

ANNALS
UNIVERSITATIS MARIAE CURIE-SKŁODOWSKA
LUBLIN – POLONIA

VOL. XXII, 1

SECTIO K

2015

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Poles' attitudes towards the idea of introduction of additional mechanisms increasing participation of Polish women in political life

ABSTRACT

In a discussion about a place of women in contemporary political life, the role of various actions and mechanisms aiming at increasing female involvement is extremely significant, since today women represent slightly more than half of the world population, and their participation in formal political structures remains insignificant.

Without any doubt, since 1989, one may observe increasing women's role in Polish political life. One of the proofs for it is a higher number of women registered as candidates before parliamentary elections, as well as higher percentage of women in Polish Sejm. In spite of this, Polish women are still less active in the political life than men, which results from the existence of several barriers hindering their participation and involvement in politics. The main aim of this article is to analyse the opinion of Poles on the activities of women in political life and introduction of additional mechanisms having the potential to increase women's participation in political bodies. The research was based on empirical data collected in November and December 2013 within the project "Political preferences: Attitude – Identification – Behavior".

Key words: women, politics, mechanisms increasing participation in politics, Poland

The possibility for all citizens to participate in the process of decision-making on public affairs is at the very heart of democracy. Women's participation in decision-making is essential for women's interests to be incorporated into governance. However, in the majority of countries, the political environment remains largely dominated by men, and is even an exclusively male bastion in some countries [Inter-Parliamentary Union 1999].

Despite the fact that today women represent slightly more than half of the world (as well as of Europe) population, their participation in formal political structures remains rather insignificant. That is also the reason why the participation of women in European or global politics is a frequently discussed problem [Barburska 2002; Ilonszki 2004; Karam & Ballington: 2005; Musiał-Karg 2009; Dahlerup & Freidenvall 2011]. The problems of role and place of women in the political space have been addressed in scientific literature for many years. This issue is more and more often addressed not only by numerous economists, sociologists and political scientists, but also commentators of the public space, journalists and experts. As a consequence, in the media we can observe an ongoing discussion about women's participation in political life, which affects the public opinion on that issue.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Researchers dealing with the issue of a role of women in political space, take into account the fact that women constitute over 50 percent of all the world population, emphasizing also that in majority of states this is not reflected by the female presence in political bodies [Barburska 2002: 72; Bari 2005; Fuszara 2007; *Democracy and...* 2010; Matland & Montgomery 2003]. This is the result of perceiving women as those whose main social objective consists in giving birth to and raising children as well as those who do not want to receive education, be professionally active, not to mention a start of political career. Scientific discussions about the problems of women's presence in public authorities often connect the lower representation of women with biological, social, ideological, structural, cultural, religious and economic conditions. Particular attention is also placed on violation of women rights which, surprisingly, is not observed only in poorly developed countries, but also in those states which boast of their economic development and stable democracy. In many of those places the discrimination against women on the grounds of their gender is present within widely understood political life, which can be proved by relatively low number of women who hold responsible posts in companies and public authorities [Musiał-Karg 2009: 79–82]. In a debate devoted to a place and role of women in contemporary political life, the role of various actions and mechanisms aiming at increasing female involvement is extremely significant [Bari 2005: 1–2].

Despite the previous century has brought a long-awaited equality between women and men, which is one of the fundamental principles of legal order in Europe, the actual situation leaves much to be desired. Considering the situation in Poland, without any doubt since 1989, one may observe increasing women's role in Polish political life. One of proofs for it is a higher number of women registered as candidates before parliamentary elections, as well as higher percentage of women in the Polish Sejm (ca. 20 percent). In spite of this, Polish women are still less active in the political life than men, which results from existence of several barriers hindering their participation and involvement in politics.

Taking into account the political space, the under-representation of women in legislative and executive authorities is clearly seen. Thus, questions about the causes seem to be natural. What prevents women from winning and maintaining political functions? What are the real causes for faint involvement of women into politics or social activities? Why do women fulfil themselves both in the professional as well as domestic space in some states, while in others they are relegated to the role of a mother and wife? Is it true that men are to be blamed for such a situation because they let women be active only within domestic and family domains? Or maybe the women are to be blamed? It is often emphasized that most of women are actually not interested in current politics and, as a result, they refrain from taking any political initiatives. Moreover, women are discouraged from public activities by frequent legal limitations which result from an outmoded and inefficient social protection system or simply because the state does not support them in making a decision to become involved socially and politically. Such a state of matters may rise some doubts and provoke questions about how the society perceives women's involvement in political life and whether Poles (after introduction of political parity in 2011) support implementation of additional tools which would increase women's political involvement.

The main aim of this article is to analyse the opinion of Poles on the activities of women in political life and introduction of additional mechanisms having the potential to increase women's participation in political bodies.

The research was based on empirical data collected in November and December 2013 within the project "Political preferences: Attitude – Identification – Behavior". The research was performed on a country-wide representative sample of adult Poles with the right to vote (N=1039). Samples were selected according to stratified quota (the population was divided completely and exclusively into strata, comprising voivodships, whereas the quota sampling procedure included the following variables: residence in a city or in the countryside, sex, and age). The actual research was preceded by a pilot survey (N=200) meant to verify the research tool – the usefulness of the individual issue regarding their understandability and the organization processes related to the research. The project was directed at recognizing the determinants of electoral behaviors and political and party identifications. The study of the conditions and citizens' motivation for active participation in the political life are important from the viewpoint of building a civic society, which includes electoral participation as an important aspect. What is more, the authors of the project also sought the factors distinctive for party electorates and individuals according to different ideological declarations regarding the attitudes towards socially important issues.

DETERMINANTS OF WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN POLITICAL LIFE

Research perspectives adopted within the last years take into account series of various factors which directly or indirectly affect situation of women in political

life. From scientific perspective, this issue should be considered in the context of several significant determinants affecting women's participation in political life: demographics, economic factors, history, cultural conditions as well as stereotypes and the tendency to assign particular social roles to women. Additionally, 'the extent of women's representation in elected office in any given country is determined by a wide range of factors, including the general progress towards achieving equality of rights and opportunities among women and men in public and private spheres, the choice of political and electoral systems, and the level of institutionalization of – and transparency in – decision-making processes within political parties' [OSCE ODIHR 2014: 7]. The most important (according to the current author) determinants for women's participation in political life are presented below.

Women regard cultural factors as one of the most noticeable and perceptible barriers. Politics is traditionally regarded as a "manly sphere" which is inaccessible to women. It is highly emphasized that politics is a domain which requires particular predispositions which are typical of men [Barburska 2002: 73]. The socialisation process during which girls and boys are being prepared for different social roles can also be the reason for women's absence in political life: the main objective of a woman is to be a mother, wife and a family guardian, whereas men are to secure appropriate conditions for themselves and the whole family. Moreover, the societies do not perceive a woman as somebody who can and should compete for a political position. Women themselves often underestimate their virtues, capacities and proclivities for such roles [Fuszara 2007: 264]. Additionally, there are social and cultural stereotypes which are the consequence of patriarchy that "emphasizes division of social roles through traditional system of values and disallows women's involvement in politics or limits it to a minimum" [Barburska 2002: 74]. In such a system of values, the possibility to participate in general elections is the only privilege which women can dispose of. Moreover, another important factor is religion. According to Olga Barburska, women of Protestant countries display greater involvement in politics than women of Catholic states [2002: 45–75]. Cultural factors include also the scope of activities demonstrated by feminist movements. The more they are active, the more women hold responsible positions in public authorities.

Socio-economic conditions play an important role in the way how women are perceived within political life. We may list here e.g. the social and economic status of a woman, access to education, financial resources, access to labour market, unemployment, problems connected with double burden of professional and domestic work. "The overall level of a country's economic development seems to be playing an important role within the group of socio-economic conditions. If this indicator remains on a high level, it may contribute to emancipation of women e.g. through increase in urbanisation, education level and it consequently may lead to a higher interest in non-domestic activities and greater share within the labour market" [Musiał-Karg 2009: 79–82].

Determinants which affect the process of creating the political elites (choice of candidates, course of voting) are the most important group of factors that relate to

Table 1. Factors affecting participation of women in political life

Cultural factors	Socio-economic factors	Political factors
- perceiving politics as a sphere which is unfriendly to women	- social and economic status	- political system
- socialization process (preparation to new roles)	- access to education	- electoral system
- leading religion	- lack of sufficient financial resources	- activities of political parties
- activities of feminist movements	- difficulties within the labour market and unemployment	- ideology of a political party
	- double burden: professional and domestic work	
	- overall level of a country's economic development	

Source: own studies based on: Bari 2005; Barburska 2002: 73; Fuszara 2007: 263–284.

women's participation. Hence, it might be concluded that women's participation in political authorities depends on particular political system as well as electoral and party systems that operate within it. What is more, ideology of political parties affects how women are represented in the given political party and, as a result, in the whole political life. There are usually fewer women in right-wing than left-wing parties. In this context, the efficiency of mechanisms which aim at increasing women's participation in politics plays a great role.

All the factors mentioned above affect the number of women who are present on the political scene of a country as well as determine how many of them hold responsible public functions. According to Christine Ockrent, irrespectively of the cultural and political circumstances in which women develop their talents and eligibilities, it can be stated that their ambition as well as methods for gaining and maintaining political authority are similar as in the case of men. For women, however, everything was and still is more difficult [2007: 174].

POLES ON ACTIVITIES OF WOMEN IN POLITICS – SURVEY RESULTS ANALYSIS

Since 1989, we observe increase in women's importance in Polish political life. One of its clear manifestations is the increase of the number of women in the Sejm and a greater number of female candidates. Despite that, it is clear that Polish women visibly less often than men display activities in politics, which is (as it has already been mentioned) the consequence of women's unwillingness to engage into politics as well as external reasons that limit women's activities within this sphere [Zaworska-Nikoniuk 2009: 163].

In this context, it can be very interesting to compare the present considerations with opinions of Poles on women's presence and involvement in politics.

Taking into account political preferences, the greatest "satisfaction" from women's involvement in political life is observed among supporters of the Law of Justice (PiS). In this case, 55.8% of this political party's supporters indicated "Definitely yes" or "Rather yes" for the statement: "Women are active enough in Polish politics". A slightly lower result was observed among supporters of the Democratic Left Alliance (SLD) who expressed similar opinion in 43.4% cases. About 40% of potential

voters of the Civic Platform (PO) have declared that they are definitely or rather satisfied with the level of female Poles' involvement in politics. The lowest number of persons who are definitely not or rather not satisfied with women's activities in politics is attributed to supporters of the two smaller parties: Your Movement (TR, 38.6%) and the Polish People's Party (PSL, 39.3%).

Supporters of other political parties constituted the largest group in this case: a total of about 51% indicated "Definitely yes" or "Rather yes" for "Women are active enough in Polish politics". Similar opinions were voiced by 26.4% of persons who declared to abstain if the voting would have taken place next Sunday.

Against a background of the above political parties, the supporters of Jarosław Kaczyński's party seem to have the most clearly defined views concerning women's activities in politics. While 3.9% to 5.6% of persons who support PO, PLS, SLD or TR selected the "Definitely yes" answer, the same choice was made by as many as 12.9% of voters of PiS.

Table 2. *Women are active enough in Polish politics* – quantitative and percentage distribution of answers in declarations with respect to elections to the Sejm that would have been held next Sunday

		Definitely yes	Rather yes	No opinion	Rather no	Definitely no	Total
Civic Platform	quantity	7	65	36	48	24	180
	percentage	3.9	36.1	20.0	26.7	13.3	100.0
Polish People's Party	quantity	3	21	21	15	1	61
	percentage	4.9	34.4	34.4	24.6	1.6	100.0
Law and Justice	quantity	27	90	43	39	11	210
	percentage	12.9	42.9	20.5	18.6	5.2	100.0
Your Movement	quantity	3	19	7	14	14	57
	percentage	5.3	33.3	12.3	24.6	24.6	100.0
Democratic Left Alliance	quantity	5	34	12	29	10	90
	percentage	5.6	37.8	13.3	32.2	11.1	100.0
Other	quantity	27	49	22	36	15	149
	percentage	18.1	32.9	14.8	24.2	10.1	100.0
Won't vote	quantity	11	66	83	103	29	292
	percentage	3.8	22.6	28.4	35.3	9.9	100.0

Source: own studies based on survey results.

Taking into account the results for "Definitely no" and "Rather no", it can be stated that opinions of those who support PO and SLD are highly polarised as far as the attitude towards women's activities in Polish politics is concerned. From among the potential voters of the both political parties, the same percentage of surveyed believe that women are active enough (a total of 40% in case of PO, and 43.4% in case of SLD) and their involvement is definitely or rather too low (40% in case of PO and 43.3% in case of SLD).

Among the supporters of PSL and PiS, about one of four respondents claim that involvement of female Poles in political life is too low (answers "Definitely no" and "Rather no" – 26.2% PSL; 23.8% PiS). The greatest number of persons who

negatively assess activities of women in politics is observed among potential voters of Janusz Palikot's party, i.e. 49.2%.

The ones who would not vote are placed just behind the result of TR, if voting would have been held next Sunday. In this case, 45.2% assessed women's commitment as too low.

It should be also mentioned that the researched persons can be divided into three different groups (by way of calculating an arithmetic mean of all "Definitely yes" and "Rather yes" answers as well as "Definitely no" and "Rather no" answers). The first group comprises about 42.1% of respondents who believe that women are active enough in Polish politics. Another group comprises about 37.4% of those who have an opposite opinion claiming that level of women's involvement is too low. The last, third group consists of about 20.5% of respondents who represent those eligible voters that have no opinion about Polish women's activities in politics.

Comparing the survey results with ideological views (right-wing, centre, left-wing) of the responding people, it is worth paying attention to two issues which seem to differentiate individual groups of respondents.

Following the solution adopted for previous part of the survey results analysis (i.e. combining "Definitely yes" with "Rather yes" and "Definitely no" with "Rather no"), we can notice the below regularities:

- firstly, respondents displaying the left-wing and centre views have similar opinions. In case of a positive assessment of women's activities in politics, the answers reached the level of 39.7% (left-wing parties) and 34.4% (centre). Women's involvement was assessed negatively by, respectively, 47.5% and 46.2% of the surveyed;

Table 3. *Women are active enough in Polish politics* – quantitative and percentage distribution of answers in declarations with respect to ideological views

		Definitely yes	Rather yes	No opinion	Rather no	Definitely no	Total
Left-wing	quantity	20	67	28	68	36	219
	percentage	9.1	30.6	12.8	31.1	16.4	100.0
Centre	quantity	5	53	33	54	24	169
	percentage	3.0	31.4	19.5	32.0	14.2	100.0
Right-wing	quantity	44	148	72	77	22	363
	percentage	12.1	40.8	19.8	21.2	6.1	100.0
Don't know/ unable to define	quantity	14	76	91	85	22	288
	percentage	4.9	26.4	31.6	29.5	7.6	100.0

Source: own studies based on survey results.

- secondly, opinions of respondents who support right-wing parties are often contrary to opinions of the latter (people advocating left-wing and centre politics): 52.9% of the respondents favourably perceive women's involvement in political life, while the total of 27.3% indicated opposite answers;

- thirdly, the image of respondents who were not able to define their ideological views is interesting. In this case, their opinions can be divided into three groups which are relatively similar in terms of their size: 31.3% – favourably assessed women’s actives in politics, 31.6% – had no opinion about this subject, and 37.1% – claimed that women are not active enough.

Table 4. *Women are active enough in Polish politics* – average percentage distribution of answers with respect to elections to the Sejm that would have been held next Sunday and with respect to ideological views

	Definitely yes + Rather yes	No opinion	Definitely no + Rather no
political preferences	42.071%	20.528%	37.428%
ideological positions	39.575%	20.925%	39.525%

Source: own studies based on survey results.

The analysis of average results obtained from individual answers allows for a conclusion that opinions of the surveyed people are polarized more by the political preferences than the references to ideological views. In this case, the both categories (those who believe that women are active enough as well as those who have opposite opinions) display identical percentage values: 39.575% and 39.525%. On average, persons who have no opinion about this issue constitute 20.92% of the respondents. The average outcome of these answers – as it can be noticed – is very similar, yet it includes political preferences.

POLES ON THE NEED TO INTRODUCE MECHANISMS INCREASING WOMEN’S PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS – SURVEY RESULTS ANALYSIS

One of the most important issues addressed during discussions about women’s activities in political life are the mechanisms which increase women’s participation. It should be emphasized that various types of electoral systems advocate different institutionalised forms of increasing women’s participation in politics:

- in proportional representation systems: quotas,¹ parities² as well as additional mechanisms which advocate proportional division of genders in electoral registers such as: zipping,³ or double appointment;⁴

¹ Percentage indication of minimal share of women and men in electoral registers, e.g. 30%, 40%.

² Defined as the mechanism of “positive discrimination”, which consists in allocating a specific number of mandates for (in this case) women. The primary idea is to provide a given group with such a level of participation in the concerned structure which would reflect the actual share of that group in the whole population. In case of gender, political parity is just a specific percentage value, fixed on the level of 50%.

³ The principle which consists in placing the names of female and male candidates in an electoral register alternately.

⁴ A principle which requires to present female and male candidate of similar qualifications for a given post, and the choice of a given candidate depends on the gender which is under-represented in the authority concerned.

- in the majority voting systems, e.g. all-women short lists,⁵ priority lists⁶ and twinning.⁷

Political parity applies in Poland since 2011. The Polish parliament have adopted the partially modified draft amendment of the election law on 5 January 2011, after stormy legislative works. Then, the draft was signed by the President of the Republic of Poland on 31 January 2011 [Act of 5 January 2011 on the amendments to the Electoral Law...]. The modification consisted in that not less than 35% of women and not less than 35% of man need to be placed on electoral registers in order to render them valid.

In the parliamentary elections of 2011, women were guaranteed 35% of all places in the electoral registers for the first time ever. As a result, individual political parties registered about 43.54% of female candidates. Amongst 7,035 of all registered persons there were 3,063 women. As much as 110 women, i.e. 23.91% of the chamber's composition have been elected to the Sejm. The increase was slight in comparison with the previous term of office during which 94 women won the mandate to the Sejm (20%). It is worth reminding that in 2011, political parties approached the newly-set requirement for allocating 35% of places in electoral registers to women in many different ways. As far as proportional distribution is concerned, the highest number of women were present on the electoral registers of the Palikot's Movement (RP) [currently the Your Movement – note of M.M-K.] – over 44% (383 women) and SLD – about 44% (405 women). From among the total number of 40 members of parliament from the Palikot's Movement and 28 members from SLD, women have been elected, respectively, 5 and 4 times. “The Civic Platform approached this legal requirement in a creative way, i.e. it was decided to include both women and men on the first three places, while the proportion between genders within the first five should be 2 to 3” [*Kobiety (n) a wybory* 2011]. From among 397 female candidates of PO (about 43% of all registered candidates), 71 have been elected to the Sejm. Electoral registers of PiS included 365 women (almost 40%), and 27 of them have won the mandate (out of all 157 members of parliament from PiS). PSL registered 382 women (about 42% of all candidates), but only 2 of them have won the mandate (from among 32 members of parliament).

The below Table illustrates the number of women in the Sejm of the Republic of Poland three years after the parliamentary elections of 2011.

⁵ Lists which are comprised of women only.

⁶ Lists which are balanced in terms of gender and other criteria. For instance, in 2005, the Conservative Party in Great Britain introduced a principle whereby electoral registers need to be composed in 50% of women and take into account a large proportion of racial and ethnic minorities as well as disabled persons.

⁷ Mechanism that consists in pairing single-mandate districts, so as to attribute one district to a woman and the other district to a man, the solution is applied e.g. in Wales and Scotland.

Table 5. Number of women in the Sejm of the Republic of Poland – as of 20 June 2014

political party	PO	PiS	TR	PSL	SLD	SP	Non-attached	Total
number of women	74	23	3	3	3	1	2	109
women's share (%)	36.63%	16.79%	8.57%	9.38%	11.54%	8.33%	13.33%	23.70%

Source: own studies based on data from the National Election Commission.

The largest number of female members of parliament come from PO, which is twice more than in case of PiS which took the second place (23 female MPs, i.e. 16.79% of all members of parliament from PiS). It is worth mentioning that the most “pro-equality” parties such as TR and SLD are being represented by three women, which constitutes respectively 8.57% and 11.54%.

Although introduction of political parity to electoral registers did not contribute to significant changes in the number of women who exercise a mandate and the discussion about role of women in political space is being continued, interesting conclusions can be drawn from respondents’ opinions on the need to introduce further solutions which would aim at increasing presence of women in the political life.

Taking into account political preferences of the surveyed persons, it is clearly visible that potential voters of SLD are the greatest supporters of additional mechanisms which would enable women to win a higher number of seats in political institutions. In total, 53.4% of the surveyed persons from this group have indicated “Definitely yes” and “Rather yes” answers. The opposite view displayed slightly less than 29% of the Alliance’s supporters.

Table 6. *More mechanisms increasing women's participation in Polish politics need to be introduced* – average quantitative and percentage distribution of answers in declarations with respect to elections to the Sejm that would have been held next Sunday

		Definitely yes	Rather yes	No opinion	Rather no	Definitely no	Total
Civic Platform	quantity	38	52	39	38	13	180
	percentage	21.1	28.9	21.7	21.1	7.2	100.0
Polish People's Party	quantity	8	19	19	12	3	61
	percentage	13.1	31.1	31.1	19.7	4.9	100.0
Law and Justice	quantity	20	49	51	53	37	210
	percentage	9.5	23.3	24.3	25.2	17.6	100.0
Your Movement	quantity	12	9	13	18	5	57
	percentage	21.1	15.8	22.8	31.6	8.8	100.0
Democratic Left Alliance	quantity	16	32	16	19	7	90
	percentage	17.8	35.6	17.8	21.1	7.8	100.0
Other	quantity	22	35	33	30	29	149
	percentage	14.8	23.5	22.1	20.1	19.5	100.0
Won't vote	quantity	46	74	105	48	19	292
	percentage	15.8	25.3	36.0	16.4	6.5	100.0

Source: own studies based on survey results.

The second place in terms of support for additional “pro-feminist” solution in politics displayed persons who declared willingness to vote for PO. Half of the respondents claimed there is a need to implement a greater number of mechanisms increasing women’s involvement in politics. About 28.3% of potential voters of Donald Tusk’s political party have expressed an opposite opinion. While most of the supporters of PSL advocate introduction of additional tools for increasing women’s participation in politics, 25.6% of them selected “Rather no” and “Definitely no” answers.

Opinions of persons who declare support for the political party of Janusz Palikot are very interesting. While 50% claimed that women are not active enough in Polish politics, only 36.9% supported the idea to introduce additional “pro-feminist” solutions which aim at increasing the number of women in politics, and 40.4% expressed their objection. Approximately 23% of the respondents had no opinion about this subject.

As far as supporters of other political parties are concerned, the supporters and opponents of the additional mechanisms constitute groups of similar sizes, respectively: 38.3% and 39.6%. Slightly more than 41% of persons who declared to abstain if the voting would have taken place next Sunday have showed support for the mechanisms that increase participation of women in political institutions. Almost 36% of the respondents had opposite opinions, while 36% had no opinion about this subject.

Comparing the survey results with ideological views (right-wing, centre, left-wing) of the researched people, it is worth to pay attention to two issues which seem to differentiate individual groups of the respondents.

Table 7. *More mechanisms increasing women’s participation in politics need to be introduced – average quantitative and percentage distribution of answers in declarations with respect to ideological views*

		Definitely yes	Rather yes	No opinion	Rather no	Definitely no	Total
Left-wing	quantity	42	62	48	48	19	219
	percentage	19.2	28.3	21.9	21.9	8.7	100.0
Centre	quantity	34	46	39	38	12	169
	percentage	20.1	27.2	23.1	22.5	7.1	100.0
Right-wing	quantity	30	86	94	87	66	363
	percentage	8.3	23.7	25.9	24.0	18.2	100.0
Don’t know/unable to define	quantity	56	76	95	45	16	288
	percentage	19.4	26.4	33.0	15.6	5.6	100.0

Source: own studies based on survey results.

Following the solution adopted for previous part of the survey results analysis (i.e. combining “Definitely yes” with “Rather yes” and “Definitely no” with “Rather no”), we can see the below regularities which are the same as in the previous part of the research (opinions on women’s involvement in politics):

- firstly, respondents having the left-wing or centre views have similar opinions; in case of a positive attitude towards implementation of the additional mechanisms increasing women’s participation in politics, the answers reached the

level of 47.5% (left-wing parties) and 47.3.% (centre). The idea of adopting new solutions was assessed negatively by, respectively, 30.6% and 29.6% of the surveyed. These results somehow confirm the assessment of women's involvement in political life;

- secondly, opinions of respondents who support right-wing parties are often contrary to opinions of people advocating left-wing and centre politics: 32% of the respondents favourably perceive introduction of new “pro-feminist” tools, while the total of 42.2% voiced the opposite;
- thirdly, interesting are the views of respondents who could not define their ideological position. In this case, 45.8% of the surveyed supported the idea to introduce additional tools which may increase women's share in politics. 21.2% of the respondents have a different opinion on this subject, whereas 1 per 3 selected the “No opinion” answer.

Table 8. *More mechanisms increasing women's participation in politics need to be introduced* – average percentage distribution of answers with respect to elections to the Sejm that would have been held next Sunday and with respect to ideological views

	Definitely yes + Rather yes	No opinion	Definitely no + Rather no
political preferences	42.39%	25.60%	32.50%
ideological positions	43.15%	25.98%	30.90%

Source: own studies based on survey results.

The analysis of average results obtained from individual answers allows for a conclusion that opinions of the surveyed people are polarized equally by the political preferences and references to ideological views. The above Table shows that opinions which take into account political preferences and ideological positions are comparable. Persons supporting implementation of new mechanisms increasing women's participation constitute about 42–43% of the respondents. Opponents of additional instruments constitute about 31–32% of the respondents. However, one of four respondents do not have an opinion about the subject.

CONCLUSIONS

Participation of women in European or global politics is a frequently researched problem. Given the slow speed at which the number of women in politics is growing, different policy measures are being introduced to reach gender balance in different kinds of political institutions. Including women, especially in political sphere, is an essential step towards creating gender equal opportunities and gender sensitive policies' [OSCE ODIHR 2014].

Polish politics – in spite of significant evolution in pro-female direction – is still dominated by men. ‘It is masculine not only in the sense that men are more politically

active, but also because fewer women are interested in it and they show lower levels of interest' [CBOS 2013].

As far as numerical values are concerned, in Poland women are still a minority in political authorities, even though the number of women who candidate in elections to parliament and eventually win the mandate has increased during the last 25 years. The increase, however, cannot be considered radical. Larger number of women in the Sejm, when compared to the number reported for the 1990s, did not contribute to the significant increase in women's involvement in political space or their role in widely understood politics. This is probably associated with the existence of diverse barriers which disallow women from starting political initiatives and limit their chances to win a mandate. In this context it is even more important to notice that about 37–40% of respondents are aware of the problem of women's scarce involvement in political world, and about 43% of the surveyed claim that additional mechanisms increasing women's participation in Polish politics should be introduced. These opinions are essential because it is often mentioned that unless societies regard politics as a domain which is equally available to men and women, and the latter should be encouraged to be increasingly active, there will not be a chance that female candidates are elected as often as male candidates. It is also worth reminding here that a discussion about relations between women and politics will most probably focus on the issue of implementing further tools which enhance women's chances within the political market. It should be remembered that political parity in Poland did not prove to be efficient and other solutions may follow the same path failing to increase women's participation.

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