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Civic Engagement and its Determinants – Cross-Cultural Comparisons

ABSTRACT. Civic engagement is considered to be a crucial element in the process of identifying issues both on the local and national levels, seeking appropriate solutions, legitimising decisions and selecting the ways of their implementation by elective bodies and the executive. This text is concentrated on the following dimensions of civic engagement in a typical democratic society: affiliations with third sector organisations and protest as a form of lobbying for political decisions taken by policy-makers at different levels.

KEYWORDS: civic engagement, civil society, cross-cultural comparisons

The existence of civil society is a key determinant of shaping democracy. Civic engagement is considered to be a crucial element in the process of identifying issues both on the local and national levels, seeking appropriate solutions, legitimising decisions and selecting the ways of their implementation by elective bodies and the executive. For a long time, it has been maintained that the development of democracy will be correlated with the increase in the participation of citizens in conventional forms (see Barnes & Kaase, 1979), and their interest in politics along with competences will increase. At the same time, there was a well-grounded conviction shared by many researchers that state institutions would enjoy citizens' trust, that these citizens would also believe that policy-makers, they are represented by, were able to identify important issues with regard to specific social groups and find and implement appropriate solutions which are accepted by the society. In the 1950s and 60s, it seemed that the relations between trust, value systems, and the evaluation of various institutions and the civic engagement corroborate these assumptions.

Research undertaken afterwards, during the following decades, show that the relationship between these factors undergoes changes in

stable democracies (e.g. Dalton, 2002). Democracies funded on the ruins of undemocratic systems provoke questions about the emerging relationships within them and the pursued version or versions of the democratic system (e.g. Jaquette & Wolchik, 1997; Wolchik & Curry, 2008).

The overthrowing of the communist regime in the Central and East European countries, which occurred 25 years ago, triggered many comments on whether these countries would be able to follow the path of West European democracies, and even if they were, how much such democratisation processes could last. It was numerously remarked that they should opt for a "third way" considering the specific experiential burden of the communist regime which had lasted almost half a century.

Cross-cultural comparative explorations show that relations between the variables under discussion and the form that they assume depend on the context. Moreover, the history of democracy in a given country, the level of economic growth, etc. clearly influence the shape of the political system.

The last 25 years can be perceived as the opportunity to reflect on the differences and similarities in the social reactions, behaviours and values between old and new democracies. Here, I will be most interested in the attitude towards state institutions, civic attitudes and behaviours as a particularly important social capital of democracy conditioning the functioning of political systems and the factors diversifying these attitudes and behaviours.

In this text, I concentrate on the following dimensions of civic engagement in a typical democratic society: affiliations with third sector organisations and protest as a form of lobbying for political decisions taken by policy-makers at different levels.

1. Civic Society: Definition and Functions

Civic engagement tends to be broadly defined as diverse activities filling the gap between the "state" and "economy" (e.g. Habermas, 1984; Young, 1990; Walzer, 1995). They are an effect and a form of self-organisation of the members of a society. These activities differ with regard to the character and function from the ones which are characteristic to the previously mentioned spheres. Moreover, they potentially contribute to limiting the power of institutions and actors functioning within them. They trigger the increase of social justice through identifying social issues characteristic of particular groups, articulating them

and putting pressure on solving them in a particular way. These activities often concern groups which are on the periphery of the attention of institutions which belong to the remaining two spheres. Social activity in the space between the state and the economy, as has been noted by many researchers, fosters democracy. As has been pointed out by Robert Putnam (1993), who looked at the functioning of Italian local and regional communities, their development and level of meeting diverse needs of community members depends on the existence and the type of civil culture. Where it is non-existent, or can be barely noticed, meeting the above-mentioned aims was difficult.

"Success in overcoming dilemma of collective action and the self-defeating opportunism that they spawn depends on the broader social context within which any particular game is played. Voluntary cooperation is easier in a community that has inherited a substantial stock of social capital in the form of norms of reciprocity and networks of civic engagement. Social capital here refers to features of social organisation, such as trust, norms, and networks, that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions" (Putnam, 1993, p. 258). As has been emphasised by many researchers, a number of functions fulfilled by associations existing in contemporary societies with regard to their attitude towards the social system can be distinguished. They fulfil the pivotal role in the process of social integration and representing interests of particular social groups. They also serve an important function as institutions providing all sorts of social assistance in the domain of social services, learning, sport, education, etc. (see Freise & Hallman, 2014). These associations frequently carry out tasks commissioned and financed by administration. When discussing advantages of such solutions, the possibility of more efficient identification and higher chances of reaching target groups are highlighted. Moreover, the costs of carrying out such tasks are often lower. Some researchers point our attention to the fact that some tasks are not completed as expected and that association staff fail to live up to expectations. However, also in this case, as claimed by some, the very fact that they take up certain issues results in the citizens' trust (see Seibel, 1996). These are only a few possible scenarios, though. It also happens that in contexts where there is a low social trust in the government, social institutions, and various politically-related agencies, associations or generally-speaking third-sector institutions enjoy limited trust on the part of citizens who do not see the need for developing them as they deem them to be ineffective and not living

up to their expectations. In such cases, citizens sometimes decide to "take matters in their own hands" and identify questions important for particular local or supralocal groups and lobby for solving them or protest should the authorities impose solutions not accepted by them. Furthermore, as research shows, participation in apolitical organisations of the third sector frequently neither triggers interest in the local or supralocal politics nor does it politicise citizens (e.g. Marody, 2004; Deker, 2014).

The following discussion will be mainly based on analyses concerning selected European countries within the so-called "sixth wave" of World Values Survey (WVS) carries out between 2010 and 2012.

2. Orientation Towards Values

The interest in politics and the types of aims, that according to citizens should be achieved in a given country, depend on the values which are held most important. The basic value structure and the attitudes concerning social order undergo changes in countries at various levels of political and economic development. Ronald Inglehart suggests that societies shift from the value system characteristic of the stage of "modernisation" to that of "postmodernisation" (see Inglehart, 1997; Inglehart & Welzel, 2005). The researcher defines materialist values as the ones which draw importance to the economic and physical safety typical of the modernisation stage. In turn, values oriented towards self-fulfilment and the quality of life, called postmaterialist, are deemed characteristic to the stage of postmodernisation. He contends that postmaterialist values start playing an important role once people have attained materialist values and because they have attained them (see Inglehart, 1997, p. 35). It is, among other things, the presence of the latter values in communist countries that Inglehart (1997) sees as the reason for overthrowing these regimes, as this political system did not create the possibilities of attaining postmaterialist values. Inglehart and Siemieńska (1998) and other authors have pointed out that gaining the sense of security in communist systems, given the objectively low possibilities of meeting other needs, resulted in the increase in orientation towards postmaterialist values. However, the analyses conducted in the following years (on the basis of WVS results at the beginning of the 2000s) show that the unstable political and economic situation after overthrowing communism resulted in the reorientation towards materialist values in the post-socialist countries (see Siemieńska, 2004; Siemieńska, Basanez & More-

no, 2010). This tendency can also be noticed especially among the youngest age groups who had been disillusioned due to their high and unrealistic expectations concerning the expected standard of living.

3. Interest in Politics

According to the commonly assumed model of democratic society, citizens should be interested in politics. This would make them competent when participating in decisions concerning local and supralocal issues and when initiating various types of activities in the public sphere. At the same time, experience tells us that the level of interest in politics differs from country to country and even within one country, and depends on a number of factors. Furthermore, the thesis that members of societies with consolidated democratic systems always pay more attention to, and express more interest in politics when compared to non-democratic countries has not been corroborated. Situations have been noted where members of a given society, dissatisfied with the functioning of the system, get involved in politics with the aim of changing it. Data from the beginning of the ninetis century (WVS, 1990-1993) show, for instance, that in South Korea, South Africa, Lithuania, Bulgaria or Poland, more people declared that politics plays a "very important" or "important" role in their lives than was the case with Switzerland, Austria, France, Italy or Belgium, not to mention Spain and Portugal which are relatively recent democracies. Political mobilisation, which has spanned the majority of the Polish society in the 1980s, ranging from the emergence of the Solidarity movement to the 1989 parliamentary elections that resulted in the change of the political system, is a powerful exemplification of this phenomenon. In the 1990s, the political system change, the feeling that some problems had been solved while other had not (particularly in the economic sphere), resulted in, for example, the decrease in the importance attached to politics. In 1990, 39% of citizens declared that politics play a "very important" role in their lives, while in the period between 1997 and 2000 this number decreased to 31%, later in 2006 to 30%, and in 2012 it was 32% (i.e. 5% of respondents said "very important", while 27% "important").

Late 1990s and the beginning of 2000s saw a smaller interest in politics in post-communist countries when compared with countries with stable democracies. In the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria the declared interest in politics was indicated by choosing

"very interested" and "somewhat interested" answers by 40% of respondents, while in 1995 this number was 58%. In 2006, this number fluctuated between 32% in Romania and 45% in Slovenia (no data for Slovakia). In the same periods this interest was higher in the Western countries. In 1995 it amounted to 65% in the USA, 67% in Norway, 65% in East Germany and 59% in West Germany. In 2006, the level of interest remained the same in the USA, decreased by a few per cent in East Germany and increased in West Germany by the same percentage. Such fluctuation in the level of interest in politics can have different causes. Sometimes they are triggered by an economic and/or political situation (e.g. a crisis), at times however it can also be an element of a long-lasting development of the political culture of particular societies (Inglehart et al., 2010).

4. Trust in Institutions and People

In research conducted in 2012, within the World Values Survey, respondents were asked about their trust in different types of Polish institutions and organisations and selected international institutions. Here, collective measure was applied: number of institutions in which the respondents trusted. The highest percentage of those declaring their trust was noticed among citizens of various political systems (Belarus, Cyprus, Estonia, and Sweden; diagram 1).
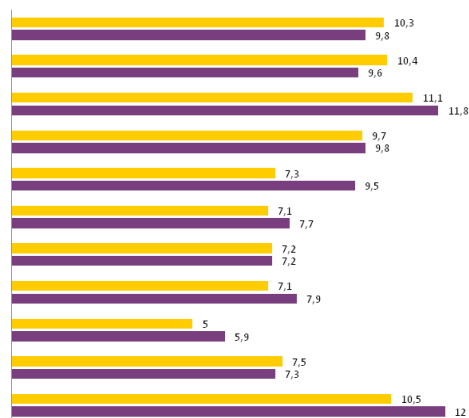

Diagram 1. Number of institutions which the respondents trusted (median) (WVS 2012)

In yellow – respondents without a university degree; in purple – respondents with a university degree. Names of countries in the order in which they appear on the diagram (from top to bottom): Belarus, Cyprus, Estonia, Germany, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Russia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden.

The next group consisted of countries with stable democracies (Germany and the Netherlands). The remainder of the group – with the lowest citizen trust – comprised Central European countries, Russia and Spain. Both respondents with and without a university degree frequently pointed to institutions which they trusted, however university degree holders were more prone to do that, particularly in the Netherlands and Sweden (diagram 2).
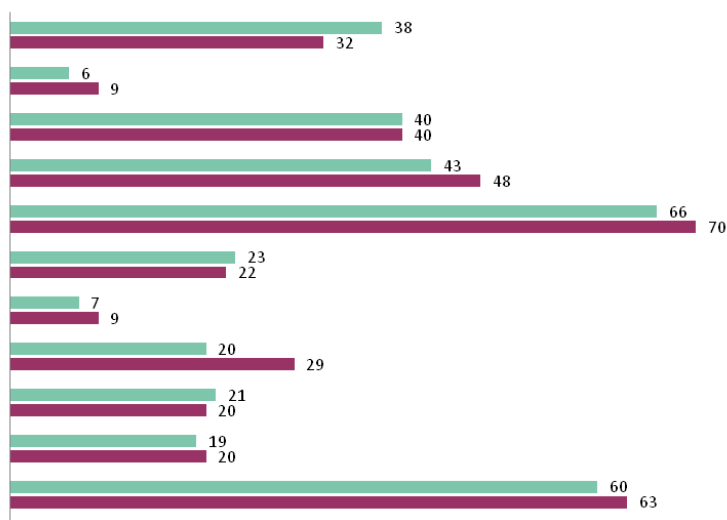

Diagram 2. Most people can be trusted – in percentages (WVS 2012)

In green – females; in purple – males. Names of countries in the order in which they appear on the diagram (from top to bottom): Belarus, Cyprus, Estonia, Germany, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Russia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden.

In the vast majority of countries, men somewhat more frequently than women declared that most people can be trusted. Education was the factor which differentiated trust to other people in all countries under comparison with the exception of countries from the former USSR, i.e. Russia, Belarus, Ukraine as well as Cyprus (outcome of multiple regression analysis). People with university degrees more frequently report that other people can be trusted. Age played a less important role with regard to trust level, while gender and the frequency of religious practice no role at all.

5. Life Satisfaction

It has been repeatedly stated that higher life satisfaction fosters engagement in activities aiming at raising quality of community life and identification with local and supralocal communities. At present, lack of satisfaction on the part of citizens – especially those living in new democracies – has been observed. This might be due to the unrealistic expectations, particularly in the economic domain, accompanied the change of the political system.

In research on stable democracies, citizens more frequently declared their life satisfaction. This observation was closely connected with the level of education, i.e. the better educated were more satisfied. Age, as the differentiating factor, played the second most important role: the younger were more satisfied. These two factors were particularly strongly differentiating the perception of satisfaction in countries with stable democracies. In Poland – as the only country among the ones under comparison – the frequency of religious practices was tightly connected with the perceived life satisfaction: the more frequent practitioners were more frequently dissatisfied.

6. Civic Engagement and its Correlates

The assumption that democracy is based on substantial involvement of community members in civic engagements has always been one of the definitional characteristics of this political system. Research conducted in recent years shows a decrease in the number of involved people in Western countries which is considered to be a worrying phenomenon. It also runs counter to the expectations concerning the development of democratic systems and the lack of possibility of fulfilling certain important functions sustaining the system. Many authors contend that associations serve the purpose of providing citizen skills (see Verba, Schlozman & Brady, 1995), citizen spirit and commitment to the community (see Putnam, 2008, p. 196). However, as put forward by Dietlind Stolle (2010, p. 286): "Participation in social networks and voluntary associations also entails political mobilisation and participation yet not unquestioningly". The ambiguous relation between activity and politicising is also highlighted by other researchers (see Galston, 2001; Seligson, 2002).

Is there, according to the citizens of European countries, a need for organisations functioning in the space between the state and individuals/members of the society? At present, as opposed to previous decades, the conviction that Non Governmental Organisations are needed is met with ambivalent reactions on the part of European Union citizens. In 2013 41% think European citizens do not need these types of organisation and they have other ways of influencing the process of political decision-making (*Europeans' Engagement in Participatory Democracy* 2013, p. 7); the highest numbers were recorded in Romania (55%) and Greece (52%), the lowest, in turn, in Finland (23%), Denmark (27%) and the Netherlands (34%). In Poland 43% of people (as opposed to 50% who had different opinions) considered NGOs as an important tool enabling them to influence political decision-making. This data shows that the conviction about the need of political action via the means of institutions offered by democracy and enjoying a long-lasting tradition in stable democracies, has a limited number of supporters, particularly in new democracies. The numbers of active citizens there is disproportionately lower (*Europeans' Engagement in Participatory Democracy* 2013, p. 33). Generally, the young tend to be less frequently involved in NGOs and their activities.

Do relations between certain attitudes and behaviours considered to be part of model of democracy, a model created on the basis of observations and research on stable democracies, appear with the same force in post-communist new democracies and the countries characterised by a different type of development? Results from research carried out in 2012 within *World Values Survey* will be utilised in the following analyses. The following countries were included in comparisons: 1) countries with stable democracies and a long-lasting history of democracy (Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden); 2) Spain, i.e. a democratic country where fascist dictatorship was replaced with a democratic system after Franco's death (in the 1970s); 3) countries with new democracies which have entered the path of democratic changes after communist regimes were overthrown in Central Europe in 1990s (Poland, Estonia, Romania, Slovenia); 4) countries which emerged on the territory of the former USSR (Russia, Ukraine, Belarus); 5) a country which does not belong to any of these categories, i.e. Cyprus. The choice of countries is driven by the fact that they were researched within WVS in 2012.

7. Activity in the Third Sector Organisations

In countries with stable democracies, the number of people who are not active in third sector organisations is disproportionally lower when compared to new democracies. While in the former case it amounts to 12-26%, the numbers fluctuate between 42% and 78% in the latter (table 1).

Table 1. Number of organisations with which respondents were affiliated (WVS 2012)

	Belarus	Cyprus	Estonia	Germany	the Netherlands	Poland	Romania	Russia	Slovenia	Spain	Sweden	Ukraine
,00	42,2	48,2	56,0	25,8	22,7	58,5	64,3	77,6	43,7	63,9	12,4	67,7
1,00	42,5	21,5	23,7	30,1	29,8	22,5	23,0	14,6	25,4	23,3	20,7	20,9
2,00	10,1	12,7	11,4	23,3	23,4	8,3	6,6	4,1	13,8	6,4	22,5	7,0
3,00	2,8	6,2	5,2	10,9	11,7	4,4	2,1	1,9	7,2	3,4	19,9	2,4
≥4,00	2,4	11,4	3,7	9,9	12,4	6,3	4,0	1,8	9,9	3,0	24,5	2,0

In stable democracies, many people belong to several organisations which is a rare phenomenon in other countries. In almost all countries under comparison, the relative majority declares to be affiliated with religious organisations and/or connected with the church and those dealing with sports and recreation. Belarus is the sole exception, as the highest number of people–disproportionately higher than in other countries – belongs to trade unions while at the same time this number is minimal with regard to memberships in other organisations. However, also in Sweden the involvement in trade unions is also high, as was the case with the other organisations discussed above.

Involvement in third sector organisations is more frequently declared by citizens of countries where the need for NGOs is noticed (see the discussion above). Considering the modest, and with time even insignificant belief in the need for NGOs, a question arises as to how
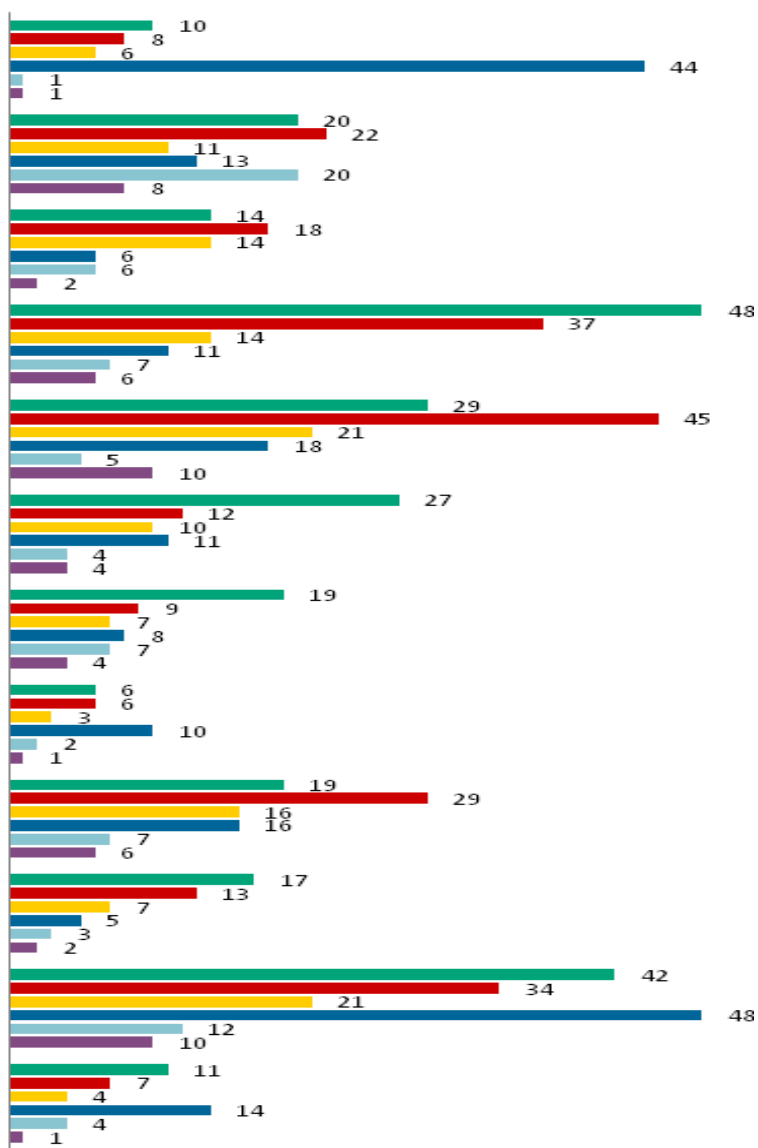
Diagram 3. Membership in organisations – in percentages (WVS 2012)

In green – religious or church organisations; in red – sports and recreation organisations; in yellow – science, arts, music organisations; in blue – trade unions; in cyan – political party; in purple – environment protection organisation. Names of countries in the order in which they appear on the diagram (from top to bottom): Belarus, Cyprus, Estonia, Germany, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Russia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Ukraine.

people strive for exercising influence over achieving aims that they consider important. As civic activity observations in various countries show, the lack of possibility of meeting one's individual or community needs within the existing NGOs coupled with the lack of trust in them results in individual activities which – at times – become a germ of active groups in a long run (e.g. neighbourhood groups which aim at creating a friendlier microenvironment or hobby groups). A specific trajectory of activity began by an individual who – with time – can attract other people in order to achieve a goal has been observed numerous times. For instance, the well-known Warsaw-based MaMa foundation established by a group of young well-educated mothers initially focused on architectural barriers, which were obstacles for the disabled and mothers with prams. Now the foundation is concerned with a broader spectrum of issues. Formalising it paved the way to possibilities of securing funding from the local or supralocal budgets as well as a spectrum of other foundations and institutions. An example in case are some urban movements (e.g. Mergler, Pobłocki & Wudarski, 2013). Also, individual initiatives have been noticed. These cannot be categorised as urban movements, however they strengthen the feeling of subjectivity of initiators and become an example for others who strive to meet their individual needs and the needs of their microenvironment. An example of the forms such activity can take is reaching agreement between owners of two neighbouring shops in the Mokotów district in Warsaw about who was to paint the frontage of the building or the initiative to set up a park in an unmanaged and littered site in the Kabaty district in Warsaw. These examples of initiatives come from the capital but this does not entail that such projects are not taken up in various smaller and bigger local communities.

8. Protests: Their Content and Functions

Observations of contemporary societies also indicate that their members reach out for a more diverse ways of exercising influence in the public sphere, something that was named unconventional back in the 1970s (e.g. Barnes & Kasse, 1979, Inglehart & Welzel, 2005) due to their relative infrequency and the noticeable departure from what was deemed the norm. The recognised form of political participation was

participation in elections, which were treated (and, in fact, are treated as such until now) as fundamental and characteristic of democracy and influencing politics, decisions and a way of replacing political elites. However, elections in numerous countries, including those with long-lasting democratic traditions, arouse less and less interest on the part of citizens who are less eager to take part in them. This is caused by the fact that supporting a given political party does not ensure solving important, from the perspective of particular social groups, issues. The phenomenon of the decrease in interest in elections, relative poor participation of the youth, both in post-communist countries and those with stable democracies, indicates that we are dealing with the change of ideas about the efficiency of the standard mechanisms of the functioning of democratic systems. First of all, it is a result of the disenchantment with the efficiency of such conventional measures; secondly, the increasing level of education already among the young generation fosters the development of the generation-specific conviction that we know what we want to achieve and we do not need any middleman in the form of political class; thirdly, the more and more dominant individualistic orientation especially in the young generation does not incline to become engaged in a collective thought about what is good for the society as a whole.

The reality shows that in the recent decades, citizens more and more often do not agree with the decisions taken by the political elites, and they attempt to persuade them to undertake actions that would take into consideration the needs of diverse social groups. This activity is to cause that the authorities feel the pressure to reconsider modifying the pursued policy and will abandon certain ideas and means of arriving at them in favour of others (this relates to, for instance, the course of roads, construction investments, making public spaces excluded from public use). These direct forms of influencing aim at putting pressure on ruling elites, and for this reason they are often referred to as *elite-challenging.* Various forms of protest, which were used to be considered unconventional (e.g. illegal strikes, building occupation, petition signing, boycott), as shown by cross-cultural research, are more and more often utilised by society members as instruments of lobbying, they also enjoy an increased approval (see Inglehart, 1997; Inglehart & Welzel, 2005; Putnam, 2008). The main aim behind protesting against certain acts of public authorities or generally the politics they pursue is to put direct

pressure on these authorities so that decisions are altered or made according to the protesters' expectations. Such protests can take the form of one-off campaigns or repeated a number of times; sometimes it becomes a part of the activity of a given type of organisation (e.g. ecological associations).

A protest is a form of social activity which expresses the dissatisfaction with the decisions made by authorities or institutions, disapproval of the ways of disturbing *status quo* or – quite conversely – demands change. What is more, protests in singled out cases often become a prelude to demanding substantive changes (see Tarrow, 1996). Participations in such campaigns have various motivations. In the case of some members, one can talk about being involved in campaigning "for" or "against" a given question. Some persons join movements (or protests) due to the need to fit the environment (see Rucht, 2010). Examples of different motivations of participation can be multiplied *ad infinitum*. In the case of organisers of such movements, the aim might be not only to express their attitude towards a certain issue but to instrumentalise it for the purpose of mobilising the movement and/or building their own support.

Due to its nature, protest provides individuals with the feeling of their subjectivity and the possibility of putting direct pressure on the ruling elites in matters which a specific social group wants to deal with. In the case of elections, the distance between the generally formulated programme of a given political party and the point of decision-making in a given case, and implementing such a decision is considerable, and the relationship far from obvious. Sometimes it happens that a presented programme remains in the sphere of declarations. The frequent lack of trust in the political class is compounded by the lack of belief that elections are a means of achieving the desired solutions. The increase in the citizen educational level predisposes them to take a stance on issues more often than they used to; at the same time they are confident of their qualifications and suggest conceptions about the means *en route* to solutions. Researchers of stable democracies, in the recent decades, emphasise that this process increases, that the younger generations – which received much better education than the generations of their parents – more and more often resort to various modes of protests, and these become a part of their "normal" lives. In turn, in post-communist countries, although – in the case of Poland – protests were random, they gained on

momentum and became mass protests (e.g. the Solidarity movement); mass uprisings in the last decades elevated the protest to the primary method of exercising influence and an effective means of achieving more satisfying goals in a plethora of issues, but particularly in the context of low trust in the existing institutions.

Protest is a mean utilised by various social groups, factory staff, inhabitants. However, upon a comparison of participation in protests across EU states within the last two years, it turns out that the percentage of citizens involved in various types of protests or other ways of expressing their opinion does not diverge from the European average in the case of Poland. Here, we mean such campaigns as expressing one's opinion on public matters via direct contact with local, regional or national politicians, signing petitions, etc. Signing petitions – the most popular form of protest in Poland – was ranked below the European mean, i.e. 29% of Poles sign petitions while the European average is 34% (Flash Eurobarometer 373, *European Engagement in Participatory Democracy*, 2013). Indeed, the differences between countries were significant; for instance, in the UK petitions were signed by 53% while in Cyprus by a mere 7% of citizens within the last two years.

Citizens of countries with stable democracies were more frequently involved in diverse forms of protest when compared to other countries, post-communist ones in particular. Petition signing was the most frequent form of protest followed by participation in demonstrations (diagram 4). In accordance with the observations made above, citizens holding university degrees had a more profound sense of their subjectivity and were more frequently participated in protests. It can be claimed, then, that the forms of civic participation within the framework of democratic systems are more often drawn on by well-educated and better-off citizens when compared to other members of the society. At the same time, it needs to be highlighted that, given the diverse forms stemming from historical experiences of each country which cannot be neglected, certain similar behavioural patterns emerge, yet these are more frequent in countries with stable democracies.

In the construed models of democracies, certain relationships between given demographic and social characteristics, attitudes and behaviours are emphasised as an effect of certain factors or the result of the interaction between numerous variables. It has been repeatedly contended that civic engagement is more significant in contexts where citi-

zens have more trust both in other people and institutions not only of their own state but also the international ones. Robert Putnam (1993) extensively wrote about the relationship between trust and political behaviours in the context of Italian local communities. Thus it seemed legitimate to acknowledge the relationship between old and new democracies amid the above-mentioned variables as crucial in forming civic engagement with regard to the functioning of the democratic system. Analyses of multiple regressions were performed with the view of determining relationships with regard to participation in NGOs activities (the third sector) and participation in protests. To what degree can we talk about the development of the syndrome and strength of relationship among characteristics of the system that emerged in new democracies when compared with countries of stable democracies?
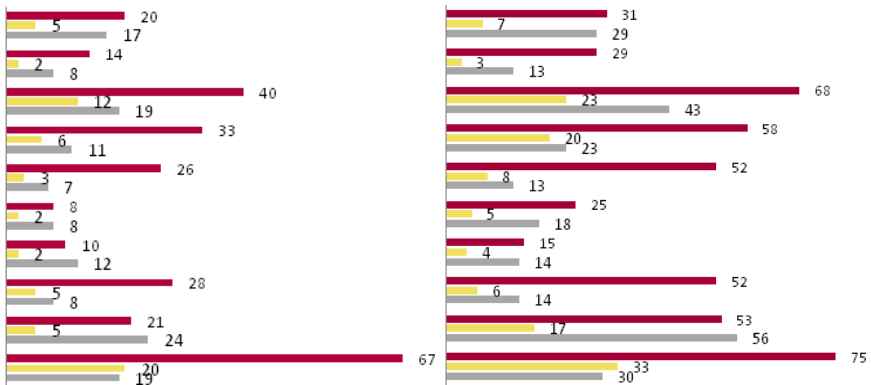

Diagram 4. Participation in various types of protests – in percentages (WVS 2012)

On the left – respondents without higher education; on the right – respondents with higher education. In red – petition; in yellow – boycott; in gray – demonstrations. Names of countries in the order in which they appear on the diagram (from top to bottom): Cyprus, Estonia, Germany, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Russia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden.

This model includes age, gender, education, and also frequency of religious practices which is considered to be of importance. For instance, Inglehart, Norris and Welzel, who have been long involved in analyses of relationships between these variables, and political behaviours and attitudes, draw our attention to the fact that generations differ between one another due to their upbringing in different historical contexts. The

role of the increasing citizens' educational level has been emphasised repeatedly as influencing individual aspirations within which the need to exert influence over issues concerning individuals exists in a more or less direct way. Two elements of Inglehart's battery measured this in our model, i.e. materialist and postmaterialist values (Inglehart, 1997). These were the political priorities indicated by respondents within the next 10 years: "Seeing that people have more to say about how things are done at their jobs and in their communities", "Giving people more to say in important government decisions" as well as the declaration regarding the level of interest in politics. The sense of freedom, control over one's own life, and the general level of life satisfaction have also been incorporated into the model, as it has been assumed that people with the sense of their own subjectivity will be more active. In turn, the general life satisfaction can also lead to the involvement in organisations, while the lack of thereof can result in participating in protests.

Analyses have indicated that the following are the major predictors of activity in organisations: age, educational level, frequency of religious practices and the interest in politics. This seems to hold true for almost all countries. Gender, in turn, does not seem to be a factor differentiating engagement. This shows that the changing social roles of women, their substantially better education compared with the past, and in the contemporary perspective – level of education better than that of men, make their experiences similar to those of men in many respects. These factors indicate that women behaviour cannot be reduced to gender which in the past "veiled" the othered experiences and civic engagement (see Burns, Schlozman & Verba, 2001). The remaining attitudes and opinions considered to be of significance and characterising citizens in the commonly assumed model of democracy generally play a lesser role when compared with the ones discussed above. At the same time, they are stronger predictors of engagements in NGO activities in old democracy countries (Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden) and in Cyprus which stands in contrast with post-communist countries. The latter ones are less significant or are not related to civic engagement. It is also trust in the already existing institutions and impersonal trust that do not form the capital fostering activity in organisations (table 2).

Table 2. Number of organisations with which respondents are affiliated and actively engaged (WVS 2012) (multiple regression – beta and adjusted R-squared)

	Belarus	Cyprus	Estonia	Germany	the Netherlands	Poland	Romania	Russia	Slovenia	Spain	Sweden	Ukraine
Constant	,000	,050	,000	,000	,002	,005	,000	,000	,000	,001	,002	,000
Age	-,189***	-,036	-,122***	,012	,141***	-,206***	-,083**	-,097***	-,198***	-,031	,071*	-,106***
Gender	-,045	,088**	,007	,027	-,028	,069*	,030	-,023	,053	-,026	-,034	,045*
Education	,048*	,110**	,144***	,183***	,260***	,104**	-,026	,099***	,090*	,140***	,165***	,019
Frequency of religious practices	-,140***	,020	-,274***	-,236***	-,243***	-,038	-,071*	-,140***	-,144***	-,143***	-,189***	-,130***
Number of groups that R trusts	-,020	,083**	,052*	,025	,065**	,012	-,019	-,015	,017	-,035	,081**	,043
Interest in politics	-,025	-,121***	-,081**	-,163***	-,111***	-,005	-,098***	-,073**	-,096**	-,099**	-,133***	-,074**

More influence in workplace and community	,019	,052*	,007	,044*	,016	,058*	,060*	-,035	-,010	,030	,098**	-,010
More influence over governmental decisions	,035	,056*	,007	,053*	,040*	,045	,005	,012	,034	-,033	-,008	,080**
Sense of free choice	,056*	-,073*	,070*	,069**	-,063**	,025	,045	-,027	,021	,071*	,070*	-,036
People want to take advantage	,058*	,125***	,018	,028	,074**	-,059*	,004	,022	,108**	-,024	,025	,012
Life satisfaction	,020	-,026	,079**	,057*	,006	-,049	,054*	,056*	-,048	-,008	,024	,083***
Adjusted R-squared	,068	,083	,152	,161	,191	,063	,023	,051	,078	,047	,141	,044

*p< .100; **p< .010 (in yellow); ***p< .001 (in green)

Education and interest in politics are the predictors of participation in protests, as was the case with the involvement in organisational activities. It indicates that protests against certain activities or action plans on the part of some groups or authorities at different levels are defined by participants as the activity in political sphere where the responsibility for the subject of protests is ascribed to the authorities conceptualised in various ways. It is worth highlighting that the political priorities indicated by respondents within the next 10 years – "more influence in workplace" and community and "more influence over governmental decisions" (indicators of postmaterialist orientation –

Inglehart, 1997) – are statistically more significant predictors in the stable, old democracy Western countries (Sweden, the Netherlands and Germany; table 3).

Table 3. Number of forms of protests attended by respondents (WVS 2012) (multiple regression – beta and adjusted R-squared)

	Cyprus	Estonia	Germany	the Netherlands	Poland	Romania	Russia	Slovenia	Spain	Sweden	Ukraine
Constant	,730	,009	,000	,181	,165	,903	,021	,029	,203	,001	,000
Age	,097**	,020	-,038*	-,018	-,073*	,022	,105***	-,106**	,031	-,058*	,015
Gender	,008	,040	,034	-,030	-,029	,056*	-,039*	-,036	-,048*	-,059*	,044*
Education	,223***	,121***	,224***	,271***	,137***	,182***	,047*	,199***	,253***	,144***	-,014
Frequency of religious practices	,048	-,086**	-,016	,067**	,049	,011	,032	,036	,048	,039	-,002
Number of groups that R trusts	,138***	,016	,046*	,040	,071*	,055*	-,021	,051	,035	,068*	,004
Interest in politics	-,221***	-,211***	-,248***	-,139***	-,148***	-,175***	-,137***	-,122***	-,286***	-,259***	-,189***

More influence in workplace and community	,075*	,069**	,068**	,052*	,067*	,018	,050*	,041	,009	,064*	-,006
More influence over governmental decisions	,061*	,017	,115***	,075**	,069*	,030	,042*	,013	,016	,085**	,058*
Sense of free choice	-,017	-,042	-,003	-,032	,026	-,008	,057*	-,033	,065*	-,009	-,045
People want to take advantage	,010	,000	,005	,027	,066*	-,007	-,027	-,015	,070*	,005	-,020
Life satisfaction	-,047	,077*	-,040*	-,058*	-,040	,010	-,055*	,013	,007	,018	,084**
Adjusted R-squared	,132	,092	,176	,134	,093	,076	,040	,083	,205	,131	,042
Constant	,054	,042	,111	,104	,063	,049	,013	,082	,114	,046	,003

*p< .100; **p< .010 (in yellow); ***p< .001 (in green)

The comparison of predictive roles included in the two models of multiple regression, i.e. "sense of free choice" and "life satisfaction", show that they played a more significant role in the case of engagement in organisation activities than in the participation in protests. It needs to be added that the presented models to a greater degree explain both engagement in organisation activities as well as participation in protests in countries with stable democracies. At the same time, they show much lesser degree of crystallising relationships between the attitudes and

behaviours in new democracies. Moreover, attention needs to be drawn to the fact that multiple regression models, in which only "classical" demographic and social variables (i.e. gender, education and religious practices) are included, determine certain behaviours or strengthen attitudes to a much lesser degree than the models which include selected attitudes to and orientations towards values. These results are in accordance with the conclusions drawn by Zimbardo and Leippe (2004, p. 240), who observe that the consistence of behaviours and attitudes is a rule when (1) the attitude is strong and clear, (2) the attitude relates to the behaviour which is required by a given situation, (3) the attitude and behaviour are intimately connected with yet another element of the attitude system (be it cognitive, or emotional) and (4) the attitude is important for a given person.

9. Conclusions

Many researchers observe changes in the ways of functioning of stable democratic systems (e.g. Dalton, 2002; Nevitte, 1996; Sartori, 1994). New democracies do not follow the footsteps of the model ways of constructing and crystallising democratic systems. Those of the states which wanted to mirror them, seem to somehow start in the middle of that model. Building on their experiences they differ, to some extent, in the choices made in the sphere of attitudes, values and behaviours. The already existing conceptions of civic engagement and their premises are specific to a given context. However, the influence of global cultural and economic processes cause that their divergence from old democracies is not as significant as was maintained in the 1990s, despite the lack of the long-lasting history of constructing democratic systems. As has been emphasised by academics, democratic systems are flexible and have powerful adaptive potentials. They are located, in a way, in the constantly ongoing process of transforming institutions, relationships between elites and the society, means of solving conflicts and, importantly, these systems are not identical with regard to the way of functioning.

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