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UNCONVENTIONAL POLITICAL ACTIVITY OF WOMEN AND MEN: THE PSYCHO-SOCIAL DETERMINANTS

BEATA PAJAŁ-PATKOWSKA, JUSTYNA KUŚWIK, JOLANTA MILUSKA

Abstract. Political activity is a type of social activity displayed by citizens. Observations and research indicate that gender can be a factor which conditions its degree and forms. Apart from biological gender, which shapes the societal roles of women and men, additional factors that are supposedly responsible for their activities include elements of the system of beliefs (i.e. acknowledged political values, conviction that political activity has an importance, level of satisfaction with democracy, as well as individualism and collectivism understood as an element of individual's mentality). The impact of those factors on the degree of unconventional political activities among women and men is the subject of surveys which were conducted in 2004, 2010, and 2014 on a group of 1048 students from Polish universities. The received results show that differences in political activity between surveyed men and women, as well as varying determinants in both groups, are slowly fading away. The most important predictors of women's political activity include: conviction of its significance in democracy, and (dis)satisfaction with the way it functions.

Keywords: political activity; gender; women's political activity; youth; social role theory.

Political Activity – Theoretical Background

Political activity is a form of social activity displayed by people. It can be perceived in both a narrow and a broader way. The narrow perception, also referred to by Krystyna Skarżyńska as behavioural, denotes political behaviour and intentions, or readiness to take steps within that scope. In the broader sense, apart from political behaviour and readiness to take steps within it, the notion also includes political comprehension. It refers e.g. to knowledge about political parties, well-

defined political opinions and voting habits, or ability to identify people who hold the most important functions in the state (Skarżyńska 1999).

Political participation, which is sometimes associated with political involvement, can be understood as "an active support for political continuity or political change" or "any form of involvement in the process of affecting the governors' allocations within socially acknowledged values" (Barner-Barry and Rosenwein (1985), as in: Skarżyńska 2002, 22). For van Deth, political participation is an involvement in politics (understood in line with the Easton's model as a process of creating and allocating socially acknowledged goods) and it often refers to such activities as voting, participation in a political campaign, demonstrating, involvement in a riot, etc. (van Deth 1986).

We can distinguish 2 types of political activity: conventional and unconventional. Conventional participation is defined as an activity which complies with the existing constitutional order and democratic rules. Thus, it will primarily include all electoral behaviours of citizens and behaviours related to "legal influence of individuals on selection of actions undertaken by politicians" (Skarżyńska 2002, 29). Barnes and Kaase (1979), in addition to the already mentioned voting, and also includes the mass media, discussions and party affiliation in conventional politics.

On the other hand, unconventional participation, which is the purpose of this paper, is based on direct actions that affect decisions of the government, hence it is sometimes determined by direct participation in politics. It may adopt the form of a manifestation, strike, or occupation and may include other methods of demonstrating civic disobedience. Marsch includes unconventional forms of participation such as petitions, demonstrations, refusal to pay taxes, strikes, painting slogans on the walls, occupation, blockades, and destruction of property and violence (see: van Deth 1986, 263). As we can see, unconventional participation does not always refer to illegal activities - an example of unconventional activity remaining in accordance with the law is signing petitions, writing letters to politicians, or participation in lawful demonstrations. In addition to unconventional illegal activity, there is also political violence that may include such behaviours as physical aggression towards other people or destruction of their property.

The Role of Gender in Political Activity

The role of gender in political activity can be considered in the context of factors that determine its level. Thus, one may wonder how gender translates into material and non-material resources, sense of effectiveness, social bonds or trust (Rosenstone & Hansen 2003; Verba, Schlozman & Brady 1995), which may in turn determine the greater or lesser level of political activity. The female gender is often treated as a burdensome factor due to the traditional role attributable to women. The so-called structural approach assumes that the difference observed in the levels of political activity between women and men is related to the lower position of women in the social structure (lower earnings, worse education). Eliminating the impact of those variables results in equalization of political activity levels among men and women (see also: Welch 1977).

The role of gender in political activity may also depend on contextual factors, especially cultural factors related to the level of social modernization or religious determinants. This way of explaining the differential in political activity among women and men can be found in Hofstede (2007), as well as in the work of Inglehart and Norris (2009).

Apart from the biological gender, additional factors that are supposedly responsible for women's and men's political activities include elements of the system of beliefs, that is the acknowledged political values, conviction that political activity has an importance, level of satisfaction with democracy, as well as individualism and collectivism understood as an element of the individual's mentality (Reykowski 1990).

In psychology, structural and cultural explanations of the role of gender are combined under the category of social expectations, regarding the attitudes, functions and behaviours directed at people identified as women and men" (Miluska 1996). The structural approach, also in relation to gender, is expressed in the conviction that there is a common position occupied by certain groups in the social structure, and there are structural factors limiting our experience at all levels, from family to society (Ashmore & Del Boca 1981; Deaux & Kite 2002). Cultural interpretation, in turn, emphasizes that the combination of convictions, recognized values and social skills derives itself from the experience of early childhood accumulated in the process, the purpose

of which is to introduce and help young people to adopt social standards (House 1981). Some importance is attributable to various cultural values which are present in the course of socialisation (Hofstede 2007). Roles of genders are supposed to explain current behaviours, being a direct predictor of gender differences observed in adult women and men, although they depend on distant variables, i.e. early socialization as well as biological predispositions (Eagly 1987).

Where the concepts of gender roles are concerned it is assumed that the social system of gender roles emphasizes the following: allocating different categories of activity to people on the basis of their biological gender (professional, household, and civic), deemed necessary and useful for maintaining and improving social life; assigning to people, depending on their biological gender, oppositional personality features, expressed in the stereotypes of masculinity and femininity; and thirdly, higher valuation of everything related to masculinity (Chetwynd & Oonagh 1978, as in: Pankowska 2005). In the case of men, it is primarily connected with professional, rather than household activities. Professions related to exercising power (the profession of a politician is categorised as such) are assigned related features such as: independence, rationality, determination, courage, or authority (Pankowska 2005; see also: Miluska 1996; Pratto 2002).

These social expectations that constitute allocated (assigned) roles may translate into subjective (internalized) roles and fulfilled (satisfied) roles. Since the role assigned to women is primarily connected with expectations related to household and private activities, we can expect lower political activity of women. On the other hand, the submissiveness and conventionality of actions, which are stereotypes associated with women, may suggest their lower interest particularly in unconventional activity.

The various factors potentially responsible for political activity of women and men indicated by the authors justify a need for further research regarding this problem, which additionally should take into account the time factor (research conducted in three periods with different characteristics defined by political events).

The aim of the study is to answer the question about extent to which gender, male and female, political values, conviction about the value of political activity, the level of satisfaction with democracy, and

the level of individualism and collectivism determines the level of political activity. Resolving this issue helps determining the level of activity in the group of women and men over the compared years (2004, 2010, and 2014); what hierarchy of political values do men and women recognize; what is the value of political activity in the group of women and men; what level of satisfaction with democracy are typical of women and men and what is the level of individualism and collectivism in the group of women and men covered in the research.

It is assumed that level of political activity in the researched group depends on gender, which also conditions individual forms of political activity. It is expected that men will demonstrate greater political activity. Moreover, gender differences in the hierarchy of values were also assumed: men more oriented to instrumental values may have a higher political commitment than women who are oriented to expressive values. It is also expected that the political activity would be influenced by the belief in value of political activity and the level of satisfaction with democracy: in both cases, higher results should be displayed by men. Persons who appreciate activity and remain more satisfied with the democratic system, who supposedly are mostly men, would be more active in a conventional way. It is also expected that the level and forms of political activity should be differentiated by the results achieved on the scale of individualism and collectivism. Women achieve higher results than men in terms of collectivism and thus they are likely to prefer conventional forms of activity. Levels of political activity in the men's and women's groups will also depend on the year of research which has its own political context.

Considering the three periods in which the research was conducted, one may reflect on what is the influence of accompanying events on the level and forms of political activity. Disappointment with the political class and politics in general could have discouraged political activity both in 2004 and in 2014. A similar effect could have been exacerbated by the political dispute that took place in 2010 and a certain sense of *entrenchment* of the political scene that accompanied citizens in that time.

The Research Methodology

We take into account results of research conducted by J. Miluska and B. Pająk-Patkowska among 1048 Polish students of psychology and political science, including 714 women (68.13%) and 334 men (31.87%). 384 persons from the year 2004 (266 women and 118 men), 367 people from 2010 (237 women and 130 men) and 297 people from 2014 (211 women and 86 men) were surveyed. The average age for women is 23.25 years, and for men 22.98 years. It was a targeted test – we were interested in the attitudes of young people.

The age of the respondents indicates that they are people in the period of early adulthood (in its early phase), which begins around 20-23 years of age and lasts until reaching about 35-40 years of age (Harwas-Napierała & Trempała 2000). In this period of human life, the physiological differences determine social development of young men and women to some extent. For men, working and being successful at work constitute the principal aim of activity. Professional life and social activity in men usually take place independently of family life, he does not exclude his activity in this area both in the matter of establishing and maintaining a family as well as often a large commitment to caring for and upbringing the children. Professional and social activity in women are being interrupted or marginalized more often due to reasons connected with parenthood. Hence, it can be concluded that women involve themselves in any political activity to a lesser extent than men. A significant change that takes place in the period of early adulthood in relation to adolescence, regarding our way of perceiving social reality, results from the fact that we have departed from the idealistic perception of the world, the “absolutist perception of truth”, and adopted of relative view of the nature of solutions. Such a method of attributing value to the affects social and political attitudes.

Political activity was examined in its unconventional (legal and illegal) dimension as well as in actual (the form of action undertaken by the surveyed person) and potential (attitudes of the surveyed towards various forms of activity) dimensions. Unconventional activity defined as direct participation in politics may take on a legal nature (signing petitions, participation in legal demonstrations or boycotts) or illegal

nature (illegal demonstrations, illegal strikes, roadblocks). The Political Activity Scale was used to measure political activity. It consisted of: four questions about unconventional legal activity, three regarding potential unconventional legal activity, and five regarding unconventional illegal activity. In the case of unconventional legal activity, the surveyed could choose one out of three answers: "yes, several times", "yes, once", "no, never" (the answers were scored from 2 to 0 respectively, the number of points was counted and the average from all questions calculated). The portfolio of answers to questions about all types of potential activity included five categories: "definitely yes", "mostly yes", "hard to say" "rather no", "definitely not" (the answers were scored from 4 to 0, the number of points was summed up and then the average was calculated). In addition to the scales indicated in the questionnaire, there were two additional questions: one regarding the belief of the surveyed regarding importance of citizens' participation in elections for the functioning of democracy (the importance of political activity), and the second regarding satisfaction of the surveyed with democracy in Poland.

A modified Sotwin's (2003) scale of values has been applied to measure the hierarchy of political values. As compared to the original tool, generally defined values were put in a more detailed way. "Equality" was replaced with "equality before the law", "income equality", "equality of opportunity", while instead of "freedom" - "political freedom", "economic freedom", "personal freedom" were used; instead of "justice": "distribution of wealth according to contribution" and "distribution of wealth according to needs" appeared. Moreover, the following values have been removed from the scale: "tolerance", "world peace" and "political activity". All of the eight values have been paired and the surveyed persons were asked to select the value which is more important to him or her. Then the number of times each value was chosen by the surveyed was calculated, which allowed for developing the hierarchy of values.

Measurement of individualism and collectivism was done using a 20-item questionnaire developed by J. Wagner (Wagner and Moch 1986; Wagner 1995). It investigates five factors: 1/ Stand alone: focus on independence and self-reliance, 2/ Win above all: extreme inclination to win in competitive situations, 3/ Group preference: preference for working with other members of the group, 4/ Sacrifice in Group:

conviction about the need to sacrifice the individual for the benefit of the group and 5/ Individual Thinking: the need to have individual beliefs as a condition of adapting to the group. Factors 1, 2 and 5 are the individualistic factors, while factors 3 and 4 and the collectivist factors.

The factor analysis has proved the existence of those five factors. Reliability of the whole scale has been confirmed in Polish research (Miluska 2005) and equals 0.71 (Cronbach's alfa), whereas reliability of individual scales are as follows: "Reliance on oneself" – 0.75; "Winning" – 0.74; "Preference for the group" – 0.72, "Commitment within the group" – 0.69 and "Independent attitude" – 0.70.

There is a similarity between the described structure of factors and the types of individualism and collectivism in Triandis' concept (1995). "Self-reliance" and "individual thinking" are close to horizontal individualism, which is characterized by a need to differentiate from other, partner-treated people. "Winning" is the equivalent of vertical individualism which emphasizes the value of rivalry and overtaking others, while "preference for the group" is a horizontal collectivism emphasizing importance of mutual dependence between members of a single group. "Dedication to the group" is closer to collectivism, although it does not fit into any of its types distinguished by Triandis, while the questionnaire does not contain items related to vertical collectivism, emphasizing the importance of tradition and respect for the family. The respondents answered questions using a seven-degree scale, where the answer "1" meant "I definitely agree" and "7" – "I strongly disagree".

The surveys have been conducted in three different years: 2004, 2010, and 2014. In 2004, which was the time following the Rywingate of 2003, the course of action was focusing on intense interrogations conducted by the committee of inquiry appointed to resolve it. This was resulting in a decreased trust in politics and disappointment over the condition of the Polish political scene.

2010 was the year of the Smolensk plane catastrophe which took place on April 10th. When the President Lech Kaczyński died in the plane crash, it was necessary to organize presidential elections. The initial atmosphere of reconciliation in the view of national tragedy finished just after Jarosław Kaczyński lost the elections. The disputes between PO and PiS flared up again, fuelled additionally by accusations

directed against the then Prime Minister Donald Tusk and the Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski on irregularities related to the preparation for the visit to Katyn, which was supposed to lead to a tragedy; 2014 was the penultimate year of PO government's second term. The Prime Minister Donald Tusk leaves government after being elected to be President of the European Council. He is replaced by Ewa Kopacz. Moreover, it is the time of the revelation of the so-called phone hacking scandal, in which a well-known politician of Civic Platform settles political deals at a table in a restaurant using obscene language. During elections to local governments, the Law and Justice party gained a slight advantage.

Considering the three periods in which the research was conducted, one may reflect on what is the influence of accompanying events on the level and forms of political activity.

Disappointment with the political class and politics in general could have discouraged political activity both in 2004 and in 2014. A similar effect could have been exacerbated by the political dispute that took place in 2010 and a certain sense of *entrenchment* of the political scene that accompanied citizens in that time.

Research Results

The level of studied variables and the significance of differences in the analyzed groups

Average values and standard deviations of particular variables in selected samples relating to political activity, as well as for independent variables that determine them, were presented in table #1. The table is missing political values, as they were positioned based on hierarchy, as described in the methodological section of this paper.

Unconventional political activity

As far as the second form of political activity is concerned (the unconventional legal actual activity), the scope of achieved results is 0

(no activity) – 2 (the highest activity). Average value within the group reached $M = 0.36$; $SD = 0.38$ which indicates low interest in this activity among the surveyed students. Important differences between men and women should be noted. Interestingly, the observed differences were steadily decreasing, to the point of nonsignificance reached in 2014. What initially seemed to be a manly domain, has also decreased its importance in this group.

An average for another form of political activity (the unconventional legal potential activity) equals $M = 2.64$; $SD = 0.96$. Assuming that score "0" denotes lack of activity, while score "4" is the maximum, then the obtained data indicate above-average interest in this form of political activity among the surveyed. There are no statistically significant differences. None of the gender groups is interested in this form of political activity to a greater extent than the other gender.

Results of the last form of political activities covered in the research (the unconventional illegal potential activity) fall between "0" (no activity) and "4" (the highest possible degree). The average value for the both groups is $M = 1.19$; $SD = 0.80$, and indicates that the surveyed expressed low interest in this activity. Men are consistently more interested than women in unconventional and illegal practices, and what is more, the upward trend is noticeable in this respect.

Confidence about importance of political activity

If the result "0" denotes conviction that the activity is invalid, and the result "4" denotes the strongest conviction about the importance of activity, the average $M = 3.49$, $SD = 0.92$ means that all of them highly value this form of involvement. Nevertheless, the achieved results indicate greater approval for this value amongst women.

Satisfaction with democracy

The scale of results assumes the minimum as "0" (no satisfaction) and the maximum as "4" (the highest satisfaction). The surveyed group

achieved an average result of $M = 1.34$ $SD = 1.05$, which indicates a rather unfavourable assessment of its state in Poland. Only the last result indicates greater satisfaction with democracy in the women's group. In this regard, men seem to be clearly frustrated.

Individualism and collectivism

On the scale of individualism with a minimum at 1 and maximum of 7, the surveyed group achieved an average of $M = 4.01$; $SD = 0.87$, which gives an indication of above-average intensity of this orientation. On the scale for collectivism with a range of results from 1 to 7, the researchers obtained an average result of $M = 4.56$; $SD = 0.82$, which proves a relatively high level of collectivism. The difference between men and women in terms of individualism is statistically significant and indicates higher values for men. Collectivism values do not significantly differ.

Table 1

The level of studied variables and the significance of differences in the analyzed groups

Variable	Year	Sex	M	SD	F, p, η^2
Actual unconventional legal activity	Total	F	0.30	0.33	F = 6.02; p = 0.014; η^2 = 0.04
		M	0.47	0.45	
	2004	F	0.39	0.36	F = 31.16; p < 0.001; η^2 = 0.08
		M	0.63	0.47	
	2010	F	0.40	0.34	F = 16.77; p < 0.001; η^2 = 0.04
		M	0.57	0.44	
2014	F	0.10	0.14	S/I*	
	M	0.12	0.15		
Potential unconventional legal activity	Total	F	2.64	0.95	S/I
		M	2.62	0.99	
	2004	F	2.63	0.94	S/I
		M	2.51	0.98	
	2010	F	2.74	0.82	S/I
		M	2.71	0.82	
2014	F	2.56	1.08	S/I	
	M	2.63	1.22		
Potential unconventional illegal activity	Total	F	1.04	0.71	F = 60.99; p < 0.001; η^2 = 0.05
		M	1.43	0.92	
	2004	F	1.2	0.63	F = 9.71; p < 0.001; η^2 = 0.03
		M	1.45	0.8	
	2010	F	1.32	0.64	F = 20.71; p < 0.001; η^2 = 0.05
		M	1.68	0.84	
2014	F	0.59	0.62	F = 33.65; p < 0.001; η^2 = 0.1	
	M	1.18	1.11		

* Statistically insignificant

Variable	Year	Sex	M	SD	F, p, η^2
Confidence about importance of political activity	Total	F	3.52	0.81	F = 8.80; p = 0.003; η^2 = 0.01
		M	3.31	0.11	
	2004	F	3.70	0.59	S/I
		M	3.67	0.88	
	2010	F	3.70	0.639	F = 7.52; p = 0.006; η^2 = 0.02
		M	3.46	1.01	
2014	F	3.18	1.07	F = 6.50; p = 0.011; η^2 = 0.02	
	M	2.80	1.32		
Satisfaction with democracy	Total	F	1.37	1	S/I
		M	1.26	0.16	
	2004	F	1.09	0.96	S/I
		M	1.12	1.10	
	2010	F	1.72	1.09	S/I
		M	1.62	1.21	
2014	F	1.30	0.81	F = 5.84; p = 0.016; η^2 = 0.02	
	M	1.02	1.06		
Individualism	total	F	3.89	0.83	F = 25.65; p < 0.001; η^2 = 0.04
		M	4.25	0.91	
	2010	F	3.92	0.81	F = 15.20; p < 0.001; η^2 = 0.04
		M	4.29	0.95	
	2014	F	3.86	0.86	F = 9.63; p = 0.002; η^2 = 0.03
		M	4.20	0.87	

Variable	Year	Sex	M	SD	F, p, η^2
Collectivism	Total	F	4.54	0.81	S/I
		M	4.61	0.86	
	2010	F	4.54	0.82	S/I
		M	4.57	0.85	
	2014	F	4.55	0.80	S/I
		M	4.66	0.89	

Source: author's work

The acknowledged values

Analysis of the hierarchy of values in the following years indicates that the highest attractiveness, both for women and men, can be attributed to personal freedom, while the lowest assessments concern income equality.

The data indicates a statistical significance for differences in the assessment of "equality of remuneration", "equality of opportunity", "personal freedom" and "distribution of goods according to the needs of citizens" (women's advantage) and "political freedom", "economic freedom" and "equality before the law" (advantage of men). The result obtained in the group of women is a collection of values indicating the need for a safe standing in the social structure and, at the same time, free choice and action, which may be violated by the sense of security. Men appreciate freedom in given spheres of activities (politics and economy) and they hold equality before the law in a higher esteem.

In 2004, women valued equality of remuneration and equality of opportunity visibly more than men, while men outweigh women in terms of appreciation towards equality before the law and political freedom. In 2010, men more often than women preferred economic freedom, while women – equality of opportunity and division of wealth according to citizens' contribution. In 2014, women particularly appreciated the equality of opportunity, division of wealth according to citizens' needs and personal freedom, while men preferred economic freedom.

Determinants of political activity: multiple regression analysis

The estimation has been conducted with a progressive step method, which allowed for avoiding problems with collinearity of descriptive variables. Factors which significantly affected levels of political activity have been determined based on the level of importance of the model parameter valuation. In turn, due to the differences in scales of explanatory variables, the hierarchy of significance related to factors taking part in the study was built on the basis of probability values (p-values). The following potential predictors were adopted in

the analysis: the aforementioned eight values, conviction about the importance of political activity, satisfaction with democracy in Poland, individualism, and collectivism.

The results of particular multiple regression analyses were presented jointly for all time periods researched. The determinants of a given activity were indicated jointly for both men and women, and separately, by sex. Statistically significant results are presented in table #2. In the group of men the actual unconventional political activity has no significant predictions.

Table 2

Determinants of political activity: multiple regression analysis

Dependent variable	Sex	Independent variable	beta	P
Actual unconventional legal activity		R = 0.27; R ² = 0.07; Adjusted R ² = 0.07; F(6,657) = 8.83; p < 0.01		
		belief in importance of activity	0.16	< 0.001
		distribution of wealth according to citizens' needs	- 0.12	0.004
		individualism	0.09	0.023
		political freedom	0.09	0.022
Potential unconventional legal activity		R = 0.26; R ² = 0.07; Adjusted R ² = 0.06; F(7,655) = 6.79; p < 0.01		
		belief in importance of activity	0.18	< 0.001
		collectivism	0.12	0.001
		satisfaction with democracy	- 0.09	0.016
Potential unconventional illegal activity		R = 0.23; R ² = 0.05; Adjusted R ² = 0.04; F (7,656) = 5.42; p < 0.01		
		individualism	0.14	< 0.001
		satisfaction with democracy	- 0.09	0.013
		high appraisal of political freedom	0.09	0.04
Actual unconventional legal activity	F	R = 0.33; R ² = 0.11; Adjusted R ² = 0.10; F(5,365) = 8.77; p < 0.01		
		conviction of the activity that carries importance	0.19	< 0.001
		"division of wealth according to citizens' needs"	- 0.13	0.015
		"political freedom"	0.12	0.022
Potential unconventional legal activity	F	R = 0.37; R ² = 0.14; Adjusted R ² = 0.12; F (9,360) = 6.49; p < 0.01		
		depends on belief in importance of activity	0.25	< 0.001
		high appraisal of political freedom	0.17	0.004
		satisfaction with democracy	- 0.12	0.02
		equality of remuneration	0.12	0.031

Dependent variable	Sex	Independent variable	beta	P
Potential unconventional illegal activity	F	R = 0.24; R ² = 0.06; Adjusted R ² = 0.05; F(3,444) = 8.81; p < 0.01		
		conviction of the activity importance	0.19	0.001
		high appraisal of political freedom	0.13	0.006
Potential unconventional legal activity	M	R = 0.22; R ² = 0.05; Adjusted R ² = 0.03; F(4,196) = 2.57; p < 0.05		
		collectivism	0.17	0.018
Potential unconventional illegal activity	M	R = 0.30; R ² = 0.09; Adjusted R ² = 0.08; F(3,212) = 6.83; p < 0.01		
		individualism	0.25	< 0.001
		satisfaction with democracy	-0.14	0.036

Source: author's work

In these results attention is drawn to the importance of a conviction about the activity significance, which seems to be the most prominent determinant of various forms of political activity of the surveyed students, regardless of their gender. Lack of satisfaction with democracy has a similar importance.

Discussion

The hypothesis that gender differentiates level of political activity has been positively verified in most of the conducted analyses. Both conventional and unconventional actual political activities turned out to be considerably closer for men than women. Those differences were confirmed by the research conducted in each year except 2014. On the other hand, men turned out to be more interested in potential conventional political activities as well as potential unconventional illegal political activities. As far as this scope is concerned, the results obtained for all the years as a whole as well as the results for respective research stages were higher. However, no statistically significant differences within potential unconventional legal political activity were observed between the researched groups.

The second detailed hypothesis regarding expected higher support for importance of political activity in the group of men was not confirmed in the obtained results because it turned out that women are more convinced of its importance. Such a conclusion is the result of analysing data from all the years together and separately the years 2010 and 2014. No difference has been observed only with regard to the data from 2004. Conviction about importance of political activity seems to be the most stable predictor of women's involvement and it is important for each type of activity. This interdependency proves itself for men only in the case of the conventional activity.

The hypothesis about a greater level of satisfaction with democracy in the group of surveyed men has also been verified negatively. Most of the conducted research does not allow for drawing such a conclusion. Only the 2014 data prove the differences. In this example, however, higher satisfaction with democracy was observed among women. Lack

of satisfaction with democracy affects the level of unconventional illegal potential activity in the group of men and the legal potential activity in the group of women.

Results of analyses concerning differences in the level of collectivism between women and men suggest to disregarding the hypothesis about its higher level in the women's group. On the other hand, significant differences were noted in the level of individualism. Its level turned out to be much higher in the group of surveyed men. Along with its increase the tendency to undertake political activity of unconventional, illegal and potential nature also increases. Collectivism has a varying impact on political activities in women, as opposed to men. In relation to women, it affects tendencies for starting potential conventional activities, while in relation to men it affects potential unconventional legal activities.

As shown by the above results, women and men differ not only at the levels of political activity, but also differ when it comes to its conditions. Analysis of dynamics of those changes as well as determinants of political activities among women and men allows for drawing the following conclusions.

The actual unconventional activity has proven to be more effective for men rather than women. It is worth noting, however, that the data collected in 2014 indicates a clear drop in interest for both groups to such an extent that the differences in its level between the analysed groups have become blurred. Taking into account data from all the years, there are no consistent predictors of this variable in the group of surveyed men. In the women's group they included: conviction of the activity importance, respect for political freedom and disregard for division of wealth according to citizens' needs.

In all stages of the research, a similar level of potential unconventional legal activity was noted, although in this case no differences were noticed between women and men. However, differences were noted in the case of predictors. For men it was collectivism only, while for women the conviction about importance of the activity, respect for political freedom and equality of remuneration. Also the lack of satisfaction with democracy is a factor that would potentially contribute to undertake unconventional yet legal political actions by women.

The surveyed did not demonstrate higher interest in taking up potential political activities of unconventional and illegal nature. And even if they did, it is more accessible to men. Analysing the results of research obtained in 2014, one can notice a clear drop in interest in the group of surveyed women in relation to results from previous years. It depends on the level of belief in importance of activity, and recognition for personal freedom. In the case of men, it depends on the level of individualism as well as (dis)satisfaction with democracy.

The research context seems to have no importance for the level and forms of political activity among the surveyed. This may be a result of the fact that the research was carried out in years accompanied by events that lower confidence in politics and politicians and discourage involvement. In addition, in each case the research covered young people, usually less interested in this area of activity, as indicated in the introduction when characterizing the studied group (see also: Liberska 2004; Szafraniec 2012; Turska-Kawa 2012; Marzęcki 2013).

To a significant degree, the trends of changes in political activities revealed by researches comply with the changes being observed in this scope. A lot of research on political participation (European Values Study, World Values Study) registers a decrease in citizens' interest in activity, especially those of conventional nature. On the other hand, interest in unconventional activity and direct participation in politics begin to increase. Moreover, it has been increasing in the Western democracies since 1970s. The twentieth century is about participatory revolution, while in countries of new democracies only recent years brought the certainty of an awakening society and an increase in interest in such activities. In Western societies, interest is increased in individualized activities, often related to consumer consumption behaviours (van Deth 2009; Ross & Dooly 2010; Theoharis & van Deth 2016). It concerns, for instance, boycotting goods of specific brands, which can be a protest against environmental policy or against producers' attitudes towards employees working in third world countries. However, it seems that in Poland and other Central and Eastern European states the trend is not yet so strong. The analysed researches indicate a decrease in political activity among respondents or its maintenance at a relatively constant level, also in relation to unconventional legal activities.

In turn, slow blurring of previously observed differences in political activity between women and men is also observed in other studies, especially those conducted in countries being more advanced in the modernization process (e.g. Coffe & Bolzendahl 2010, Norris 2002). As R. Inglehart and P. Norris point out, the shift towards post-materialist values that accompany these processes favours equalization of the position of women and men in the political area as well (Inglehart & Norris 2009). The fact that in the concerned studies gender ceased to be a factor differentiating level of both conventional and unconventional legal political activity only in 2014 allows the suspicion that this change has only just begun (see results of research on values, e.g. Bartkowski 2009; Jasińska-Kania 2011).

The most doubtful and questionable are the results that refer to conditions of political activities taken up by women and men. It is difficult to identify the factor which is conducive to undertaking political activity in both surveyed groups to the same extent. An important predictor of any type of activity among women was the belief in importance of being active in democracy, which for men was only important in the case of conventional activities. Obviously, it is not strange that undertaking political activity is related to conviction that the said activity is important (more about relationship between political participation and attitudes and beliefs see: Quintelier & van Deth 2014). It is worth noting, however, that women's conviction about the importance of activity in democracy is growing, which may be the result of intensified actions carried out by feminist organizations stressing the importance of mobilising women in the political sphere. The fact that it is accompanied by an increase in political activity among the surveyed women may be an indication of interdependency between those factors.

On the other hand, interdependencies between individualistic or collective orientation and political activity of women and men were more complex. According to the assumption, men had stronger individualistic orientations than women. Support for unconventional illegal activity has been increasing together with the increase in individualism, which cannot be regarded as a surprise. Activities of this type undermine the existing rules and they are often a manifestation of a rebellion against the rules imposed by a dominant group. However, the picture of interdependencies was more complicated in the case of

collectivism. In case of women, it caused greater support for potential conventional activity (which is in line with expectations – participation in elections can be treated as an expression of support for group norms and attention to social order). In the case of men, however, it translates into higher support for unconventional legal activity.

Furthermore, the noticed interdependencies between importance of given political values and political activity create a complex and vague image. While the dependencies between political activity and the choice of equality before the law or political freedom that have been found in the group of women can be explained, a link between equality of remuneration and political activity (found in the group of men) is more difficult to explain. It seems that it would be worth carrying out more in-depth research focused only on relationship between political values and political activity of women and men.

Conducting this type of research on the relationship between gender and political activity is important in the context of controversies related to quotas introduced in the Polish political system as well. According to opponents of this type of solution, such artificial activation of women may cause them to enter politics by accident, because the number of females who are really interested in this sphere is smaller than the number of men. Detection of factors determining the level of political activity among women and men brings us closer to answering the question of where the possible differences in this activity come from.

Although the research was conducted on a relatively small group (young people, who were still students¹), and as such does not give grounds to generalize the results, it does not mean they are not very important. Research conducted among students helps to identify certain trends in changes within the sphere of activities among men and women. Young people, especially well-educated, are the first carriers of specific attitudes that will probably appear in future society (Koseła 1999; Rogowska 2000, Szafraniec 2011; Szafraniec 2012).

¹ Among students there were students of political science, which could suggest their greater interest in political activity, but analyses carried out for the purposes of another article indicated that differences related to the field of study in the subsequent years of research tend to fade away (see also: Miluska, Pająk-Patkowska, 2014).

It is worth to considering monitoring sustainability of the above tendencies during future research. It is worth checking whether gender ceases to diversify political activity and whether the increase in the political activity of women is still due to their greater conviction about the importance which the activity has in the political sphere and greater satisfaction with democracy. It could indicate possible methods for strengthening those trends, for instance through educational activities.

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