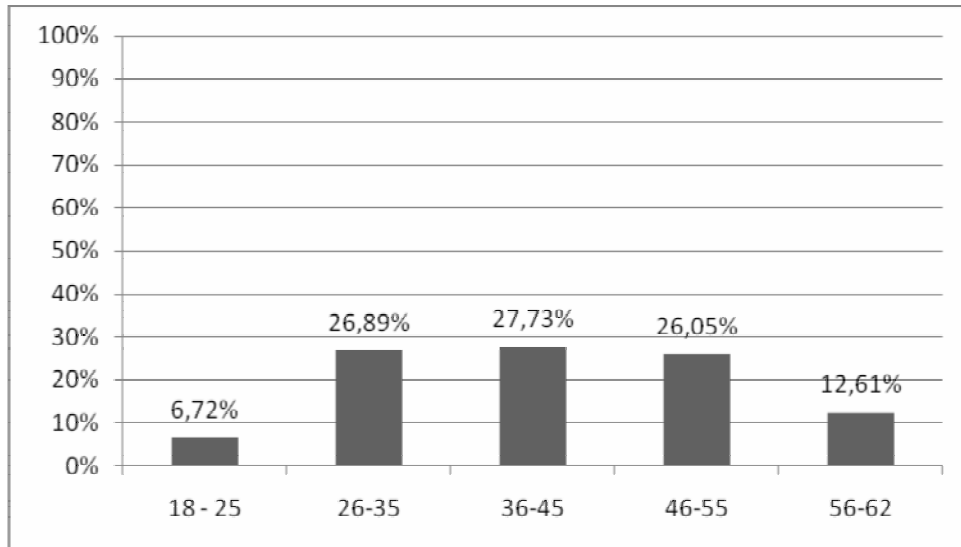
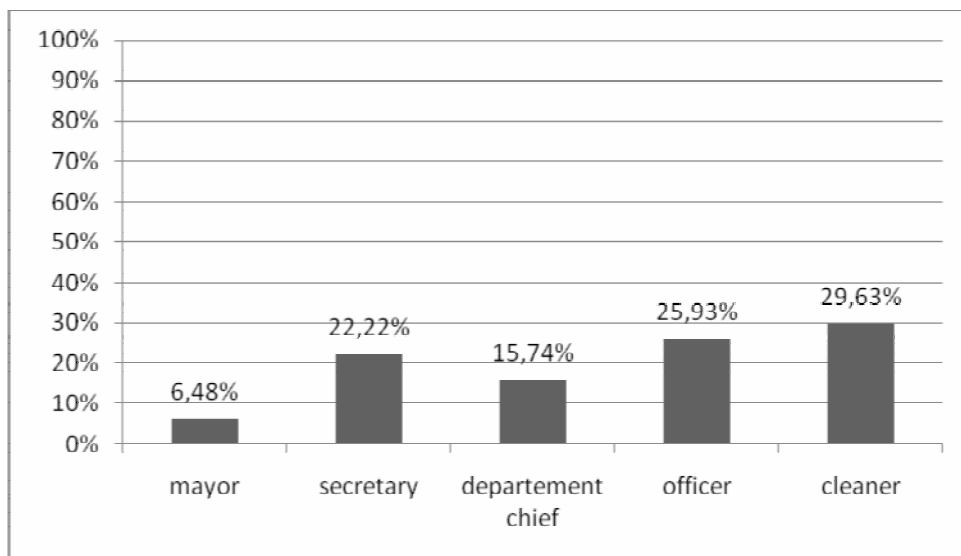
The respondents were asked to state the total number of their employees and the number of women employed in the municipal office. The results are not surprising. As the Figure 2 shows, women represent more than a half of the employees' count. This tendency is the same both in villages and cities.

Figure 2: Women's proportion in municipal office employee count



In the next part of the questionnaire we found out the age structure of women employed at municipal offices. The interval was determined from 18 to 62 years, because in Slovak republic people can work from the age of 18 and the retirement age is 62 years. Figure 3 shows that the most frequent age - class distribution - is the class between 36 and 45 years, but also the classes of 26 – 35 and 46 – 55 are very frequent. Right in the two most frequent classes, women with family and small children are included. Few men take parental leave or work part-time. Measures should be taken to encourage them to take up family responsibilities. [2]

In the part where the position structure of women employed at the municipal offices was examined, respondents could choose from the following possibilities; mayor of the municipal office, secretary, department chief, officer and cleaning woman. From figure 4 we can see that the least frequent position is mayor – head of the municipal office. We can suppose that men are more often in the head position not only in public sector but also in private sector.

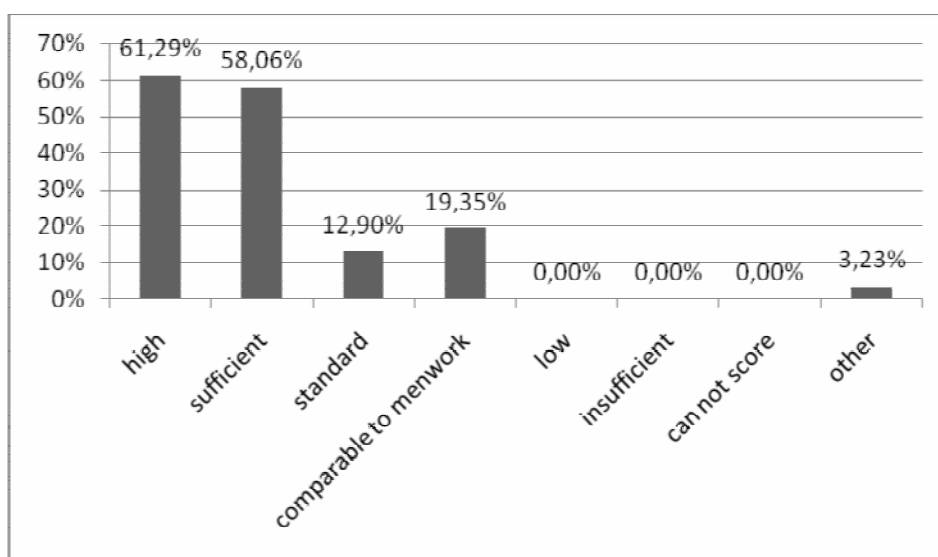
Figure 3: Age structure*Figure 4: Position structure*

Women's persistent under-representation in civil society, politics and senior management in public administration is a democratic deficit. A balanced participation can contribute to a more productive and innovative work culture. Transparency in promotion processes is essential. Reaching

the target, set by the Member States, women's increase of proportion by 25% in leading positions in public sector research can contribute to increasing the innovation, quality and competitiveness of research. O, (Council Decision 2001/51/EC, 2000) But according to results of our questionnaire, women are frequently employed as secretaries and officers. Furthermore, cleaning is exclusively woman's work also in other sectors.

Globally, only three EU states have more than 40% of women municipality councillors in local Governments. Eleven member states have less than 20% women municipality councillors. Whether mayors and municipality councillors are elected by citizens or appointed appears to have no impact on the percentage of women in local Governments. Only four EU member states have more than 20% of women mayors in Local Government. None of the member states has reached the required minimum of each sex. Three member states have no women mayors at all. In EU member states, 90% of mayors at local government level and 75% of councillors in municipal council are men. [5]

Figure 5: Performance quality

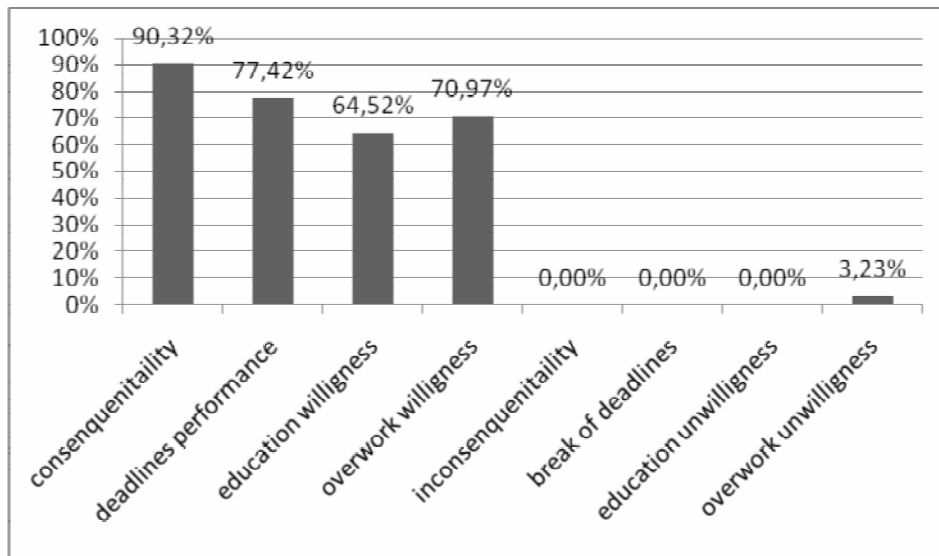


In the last part of the questionnaire we were investigating the women work valuation. It should be noticed that according to results in part presenting the position structure of women employed at municipal offices; the men evaluated the performance quality (Figure 5) and performance

approach (Figure 6) of women. The results are clear. Performance quality of women is considered as high or sufficient and comparable to men work.

The characteristics of performance approach of women employed at municipal offices are thoroughness, keeping the deadlines, overwork willingness and education willingness.

Figure 6: Performance approach



Summary

According to children care, women are devoted to look after other people, to communicate and to solve everyday's problems patiently. They are more emotive and apprehensive. Men and women have different life experience and also their position in real life is different. Men are more often in a position of leader, chief or head although women abilities are the same. This finding is supported by several researches. Our questionnaire offers similar results. At municipal offices work over 60% of women with the most frequent age between 26 and 46 years. The most frequent positions of women employed at municipal offices are secretary, officer and cleaning lady. Their work is considered as very good, women are consistent, they keep the deadlines, they are willing to educate themselves and overwork. Their performance quality is at least sufficient and comparable to men work.

Achieved results correspond with our expectations, that there is a large number of women employees in public administration at municipal level, but they are rarely at the head position despite of the fact, that their work is considered as good and comparable to men's.

Moreover, our results are supported by results of other researches in this field: "... Balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making is a matter of human rights and democracy. Decisions made by political and public bodies have long-term consequences and it is important that the views and interests of women are fully represented in these spheres. Despite progress achieved in Council of EU member states, women are still seriously under-represented in political and public decision-making and continue to face difficulties in becoming involved in equitable numbers in the political process. ... " [5]

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