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## **Low participation of women in political decision making – academic reflections and explanations**

### *I. What explains the situation of women in a given political environment – attempts to identify the problem*

1. economic explanations: lower level of development and the related conditions of the labour market and of qualification are an obstacle to more possibilities for women
2. cultural explanations: the dominance of patriarchal values and the weakness of the political culture of citizens are an obstacle to the recognition of the problem both by the male and the female population
3. political explanations: beyond the differences between the political left and right (in general, the egalitarian set of values of the left supports the participation of women more) the situation of the political directions also counts: there can be major differences both within the conservative and the socialist political families.
4. social explanations: the small number and low power of women's NGOs, the low level of social activities i.e. the lack of social pressure on political actors hinder the emergence of solutions;
5. institutional explanations: certain institutional solutions are positive/negative from the perspective of the representation of women, e.g. the majority election system or the centralised and under-institutionalised mechanisms are an obstacle to an appropriate participation of women.

(a comprehensive review of these aspects: Ronald Inglehart and Pippa Norris, *Rising Tide: Gender Equality and Cultural Change Around the World*, 2003 Cambridge University Press)

### *II. Selected international comparative fundamental research and analyses in the area of equal opportunities*

1. The most comprehensive overview of the position of women in the world: gender gap index; has been published since 2006. On initiative of the World Economic Forum countries are ranked along four aspects (health, education, economic situation and political equality); <http://www.weforum.org/issues/global-gender-gap>
2. Comprehensive overview of opinions in the society within the frame of WVS (World Value survey); one element of the survey of the set of values is the opinions on the social and political situation of women; [http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/wvs/articles/folder\\_published/article\\_base\\_136](http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/wvs/articles/folder_published/article_base_136)

The sixth survey is going on, Hungary is also involved. Gender –sensitive questions are for instance:

- When a mother works for pay, the children suffer. 1 – 2 – 3 – 4
- On the whole, men make better political leaders than women do. 1 – 2 – 3 – 4
- University education is more important for a boy than for a girl. 1 – 2 – 3 – 4
- On the whole, men make better business executives than women do. 1 – 2 – 3 – 4
- Being a housewife is just as fulfilling as working for pay. 1 – 2 – 3 – 4

3. Eurobarometers – reveal differences and similarities between the genders in core economic, public political and social governance issues; interactive websites, accurate information [http://ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/cf/index\\_en.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/cf/index_en.cfm)

4. IDEA surveys and analysis <http://www.idea.int/>: the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance carries out studies and develops publications on the gender impacts of institutional solutions of core importance for the functioning of democracy; parties, elections systems and quotas are regularly included in the comparative materials.