

Radosław MARZEŃKI

Uniwersytet Pedagogiczny im. KEN w Krakowie

ORCID: 0000-0002-2915-8878

Ideological orientations and left-right self-identifications of young Polish men and women: an image of the political gender-generation gap

Abstract: The subject of the author's interest is the diversity of ideological orientations due to gender and age. The theoretical findings so far indicate that in developed democracies already at the end of the 1990s there was a reversal of the ideological positions of women and men. Recent social research shows that also in Poland women identify with the left to a greater extent than men, and in the younger generation these differences are even greater. The aim of the article is to show in detail the ideological differences between young men and women in Poland. The author poses two types of research questions: (1) descriptive and explanatory, which concern the characteristics of similarities and differences in the ideological orientations of young women and men; (2) methodological, which concern how to measure this phenomenon. The author assumes that the measurement of left-right self-identification used in many studies brings an overly simplified picture of the respondents' real views, beliefs and values, which can be described as ideological orientations. Therefore, he proposes the use of multidimensional tools (issue-based scale) that allow to better describe complex political attitudes. In search of answers, the author analyzes data from his own survey conducted among a large group of Polish students.

Key words: ideological orientations, left, right, young people, gender-generation gap

Introduction

Age and gender are two socio-demographic variables that have been used in Polish public discourse in recent years as an important factor in describing and explaining political behavior and views. Debates on this topic have been inspired mainly by published survey results, which indicated the highest levels of identification of young people with the left after 1989 (CBOS, 2021a), but also – not previously observed on such a scale – disparities in left-right identifications between young women and men (CBOS, 2021b). After 2020, the deep polarization of ideological self-identifications in the young generation of Poles is becoming increasingly clear, and this is particularly evident along gender dimensions. However, the way they are measured using quantitative scales does not allow for a more detailed description and then a thorough understanding and explanation, of the content of the actual beliefs of those who define themselves as right- or left-wing. The deficit of knowledge on this subject makes it impossible for us to determine what explanatory power the tools for measuring left-right self-identification have. Does the fact that 2021 diagnosed the highest percentage of left-leaning young people actually mean that we are dealing with those who take a more left-wing point of view in assessing such far-flung issues as taxes, civil unions and environmental protection? How are these issues viewed by people who identify themselves as right-wing? Do they always

consistently adopt a right-wing point of view? These are just preliminary questions that sketch the most general boundaries of the research issue. The results of social research conducted in an international perspective, especially in advanced democracies suggest that age is significantly related to self-positioning on the left-right scale (Noël, Thérien, 2008, p. 46), and women – especially in younger generations – are and will continue to be more to the left than men (Inglehart, Norris, 2003, p. 98–100). This phenomenon is referred to in the literature as *political gender gap* (van Ditmars, 2022) or *ideological gender gap* (Dassonneville, 2020), and sometimes – noting that gender differences are intensifying in younger generations – as a *gender-generation gap* (Shorrocks, 2018). In this article I try to take a closer look at the differences in self-identification on left-right scales, but also at specific views and beliefs in the young generation of Polish women and men. I formulate the specific objectives in two dimensions. First: descriptive-explanatory. Starting from the assumption based on the conclusions of the previously cited nationwide survey research about the existence of important gender and age differences, I would like to explain how these differences are manifested in social practice, that is, what views and beliefs do young women and young men hold? What issues polarize the two groups the most? Are there issues on which young women and men have converging beliefs? I expect (hypothesis 1) that based on the collected data I will be able to identify differences at the general and specific levels, so it will also be possible to identify such common and polarizing issues.

Second: methodological. What I am interested in is whether the tool used for self-placement on the quantitative left-right scale adequately reflects the actual beliefs and views of young people. In this case, I assume (hypothesis 2) that the multidimensional tool (issue-based scale) to diagnose more complex “ideological packages” (which I refer to hereafter as ideological orientations) will give a more left-leaning picture of the actual beliefs, views and values preferred by those who participated in the study.

The article consists of five parts. In the first, I attempt to characterize two key concepts and show the advantages of a multidimensional approach to studying ideological orientations. In the second, I will focus on explaining the role of gender as a variable that differentiates these orientations in the younger generation. In both sections, I will review the literature in the area. In the third section, I will describe the methodological assumptions and research tools. In the fourth section, I will present the results of the study as evidence in the process of hypothesis verification. Finally, I will formulate conclusions and answers to the research questions.

Self-identifications and ideological orientations

In the diagnosis of political views in the left-right spectrum, the concept of “ideological orientation” is often used, although researchers employ various terms, but also operationalize them in different ways and use different measurement methods. In Polish literature there are such terms as: *political identification* (Turska-Kawa, Wojtasik, 2010); *ideological identity* (Szawiel, 2001; Łukowski, Sadowski, 2013); *worldview identity* (Sadowski, 2013). Some studies use different terms interchangeably, such as *left-right identification and worldview orientation* (Kwiatkowska et al., 2016); *left-right identi-*

ty, *left/right orientation and ideological self-definition* (Godlewski, 2007). On the other hand, the following terms can be found in the world literature: *ideological identification* (Wiesehomeier, Doyle, 2012); *ideological orientation* (Harring, Sohlberg, 2017; Zuell, Scholz, 2019); *left-right orientation* (Aspelund, Lindeman, Verkasalo, 2013; Huber, 1989); *left-right identification* (Rico, Jennings, 2015); *left and right political orientation*, but also *individual ideological orientation* (Wojcik, Cislak, Schmidt, 2021); *left-right ideology as a dimension of identification* (Freire, 2015); *left-right self-placement* (Noël, Thérien, 2008; Dassonneville, 2020); *ideological self-placement* (Caprara et al., 2017). Most often, it comes down to asking respondents to self-declare their views using quantitative scales, where one pole is described as “left-wing” and the other as “right-wing”. In the practice of international research projects, 10-point (1–10; World Values Survey, Eurobarometer) or 11-point scales are usually used (0–10; European Social Survey). In Poland, 7-point scales are also used (1–7; CBOS). This approach has also been criticized because it does not answer the question of what beliefs in each area are held by those who mark each item on the scale. This simplistic measurement ignores the fact that “left” and “right” are social (political) constructs that have strong culture-specific meanings (Zuell, Scholz, 2019, p. 92). The meanings people ascribe to them depend on the time, the country, its history, its culture, but also on the individual socialization experiences of human individuals (Dalton, 2006; Noël, Thérien, 2008; Farneti, 2012; Freire, Kivistik, 2013). They may change in time and space, but even at a given moment they remain relative (Noël, Thérien, 2008, p. 11; Zechmeister, 2006). The point of reference for the different orientations can involve visions of leftism and rightism constructed by a variety of agents (e.g., individuals, groups, movements, parties, or states) (Noël, Thérien, 2008, p. 26). Contextual factors that can shape the meaning of the terms “left” and “right” also include the age of democracy, the geopolitical location of the country, the way political elites instrumentalize political labels, the level of economic development or the secularization of society (Esposito, Theuerkauf, 2021, p. 4). First of all, he recognizes the creative role of political parties that “format” the multidimensional social divisions into a political division, described in terms of “left” and “right” (Giebler, Meyer, Wagner, 2021). Parties competing for voters’ votes are constructing “an ideological pattern that makes sense for both elites and voters, and that gives structure to politics” (Noël, Thérien, Boucher, 2021, p. 330). It is stressed that in polarized political systems, voters are even more partisan and more biased in their political evaluations and opinions (Vegetti, 2019, p. 79; Druckman, Peterson, Slothuus, 2013). Understanding these ideological patterns thus depends on “the specific types of political conflict that dominated in the course of the institutionalization of the left-right symbolism in the sphere of politics” (Fuchs, Klingemann, 1990, p. 233). In advanced democracies, these were traditional class and religious divisions (Lipset i Rokkan, 1967), nevertheless, today the content of this ideological rivalry is changing (Dalton, 2006, p. 2). Voters’ political identities have begun to be further structured by new forms of division centered around post-materialist concerns (Inglehart, 1977; 1990; van Deth, Geurts, 1989). They are repolarizing societies, stimulating new conflicts over non-economic issues such as environmental quality, gender equality, life style choices (Dalton, 2006, p. 2); belonging, self-expression, quality of life (including e.g. attitudes towards multiculturalism, LGBTQ+ rights) (Esposito, Theuerkauf, 2021, p. 5), but also European integration (Jahn, 2014, p. 300; 2022). The current

context is also important: ideological orientations may be more strongly constructed if an issue is politicized in a country, such as immigration or religious and lifestyle issues (in Catholic countries) (Freire, 2015, p. 64). An illustration of this phenomenon is definitely the significant increase in identification with the left among young women in Poland after the 2020 Constitutional Court ruling restricting the right to abortion. Therefore, left-right identity should be treated rather as a multidimensional phenomenon: it is anchored in multiple sets of values orientations, both economic and non-economic (Freire, 2015, p. 45).

Dieter Fuchs and Hans-Dieter Klingemann propose to distinguish between left-right self-placement and ideological self-identification. In their view, “ideological systems of orientation establish priorities, and left-right self-placements are analytically distinct concepts that have separate and independent explanatory status and power for political attitudes and political behavior” (Fuchs, Klingemann, 1990, p. 234). In turn, Cornelia Zuell and Evi Scholz (2013, p. 77) argue that the left-right scale used as a standard survey question measures ideological orientations in a minimalist way. An example of such a multi-dimensional approach is *issue-based scale* that is made up of issue positions on different political proposals. Niklas Harring and Jacob Sohlberg (2017) used this research tool to measure ideological orientations (left-right ideology) with issue positions on five political proposals focused on the size of the welfare state, taxation levels, income differences, for-profit hospitals and privatization of the healthcare sector. Recognizing the validity of this approach, a double measurement method was used in the research design: one-dimensional (left-right self-identifications) and multi-dimensional (ideological orientations understood as a set of views, beliefs and values).

Gender as a variable determining ideological orientations of the young generation

Many researchers note that the ideological orientations of individuals may depend on social background factors, such as social class, education, gender, age, income, religious practice (see: Inglehart, Klingemann, 1976; Lesschaeve, 2017, p. 358). In developed democracies, the correlations between ideological orientations, gender and age are particularly emphasized. Findings by Alain Noël and Jean-Philippe Thérien indicate that women tend to adopt more left-wing views than men. In the past, they were more right-wing (which may have been related to their religiousness), but in recent generations this pattern has been reversed, creating “a gender gap between more progressive women and more conservative men” (Noël, Thérien, 2008, p. 46). A major contribution to these findings came primarily from the research of Ronald Inglehart and Pippa Norris (2000; 2003), who noted that “by the late 1990s a reversal of men’s and women’s ideological positions was visible in established democracies more generally” (Dassonneville, 2020, p. 2). Social change in this area is correlated with the growth of post-materialist values in advanced democracies, where men’s and women’s positions differ on issues that are related to freedom, self-expression and gender equality (Inglehart, Norris, 2000, p. 446; Dassonneville, 2020, p. 2). There is no doubt that the formation of an ideological gender gap is a result of generational change (Shorrocks 2018). Using this generational per-

spective, the process is analyzed in detail by Ruth Dassonneville, who noticed that in the juncture between the Silent Generation and Baby Boomers there was an ideological gender realignment, because women of the older generation (Greatest Generation) were more right-wing than men, while women of the Baby Boomers generation were already more left-wing¹. In subsequent generations (X, Y and Z), the ideological position of women is always more to the left than that of men, while we can observe a widening gender gap, which is mainly due to the shift of men to more right-wing positions (Dassonneville, 2020, pp. 8–10).

These conclusions are also supported by the results of the 10th round of the European Social Survey conducted in Poland in 2022 (Table 1). Left-right self-identification was measured using an 11-point scale (0–10), and the arithmetic mean for the entire population was 5.53 (the metric midpoint of the scale is 5.00). Detailed results show that women are more leftist (5.22) than men (5.86), and self-identification is correlated with age, which is even more evident by gender. Young women are the most left-wing (4.49), while older men are the most right-wing (6.14).

Table 1

Self-identifications of Polish society on the left-right scale by gender and age

	Mean (0–10 scale)	Mode
TOTAL	5.53	5
Females	5.22	5
Males	5.86	5
15–29 years	5.02	5
30–59 years	5.40	5
60 and more years	5.93	10
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15–29 years	4.49	5
30–59 years	5.01	5
60 and more years	5.77	5
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15–29 years	5.53	5
30–59 years	5.77	5
60 and more years	6.14	10

Source: European Social Survey (ESS), round 10, 2022.

The gender-generation gap in political ideology is the result of the uneven transmission of ideological orientations in the process of socialization (van Ditmars, 2023). The classical approach to this phenomenon (Jennings, Niemi, 1968) assumes the transmission of values and beliefs from parents to their children, but less attention is paid to the fact that the impact on daughters may be different than the impact on sons. The results of research conducted in Germany and Switzerland show that “daughters are less likely than sons to take over their parents’ rightist positions, while parent-son transmission is equally large on the left and the right” (van Ditmars, 2023, p. 3). These findings con-

¹ This outcome applies to the following 9 countries: Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom.

firm that gender differences are increasing in younger generations, and in particular the emergence of a left-wing turn occurs in the younger female generation. Ruth Dassonneville points out that there are significant differences between countries in the size of the ideological gender gap, but “even in those countries where women are still more right-leaning than men, it is expected that with time, they will not only move to a similar ideological position as men, but move further to the left” (Dassonneville, 2020, p. 2; see also: Giger, 2009).

Methodology and research design

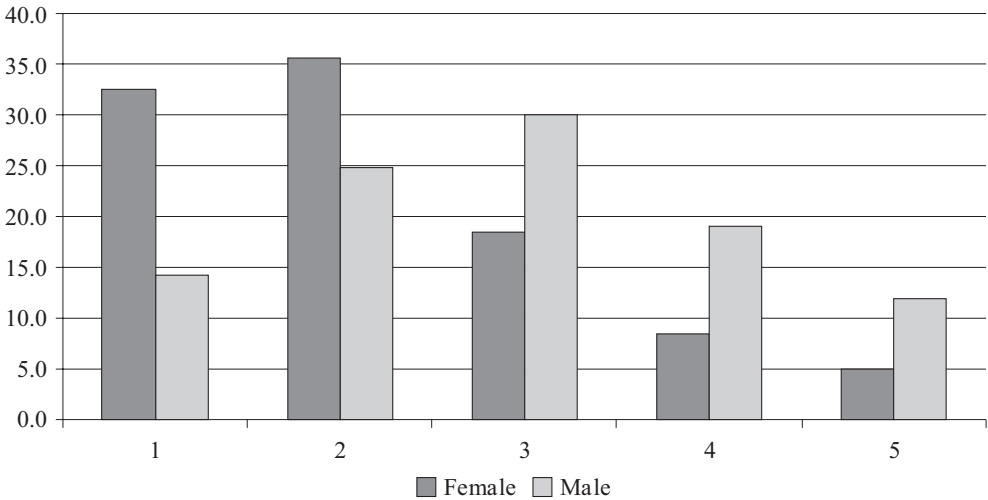
The study was carried out using the survey method (online survey, CAWI) in the period 18.03–2.04.2021. The questionnaire was sent to student scientific circles operating at dozens of public universities in Poland from 16 academic centers.² The study involved 500 students (288 women and 212 men) between the ages of 19 and 30 (mean age: 22.6, median: 23). The survey design assumed that ideological orientations are a broader, more complex and analytically different concept from self-positioning on left/right scales. This assumption had important consequences for decisions on the shape of the survey tools. The survey was designed to obtain both unidimensional (left-right self-identifications) and multidimensional (ideological orientations) information on the actual beliefs, views and values of young people (students). For the purposes of this article, the collected data was analyzed to compare respondents by gender. This approach should make it possible to answer the research questions formulated in the Introduction in the descriptive-explanatory and methodological dimensions. A 5-point scale was used to diagnose self-identification. Respondents determined their position in response to the question: *Where would you place your views on a scale from 1 to 5, on which: “1” – means LEFT, and “5” – means RIGHT?* On the other hand, more complex ideological orientations were measured using the issue-based scale covering 24 questions from three areas: economic, worldview and socioeconomic. Respondents also expressed their opinion using a 5-point scale, but the questionnaire described the poles of the subscales differently. Then, for analysis purposes, appropriate recoding was done (“1” on the scale meant a more left-wing viewpoint, and “5” meant a more right-wing viewpoint). Table 3 (in the section with the results of the analysis) provides a general description of the poles for each subscale (issue). In constructing the research tool, an effort was made to cover a relatively broad spectrum of issues, combining traditional and new dimensions of political disputes and divisions, often typical of public discourse in Poland or the practice of social life (hence the issues of religiosity and perceptions of the church, but also, for example, the use of feminatives, i.e., female endings to the names of professions). In describing the poles of the L/P scale, meanings typical of Polish political discourse were used: in the economic dimension, free-market views, and in other dimensions, conservative views were treated as right-wing. However, it is possible to abstract from the left-right dichotomy and interpret the data presented simply as differences in the views of young women and men.

² Kraków, Wrocław, Łódź, Szczecin, Gdańsk, Warsaw, Poznań, Rzeszów, Toruń, Katowice, Opole, Lublin, Białystok, Jelenia Góra, Słupsk, Kielce.

Results

The basic descriptive statistics confirm initial expectations of left-right self-identification differentiation by the gender of young respondents. The survey sample was dominated by those identifying more strongly with the left side of the 5-point scale, indicating a preponderance of left-wing identifications. This distribution of responses corresponds with the results of the CBOS survey (2021a), which was published in early 2021. Women predominated among those indicating values of “1” and “2” on the scale, while men predominated among those indicating “4” and “5”.

Figure 1. Left-right self-identifications of respondents (1–5 scale), in percentage



Source: Own study.

This phenomenon is also confirmed by the values of the arithmetic mean calculated from the 5-point left-right self-identification scale (Table 2). The survey tool was a scale whose metric mean is 3.00, so the mean value of 2.48 indicates the predominance of left-wing identifications. Respondents most often indicated a value of “2” on the scale. The average for women was lower (2.17) than for men (2.90). Women most often chose option “2” and men “3” on the scale. The observed gender differences were statistically significant, as confirmed by the Mann-Whitney U test result ($p < 0.001$).

Table 2

Left-right self-identifications and ideological orientations of respondents

	Left-right self-identifications		Ideological orientations	
	Mean (1–5 scale)	Mode	IO Index	Median
Total	2.48	2	2.13	1.92
Females	2.17	2	1.97	1.81
Males	2.90	3	2.36	2.21

Source: Own study.

As already mentioned, the questionnaire used not only a scale to diagnose left-right self-identification, but also 24 questions containing specific issues that respondents rated using a 5-point scale (issue-based scale). A reliability analysis of the research tool was conducted, which showed a high value of Cronbach's Alpha coefficient (0.92) for the 24 subscales used, which means that they represent a valid (internally consistent) tool for measuring ideological orientations. In the course of the analysis, an ideological orientation index (IO Index) was constructed, which for each respondent corresponded to the average of the values indicated on each of the 24 subscales (Table 2). The IO Index value for the entire research sample was lower (2.13) than the average value calculated from the 5-point self-identification scale (2.48). Similarly, lower values were recorded for the female (1.97) and male (2.36) groups. These results provide evidence supporting the first research hypothesis in this section, which was that there are differences determined by the respondent's gender at the overall level.

The measurement made with the issue-based scale shows a more left-leaning picture of respondents. This is also confirmed by the median values. For example, half of the women obtained IO Index values below 1.81. Again, the Mann-Whitney U-test result ($p < 0.001$) signals the statistical significance of gender differences. The above data, supplemented by information from Table 3 (below), allow us to confirm the second hypothesis. In fact, in their assessment of many issues, respondents located themselves more to the left than their overall self-identification would suggest. This observation applies primarily to respondents who identified themselves as right-wing (options "4" and "5" on the self-identification scale). A detailed analysis of the data in Table 3 allows us to identify differences between men and women at a more detailed level. It turns out that on 23 out of 24 issues women took a more left-wing position. It is possible to identify a number of issues that significantly differentiate the two groups, although only in 4 cases (*feminatives*, *conscience clause*, *income inequality*, *taxes*) their positions were located on two sides of the metric center of the scale (women on the left, men on the right). In this sense, it is difficult to speak of polarization of beliefs and views by gender, although in most cases the differences identified were statistically significant. The biggest differences were noted on issues concerning the social role of women, which may suggest that men's positions are determined by the persistence of the social gender stereotype. Women are significantly more likely to admit that it would be better if they were more active in politics, as well as being more supportive of a definition of marriage that also implies same-sex relations. Undoubtedly, men declare a more conservative view on both matters. The third issue that most significantly differentiates respondents is attitudes toward the use of feminatives, although here views closer to the middle of the scale are evident (also among women). Men generally have a more right-wing (free-market) view of economics (*social benefits*, *minimum wage*, *taxes*), although in the case of *social spending* both women and men declared a right-wing view (less social spending, but lower taxes), nevertheless the differences turned out to be statistically insignificant. Additionally, strongly differentiating issues include the belief that schools should teach tolerance first and foremost, support for financing in vitro from the state budget, and the belief that homosexuals are discriminated against in Poland. The following issues differentiate between men and women to a lesser extent (differences in the mean of a given subscale no greater than 0.50): evaluation of the abortion law, attitudes toward same-sex partner-

ships, environmental protection and the belief that we should strive for special protection of traditional religious or family value. Women consistently took more left-wing positions. Even smaller differences (less than 0.30) are observed in the case of issues related to the functioning and role of clergy, religion and churches, indicating that criticism and secularization of attitudes are widespread among young respondents. Young people, on the other hand, unanimously oppose the statement that schools should teach obedience to authority, as well as unanimously support the statement that people should have the right to organize demonstrations on ideological issues. In only one issue (attitudes toward the legality of soft drugs) did women declare a position more to the right than men.

Table 3

Ideological orientations of respondents (issue-based scale)

Issue	The poles of the 1–5 scale: LEFT/RIGHT	Arithmetic mean		Difference	Statistical significance (U Mann-Whitney test)
		Females	Males		
1	2	3	4	5	6
Women in politics	<i>It would be better if more women were active in politics: Yes/No</i>	1.73	2.60	0.87	<0.001
Definition of marriage	also for same-sex/female and male only	1.82	2.62	0.80	<0.001
Feminatives	<i>We should use suffixes more often for women's professions: Yes/No</i>	2.43	3.20	0.77	<0.001
Social spending	yes. but higher taxes/no. but lower taxes	3.40	4.17	0.77	0.287
Conscience clause	a doctor or pharmacist should not have the right/should have the right to use the conscience clause	2.38	3.13	0.75	<0.001
School: tolerance	<i>Schools should teach, above all, tolerance and respect for others: Yes/No</i>	1.34	2.01	0.67	<0.001
Social benefits	provided by the state/paid individually by the citizen	1.78	2.43	0.65	<0.001
In vitro	financed/not financed from the state budget	1.92	2.54	0.62	<0.001
Discrimination against homosexuals	takes place/does not take place in Poland	1.66	2.28	0.62	<0.001
Income inequality	should be countered/are natural	2.84	3.45	0.61	<0.001
Minimum wage	should be determined by the state/determined by the free market	2.28	2.73	0.45	<0.001
Abortion law	too restrictive/too liberal	1.49	1.93	0.44	<0.001
Same-sex marriage	should be legal/should be illegal	1.55	1.90	0.35	<0.001
Taxes	progressive/linear	2.81	3.12	0.31	<0.05
Environmental protection	<i>We should do more to protect the environment: Yes/No</i>	1.33	1.64	0.31	<0.001

1	2	3	4	5	6
Protection of values	<i>We should strive for special protection of traditional religious or family value: No/Yes</i>	2.39	2.69	0.30	<0.05
Clergy and politics	should not speak out/should speak out on political issues	1.34	1.63	0.29	<0.001
Coal	greater use of renewable energy/coal the primary energy resource	1.34	1.63	0.29	<0.001
Religion in schools	No/Yes	2.03	2.22	0.19	0.056
Financing of churches	should not/should be financially supported from the state budget	1.58	1.74	0.16	<0.05
Sex scandals involving clergy	the Catholic Church reacts inappropriately/appropriately to information regarding sex scandals involving clergy	1.32	1.42	0.10	<0.05
School: authority figures	<i>Schools should teach, above all, obedience to authority figures: No/Yes</i>	1.70	1.74	0.04	0.477
Worldview manifestations	<i>People should have the right to organize demonstrations on ideological issues: Yes/No</i>	1.48	1.48	0.00	0.813
Soft drugs	should be legal/should be illegal	2.55	2.01	-0.54	<0.001

The issues were ranked according to the greatest differences between men and women.

Source: Own study.

Conclusions

Ideological orientation is one of the most important factors explaining political attitudes, views and behavior (Harring, Sohlberg, 2017, p. 278). In this article, I have tried to explain the need for a multidimensional approach to diagnosing attitudes using the labels “left” and “right”. I adopted the assumptions present in the literature that both categories are social (or political) constructs, are variable in time and space, and their meaning depends on a number of contextual factors, including country specifics, history, experiences of individuals (Noël, Thérien, 2008; Zechmeister, 2006; Zuell, Scholz, 2019; Dalton, 2006; Farneti, 2012; Freire, Kivistik, 2013), interpretive frameworks imposed by politicians and political parties in disputes and conflicts not only over economic issues, but – increasingly – over non-economic issues centered around various post-materialist values (Inglehart, 1977; 1990; van Deth, Geurts, 1989; Freire, 2015; Esposito, Theuerkauf, 2021; Jahn, 2014; 2022). Thus, it seems that the concept of ideological orientation should be – differently to self-positioning on the left-right scale – used to describe more specific sets of beliefs, views and values in a multidimensional way, i.e., taking into account the point of view on various important socio-political issues simultaneously.

The object of my interest was primarily the differentiation of ideological orientations by two variables: age and gender. The work of Inglehart and Norris (2000; 2003)

indicated that the ideological positions of men and women in advanced democracies had already reversed by the late 1990s. The results of social surveys (ESS) lead to the conclusion that in modern Poland women also place themselves more to the left than men, and in the younger generation these differences are even greater. However, the way left-right self-identifications are measured still does not allow to describe in detail what these differences are. The desire to identify them was the main inspiration for this article. I had previously formulated research questions along two important dimensions: descriptive-explanatory (Are there and what are the ideological differences between young women and men?) and methodological (Is a one-dimensional measurement confirmed by a measurement using a multidimensional tool?). Analysis of the data confirmed the existence of differences at both the general level (left-right self-identifications; IO Index) and the specific level (24 issues). The results of the presented research confirm the phenomenon described on the ground of theory, i.e. *gender-generation gap* (Shorrocks, 2018; Dassonneville, 2020; van Ditmars, 2022), indicating ideological gender differences in the young generation, nevertheless, there were rarely differences that would indicate polarization of views or beliefs. In general, left-wing identifications and orientations prevailed in the surveyed group, although they were much stronger among young women. On only 4 (out of 24) issues did women place themselves on the left side of the scale, when at the same time men placed themselves on the right side. It is worth noting that women averaged less than 2.00 on 15 issues (a strongly left-wing position), while men scored similarly on only 9 issues. Overall, women had more left-wing beliefs (average below 3.00) on 23 (out of 24) issues, and men on 19 (out of 24). Nevertheless, on 23 issues women declared a stronger left-wing stance than men. They declared a more left-wing point of view only in the case of the legality of soft drugs, i.e. they were more likely to call for the abolition of criminal penalties for their possession. In the end, it was possible to positively verify both research hypotheses. Differences were identified at the general and specific level (hypothesis 1), and this was mainly due to the use of a complex tool (issue-based scale) to the diagnosis of ideological orientations, which made us obtain a more complete picture of the differences between men and women in views, beliefs and values. The actual views and beliefs of respondents – regardless of gender – are more left-wing than their self-declarations on the left-right scale (hypothesis 2).

Author Contributions

Conceptualization: Radosław Marzęcki

Data curation: Radosław Marzęcki

Formal analysis: Radosław Marzęcki

Funding acquisition: Radosław Marzęcki

Software: Radosław Marzęcki

Writing – original draft: Radosław Marzęcki

Writing – review & editing: Radosław Marzęcki

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Orientacje ideologiczne i lewicowo-prawicowa samoidentyfikacja młodych Polek i Polaków: obraz politycznej przepaści płciowo-pokoleniowej

Streszczenie

Przedmiotem zainteresowań jest różnorodność orientacji ideologicznych ze względu na płeć i wiek. Dotychczasowe ustalenia teoretyczne wskazują, że w rozwiniętych demokracjach już pod koniec lat 90. doszło do odwrócenia pozycji ideologicznych kobiet i mężczyzn. Z ostatnich badań społecznych wynika, że także w Polsce kobiety w większym stopniu niż mężczyźni identyfikują się z lewicą, a w młodszym pokoleniu różnice te są jeszcze większe. Celem artykułu jest szczegółowe ukazanie różnic ideowych pomiędzy młodymi mężczyznami i kobietami w Polsce. Autor stawia dwa typy pytań badawczych: (1) opisowe i wyjaśniające, które dotyczą charakterystyki podobieństw i różnic w orientacjach ideologicznych młodych kobiet i mężczyzn; (2) metodologiczne, które dotyczą sposobu pomiaru tego zjawiska. Autor wychodzi z założenia, że stosowany w wielu badaniach pomiar lewicowo-prawicowej samoidentyfikacji daje nadmiernie uproszczony obraz rzeczywistych poglądów, przekonań i wartości respondentów, które można określić mianem orientacji ideologicznych. Dlatego proponuje zastosowanie narzędzi wielowymiarowych (skala problemowa), które pozwalają lepiej opisać złożone postawy polityczne. W poszukiwaniu odpowiedzi autor analizuje dane z własnego badania przeprowadzonego wśród dużej grupy polskich studentów.

Słowa kluczowe: orientacje ideologiczne, lewica, prawica, młodzież, różnica pokoleń