

## ENUT News 2/1999

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### Editorial

The second issue of ENUT News is devoted to giving an overview of the Estonian Women in Politics conference held on February 4-6, 1999, at the Tallinn Pedagogical University, and an analysis of the parliamentary elections on March 7, 1999.

On the eve of the Conference, ENUT (Estonian acronym for the Estonian Women's Studies and Resource Centre) was opened officially. Mait Arvisto, the Rector of the Tallinn Pedagogical University (TPU) where the Centre is located, gave the opening address. Suzanne Lie, ENUT's Academic Director, told the guests about the history of ENUT, and introduced Selve Ringmaa, ENUT's Administrative Director.

The Centre's library of books, purchased with a grant from the Government of the Province of Ontario, Canada, was turned over to the Centre by Eda Sepp, a member of ENUT's board. The audience included representatives from the foreign embassies that have supported and contributed to the development of the Centre. The program, held in the auditorium, was followed by a reception and open-house at the Centre.

The Conference was attended by more than 200 people, representing 129 organizations across Estonia. First day's program included plenums on "Women in Politics", "Women in Estonian Politics", and "Strategies to increase women's participation in politics". The plenums were followed by a total of six workshops: 1) Women and political activity, 2)

Networking among women, 3) Political women's public image and how to achieve positive impact, 4) Women's agenda, 5) Women in local politics, 6) Cultural stereotypes among women and men working together. On the second day, a panel discussion on "Strategies to increase women's participation in Estonian politics" was held in the morning with conclusions drawn by Jill M. Bystydzienski, in the afternoon. Valve Kirsipuu, Selve Ringmaa and Suzanne Lie gave closing remarks.

Parliamentary Elections on March 7, 1999

Riigikogu (the parliament) consists of 101 delegates. The previous Riigikogu had 11 women delegates. Two women held ministerial posts in the government: Tiiu Aro was the Minister of Social Services and Andra Veidemann was the Population Minister. The newly elected Riigikogu has 18 women delegates an increase of 63.6%, but constituting 17.8% of the Riigikogu delegates. Women constitute 53% of Estonia's population.

The 18 women delegates are: Siiri Oviir, Liina Tõnisson, Viive Rosenberg, Erika Salumäe, Laine Tarvis, Marju Lauristin, Liia Hänni, Liis Klaar, Jaana Padrik, Sirje Endre, Mari-Ann Kelam, Kadri Jäätma, Valve Kirsipuu, Kristiina Ojuland, Maret Maripuu, Ivi Eenmaa, Mai Treial, Valentina Võssotskaja. The new government has two women ministers: Signe Kivi is the Cultural Minister and Katrin Saks is the Population Minister. Riigikogu has for the first time a woman, Siiri Oviir, as an Assistant Speaker, and one committee out of ten – the Constitution Committee - is chaired by a woman, Liia Hänni.

Work in the future needs to draw attention to the need for women to head important committees and decision making councils, and to appoint women to major governmental posts.

May 7 Seminar "Estonian women and local elections."

Local elections will be held in Estonia on October 17, 1999. In this connection, ENUT is planning a May 7 Seminar. The aim is to increase the number of women in political office, to advance democratic development, and to draw attention to critical social issues.

### **ENUT Activities**

ENUT is in the process of developing databases on women's organizations in Estonia, and a registry of research being done in Estonia on women and gender. An ENUT website is also being developed.

New personnel. Kristiina Luht came aboard in February as half-time Assistant Librarian, Eed Hõimoja and Kadri Josua has been working at the Centre as part-time librarians since April.

On February 10, Gerald Skinner, Canada's Charge d'Affaires at the Canadian Embassy in Riga, and Mrs. Ilham Skinner visited the Centre. Canada was the largest contributor of funds for the purchase of 2,500 books for our Library. Canada has also given to the Centre used furniture and office equipment.

Femina Baltica seminar on February 18, held at the Tallinn Pedagogical University, was the first theme meeting sponsored by the Baltic-Nordic Women's Network on women and reproductive health. It was part of the gender studies sponsored by the European Union via the European Regional Development Fund. Thirty-five delegates from the

Baltic and Nordic countries were represented. The seminar's opening took place at ENUT. Administrative Director, Selve Ringmaa, introduced the Centre and its facilities to the delegates and led the workshop on young researchers. Our board member, Eda Sepp, led the workshop on women's studies and presented the program of the Centre.

Administrative Director Selve Ringmaa attended a seminar on the Promotion of the Status of Women in Riga, Latvia. The seminar held on March 14 and 15, was a joint project by the United States and Finland. Selve's travel was funded by the Finnish Embassy in Tallinn.

Assistant librarian Kristiina Luht was in Minsk, Belarus, on March 16-18, in order to attend the ECE/UNDP Workshop on Gender Statistics. Her travel was sponsored by UNDP.

ENUT arranged a meeting of the Speaker of the Norwegian Parliament, Kirsti Kohl Gröndahl, and the Speaker of the Swedish Parliament, Brigitta Dahl, with the women delegates to the Estonian Parliament. Both speakers, Ms. Gröndahl and Ms. Dahl, were on an official visit to Estonia. The meeting was covered by the news media and it signaled to the Estonian population the importance the governments of Norway and Sweden place on the role of women in politics.

#### Coming Events

We plan to publish our third issue of ENUT News in the fall and to bring you summaries of our May seminar and an analysis of the October elections. We will also publish a journal containing articles of some of the presentations at the February conference as well as those made at the May seminar. In addition, it will include selections of presentations given at ENUT seminars conducted in 1998 and 1999.

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### **Opening Address at the Conference**

*Tiiu Aro, Minister of Social Affairs*

While the Estonian constitution guarantees democratic freedoms, reality shows that men dominate on all levels of government. Estonia's process of bringing its laws into conformity with EU shows that we have room for improvement. Some laws either favor or harm the interests of men and women. At the beginning of the century there existed voices demanding equal rights, such as equal pay for equal work. During the first period of independence, laws were passed that equalized rights for men and women, but effective power remained largely in the hands of men. The 1940 occupation ended the work of all women's organizations as well as the other non-governmental organizations. In our current situation of restored independence, most people think that equal rights have been restored. Reality shows otherwise:

1. The constitutional right to equality was only recently given institutional grounding by the statute that established the bureau of Equal Rights in the Ministry of Social Affairs, and to date it consists of only one person.
2. Estonia provides no special statutory protection of equal rights.

3. Sociological and sociopsychological analyses of equal opportunities are only in the beginning stages.
  4. Stereotypical selections prevail in higher education, the workplace and politics.
  5. Women's participation on the national level is relatively low. This conference indicates movement toward change and it should lead to application of equal rights principles in all governmental agencies; to analysis of Estonia's laws and their reform through the prism of equal rights; to collection of sociological data on which to base domestic programs and the reports to international organizations expected from us; to publicizing of men's and women's concerns; to balancing of representation in the power structures. Estonia has assumed many international responsibilities and that will contribute toward the development of equal rights. We have many active NGO's which also indicates movement toward greater equality. Striving for equal rights is a never-ending process as we see by looking at countries that have been involved with it a long time. In our society, with its legacy of ideological coercion, we must also be sensitive to the boundaries individual or group freedoms have.
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### **What is Women's Studies?**

*Suzanne Lie, Professor and Academic Director of ENUT*

Perhaps one of the major achievements of women academics over the last 30 years has been the genesis and growth of Women's Studies as a formal area of teaching and research which concentrates on issues regarding the life situation of women.

The aim of Women's Studies was to raise consciousness of both men and women to such a level that women need no longer be regarded as the "second sex", to question traditional roles and to value and develop women's abilities and confidence. Other goals were to build a body of research about women, to re-envision the lost culture and history of women, and to introduce this new knowledge into "mainstream curriculum" of universities.

The spread of Women's Studies, which is international in scope, is perhaps the most striking and dramatic success story of strategic planning and networking of the women's movement. These initiatives have occurred world/wide since the early 1970s and today, Women's Studies is a legitimate area of academic work throughout the world.

Women's Studies and Women's Research have gone through various phases. First, it criticized the invisibility of women in traditional research. The next phase was to make women "visible". They documented "her story" where the emphasis was before virtually on "his story". Neglected women in literature, history and art were brought to life. Much of the research concentrated on women as "victims". Neglected topics such as sexuality, sexual harassment, incest, prostitution were put onto the academic agenda. The next phase of research was to show that women were not only victims, but active agents in their own situation, and in that of their children and their families. The current phase is one of self-reflection. This coincides with the shift from the term Women's Studies to

Gender Studies where gender is seen as a structure of relations. Now the emphasis is on the “whole story”.

By working to increase gender equality and the empowerment of women, Women’s Studies promote better understanding of human rights and the democratic process.

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## **Winning with Women**

*Pat Evans, Director of the US Baltic Foundation*

The comments I offer, are provided not as a final word, but to contribute to the ongoing discussion on how best to assist women, who aspire to hold public office. It is important that I underscore that the source that informs my comments are but one, thirty years of active participation in influencing public policy issues that affect women and families in United States, and managing and planning strategy for over twenty political campaigns in the United States and central America, most of them for women candidates.

I suppose I might be described by someone as a “western feminist”, whatever that means. It has often been said by scholarly voices that Western feminism should be rejected in Eastern Europe, as it does not comprehend women’s experiences in Eastern Europe. I do not propose to comprehend your experiences. I am here to share with you one woman’s experience, mine, as a western feminist, who has had some influence in changing laws, designing innovative programs for women, and managing or acting as a political strategist in women’s campaigns.

Professor Suzanne Lie reminds us that the collapse of communism represents an extraordinary opportunity to rethink how women and men can more fully participate in civil and private life. She calls for a “gender democracy”, a term coined by feminist researchers (Bergman 1991). It is, she contends, “a historical moment not to be missed”. Gender democracy requires that women sit at the table of political power. And are they present at the table in the United States, where the first woman elected to the U.S. House was Jeannette Rankin from Montana? She ran in 1916 on a platform that included women’s suffrage, child welfare and the protection of U.S. workers.

Just a decade ago, there were 25 women in Congress. Today there is over 60, and the trend shows little signs of slowing. With the exception of 1992, when the combined number of women jumped from 32 to 54, propelled by the backlash over Senate confirmation of Supreme Court nominee Clarence Thomas, the increase has been slow but steady for two decades. Women now make up 12 percent of the House and 9 percent of the Senate.

“What’s happened is that there has been a quarter of a century of incremental progress”, says Ruth Mendel, director of Rutgers University’s Center for the American Woman and Politics. “In fact, the incremental progress represents enormous changes in terms of participatory democracy”.

Among the most important changes in recent years, is a willingness of voters, both men and women, to contribute to women candidates. Fund raising has always been a

daunting problem for women running for office. The money they can raise fuels campaigns.

The story in the U.S. is that women are no longer on the political sidelines. While the numbers are still too few, they are taking stage center as senators, governors and campaign managers.

Candidate Bill Clinton told a meeting of the National Women's Political Caucus at the Democratic National Convention, in 1992 "We don't need a new generation of leadership, we need a new gender of leadership. Building up women does not diminish men".

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### **Women's Role in National Politics**

*Eda Sepp, ENUT Board member* Why does Estonia need women in politics?

Would the Estonian voter support women in politics? Despite being 52% of the population, women in Estonia are disadvantaged. Women earn less than men (72.5% of the man's salary), unemployment is greater among women (14% more than among men), and whenever layoffs have to occur, for some reason it is easier for employers and organizations to get rid of the women first. Although women are more highly educated than men, they receive a smaller salary for the same work. One could say that Estonia's society is indifferent toward women. After restored independence, incomes shrank in those job categories dominated by women, and incomes grew in those categories dominated by men. At that time, women politicians still lacked feminist knowledge that could have seen through the patriarchal social structure and explained the situations that specifically affect women. Rather, support was given to one's partisan politics.

It appears that children don't matter, either. How else can one explain allocation of some of the funds for child support to other priorities, and cutting the funding for the national packet program for newborns in a year of low birthrates? According to Andra Veidemann, the packets for newborns would cost 6 million kroons per year. That is the cost for only 10 Mercedes automobiles, at 600,000 kroons per car. Also, costs have been creeping into the kindergartens. This results in poorer families having to leave their little one home alone. In the rest of the western world, law strictly forbids this. Cutting funds for school lunches leaves many children from poorer homes with an empty stomach. That also can be figured out in luxury cars. Family and children issues have been more the concern of women rather than men. Same can be said for concerns about the environment, public transportation, violence and health. That does not mean, however, that women do not have other interests, or that foreign or defense policies are alien to them. Experience has simply shown that it is easier to get consensus and cooperation among women on those issues outside partisan politics. We must speak with men politicians about partnership and cooperation, about mutual consideration, about learning about each other's interests and problems and seeking solutions together. These have been the feminists' principal aims.

Only few political parties have agreed to have 30% women among the first ten candidates. Cooperation always takes two and partnership means equality. If Estonia's women politicians could articulate their programs and find partisan support for their

implementation; the Estonian people will begin to support them. In order to do that, however, women in politics must have the courage to pressure their parties, must transcend narrow partisanship, and work together with other women on programs that are in the interest of women, children, families and especially Estonia's future. It is important for all women in the parliament to be of the same mind. The women should weigh all legislation from the women's perspective and then support it together and courageously.

The proposal to introduce tuition costs, presently supported by almost all political parties, will have an impact on Estonia's future. The students attending universities will have to start repaying their loans after graduation and it is obvious that, as a result, they will not begin to raise families. A requirement for students to pay for their education will bring about national demise for which no foreign country can be accused. I have heard some Estonian higher education officials allege that he who pays will study, for everything costs and nothing is free. But a national policy question is - at what cost? It is a total myth that those who pay are better students. Students who do not have money worries can dedicate much more time to studying than the ones that have to work in addition to studying in order to pay for their schooling. It appears to me that paid education brings high costs in the long-term and can endanger Estonian nation's existence.

Women should examine these questions in Estonian politics. In addition, they should consider whether present quotas and limits at national institutions of higher education are beneficial or not. A diploma is far more important in European countries than it is here. Our competitiveness in the future and how we are accorded depend a lot on how highly educated our citizens are.

In conclusion, I would like to say that women politicians must develop a strong program that includes women's interests. Only thereby can they win voters' support. Women should give to politics another perspective, a perspective that is thought through and reflects their situation. Support will follow. It is clear that women are necessary in politics for a balanced society.

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### **Without Feminism – No Democracy? The Swedish Experience.**

*Ebba Witt-Brattström, Associate Professor of Comparative Literature at the University of Stockholm*

Let me first of all state that when I use the word "feminism", it does not in any respect have a similarity with the soviet interpretation of the word. On the contrary, I understand by this word a multi-political strategy to ripen democracy, restore it to its truest sense. That is, a political representation of all human beings means as many women as men in the government, in the parliament, in all legislative assemblies.

The ultimate goal of feminism, in my sense of the word, is to abolish all affirmative action on the part of women – or men. But we have still a long way to go on the road leading to this goal. In our world of today, male interests are still prioritized – and the

interests of women, old people and children are thought to be secondary matters. As long as this prevails, we cannot talk of (true) democracy.

I will tell you the story of how feminism became item number one in Swedish democracy, so famous in Europe that the prestigious French magazine *Le Nouvel Observateur* lately gave Sweden the credit for inspiring “the second French Revolution”. In France the politicians are discussing a law on at 50% quota to get women into the legislative assemblies! In Sweden we did not have to go that far to get political parties to make their own lists with every second a woman.

After the elections 1991, for the first time since women got the right to vote in Sweden (1921), the percentage of women in our parliament was reduced, from 38% to 33%. This was the signal for a pressure group of women, free from specific political commitment to start a secret network all over the country called “the support stockings” female politicians (of all colours), and to canalize the widespread discontent among women in a slogan that was to be the least common denominator for a feminist action: “Half Power, whole Salary”. Three of us acted as official leaders, besides me, the economist Agneta Stark and the journalist and writer Maria-Pia Boethius. As time approached for the elections of 1994, we decided to present the political parties with the idea of founding a Women’s Party. Two polls showed that “the support stockings,” if they were to become a Women’s Party, would get no less than 40% of all votes (thereby 40% men vote!). This made the Social Democrats, the left party and the liberals very nervous. Ingvar Carlsson, the Social Democratic leader, immediately promised a government with every second a woman, and forced his party to nominate as many women as men for the parliament. No doubt this was one of the reasons why they won the elections of 1994.

My concern, however, with telling you in Estonia this “feminist success-story”, is to plead an interpretation of feminism as a performative, deeply democratic act. I would go so far as to say that without feminism, there is no (true) democracy.

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## **Gender Equality and Women in Politics in the EU**

*Heidi Hautala, EU Women’s Rights Committee*

### 1. Introduction

Women are still underrepresented in politics, public and private institutions, but in many European countries, political and policy structures are changing. This change creates an opportunity of a better balance between women and men.

#### 1. Some history

In most European countries women won the right to vote around 1920, but the country number one was the United States where women were allowed to stand for election already in 1788. In Estonia, women got the vote in 1918. By then, the struggle for women’s suffrage had taken many years, due to an opposition based mainly on the concept that a women’s proper role was in the family. The advent of suffrage for women raised questions about the consequences of doubling the electorate. Since then, there has been an ongoing debate on the role of women in politics.

#### 2. The legal background

At the European level, the Council of Ministers adopted a resolution on 27 May 1995, in which the Council affirms that “...balanced participation in decision-making...in every

sphere of life constitutes an important condition for equality between men and women. It is necessary to make every effort to bring about the changes in structures and attitudes which are essential for genuine equality of access to decision-making posts for men and women in the political, economic, social and cultural fields.”

#### 4. Female representation

There is no doubt that a great deal has been achieved so far, which can allow us a little celebration. However, fundamental equality has not been achieved yet, since we are still poorer and with less power than men. Although growing numbers of women have attained high political office, a breakthrough is still a long way off. The proportion of women in the national parliaments of the EU countries varies considerably, from 6,3% to 42%. The European Parliament is in the forefront with 27,6% women members, and it is interesting to note that the proportion of women in each political group varies greatly.

5. The situation in Estonia. Women in Estonia bear the greatest burden for ensuring the family's well – being and also suffer more in the labor market. There are still very few women in leading positions in society or politics in your country. However, equality legislation has been put in place.

The wish of Estonia to strengthen equality policy and to improve women's role and status in the workplace is clearly manifested. The Ministry of Social Affairs established a Bureau of Equal Opportunities in 1996. Estonia is one of the pilot countries participating in the ILO Program More and Better Jobs for Women.

The European Parliament supports all those efforts. It has repeatedly analyzed the consequences for the enlargement for the preservation of the *acquis communautaire* regarding women in the EU, drawing attention to the serious social problems faced by Estonia and other CEEC-s in their transition to a market-based economy.

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### **Dangers and Opportunities to Consider for Women Politicians**

*Sirje Kiin, Adviser, The Fatherland Party Caucus at the Parliament*

1. In politics we have to work with the realities of our own society, not depend on others' theories and the need for foreign advisors. We have to know what is thought and written about feminist theory, what kinds of situations exist abroad, but our own situation has to be the basis for any strategy. Estonian women are more fully employed and educated than many developed countries' women and for that reason our situation is quite different. It doesn't make sense for us passionately to pursue what most women in the world pursue and what we basically already have \*high employment rate;\*high education;\* a large percentage of women in top positions.

2. We have to acknowledge the social dangers and problems that we don't yet have, or don't have massively, but which have become noticeable in Scandinavia, for instance, partly due to the blurring of lines (women's, especially girls' growing violence, alcoholism, drug use, eating disorders, etc). Although this is not evident in Estonia, small signs are becoming noticeable and here we can learn from others what preventive measures to take in order to be spared the agony.

3. If we want to change our society into a kinder one whose members work together, we ourselves must not be combative. We should not call our women colleague “a fellow fighter”, even less “a weapon carrying sister”, we must not talk of “doing battle”, and because we're not at war with anybody nor do we stand at any battlefield. Instead, we

should talk about partnership and working together, be mindful of each other, and seek for solutions together. Our goal is a socially more tolerant Estonia. We are not against men, but for better cooperation between men and women. For that reason, it's not smart to talk of chauvinism, even if the characteristic clearly is evident at the workplace and politics. It only provokes an aggressive reaction. Instead of the accusations of chauvinism, we should clearly talk about what we want. A positive and constructive message always creates more trust than a direct or indirect attack on somebody. We need to form men's and women's attitudes, not with nays, but with ayes.

4. If we want to participate in politics, then we must not isolate ourselves in separate parties, organizations or associations. The women's movement in Estonia has since the last century focused on family and social centered values, on common interests not women's special interests.

5. We ourselves have to want to participate, decide, and be responsible, and not just to be an ornament.

6. If we want to increase women's participation at the highest level, then we need to nurture voters for ourselves. Generally speaking, 28% of women are ready to elect a woman candidate and 63% would elect a man under all circumstances. Thus we have to form attitudes that would have women vote for women, and for men to vote for women, also. We should convince the voter that in us resides unused potential that would be beneficial for everybody and not only for women.

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**Conference Coverage in the Estonian Media.** The media provided uneven coverage. The newspapers with largest circulation remained silent. On the whole, the media tends to ignore women's events or tends to treat them as being insignificant. The conference did have TV and radio attention. Selve Ringmaa, ENUT's Administrative Director, gave interviews to the News Radio, the Estonian Radio, Kuku Radio, Radio 2, Orsent TV and Channel 2. Her article appeared in Sirp, the cultural newspaper. A lengthy interview with Suzanne Lie, ENUT's Academic Director, appeared in the magazine, Luup.

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### **Master Suppression Techniques in a Power Perspective: Political Experiences With Language and Power.**

*Berit Ås, Professor Emeritus, former Norwegian Parliamentarian*

Suppression implies the use of power. A theory about strong suppression techniques is a theory about the use of power. But it does not necessarily mean use of physical power as open violence harming the body. The suppressor's body is used, however, in a subtle "body language", which in many cases will harm, discourage and humiliate the other. Most often the body language builds on a simultaneous use of lexical-, body- and pictures. It is used extensively, especially in some institutions, for instance in politics and the military where it is legitimate to "take power", "stay in power" and "increase one's power base". Members of a superior group most effectively use it, and especially when that group historically has been rendered superior to the other group. Examples are men towards women, white people towards black or colored people, capitalists and owners of property towards laborers and land workers and parent towards their offspring.

I have labeled the 5 suppression techniques as follows:

1. Making invisible. (Not listening, turning the back to you when you speak, does not remember your arguments...)
2. Ridiculing. (Using animal synonyms for people: bitch, hens, geese, “boy” – for blacks, or indicating stupid behaviors with words, gestures and pictures.)
3. Withholding information. (especially important items which could have helped save you from problems, given you media coverage or rescued you from a scandal.)
4. Damned if you do and damned if you don't! (A strongly prejudiced evaluation by a superior, which could not have been rendered if our language did not have different adjectives for describing similar behaviors in powerholders and the powerless.)
5. Heaping blame and putting to shame. (Some-times labeled: Blaming the victim. The powerholder has the ultimate power to describe, evaluate and label a person who has no access to the media, to other powerholders or authorities. In a patriarchal society the abused wife feels much more guilt and shame than the abuser.)

I will show by examples how the techniques are used in politics, how important it is to identify, label and resist them and how they may explain why formal rights are hampered by these informal power acts.

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### **Women's Interests in the Parties' Platforms**

*Anu Toots, Political Science Professor, TPU*

The existence of political parties is based on the aggregation of the interests of certain social groups and the advancement of them at the institutions of power. Gender is one of the criteria according to which the groups can be separated. According to M. Weber, in stable societies status and value orientation for individual political identification are of greater importance than class membership. It would follow that in stable societies gender differences are evident. Women voters should have gender interest preferences in certain areas. And it could be alleged that certain areas are outside women's interests. Among the interests common to men and women would be low taxes, domestic tranquillity, and local policies. Of greater interest to women would be accessible education, children's policies, and unemployment protection. Of lesser interest to women would be NATO, defense, and government. These topics appear in the platforms of Estonia's political parties. They lack at least one issue of interest to feminists in the West - women's special needs in medicine, including abortion. From considerations of the average woman voter, let's move on to types of women types.

Roughly three can be identified: La femme traditionnelle (patriotic, homemaker and husband dependent), or “the mother” type.

La femme liberale (egalitarian, self-reliant and career oriented), or “the working woman” type. La femme sociale (socially active, but society must create the conditions which can liberate her from the traditional burdens in order to be active), or “the working mother” type. The domestic woman (Estonia's society cannot provide such luxury).

The political parties' attention to women varies a lot. Four parties have the principle of

gender equality in their platforms. They are Pro Patria, the Moderates, the Progress Party, and the Farmers Assembly. The omission is surprising on the part of the Centrist Party, but not so surprising in the case of the United National Party. The fundamental idea of the Reform Party is all of the benefit payments to the family. The parents are to decide how to use the money. Only good education is seen as necessary for women's advancement. The Moderates and the Centrists exemplify classical leftist policies. Services associated with children are either provided by the state without cost, or they are subsidized. Estonian Agrarian Party and Pro Patria differ on conditions for child support. The Agrarian Party ties them to income, while the Pro Patria ties them to the number of children. The Agrarians value the working woman, while Pro Patria prizes the domestic woman. The parties also have different approaches to marriage as an object of social costs.

Estonia's women politicians do not protect the interests of their sisters any more than do men and, therefore, it is not necessary to elect women. It is necessary to elect candidates that advance the interests of women and it is preferable to put men to work in support of women's interests. The basic political ideology is the determinant.

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## **Workshops: Presentations and Summaries**

### **Women and Political Involvement**

Jill M. Bystydzienski, Director of Women's Studies, Iowa State University, US, described how women's local activity influences the democratic process. In the analyses of democracy very little attention has been given to the study of processes that occur on the local level. Analyses tend to address general problems. But from the democratic perspective, it is necessary to look at the process from the bottom up, not the other way around. This understanding is important for women's involvement, because women's voices are heard more at the grassroots level than at the national level, and women are more active on the local scene. When women organize locally, they constitute a broad base and they have many participants. In these organizations, women acquire experiences, which they can apply later at the national level. On the grassroots level women can develop collaborative relations which can serve as a springboard later. Research shows that women who are active in organizations learn to identify their role. This leads to greater recognition of the woman in both the society as well as the family. As she moves up in the political structure, she has a better understanding of what is important.

Liina Tõnisson, Estonian Parliamentarian, thinks that the Estonian woman has been a strong individual. But historically she has been relegated to organizing sewing circles, choirs, and activity at the church. Estonia's society has been relatively democratic and the language lacks gender differentiation. Our women have the potential to be equal partners to the Estonian male. Ages have created the legend that women have no place in politics. At the Second National Awakening (beginning of the 1990's), a fundamental mistake was made. The two women's organizations that existed at the time advanced the slogan, "Women Return Home". It was a fin-de-siecle model that should not have

been idealized. It put brakes on women's desire for involvement in public life. In order to emerge from this situation, we have to ask women to vote for women. Today's decision-makers are men, for the most part, but not all of them have been politically successful. Given this situation, public opinion could begin to change. The women in Riigikogu (11%) have shown that when they want to get something done, it can be done. Were there more women, they would be even stronger. Women receive fewer votes at elections, but several parties have increased the number of women among the first 10 candidates. In the bigger picture, women are very important in changing the attitudes of the political parties.

Maret Maripuu (Reform Party) said that women can be involved in politics in several ways: by being active in the discussions, by attending meetings of a party or an organization, and by working to advance the interest of her party. If a woman wants to enter politics, she has to give an answer to the question: Why? If she is capable of doing that, she is ready for it. It is important to understand that listening and talking the language of ordinary people is essential. A woman must not adopt the ways of a man, but has to remain true to herself. This will lead to success. It is important to keep a perspective in politics. It should not become all-consuming and an end in itself. Conflicts between work and private life must be avoided and compromises must be sought.

Reet Laja, ENUT Board member, discussed the question of women who have not decided to enter politics and when will a woman begin to vote for another woman. For the undecided woman, more information, conferences, and centers are needed on the local level. Many women need instruction (public lectures). Collaboration with small countries is very important. Networking among women's organizations is essential. It can be useful before elections as well as at any other time.

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**Networking** Christina Mörtberg from Luleå University of Technology - "Women and Information Technology". International cooperation among women originated in Oslo and the idea moved to Finland. Presently, the Baltic States and Russia are included. Collaboration is going on with the Estonian Human Development Center and with Sirje Virkus, Pedagogical University faculty member specializing in information science. Principal research is on information technology and gender division in the use of computers. How does a woman feel in the modern informational technology environment and related risks and opportunities is the aim of the research. The daily use of information technology has changed in recent years. One can carry on a dialogue, one can use the Internet, but the largest obstacle right now is lack of access.

Krista Kilvet, Estonian Parliamentarian - "What can the women who have reached parliaments do to increase the presence of women in power structures". Global cooperation has become computerized and information technology touches every corner of the world. Estonia must keep up with these developments and for that reason Estonia has again become a member of the International Parliamentary Union (IPU). IPU is a non-governmental organization that works closely with the United Nations. Currently 137 countries are its members and Krista Kilvet heads Estonia's group. One

day every year is devoted solely to women's issues. IPU helped a lot with the preparations for UN's Women's Congress. IPU Women's Assembly has adopted the Plan of Action and the Peking Mapping Process in order to facilitate the inclusion of women in the electoral process toward powerful positions. It has become evident that men are ideologically motivated, while women's approach is pragmatic.

Silva Anspal (Centrist Party) - "A comparison of election campaigns in Finland and Estonia". Campaigns in Estonia are built on mass media, while elections in Finland have a historical tradition, which would not be applicable in Estonia. In Finland, every candidate has a team of volunteer workers and a key support person. Information technology has a large role in campaigns and it helps to introduce the candidates via the Home Page and similar techniques. The differences in campaigns are principally due to the differences in election laws. In Estonia, it tends to be more individualized, while in Finland it is centered more on the level of local government. Research has shown that a logo plays a critical role - a symbol reflects a personal position. Also, a project to introduce Finnish and Estonian women's organizations has been carried out. The Finns have a Women's Round Table in the parliament, and the Estonians hold "getting acquainted" evenings among political parties. Research reveals that women are candidates in order to 1) get contacts and to be in touch with information, 2) test oneself, 3) get ready for local elections.

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**Women's Political Agenda.** The workshop was headed by Siiri Oviir, Estonian Parliamentarian, ("Women's Interests in Politics") and Kadri Ottis, Estonian Parliamentarian ("Needed improvements in collaboration among women?"). Following topics were discussed: quotas, integration, age discrimination and law enforcement. It is difficult to change anything by a few women politicians. A "critical mass" of women is necessary. Men have different priorities and they often do not think about certain issues. Women's political agenda should be to identify the issues ignored by men. Quotas would assure women a share in politics and this has been already discussed. A problem is women's low self-confidence, and because of difficult circumstances, political involvement is undesirable. A practical engagement in politics is missing in Estonia. Quotas are necessary at some point and one should not be ashamed of them.

It has to be admitted that presently women do not actively seek collaboration. Apparently, they are not yet ready for it. Collaboration among the political parties is not very good. Many important laws have not been adopted because of that. Compromises have not been reached, and fundamental programs have not been adopted. Ties among women can happen when they themselves want them. Cooperation among women has removed biases among women. Women find compromises more easily, even when they belong to different parties. Women must begin at local governments. Women's organizations must seek opportunities for collaboration. In the future, they could familiarize themselves with proposed legislation in order to make corrections and suggestions. In order to bring about change, women's organizations should meet regularly. Occasional endeavors evaporate without results. ENUT could act as the agent, offering information and space for meetings.

In Estonia, women live 11 years longer than men. The population is aging, and there are especially many older women. Their needs for social support grow, but benefits shrink. Women are older than men and their pensions are smaller due to the time away from work to raise children, and their one-fourth smaller wage. Age discrimination is widespread and middle-aged women have great difficulties finding employment. One course would be to change the law. Problems: a) wage envelopes. Laws should be such that would make undisclosed wages obsolete. 2) responsibility for the child. More than 50% of couples live together unmarried. Legal question: whose responsibility is the child (or the woman) after a separation? Who has to support and how? Women carry the full responsibility for the child, but it should be equally shared. According to the law, protection of children is the society's number 1 priority. In order for it to be implemented, there should be a direct support allocation in the budget.

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**Women and Local Governments** Mall Hellam, Director of the Open Estonian Foundation - "How to become a good general, or the civic society is female."

Popular discussion globally centers on the reduction of the role of the government and the increased role for civic institutions and non-governmental organizations. The strength of a democratic society consists of independent organizations that serve the interests of its citizens and limit the desire of individuals in the power structure to enforce their will without popular consent.

A democratic state is a resource rich "machine". Absence of a well functioning officialdom and an uneconomical administrative system are Estonia's largest problems. Their low quality is considered even socially dangerous. A centralized state that ignores the nonprofit sector as a partner has long ceased to be a model for organizing public life. Although state institutions are best suited for certain tasks, they often fail to see people's real needs and the complexity of their problems. In order to assist transformation in the society, nationally and locally, well thought through pertinent programs that utilize to the maximum all extant human and material resources are necessary. Our country, population and culture are small and their development takes much more effort. In our situation, cooperation between local governments and civic volunteer institutions, or the third sector, becomes totally unavoidable. Services rendered by the third sector are of noteworthy importance. Diverse institutions can function as nonprofit organizations: schools, safe homes, counseling centers, local civic projects, museums. These organizations are genuine schools for democracy where people acquire analytical experiences and knowledge to stand up for common interests.

There are over 4,500 non-governmental organizations in Estonia today. Our non-governmental organizations have traditional social activities, which have not developed modern pressure group features. The future of a civic society in Estonia is uncertain especially in the rural areas where traditional cooperative effort is weakening, the population aging, and the economy worsening. Estonia needs a strong and multifaceted governmental program that modernizes non-governmental organizations and civic institutions.

Looking at areas where nonprofit institutions are effective and who work there, one can

say with certainty that the civic society is female. Women know how to bring human measures and social sensitivity into politics. It can be said that women have a special role to fulfill in local governments since they can bring human values into politics and local life. Coming from a closed society, we women have a unique opportunity and outright responsibility to help with the development of a humane and open society, where stability governs and cooperation among the three parts - public, business and the third sector - exists, and where people that have had less luck in life do not feel superfluous.

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## **How to win elections**

*Pat Evans*

All campaigns need good techniques and sharing of information is essential. A healthy attitude, planning and lot of work are needed for an election campaign. It is necessary to contact voters organizationally. Research shows that information has to be repeated to people seven times before they notice it. For a campaign, it is necessary to have a theme, or message, which has to contain a lot of emotion in order to reach the voter's heart and it always has to end with a slogan. It is important to locate the target groups that will vote for you. One must remember that the candidate's appearance, personality, and relations are important to the voter. The candidate must also know answers to all questions. The best way to influence a voter is by meeting with people and the meetings should be planned in such a way that they become news. It is necessary to touch upon issues that interest the media, also. Funding is the greatest problem. All campaigns are very expensive and, therefore, knowing the size of the budget is a must. Generally speaking, a campaign is like running a small business, except that it has to be done faster than a business is run. Largest part of the time has to be spent meeting with people and that is the basis for a successful campaign.

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## **Cultural Stereotypes Confronting Men and Women.**

*Voldemar Kolga, Head of Women's Studies, TPU*

The journalist Walter Lippman addressed the contemporary meaning of "stereotype". It is a picture in one's mind which conveys in a simplified way the appearance or activities of persons. It emphasizes groups of people's typical characteristics, such as, for instance, what does a typical professor of Finn look like. A stereotype is not necessarily false. Some stereotypes can describe quite accurately differences between people, but others can be totally off the mark, as for instance the generalization about some people being greedy. It should be noted that a positive stereotype could have a negative influence. Thus, the remark, "a real man never cries", may not bring beneficial results to a man. On occasion, it may be good for a man to cry. Herewith I will advance the thesis that stereotypes help to cope with life. I base that thesis on the premise that the world is

rational. If we do not accept that the world is irrational, then we have to accept that stereotypes are rational phenomena that help us to orientate in the world. However, the substance of rationality changes throughout history. What was reasonable a thousand years ago is not reasonable today albeit many think that man does not change. In his book, "The Third Wave", Alvin Toffler has presented a picture of the development of society that we should consider here. Three waves can be identified in the development of society, three different positions, three different systems of value:

1. In the agricultural society, land on which everything grows is the basis of wealth. People need more fertile land.
2. In the industrialized society, wealth is based on labor and capital in addition to land.
3. In the informational age society, wealth is based to an unprecedented manner on knowledge and individuality.

Considering Toffler's thesis, patriarchy occurred quite naturally in the agricultural society. Men dominated, because work on the land requires physical strength. And quite naturally, women had to be at home raising the children and cooking while men toiled in the fields. In the industrialized society, the value system changes and patriarchy begins to diminish. Capital as wealth is not tied to gender. It can be said that capital has neither nationality nor gender. In the information age, gender, as a determining factor play even less of a role since special women's or men's knowledge does not exist. Both the man and the woman can develop his/her individuality. The third wave force patriarchy - male supremacy - to recede and to yield to new relations between a man and a woman. According to Toffler, in this society people work at decentralization and destandardization tasks. The center of gravity moves from the Center to the individual.

Gender as such is not the determiner, but a person's knowledge and uniqueness are. The simple human relations' network based on patriarchy is superseded by a complicated system. To put it another way, solidarity of men and women based on gender becomes inadequate. I as a man need not support another man as being smart and strong simply because he is a man. In reality, I would approach the matter on its own merits, but not because of gender. More problematic is the automatic preference of women for women in certain selections. Is it necessary to prefer women as women, regardless of their knowledge and their capabilities? Is it wise to implement a quota system in order to bring women into politics?

I think there is no general answer to these questions. We must look at the situation. If we consider elections, it seems wise to have quotas. Surveys show that given men and women candidates equally, 30% of women would elect women and the rest would elect men. Because of this situation, it would make sense to have quotas in order to bring about change in public attitude. At the same time, I think a women's party is unnecessary because no great issues exist that would unite all women. According to Toffler, large political parties will disappear in the third wave. It is conceivable that, instead, there will be academicians and homemakers parties that pursue their special interests. It is also interesting to note what will happen to men in the third wave. The common objective to dominate will disappear, because women as such are now a group of different individuals with whom different modes of relating emerge. Men's unique wealth - physical strength - does not play much of a role in the information age. Rather,

the brain is wealth. In this sphere there are no differences between men and women. Women's heads work as well as men's - on an average, of course.

In the third wave, the concept of masculinity begins to change. Many different expressions of masculinity emerge. Cooperation among men and women becomes a priority in the third wave, because the basis for relationships is not gender, but knowledge and individuality. Conversations with a male colleague are more interesting to a female journalists than conversations with a female hairdresser. A male artist is more interested in a female artist than a male politician, because it is more interesting to be with a colleague than with some top functionary of same gender.

In conclusion, I find that traditional male and female stereotypes will disappear in time, as society's values change. I find, also, that a person himself can help along the process of stereotypes' disappearance, even if it is by supporting women's participation in politics via quotas.

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## **Political Participation**

*Tiina Raitviir, Defense Academy*

This is an analysis of Estonian women's participation in politics and their representation in the parliament. On the local level, women have a better opportunity for involvement: there are many offices and electorate is small. Competition is not very sharp and the offices are not prestigious. In order to get elected into the parliament, the candidates has to be known nationally, and individuals in that category are already top leaders and specialists, including former members of parliament. Very few women are among them. Considering such a situation, women will not have the representation in the parliament that they have in local governmental organs.

Increased representation of women in the parliament depends largely on the political parties in the present election system. There is no correlation between the share of women in the candidate's lists and the number that got elected to the parliament in 1999. Relatively speaking, Pro Patria and the Coalition Party had the largest number of women elected to the parliament. As long as the present election system exists, placement of one's candidacy at the top of the list will be the chief factor for women, and for most men, in order to win. Women cannot get an individual mandate (to date, the sole exception has been Siiri Oviir, 1999 elections), mandate via candidate lists is available to few women, and the remainder receive compensation mandate. Women active in politics hoped to see a shift toward gender equality in the 1999 elections. The basis for that was the increased number of women running for office. A total of 508 women, or 26.9% of the total, were candidates. Only a small number of women were at the top of the lists. Were one to say simply that the first 10 candidates of every party will be elected, then 21 women would have become members of parliament. Were one to consider victory for the seven strongest parties, then 13 women would have been elected. Most likely, 15-17 women would have been among the winners. However, in reality, 18 were elected to the parliament. It does seem that a certain shift occurred in

the leadership of the parties and that women themselves were more active than previously. Since they also received, per candidate, more votes than previously, there is cause to think that women in politics is gradually becoming a normal occurrence. Considering membership numbers in the political parties, men constitute 54.5%. Still, women's share is unexpectedly large. Coalition Party's membership has 30.5% women, Estonian Rural Party has 31.8% women, Reform Party has 28.5%, and Pro Patria has 30.4%. Albeit the Centrist Party and the Moderates are major parties, their ranks have the highest percentage of women (47.5% and 41.5% respectively).

Women's role in politics is difficult to change in Estonia's extant system of values. It is easier to change attitudes in the political parties and their leaders. But men sit in party leadership offices. Women's relatively large share in the parties' membership and their considerable number as candidates indicate women's interest and desire to be involved in politics. While to outsider women's small representation in the governmental organs seems undemocratic, no doubt, to politicians, people and women themselves it does not appear that way. Nor does there appear any conflict between men and women over the matter. Women do not make protests. Sociological studies show that women's small participation in great politics is not seen as a problem. Our present social culture, reactionary thinking among our educated people, especially among men, and women's own lack of want to liberate themselves from men's influence in questions of public, including political matter, do not forecast change. Things remain as they were.

The parliament has become used to the small representation by women. It has also become used to regarding women as politicians of equal status. Despite that, women's share in the parliament and the government is small. The parliament does not elect itself and for that reason it cannot influence itself. But it can influence the organs below it, especially the political parties. It is the party leaders that hold major power in deciding who runs for office and in which slot. The attitude toward women in politics among the party leaders is completely European, but not yet Scandinavian. Despite that situation, women have not yet broken the barrier. However, it may happen at the first parliamentary elections of the next century. Public attitudes are the most difficult to change. It will take at least one generation, if not longer, before women's role according to the Scandinavian model is accepted. Feminism is known, but it is not popular in Estonia. A movement for "women to elect women" has not developed and opinion makers, who should be the most democratic element in society, are against women getting involved in politics.

Despite everything, socio-cultural changes are occurring fast in Estonia today. From one side, contemporary thinking comes to the voters from the political leaders, while from another direction, it comes from education and mass communications media.

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