



## GENDER OUTCOMES OF THE REVOLUTION OF DIGNITY AND RUSSIA'S WAR ON UKRAINE

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## Gender Outcomes of the Revolution of Dignity and Russia's War on Ukraine

*Women played a prominent role in the 2013–2014 Revolution of Dignity and the war against Russia. This brief examines gender outcomes of mass mobilization in contemporary Ukraine. Drawing upon social movement literature, the brief singles out political, socioeconomic, and cultural outcomes of the revolution and the ensuing war. First, the brief compares patterns of women's representation in the national parliament and local governments before and after the Revolution of Dignity. Second, the brief analyzes women's participation in the labor market and the gender wage gap. In particular, the brief highlights women's greater presence in the armed forces since the onset of the war in 2014. Third, the brief uses data from three waves of the World Values Survey to gauge shifts in mass attitudes toward women's empowerment. The brief suggests that some progress toward gender equality was made. Yet, there remain a number of structural and cultural barriers to women's empowerment.*

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Women played a vital role in the 2013–2014 Revolution of Dignity and the Russia-Ukraine war. Over the course of mass mobilization, women coordinated an extensive network of volunteers, executed a wide range of crowdsourcing initiatives, offered pro bono legal aid and urgent medical care for protesters, disseminated information, produced art of resistance, and joined self-defense units (*sotni*).<sup>1</sup> Many participants in the revolution subsequently became involved in the war to defend Ukraine's independence and democracy against Russia's aggression.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, women and children made up 90 percent of 5.5 million people who has fled the war-torn country by April 2022, which affected gender dynamics of the humanitarian crisis resulting from the war.<sup>3</sup>

This brief examines gender outcomes of the Revolution of Dignity and the ensuing war. Drawing upon social movement literature,<sup>4</sup> the analysis distinguishes several types of outcomes:

- **Political** outcomes, measured by changes in electoral laws and the share of women's representation in government;
- **Economic** outcomes, measured by unemployment rate, the gender wage gap and occupational segregation
- **Cultural** outcomes, measured by mass attitudes toward gender equality and women's empowerment.

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<sup>1</sup> Nikolayenko, Olena. 2020. "Invisible Revolutionaries: Women's Participation in the Revolution of Dignity." *Comparative Politics* 52(3): 451–472.

<sup>2</sup> Grytsenko, Ganna, Anna Kvit and Tamara Martsenyuk. 2016. *Invisible Battalion: Women's Participation in ATO Military Operations in Ukraine*. Kyiv: Ukrainian Women's Fund; Jarymowycz, Christina Olha. 2020. "Guardians and Protectors: The Volunteer Women of the Donbas Conflict." *Feminist Review* 126(1): 106–122.

<sup>3</sup> For details, see UN Women and CARE International. 2022. *Rapid Gender Analysis of Ukraine*. New York: UN Women. Retrieved from <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2022/05/rapid-gender-analysis-of-ukraine>.

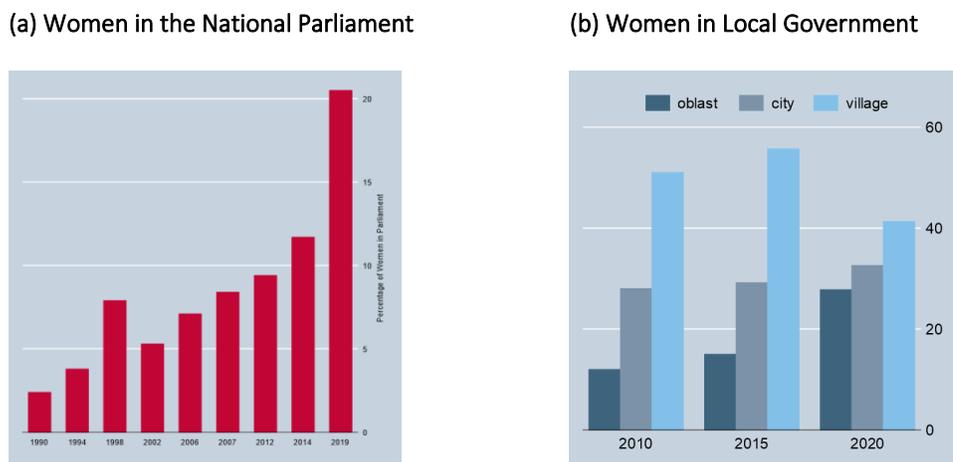
<sup>4</sup> Bosi, Lorenzo, Marco Giugni, and Katrin Uba, eds. 2019. *The Consequences of Social Movements*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

It is critical for various stakeholders, including the Ukrainian government, international organizations, and non-governmental organizations, to develop a blueprint for the post-war reconstruction of Ukraine, taking into account four pillars of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security: (1) participation, (2) protection, (3) prevention, and (4) relief and recovery.<sup>5</sup>

## Political Outcomes

Since 2014, Verkhovna Rada, Ukraine's national parliament, introduced various changes in electoral laws, including gender quotas. Article 4 of the 2015 Law on Local Elections stated that representation of either sex on the candidate list under the proportional system must be no less than 30 percent. However, the passage of this law on the eve of the 2015 elections, as well as lack of any sanctions for non-compliance with the gender quota, weakened its impact on the electoral process. The 2020 Electoral Code raised the gender quota to 40 percent in localities with over 10,000 voting-age population and extended its application to both local and national elections.<sup>6</sup>

Figure 1. Women's Representation in Government



Sources: Committee of Voters of Ukraine; Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Parline. 2020. *Historical Data on Women in National Parliaments*. Retrieved from <https://data.ipu.org/historical-women>.

Women's representation in government has recently increased, albeit there is considerable variation in the share of women deputies across different types of legislative bodies. As seen in Figure 1a, the percentage of women in the national parliament increased from 3.9 in 1994 to 11.7 in 2014, and it surged to 20.5 as a result of the 2019 snap elections, held three months after Volodymyr Zelensky's resounding win in the 2019 presidential election. Women's representation in oblast legislatures increased from 12 percent in 2010 to 14.9 in 2015 and 27.8 in 2020. The

<sup>5</sup> The full text of the UN Resolution 1325 (2000) is available at: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/docs/2000/10/un-security-council-resolution-1325>.

<sup>6</sup> According to the Electoral Code, no less than 2 of 5 candidates on a party list should be of a different sex (*stat'*). Retrieved from <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/396-20#n4129>.

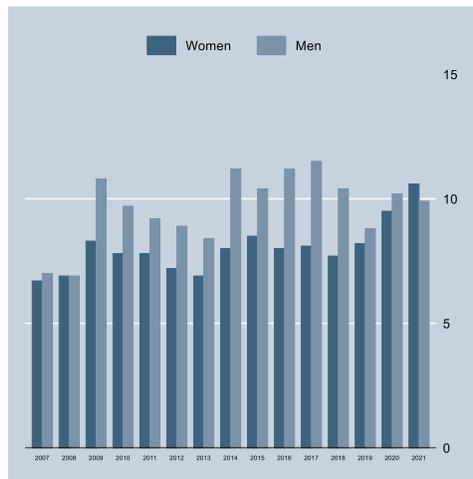
proportion of women slightly improved in city councils (28 percent in 2010 vs. 32 percent in 2020), while it declined in village councils. These statistics offer a rather crude measure of women’s empowerment.

A closer analysis of legislative work by women deputies would provide us with a more accurate assessment of women’s role in domestic politics. For example, an examination of the distribution of leadership positions within local legislatures indicates that women are less likely than men to be appointed as heads of standing committees and in particular women are less likely to head committees on finance, infrastructure, land, the use of natural resources, and communal property.<sup>7</sup>

### Economic Outcomes

According to the official statistics, unemployment rate was slightly higher for working-age men than working-age women throughout the 2010s. In 2015, for example, the unemployment rate was 8.5 percent for women and 10.4 for men (Figure 2). Yet, the statistics do not reflect men’s and women’s participation in the informal economy.

Figure 2. Unemployment Rate among Working-Age Women and Men

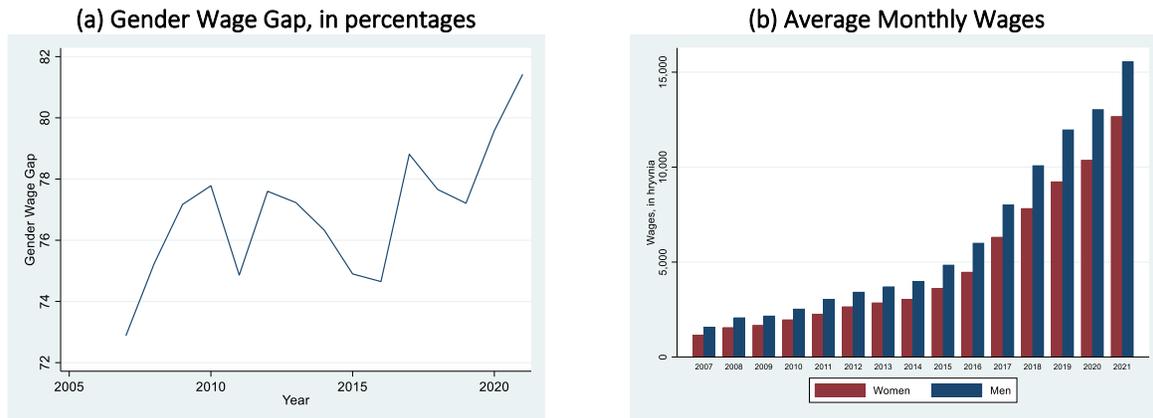


Source: State Statistics Service of Ukraine. 2022. Retrieved from <http://ukrstat.gov.ua>.

Gender wage gap is widely used as an indicator of gender inequality in the labor market. State Statistics Service of Ukraine measures this gap as the difference in average monthly earnings between men and women who are employed by an entity with at least ten employees. As shown in Figure 3, women, on average, earned 77 *kopiyok* for every *hryvnia* earned by men between 2009 and 2019. In 2021, women, on average, earned 81.4 percent of men’s wages. However, the gender wage gap remains larger in certain industries.

<sup>7</sup> Ukrainian Women’s Fund. 2020. *Final Report on Gender Monitoring of the 2020 Local Elections*. Kyiv: UWF, pp. 65-68.

Figure 3. Gender Wage Gap, 2007–2021



Source: State Statistics Service of Ukraine. 2022. Retrieved from [http://www.ukrstat.gov.ua/operativ/operativ2017/gdn/smzp\\_zs/smzp\\_zs\\_ek/smzp\\_zs\\_ek\\_u.htm](http://www.ukrstat.gov.ua/operativ/operativ2017/gdn/smzp_zs/smzp_zs_ek/smzp_zs_ek_u.htm).

Occupational segregation – gender-based distribution of workers across and within occupations – is another marker of inequalities in the labor market. The gender segregation of occupations was especially pronounced in the military. Since the start of the war, however, the number of women who served in the military increased from 16,557 in 2013 to 31,757 in 2020.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, women succeeded in making the Ministry of Defense expand a list of occupations and positions open for women, which enabled women to officially assume combat positions.<sup>9</sup>

## Cultural Outcomes

Cultural norms are slow to change. Nonetheless, opinion polls suggest that there is a gradual increase in the level of public acceptance of women’s leadership roles in business and politics. Approximately half of WVS respondents in 2020, compared to 40.8 percent (political leaders) and 44.1 percent (business executives) in 2006, disagreed with the statements that men make better business executives and political leaders than women do. Moreover, there is growing support for the idea that equal rights for women and men are an essential characteristic of democracy.

<sup>8</sup> *UkrInform*. 2021. “Number of Servicewomen in Ukraine Almost Doubles over Seven Years.” March 6. Retrieved from <https://www.ukrinform.net/rubric-defense/3203581-number-of-servicewomen-in-ukraine-almost-doubles-over-seven-years.html>.

<sup>9</sup> See, for example, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/z0881-16#n5>.

Figure 3. Attitudes toward Women’s Empowerment



Source: World Values Survey, <https://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSContents.jsp>.

Discussion Points

- What are the most reliable measures to evaluate the impact of anti-regime mobilization and war on gender equality?
- How should policymakers take into account the heterogeneity of the female population?
- How can the impact of structural changes (e.g. electoral laws) be strengthened by programs directed at government officials and politicians to foster support for gender equality within government agencies and political parties?

- How should the Ukrainian government revise the National Action Plan for 2020–2025 on the implementation of UN Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security in response to Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine?<sup>10</sup>
- How can different stakeholders incorporate gender mainstreaming policies into post-war reconstruction plans?<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> The text of the National Action Plan adopted in October 2020 is available at:

<https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1544-2020-%D1%80#Text>.

<sup>11</sup> For an overview of gender mainstreaming policies, see Hannan, Carolyn. 2022. *Handbook on Gender Mainstreaming for Gender Equality Results*. New York: UN Women. Retrieved from

<https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2022/02/handbook-on-gender-mainstreaming-for-gender-equality-results>.