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Violence Against Women in Politics – a Study in Poland

Abstract: The increase in women’s participation in political life in recent decades has resulted in research explaining how women’s presence (or absence) changes the form, nature and content of politics. However, a gender perspective is still lacking, especially in the relationship between political participation and violence. Violence against women in politics is increasingly recognised around the world as a significant barrier to women’s participation in political life. The aim of the research is to find out whether politically active women are more exposed to violence (physical, psychological, symbolic, sexual, economic) than politically active men and whether violence against politicians is related to belonging to a political party. The research conducted among Polish politicians (n=88) confirms that both women and men who are politically active experience violence. However, women are more often attacked psychologically, symbolically and sexually. Politicians acting under the banner of a party are much more likely to experience violence than non-partisan politicians. Physical violence is very rare, and the level of experiencing violence in all its forms decreases with age.

Key words: woman, politics, violence, participation

Introduction

Women’s participation in politics has doubled in the last twenty years. Worldwide, in 2002 there were 5,582 (14.3%) women parliamentarians and in 2022 – 11,851 (26.4%, IPU, 2023). The share of women in the executive power is slowly increasing. Almost half of the countries have introduced quota solutions (93 out of 193, Gender Quota Portal, 2023), to increase women’s participation, and few political parties adopt voluntary gender quotas in their party structures. The increase in women’s participation in political life in recent decades has resulted in research explaining how the presence (or absence) of women changes the form, nature and content of politics. A new area of research in gender and politics is the issue of gender-based violence in politics. In contrast to the mainstream literature on political violence (Mazurkiewicz, 2006; Bielawski, 2021), which focuses mainly on physical attacks in the public sphere, conflicts or regime changes, research on violence against women in politics (VAWIP) treats acts of violence in the private sphere as equally important. In the National Democratic Institute international campaign “#NotTheCost, Stopping Violence Against Women in Politics” (NDI, 2016, p. 12), initiated after the murder of British MP Jo Cox, it was indicated that VAWIP occurs when these three conditions are met (1) it targets women because of their gender; (2) in its very form it can be gendered, as exemplified by sexist threats and sexual violence; and (3) its impact is to discourage women in particular from being or becoming politically active. A review of research indicates that VAWIP means any act of physical, psychological or sexual violence, harassment or discrimination specifically

directed against women involved in politics or public life (Bardall et al., 2020; Håkansson, 2021; Holm, 2020; Krook, Sanín, 2020; IPU, 2016; Franceschet et al., 2016; Druciarek et al., 2019). The aim of violence is to silence women or prevent them from actively participating in the political arena, exercising their rights and boosting their political careers. The inclusion of a gender perspective in research on violence against politicians not only emphasises the gender identity of victims and perpetrators, but also points to a phenomenon where the sources, means and effects of acts of violence are aimed at excluding women from the political sphere, as their gender is perceived as a threat to patriarchal political norms (Kuperberg, 2021). It is worth noting that the understanding of violence is not limited to its physical manifestation. Harassment, intimidation and bullying can be used in conjunction with violence to draw attention to non-physical acts of resistance to women's participation. Krook and Sanin introduce the notion of semiotic violence, manifested by degrading images and sexist language, in order to make women seem incompetent and invisible (Krook, Sanín, 2016, p. 744). Symbolic violence is particularly often studied on the Internet although as a phenomenon it is not limited to it (Bardall, 2013). According to (Krook, 2020, p. 187) the acts of semiotic violence "are less about attacking particular women directly than about shaping public perceptions about the validity of women's political participation more broadly". The public and performative nature of online abuse, although often directed at specific politicians, affects the views of the wider public and aims to delegitimise women as political actors. Perpetrators of this form of violence objectify women, emphasise their appearance or sexuality, describe them as bad mothers or women who have failed. In particular, one of the strategies that emphasises the inadequacy of women to play a role in politics is disqualification, where opponents mobilise to find information about a female politician in order to disqualify her from political life. Importantly, these strategies are different from those aimed at disqualifying a politician on the basis of his/her political views or previous political activity. Instead, scrutiny and criticism disproportionately emphasise the personal lives and sexuality of women politicians, and weakness and incompetence in the case of men. For women in influential political positions, the inconsistency of roles between political leadership and gender is particularly evident (Håkansson, 2021). Numerous studies confirm that women in politics sustain violence because of their gender and role, which has serious consequences for democracy and gender equality (Bardall et al., 2020; Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention, 2019; IPU, 2018).

Research method and procedure

The study on violence against women in politics is a complex and important area of research that requires careful consideration of various factors and potential causes. When establishing the hypotheses for the study, I first tried to find out whether politically active women are more exposed to violence than politically active men and secondly, if violence against politicians is related to belonging to a political party.

The author's questionnaire consists of 18 questions. The questionnaire was sent by e-mail to the Members of Parliament (both chambers) and Polish Members of the Eu-

ropean Parliament. In total, a questionnaire was sent to 612 politicians, of whom 88 responded (Table 1).

Table 1
Description of the sample (n)

Sample	Sex	The average age	Average years in politics
W	33	53	14
M	55	52	17

Source: Study based on own research.

The respondents represented all political factions of the current parliamentary term (2019–24), in the decreasing order: 37 people from the Civic Coalition (KO), 22 people declared as non-partisan, 12 people from Nowa Lewica (NL) and Law and Justice (PiS) and one person from Konfederacja, Polska 2050, Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe, Solidarna Polska and Kukiz15 each. In further analysis, political affiliation was assigned to three categories: the power camp (17), opposition (49) and non-partisan (22).

In the questionnaire, the questions corresponded to five forms of violence, the understanding of which is explained in the table below (Table 2).

Table 2
Forms of violence experienced

Psychological violence	Bullying, harassment directed at me or my family, including sending messages, phone calls Threats against me or my family
Economic violence	Vandalism, e.g. destroying (burning, painting over) of election materials or offices Theft – e.g. a banner, poster, election materials, etc.
Physical violence	Physical attack (hitting/pushing/jerking/throwing an object) Scuffles in the Parliament/Council during debates causing great emotions
Sexual violence	Unwanted physical contact (touching, unwelcome physical closeness, rubbing) Unwelcome sexual comments or proposals to me or my family Unsolicited appearance comments directed at me or my family Receiving unsolicited indecent and/or obscene photos, images or recordings
Symbolic violence	Name-calling – words and symbols that are considered offensive (depreciation, humiliation, calling me objects or animals) Offensive comments addressed to me

Source: Study based on own research.

Hypotheses and research questions:

Violence against politicians is gendered

RQ1: Is there a gender difference in the frequency of experiencing violence?

RQ2: Is there a gender difference in the type of violence experienced?

Violence against politicians is conditioned by belonging to a political party

RQ3: Is there a relationship between belonging to a political party (the power camp/opposition/non-partisan) and the politician’s gender and experiencing violence?

RQ4: Politicians of which parties (the power camp/opposition/non-partisan) experience violence more often?

The questions from the questionnaire were assessed as to the reliability of the variables. Its theoretical range is from 0 to 1. The further from 0, and the closer to 1, the greater the reliability of the given tool or variable (Table 3).

Table 3

Reliability analysis of the index of violence in general

Violence in general	Item correlation Total	Cronbach's alpha after deleting items
Physical attack (hitting/pushing/jerking/throwing an object)	0.352	0.869
Attempted physical attack	0.479	0.864
Scuffles in the Parliament/Council during debates causing great emotions	0.364	0.869
Bullying, harassment directed at me or my family, including sending messages, phone calls	0.703	0.848
Threats against me or my family	0.544	0.868
Unsolicited appearance comments directed at me or my family	0.738	0.846
Unwanted physical contact (touching, unwelcome physical closeness, rubbing)	0.549	0.860
Unwelcome sexual comments or proposals to me or my family	0.612	0.855
Name-calling – words and symbols that are considered offensive (depreciation, humiliation, calling me objects or animals)	0.771	0.844
Receiving unsolicited indecent and/or obscene photos, images or recordings	0.555	0.860
Vandalism, e.g. destroying (burning, painting over) of election materials or offices	0.548	0.859
Theft – e.g. a banner, poster, election materials, etc.	0.543	0.860

Source: Study based on own research.

Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient for the index of violence in general was 0.869, which should be considered as evidence of high reliability. Individual items are positively correlated with the overall score. A physical attack and scuffles in the Parliament/Council during highly emotional debates correlate slightly less with the overall indicator than the others, but their removal would not increase the reliability of the indicator, so it is not advisable.

Results

The analysis of the survey results began with the presentation of the distribution of all respondents' answers to individual questions, along with a comparison of women's and men's answers. Most of the respondents (68.2%) experienced threats against themselves or their family. There is a statistically significant relationship and a rather weak correlation between gender and the experience of threats against oneself or one's family. Significantly more women (81.8%) than men experienced them (Chi-2 = 4.526, p = 0.033*, Cramer's V = 0.227).

Among various types of threats, the largest number of respondents experienced bad wishes (61.4%), and slightly fewer threats of inflicting harm (54.5%) and death threats (47.7%). One in four people (25%) experienced rape threats and 8% other types of threats. As it turned out, there is a statistically significant relationship between gender

and the experience of bad wishes (quite weak correlation $\text{Chi-2} = 3.495, p = 0.174$), death threats (quite weak correlation $\text{Chi-2} = 10.309, p = 0.006^{**}$, Cramer’s $V = 0.324$) and threats of rape (moderate correlation – $\text{Chi-2} = 2.820, p = 0.244$). Significantly more women than men experienced all these types of threats.

As many as 2 out of 3 respondents (67%) believe that public speaking increases the number of offensive comments against them. 14.8% of respondents have a different opinion, and the remaining 18.2% cannot assess it. The Chi-2 test showed a relationship that is close to statistically significant between gender and experiencing more derogatory comments about oneself in connection with public speaking. Many more men (21.8%) than women (3%) answered “no”.

Among the experienced comments, definitely the largest number of respondents encountered remarks about their political environment (69.3%), and slightly fewer about their actions (59.1%) and knowledge (47.7%). Quite a number of people experienced comments about their appearance (36.4%) and experience (31.8%), and much fewer about: age (23.9%), gender (20.5%), family (14.8%) or origin (14.8%). As it turned out, there is a statistically significant relationship between gender and the experience of animadversions on: political environment ($p = 0.049^*$), actions ($p = 0.044^*$), appearance ($p = 0.006^{**}$), age ($p = 0.002^{**}$). Significantly more women than men experienced all these types of comments.

Almost 3 out of 5 respondents (59.1%) reported the experience of any violent behaviour to party authorities or law enforcement agencies. The remaining 40.9% of respondents did not. The Chi-2 test showed no relationship between gender and reporting this type of behaviour.

In the next step, the surveyed politicians assessed the frequency of experiencing various types of violent behaviour on a scale of 0–4 (where 0 – never, 1 – almost never, 2 – rarely, 3 – often, 4 – very often). Referring to all the respondents, the most common ones are name-calling – words and symbols considered offensive and unwanted comments about their appearance or that of their family. The average oscillates around the answer “rarely”. Behaviours such as bullying, harassment directed at me or my family, including texting, phone calls, theft, and vandalism can also be located near the answer “rarely”. The others are much less common.

As the Mann-Whitney U test showed, women statistically significantly more often than men experience such behaviours as: bullying, harassment, unwanted comments about appearance, unwelcome comments or suggestions of a sexual nature, and calling names – words and symbols considered offensive. A difference close to significance occurs in the case of account takeovers in social media (Table 4).

Table 4

Gender and the frequency of experiencing particular manifestations of violence

Frequency of experiencing manifestations of violence (on a scale of 0–4)	Sex									Mann-Whitney U test	
	woman			man			in total			Z	p
	M	Me	SD	M	Me	SD	M	Me	SD		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Physical attack (hitting/pushing/jerking/throwing an object)	0.39	0.00	0.70	0.45	0.00	0.72	0.43	0.00	0.71	-0.552	0.581
Attempted physical attack	0.67	0.00	0.82	0.58	0.00	0.79	0.61	0.00	0.79	-0.551	0.582

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Scuffles in the Parliament/Council during debates causing great emotions	0.79	0.00	1.22	0.58	0.00	0.83	0.66	0.00	0.99	-0.366	0.714
Bullying, harassment directed at me or my family, including sending messages, phone calls	2.42	3.00	1.25	1.69	2.00	1.33	1.97	2.00	1.34	-2.479	0.013*
Unsolicited appearance comments directed at me or my family	2.64	3.00	0.90	1.71	2.00	1.36	2.06	2.00	1.28	-3.223	0.001**
Unwanted physical contact (touching, unwelcome physical closeness, rubbing)	0.73	0.00	1.01	0.53	0.00	0.84	0.60	0.00	0.90	-1.018	0.309
Unwelcome sexual comments or proposals to me or my family	1.21	1.00	1.24	0.58	0.00	1.01	0.82	0.00	1.14	-2.712	0.007**
Name-calling – words and symbols that are considered offensive (depreciation, humiliation, calling me objects or animals)	2.55	3.00	1.00	1.89	2.00	1.34	2.14	2.00	1.26	-2.252	0.024*
Receiving unsolicited indecent and/or obscene photos, images or recordings	0.76	0.00	1.09	0.53	0.00	0.86	0.61	0.00	0.95	-1.020	0.308
Vandalism, e.g. destroying (burning, painting over) of election materials or offices	1.61	2.00	1.14	1.71	2.00	1.29	1.67	2.00	1.23	-0.310	0.757
Theft – e.g. a banner, poster, election materials, etc.	1.79	2.00	1.02	1.93	2.00	1.14	1.88	2.00	1.09	-0.465	0.642
Account takeover in social media	0.42	0.00	0.75	0.20	0.00	0.68	0.28	0.00	0.71	-1.943	0.052

Source: Study based on own research.

As the Kruskal-Wallis test showed, politicians from the ruling camp and opposition parties statistically significantly more often than non-partisan politicians experience such behaviours as: bullying, harassment, unwanted comments about their appearance and calling names. In turn, politicians from the ruling camp significantly more often than non-partisan politicians receive unwanted indecent and/or obscene photos, images or recordings. On the other hand, politicians of the ruling camp experience vandalism significantly more often than the opposition and non-party ones. Politicians in power significantly more often experience theft than opposition politicians and non-partisan people, and opposition politicians significantly more often than non-partisan ones (Table 5).

Table 5

Political group and the frequency of experiencing particular manifestations of violence

Frequency of experiencing manifestations of violence (on a scale of 0–4)	Political group									Kruskal -Wallis test		R.I.S.
	non-partisan (1)			opposition (2)			In power (3)			H	p	
	M	Me	SD	M	Me	SD	M	Me	SD			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Physical attack (hitting/pushing/jerking/throwing an object)	0.36	0.00	0.73	0.47	0.00	0.73	0.40	0.00	0.63	0.720	0.698	

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Attempted physical attack	0.36	0.00	0.66	0.71	0.00	0.83	0.67	0.00	0.82	3.086	0.214	
Scuffles in the Parliament/ Council during debates causing great emotions	0.55	0.00	1.14	0.75	0.00	0.96	0.53	0.00	0.92	2.608	0.271	
Bullying, harassment directed at me or my family, including sending messages, phone calls	1.27	1.00	1.39	2.12	2.00	1.32	2.47	3.00	0.99	8.032	0.018*	2.3>1
Unsolicited appearance comments directed at me or my family	1.41	2.00	1.01	2.22	2.00	1.36	2.47	3.00	1.06	9.388	0.009**	2.3>1
Unwanted physical contact (touching, unwelcome physical closeness, rubbing)	0.45	0.00	0.67	0.67	0.00	1.01	0.60	0.00	0.83	0.254	0.881	
Unwelcome sexual comments or proposals to me or my family	0.36	0.00	0.73	0.92	0.00	1.23	1.13	1.00	1.19	5.573	0.062	
Name-calling – words and symbols that are considered offensive (depreciation, humiliation, calling me objects or animals)	1.45	1.00	1.06	2.31	3.00	1.30	2.53	3.00	1.06	9.849	0.007**	2.3>1
Receiving unsolicited indecent and/or obscene photos, images or recordings	0.18	0.00	0.39	0.67	0.00	1.03	1.07	1.00	1.03	8.128	0.017*	3>1
Vandalism, e.g. destroying (burning, painting over) of election materials or offices	1.14	1.00	1.25	1.65	2.00	1.13	2.53	3.00	1.13	11.461	0.003**	3>1.2
Theft – e.g. a banner, poster, election materials, etc.	1.23	1.00	1.02	1.94	2.00	0.97	2.60	3.00	1.12	13.92	0.001**	3>2>1
Account takeover in social media	0.50	0.00	1.01	0.16	0.00	0.46	0.40	0.00	0.83	2.979	0.226	

Source: Study based on own research.

Next, an attempt was made to construct general indicators of experiencing violence in terms of the five forms. For this purpose, questions were assigned to particular forms of violence, and the answers were scored in such a way that a higher number of points means more frequent experiences of violence. Such questions were selected so that they could be logically and quantitatively included in the indicators and at the same time that enable the comparison of the indicators with each other. Thus, for each question, regardless of the multiple choice structure of the answers, a score of 0–4 was adopted. Due to the fact that the various forms of violence consist of a different number of questions, and thus the maximum sum of points is different, in order to be able to compare them, the sum of points was divided by the number of component questions. Ultimately, therefore, for each form of violence, the indicator ranges from 0 to 4 – the more points, the more often violence is experienced (Table 6).

Table 6

Construction of general indicators of forms of violence

Form	Manifestation	Points
Physical (0–12 points)	Physical attack (hitting/pushing/jerking/throwing an object)	Never – 0
	Attempted physical attack	Almost never – 1
	Scuffles in the Parliament/Council during debates causing great emotions	Rarely – 2 Often – 3 Very often – 4
Psychological (0–12 points)	Bullying, harassment directed at me or my family, including sending messages, phone calls	Never – 0 Almost never – 1
	Unsolicited appearance comments directed at me or my family	Rarely – 2 Often – 3 Very often – 4
	Threats against me or my family	Yes – 4 No – 0
Sexual (0–12 points)	Unwanted physical contact (touching, unwelcome physical closeness, rubbing)	Never – 0 Almost never – 1
	Unwelcome sexual comments or proposals to me or my family	Rarely – 2
	Receiving unsolicited indecent and/or obscene photos, images or recordings	Often – 3 Very often – 4
Economic (0–8 points)	Vandalism, e.g. destroying (burning, painting over) of election materials or offices	Never – 0 Almost never – 1
	Theft – e.g. a banner, poster, election materials, etc.	Rarely – 2 Often – 3 Very often – 4
Symbolic (0–4 points)	Name-calling – words and symbols that are considered offensive (depreciation, humiliation, calling me objects or animals)	Never – 0 Almost never – 1 Rarely – 2 Often – 3 Very often – 4

Source: Study based on own research

In the next step, on the basis of the previously discussed key, general indicators of forms of violence were calculated on a scale of 0–4. Below (Table 7) their descriptive statistics and the results of testing the normality of distribution in relation to the total number of respondents are presented.

Table 7

Descriptive statistics and tests of normality of distribution of general indicators of particular forms of violence

Forms of violence	N	Min	Maks	M	Me	SD	K-S	p
Physical	88	0.00	2.33	0.57	0.33	0.63	0.213	<0.001***
Psychological	88	0.00	4.00	2.25	2.67	1.25	0.180	<0.001***
Sexual	88	0.00	3.33	0.68	0.33	0.81	0.210	<0.001***
Economic	88	0.00	4.00	1.77	2.00	1.09	0.098	0.038*
Symbolic	88	0.00	4.00	2.14	2.00	1.26	0.208	<0.001***
In general	88	0.00	3.13	1.48	1.53	0.79	0.084	0.167

Source: Study based on own research.

Comparing the various forms of violence and taking into account averages and medians, it can be concluded that the respondents most often experience psychological violence, and only slightly less often symbolic violence. In turn, they experience physical violence to the least extent, and sexual violence only slightly more often. The distribution of all forms of violence is statistically significantly different from normal. Only the distribution of general violence is consistent with it. Therefore, in the further analysis of these indicators, tests and a non-parametric coefficient were used.

Then, it was checked whether gender, political group, age and the duration of the political career are related to the frequency of experiencing particular forms of violence (Table 8).

Table 8

Gender and general indicators of experienced forms of violence

Forms of violence	Sex						Mann-Whitney U test	
	woman			man			Z	p
	M	Me	SD	M	Me	SD		
Physical	0.62	0.33	0.63	0.54	0.33	0.64	-0.774	0.439
Psychological	2.78	3.33	0.97	1.93	2.00	1.30	-3.059	0.002**
Sexual	0.90	0.67	0.90	0.55	0.33	0.73	-2.020	0.043*
Economic	1.70	2.00	1.00	1.82	2.00	1.14	-0.335	0.738
Symbolic	2.55	3.00	1.00	1.89	2.00	1.34	-2.252	0.024*
In general	1.71	1.67	0.63	1.35	1.27	0.85	-1.961	0.050

Source: Study based on own research.

The Mann-Whitney U test showed that women experience psychological, sexual and symbolic violence significantly more often than men. There was no significant difference in terms of physical and economic violence. On the other hand, the difference in the general indicator is close to statistical significance. Thus, the hypothesis – Violence against politicians is conditioned by gender, was undoubtedly confirmed as far as psychological, sexual and symbolic violence is concerned.

The Kruskal-Wallis test showed no significant difference between non-partisan, opposition and ruling camp politicians in terms of experiencing physical violence. It was found, however, that the opposition politicians and the ruling camp ones significantly more often experience psychological and sexual violence than the non-partisan ones. On the other hand, economic violence is significantly more often experienced by politicians from the ruling camp than opposition and non-partisan ones, and significantly more often by opposition politicians than non-partisan ones. Symbolic violence is significantly more often encountered by politicians from the ruling camp than opposition and non-partisan ones. Thus, the hypothesis – Violence against politicians is conditioned by belonging to a political party was confirmed in all forms of violence except physical violence (Table 9).

No statistically significant, linear correlations were found between age and the experience of individual forms of violence, or the experience of violence in general. It turned out, however, that the longer the political career, the less sexual and symbolic violence, as well as violence in general, are experienced.

Table 9

Political party and general indicators of experienced forms of violence

Forms of violence	Political group									Kruskal-Wallis test		R.I.S.
	nonpartisan (1)			opposition (2)			In power (3)			H	p	
	M	Me	SD	M	Me	SD	M	Me	SD			
Physical	0.42	0.00	0.73	0.64	0.67	0.62	0.53	0.33	0.53	4.367	0.113	
Psychological	1.44	1.17	1.17	2.44	3.00	1.22	2.80	3.00	0.93	11.933	0.003**	2.3>1
Sexual	0.33	0.00	0.50	0.75	0.33	0.88	0.93	0.67	0.83	6.967	0.031*	2.3>1
Economic	1.18	1.00	1.09	1.79	2.00	0.94	2.57	3.00	1.08	13.813	0.001**	3>2>1
Symbolic	1.45	1.00	1.06	2.31	3.00	1.30	2.53	3.00	1.06	9.849	0.007**	3>2.1
In general	0.97	0.83	0.69	1.59	1.73	0.78	1.87	1.90	0.62	13.542	0.001**	2.3>1

Source: Study based on own research.

Table 10

Age and the duration of political career and general indicators of experienced forms of violence

Forms of violence	Age		Duration of political career	
	rho	p	rho	p
Physical	-0.043	0.692	-0.050	0.651
Psychological	0.044	0.685	-0.180	0.101
Sexual	-0.135	0.212	-0.253	0.020*
Economic	-0.039	0.719	0.027	0.810
Symbolic	-0.185	0.087	-0.338	0.002**
In general	-0.114	0.294	-0.224	0.040*

Source: Study based on own research.

Conclusions

Gendered beliefs and attitudes can shape the forms and impact of political violence, even when the perpetrators are not centrally motivated by retaining male hegemonic control of political power. It turns out that gender can shape the way men and women experience political violence, regardless of whether or not gender appears in the motive. Both women and men experience violence, but women are more likely than men to suffer psychological, symbolic and sexual violence. Threats and intimidation (a form of psychological violence) against people who are running for and/or holding political office, including harassment, create a hostile work environment, which may be the reason why women choose not to engage in political party activities.

Undoubtedly, belonging to a political party increases the scope of experienced violence. It can be assumed that being a politician is associated with sustaining violence, but it is more common against women. Media visibility intensifies psychological, symbolic and sexual violence against women. Physical and economic violence, which is rarely experienced among the surveyed politicians, does not differentiate according to gender, but it has been confirmed that economic violence – here only in the field of theft and vandalism – more often concerns the ruling camp and opposition parties than non-partisan politicians, which in this case may be a derivative of the amount of election materials

and parliamentary offices. In this aspect, there is a need for further in-depth research on limiting access to party financial resources or training.

Limitations of the study and further implications

The research did not take into account politicians' speeches and political demands that may escalate violence. In addition, women from marginalised and minority groups (lesbians, trans women) may experience more violence in politics compared to women from dominant social groups. In this regard, intersectionality may play a role in violence against women in politics.

The conceptualisation of VAWIP as resulting from a patriarchal order in the political sphere in which women with political ambitions experience violence because they violate this order is not devoid of controversy. Bardall (2013), Funk et al. (2019) and Franceschet et al. (2016) argue that the socio-political context should be taken into account, for example, the weakness of the state apparatus in administering justice and the interrelated problems of violence and impunity of perpetrators. The authors believe that VAWIP occurs only in countries with weak political institutions. It should be noted, however, that the authors carried out their research in societies where sexist beliefs prevail and women in politics may be the target of violence as a way to maintain traditional gender norms and discourage their participation. This position is challenged by Krook & Sanín (2016), who claim that this is a structural phenomenon and is not the domain of weak states only. Political violence against women is not unique to one region, it is a global problem with accentuated political, social, economic and cultural differences.

Author Contributions

Conceptualization: Barbara Kijewska

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Formal analysis: Barbara Kijewska

Funding acquisition: Barbara Kijewska

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Przemoc wobec kobiet w polityce – badanie w Polsce

Streszczenie

Wzrost udziału kobiet w życiu politycznym w ostatnich dziesięcioleciach zaowocował badaniami wyjaśniającymi, w jaki sposób obecność (lub nieobecność) kobiet zmienia formę, charakter i treść polityki. Nadal jednak brakuje perspektywy płci, szczególnie w odniesieniu do związku pomiędzy udziałem w życiu politycznym a przemocą. Na całym świecie przemoc wobec kobiet w polityce jest coraz częściej uznawana za istotną barierę utrudniającą kobietom udział w życiu politycznym. Celem badania jest sprawdzenie, czy kobiety aktywne politycznie są bardziej narażone na przemoc (fizyczną, psychologiczną, symboliczną, seksualną, ekonomiczną) niż aktywni politycznie mężczyźni oraz czy przemoc

wobec polityków ma związek z przynależnością do partii politycznej. Badania przeprowadzone wśród polskich polityków (n=88) potwierdzają, że zarówno kobiety, jak i mężczyźni aktywni politycznie doświadczają przemocy. Jednak kobiety częściej padają ofiarą ataków psychologicznych, symbolicznych i seksualnych. Politycy działający pod sztandarem partii są znacznie bardziej narażeni na przemoc niż politycy bezpartyjni. Przemoc fizyczna jest bardzo rzadka, a poziom doświadczania przemocy we wszystkich jej postaciach maleje wraz z wiekiem.

Słowa kluczowe: kobiety, polityka, przemoc, partycypacja

