EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES
IN SLOVENIAN DIPLOMACY

Research presentation
About

Equal Opportunities in Slovenian Diplomacy

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1. IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS
   (3 Nov 2008 – 19 Dec 2008)
   - Diplomats of both genders
   - Different ages
   - Representatives of all three diplomatic ranks
   - With and without families

2. OPINION POLL
   (14 Jan 2009 – 20 Feb 2009)
   - Extensive questionnaire for all employees
   - Anonymity
   - In written or electronic form

3. DATA ANALYSIS
   - Qualitative : quantitative
   - Univariate analysis
   - Bivariate analysis – differences between interviewees of different genders, ages, etc.
   - Data comparison

4. CONCLUSION
   - Findings
   - Testing the validity of hypotheses
   - State of affairs evaluation
   - Suggestions for improvement
Interviews

- **Unequal opportunities in Slovenian diplomacy** were said not to be primarily generated by gender, but rather by:
  - Personal acquaintances/grudges, party affiliation
  - Generational grouping
  - General interpersonal relations
  - Power abuse
  - *Personification* of decision-making process.
Interviews

- **Gender (im)balance** – stereotype conceptions in the patriarchal society + family policy.
  - A woman as a “housewife” and/or a “(potential) mother” – Will she be able to work late hours/work abroad?
  - A woman is also hindered by prejudices when making important career decisions (“Shall I manage? What about my family?”)

- Ideal-type oppositions – in current stereotype way of thinking, consciously or subconsciously **woman** stands for “emotional”, “object”, “passive”, “soft”; whereas **man** means “rational”, “subject”, “active”, “hard” ➔ latently, this makes people perceive men as better diplomats.

- The current **family policy** of the Ministry seems to be deprivileging female diplomats and diplomats with families in certain situations:
  - Costs and formalities regarding child education
  - Not enough vacation when posted abroad
  - Not enough information for diplomats and their families when going abroad
  - Employment/occupation of diplomats’ partners
Interviews

“I have a small child and I simply cannot stay at the office until late hours. This stigmatizes me as ‘the one who does not work hard enough’, and I am not regarded as being efficient and ambitious.”

“We should enable diplomatic families to live in the same conditions at home and abroad. If they pay one hundred euros for kindergarten in Slovenia and if all expenses relating to elementary education cover teaching aids and books, they should have the same expenses in a foreign country as well.”

“As a diplomat, should I think that I cannot have more children due to my vocational limitations? Because living abroad with more children is too expensive? This is in fact what I call unequal opportunities!”
Opinion poll

- **Extensive questionnaire** for all employees of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia, both diplomats and support staff in internal and external services.
- We received 235 questionnaires – **37.3% of all employees** (as of 1 January 2009).
- Main goals:
  - Identify the **perceived (in)equality level** among people engaged in Slovenian diplomacy
  - Identify **main discrimination factors** as perceived by the employees, while paying special attention to the estimation of **(in)equal opportunities of genders**
  - Identify **situations** in which employees are most likely to feel discriminated against
  - Identify the principal **causes of inequality** and
  - On the basis of findings, suggest possible **improvement measures** to raise the equal opportunity level in Slovenian diplomacy
- Mostly a combination of **interval scale and open-ended questions**.
- Numeral scales for evaluating severity, frequency, etc.
- Independent variables: **gender, age, work post** (diplomats vs. support staff), **years of service**, **foreign work experience** and **family status** (diplomats with partners vs. single diplomats, and diplomats with children vs. diplomats without children).
Equal opportunities – general assessment

General assessment of equal opportunities

- Men: 50.5%
- Women: 61.9%

During your career in the Ministry, have you ever felt discriminated against because of your gender or any other factor?

- Yes: 57.8%
- No: 42.2%

$\bar{x} = 2.42$
$s = 0.85$
$N = 233$
Perceived level of discrimination among those who have already felt discriminated against

- Men: 7.48
- Women: 6.61
- Diplomats: 7.07*
- Support staff: 5.71*
- under 30 yrs: 5.71*
- 30–40 yrs: 6.08*
- 40–50 yrs: 7.45*
- 50–60 yrs: 7.70*
- 60 yrs and above: 8.33*

*sig. < 0.05

Material and psychological harm assessment
Correlation between perceived level of discrimination and age

Harm assessment

great material and/or psychological harm

$\rho = 0.321$

sig. = 0.001

$N = 110$
Difference between men and women in assessing severity level is statistically significant for one factor – gender:

**Men:** 1.69  
**Women:** 2.72  
(sig. = 0.000)

Top three most frequent factors are the same with both genders.

Discrimination factors
Discrimination occurrences

Activity/field
- Assigning of external service posts: 3.97
- Assigning of leading posts in the internal service: 3.91
- Promotion: 3.88
- Employee's performance assessment: 3.74
- Assignment and extent of tasks: 3.34
- Informal communication: 3.17
- Working conditions: 3.01
- Extra hours as a measure of efficiency: 2.80

Average discrimination frequency assessment
Multivariate analysis – groups

Group B
67.2% employees

Group A
12.9% employees

Group C
19.9% employees
Multivariate analysis – groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Average discrimination frequency assessment</th>
<th>Group A</th>
<th>Group B</th>
<th>Group C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1 – never, 5 – very often)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignment and extent of tasks</td>
<td>2.31</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>4.35</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee's performance assessment</td>
<td>2.08</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>4.58</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>3.96</td>
<td>4.82</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Assigning of leading posts in the int. service</td>
<td>2.81</td>
<td>3.82</td>
<td>4.88</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assigning of external service posts</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>4.07</td>
<td>4.85</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Extra hours as a measure of efficiency</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Informal communication</td>
<td>2.12</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Working conditions</td>
<td>2.19</td>
<td>2.74</td>
<td>4.48</td>
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Multivariate analysis – groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Group A</th>
<th>Group B</th>
<th>Group C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>53.8%</td>
<td>38.6%</td>
<td>34.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>46.2%</td>
<td>61.4%</td>
<td>65.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average age</td>
<td>40.9 yrs</td>
<td>38.7 yrs</td>
<td>43.0 yrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average yrs of service in the MFA</td>
<td>8.8 yrs</td>
<td>9.3 yrs</td>
<td>9.3 yrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diplomats</td>
<td>84.6%</td>
<td>84.0%</td>
<td>82.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support staff</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
<td>16.0%</td>
<td>17.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Already been posted abroad</td>
<td>80.8%</td>
<td>67.4%</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With children</td>
<td>61.5%</td>
<td>53.9%</td>
<td>65.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>30.8%</td>
<td>20.5%</td>
<td>26.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Gender and equal opportunities

There is no statistically significant difference between genders when assessing severity level of given options.
The ideal successful diplomat and stereotype dyads

Average scale value

- rigorous: 4.10
- disciplined: 2.68
- open: 2.35
- rational: 2.08
- stubborn: 3.09
- traditional: 3.43
- worker: 3.30
- bureaucrat: 2.93
- old: 2.87
- attached: 2.53
- with children: 2.52
- male: 3.02

Share of interviewees responding

- kind: 96.6%
- relaxed: 96.6%
- retained: 96.2%
- emotional: 93.6%
- complying: 93.2%
- inventive: 86.8%
- leader: 82.1%
- politician: 81.3%
- young: 75.7%
- single: 68.1%
- without children: 63.4%
- female: 63.0%
Gender related stereotypes

Have you or your partner ever faced remarks, prejudices, reproaches, etc. due to the “passive” role of your partner escorting you abroad?

Men: 18.8%
Women: 54.3%

(sig. = 0.000)

N = 102
Living and working abroad – advantages

No statistically significant difference between genders.
No statistically significant difference between genders.
Conclusion

- **Interpersonal relations and biased decisions:**
  - Team/confidence building
  - Automated institutional mechanisms, clear and transparent criteria
  - Ability to work with people as an important measure of quality
  - Anonymous evaluation of co-workers

- **Women in diplomacy – breaking stereotypes and institutional barriers:**
  - Women are equally successful diplomats
  - Female point of view as a comparative advantage or unexploited potential?
  - Family policy improvement

- **Working Group for Equal Opportunities:**
  - Appointed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Samuel Žbogar
  - Chaired by State Secretary Ms Dragoljuba Benčina