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A Cross-Time Comparison of Men and Women's Public Opinion on Freedom, Liberty, and Democracy in Poland and the U.S.

Background

Much of the thinking on democracy has been done by men and focuses on two-party systems and free elections. Historically, the very idea of democracy excluded women [Tremblay]. Only in the last thirty years has the topic of women and politics been accepted as a legitimate field of study in the U.S., even though women have been active in mainstream electoral politics for more than thirteen decades [Freeman]. Research and thinking on politics and democracy often ignore the fact that the values of equality and freedom are also central to democracy. Women were involved in freedom movements in both Poland and the U.S. even during periods when they could not vote. Their fights for equality often paralleled each other. It is the unique attitudes of women on issues involving freedom, independence, and democracy that we are most interested in here. We argue that a gender perspective adds to our understanding of democracy and freedom. Data from the World Values Survey (1989-2014) are used to answer questions about gender diversity in public opinion on freedoms involving gender, immigrants, and human rights, as well as freedom of speech, choice, and religion. Public opinion on civil liberties (individual's input to government and the right to attend peaceful demonstrations) and democracy (protections and rights) are also examined. Variation in these areas of public opinion are considered across three dimensions: country (Poland vs. U.S.), gender, and time.

* Both authors have had multiple Fulbright appointments at Jagiellonian University in Krakow, Poland. We thank the Fulbright organization for this opportunity. The conclusions in this paper do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S./Poland Fulbright program.

The U.S. – Polish Comparison

For several reasons, Poland and the U.S. make an interesting comparison in research on freedom, liberty, and democracy. The American Dream, and the independence and freedom associated with it is an essential part of American culture and history. It is not unique for a nation to have a Dream. In fact, some set of hopes and dreams is most likely present in all cultures. For Poland, the idea of

independence looms large in the landscape of Polish Dreams. In a globalized world it is interesting to think about the ways in which Dreams cross borders and how nations are influenced by the Dreams of other nations. The focus on these two countries is interesting for other reasons as well. Poland's 1791 constitution was Europe's first constitution and was achieved through democratic methods. It was a model for later constitutions such as that in the U.S. It was a Polish military engineer –Tadeusz Kosciuszko – who played a critical military role in the U.S. fight for independence in the American Revolution and in his resistance to slavery in the U.S.

Additionally, the U.S. – Polish contrast is interesting given the fact that the American Dream (and associated views of independence and freedoms) provided a specific model for Kosciuszko when he returned to Poland to achieve democratic reforms, as well as when Poland transitioned from communism to democracy in 1989. Interestingly, the Polish constitution of 1952 was one of the first to provide a statement of equal rights for men and women. The U.S. constitution does not include an equal rights amendment. Other historical and political differences include Poland's unique experience with communism, religious and racial/ethnic homogeneity, and its long history as a Catholic country.

On this last issue of the church, Poland's history involves two hundred years of partitions and fifty years of communist domination, during which the Catholic Church provided Poles the only possibility of a minimal civil society. The opposition between state and society during these periods stressed civil rights over women's rights. The influence of the Catholic Church over the lives of Poles only increased after the communist period with the church having influence over all areas of life including media, politics, elections, legislation on issues like abortion and education, as well as ideologies about gender [Eberts; Hanson and Gadowska; Heinen and Portet].

Although the communist period theoretically guaranteed men and women equal rights, this was not the reality. Some of the experiences during this time help explain the presence of women's movements in the U.S. and the lack of them in Poland. In general, they are experiences that might contribute to diverging ideas about freedom and independence between Poles and

Americans and between Polish and American men and women. Women in both countries, however, were actively involved in civil rights, temperance, solidarity and other movements. Interestingly, commentators have noted that the solidarity movement did not include a focus on gender equality. The argument was made that democracy should be established first, then the details (e.g., the rights of women) later. Nevertheless, with Solidarity's win and the new government of 1989, Poles were given the freedom to organize, demonstrate, speak, and publish for the first time in years. In a parallel way, the Civil Rights movement in the U.S. was fought by both men and women of color but the goals of the movement focused mainly on race equity, with minimal attention to gender equity. Our major research questions address the ways in which men and women's public opinion on freedom, rights, democracy, and related concepts overlap and diverge in Poland and the U.S. given their unique histories.

The movement of Poland out of communism and the over-time variation in both the U.S. and Polish political systems' focus on democracy and freedom suggest that it is important to gauge changes in public opinion over time in Poland and the U.S. Democracies, rights, and freedoms are not static but rather change over time with the shifting of power, administrations, leaders, and authority. Thus, this fight for freedoms and their achievement is constantly shifting. We use data from the last quarter century to address our research question about these trends.

Conceptual Frameworks focusing on Gender and on Democracy, Liberty, and Freedom

Our research is informed by the considerable body of scholarship on gender variation in public opinion on issues related to freedom, liberty, and democracy. Trends often indicate rather stable over time differences where women are more likely to vote, vote for different parties, have more egalitarian attitudes, and have differing economic preferences, issue attitudes, and core values than do men [Celis et al.; Abendschon and Steinmetz; Kaufman; CAWP; Zainulbhai; Tyson]. However, these analyses are seldom comparative across countries so we know little about the unique or contrasting approaches to democracy, freedom, and liberty for women in Poland and the U.S. A recent report by Zainulbhai

suggested divergence on gender equity issues between women across countries. For example, she found that women in the U.S. provide more support for gender equality than women in Poland. Thus simple conclusions about women's values and egalitarian attitudes ignore the diverse historical and cultural contexts that women reside in. Just as gender inequality varies by country, so do the causes and consequences of gender inequality and attitudes about democracy, freedom, and liberties. Charles and colleagues' conceptual and empirical work on gender inequity has been instrumental in showing the import of economic, political, and cultural characteristics on gender opportunity systems at the country level ["Cross-National Variation"; "Deciphering Sex Segregation"; Charles and Grusky]. Others have shown that variation in wealth, values, and structures contribute to attitudes about gender and gender inequality. Some have suggested that globalization and the spread of global culture also contributes to gender attitudes, often with the effect of bringing convergence toward a Western model [Dorion and Alwin; Schwartz and Rubel-Lifschitz; Celis et al.].

Our research also utilizes a theoretical perspective that relies on the work of scholars exploring the concepts of democracy and freedom. There is considerable dissensus on the meaning and measurement of freedom, but authors like Graeff have provided specific concepts and measures that help us move forward in this area of research. For example, the concept of freedom includes freedom of speech, of protest, of religion, and of work. There is similar dissensus on the meaning of democracy [Mansbridge; Tremblay]. This dissensus goes beyond issues of democracies that exist hand in hand with structured gender and race inequality. For example, many of America's founders were interested in an alternate form of government involving a 'natural aristocracy' and were suspicious of democracy as being a way to create a good government. Hence the democratic ideal only came about slowly in the U.S. Additionally, democracies world-wide do not guarantee liberties or freedoms for all minority groups (Miller). One of the questions addressed in our research has to do with the views of men and women in Poland and the U.S. on these complex issues of freedom and the related concepts of equity, liberty, and democracy.

Methods

Data

This paper uses the World Values Survey to address our research questions (Inglehart et al.). The World Values Survey is a global survey project that has been conducted by a worldwide network of social scientists since 1981 in nearly 100 countries. The surveys involve representative samples within countries and explore individual values and beliefs, their change over time, and the socio-political impact that they have. Data for this research come from waves 2 through 6 of the aggregated World Values Survey.¹ Wave 2 was collected in 1989-1993, and the following waves were collected in 1994-1998 (III), 1999-2004 (IV), 2005-2009 (V), and 2010-2014 (VI). The aggregated data file was developed by WVS Association Vice-President Professor Christian Welzel. Samples are representative of all people aged 18 and older who are residing in private households in each country, regardless of their nationality, citizenship or language.

Measures

Given our research questions and the literature on the concepts of freedom, democracy, and liberty, we utilize measures of freedom that explore public opinion on rights (gender, race/ethnicity, and human). We also include measures of public opinion toward civil liberties and democracy. Full details on each measure are provided below. In this research, gender and country are the independent variables and public opinions on freedom, democracy, and liberty are the dependent variables. We limit our analysis to two countries: Poland and the U.S. All analyses are performed so that the impact of gender on the attitudes can be assessed in addition to the influence of country.

Freedom

Two aspects of freedom were measured. The first involves gender rights, immigrant rights, and human rights. Two survey items measure *gender rights*. One asks: "When jobs are scarce men should have more right to a job than women." Response options were: agree (coded 1), disagree (2) and neither (3). For response consistency we assigned "neither" to missing values and recoded agree to 0 and disagree to 1. A second measure

¹ Poland was not included in Wave 4.

related to gender states: “Men make better political leaders than do women” with responses ranging from agree strongly (1) to disagree strongly (4). The measure of rights associated with *immigrant rights* is: “When jobs are scarce, employers should give priority to (Polish/American) people.” For response consistency we coded “neither” as missing and assigned a code of 0 to “agree” and 1 to “disagree.” A final measure of rights measures *human rights* with the question: “How much respect is there for individual human rights nowadays in this country? Do you feel there is: A great deal of respect for individual human rights (1); Fairly much respect (2); Not much respect at all (3); No respect at all (4).”

A second aspect of freedom examined here involves freedom of speech, choice and control, and religion. *Freedom of speech* is measured with a question that asks: “If you had to choose, which one of the things on this card would you say is most important? Maintaining order in the nation, giving people more say in important government decisions, fighting rising prices, or protecting freedom of speech.” If respondents picked freedom of speech, the answer was coded 1. All other choices were coded 0.

Freedom of choice and control is measured with responses to the following question: “Some people feel they have completely free choice and control over their lives, while other people feel that what they do has no real effect on what happens to them. Please use the scale where 1 means ‘no choice at all’ and 10 means ‘a great deal of choice’ to indicate how much freedom of choice and control you feel you have over the way your life turns out.”

Freedom of religion is measured with a survey item that asks the respondent to respond on a scale from strongly agree (1) to strongly disagree (4) with the statement: “Please tell us if you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with the following statement: The only acceptable religion is my religion.”

Civil Liberties

Civil Liberties is a second major concept examined here. We examine two measures of these liberties. The first involves opinions on whether people should have *more to say* on how things are done in the country. The question for this measure reads: “People sometimes talk about what the aims of this country should be for the next ten years. On this card are listed some of the

goals which different people would give top priority. Would you please say which one of these you, yourself, consider the most important?.” Respondents had the choice between “a high level of economic growth, making sure this country has strong defense forces, seeing that people have more say about how things are done at their jobs and in their communities, and trying to make our cities and countryside more beautiful.” The response “seeing that people have more say about how things are done at their jobs and in their communities” was coded 1 and all other responses were coded 0.

A second measure of civil liberties involves whether the respondent *attended a peaceful demonstration*. The question reads: “Now I’d like you to look at this card. I’m going to read out some forms of political action that people can take, and I’d like you to tell me, for each one, whether you have done any of these things, whether you might do it, or would never under any circumstances do it: Attending peaceful demonstrations.” Responses were coded 1 if the respondent answered “have done” and 0 otherwise.

Democracy

Two measures were used to operationalize the third concept examined here – democracy. Respondents were asked: “Many things are desirable, but not all of them are essential characteristics of democracy. Please tell me for each of the following things how essential you think it is as a characteristic of democracy. Use this scale where 1 means “not at all an essential characteristic of democracy” and 10 means “it definitely is an essential characteristic of democracy.” We chose two statements from this list of statements on characteristics of democracy: “*Civil rights protect people from state oppression*” and “*Women have the same rights as men.*”

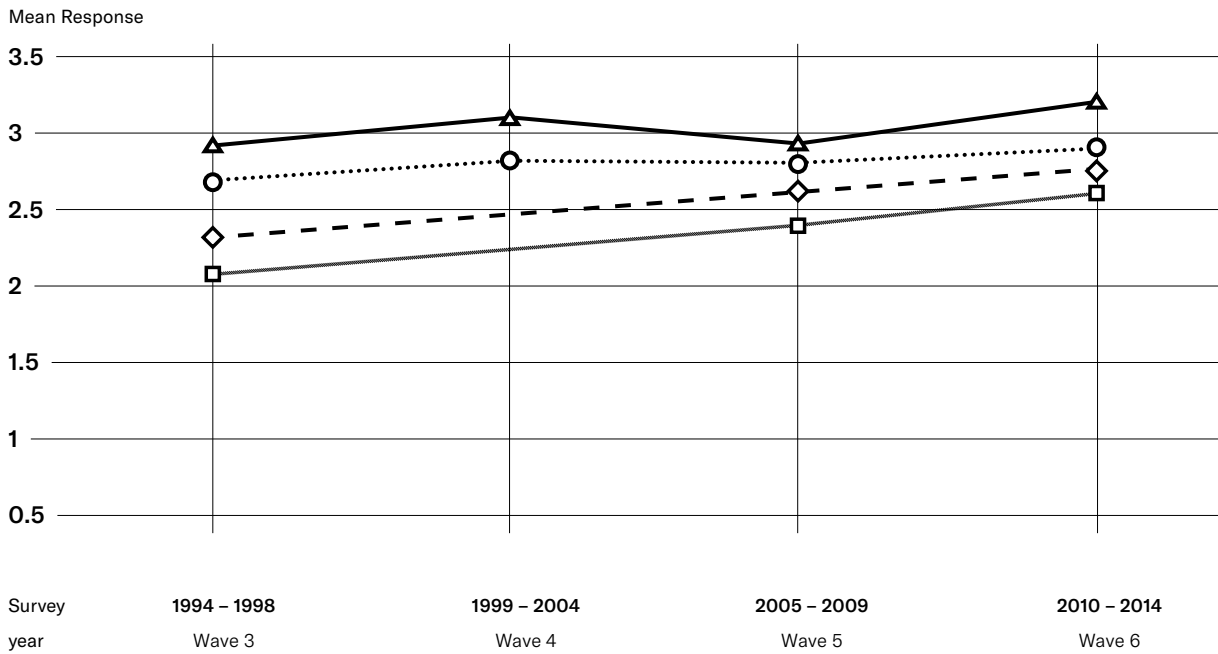
Analyses

Line charts for men and women in Poland and the U.S. are used to display changes over time in several of the freedom, liberty, and democracy measures identified above. Since wave 1 data are not available for these countries we focus on waves 2 through 6 for the six indicators that were measured across time for both countries. Additionally, we examine differences in means across gender within countries and across countries within gender on the freedom, liberty, and democracy items measured in the most recent wave (6).

Findings

Chart 1.

Mean Response of Polish and American Respondents by Gender on Men as Political Leaders (World Values Study)

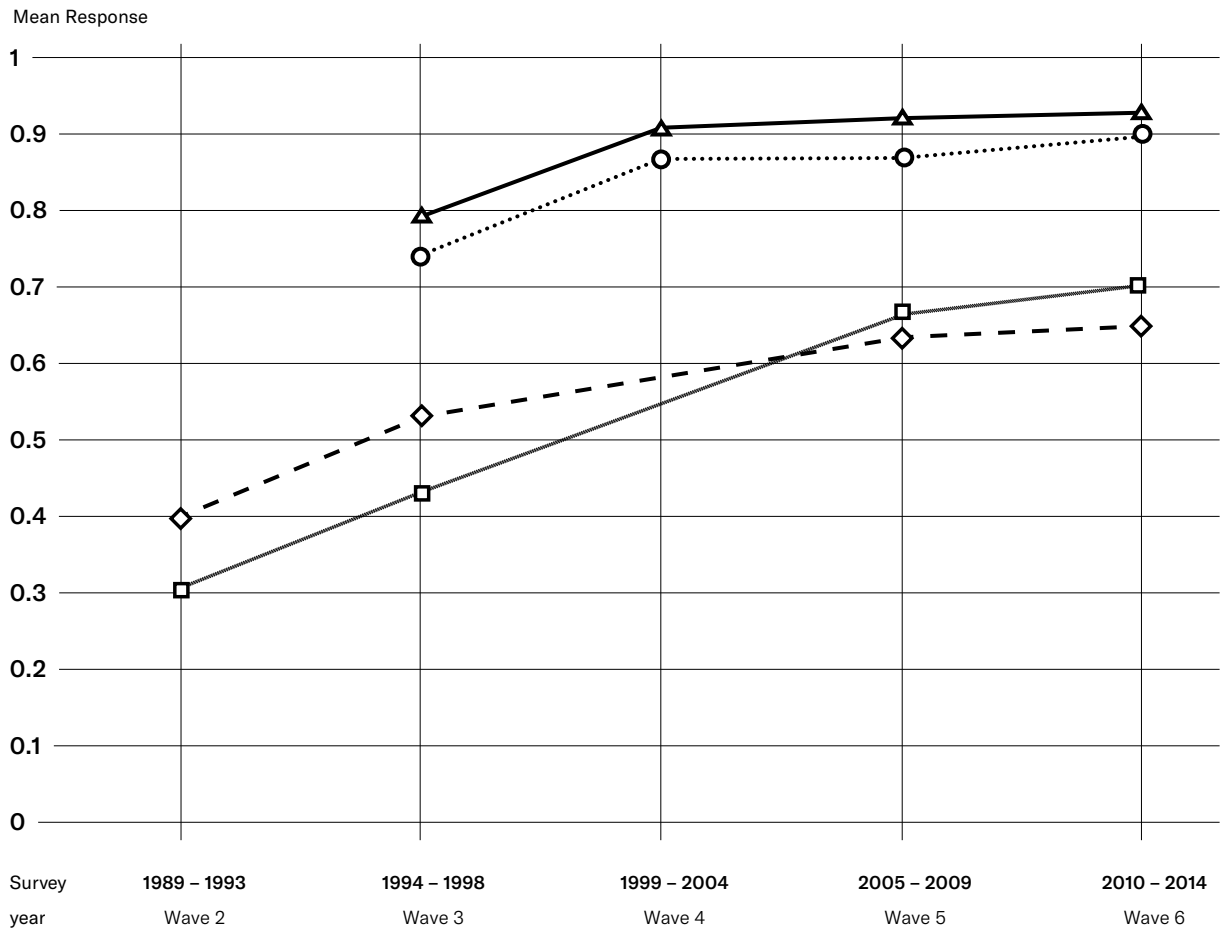


“Man Make Better Political Leaders than do Women.”

- 1 = Agree Strongly;
- 2 = Agree;
- 3 = Disagree;
- 4 = Disagree Strongly

- ⋯○⋯⋯ US Men
- Polish Men
- △— US Women
- ◇- Polish Women

Chart 2.
 Mean Response of Polish and American Respondents by
 Gender on Jobs and Men (World Values Study)



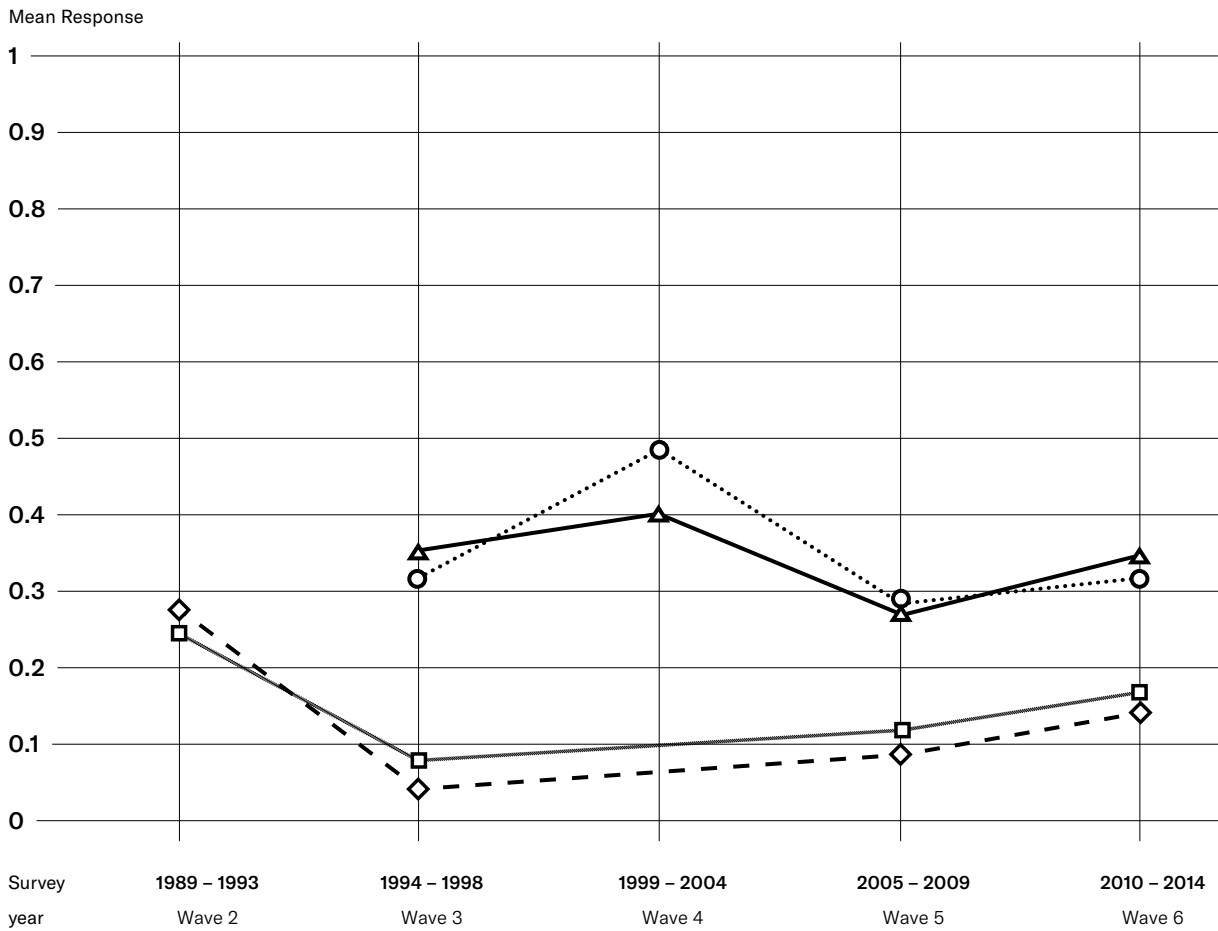
“When Jobs are Scarce Men Should have More Right to a Job than Women.”

0 = Disagree
 1 = Agree

- ⋯○⋯⋯ US Men
- Polish Men
- △— US Women
- ◇- Polish Women

Chart 3.

Mean Response of Polish and American Respondents
by Gender on Jobs and Immigrants (World Values Study)

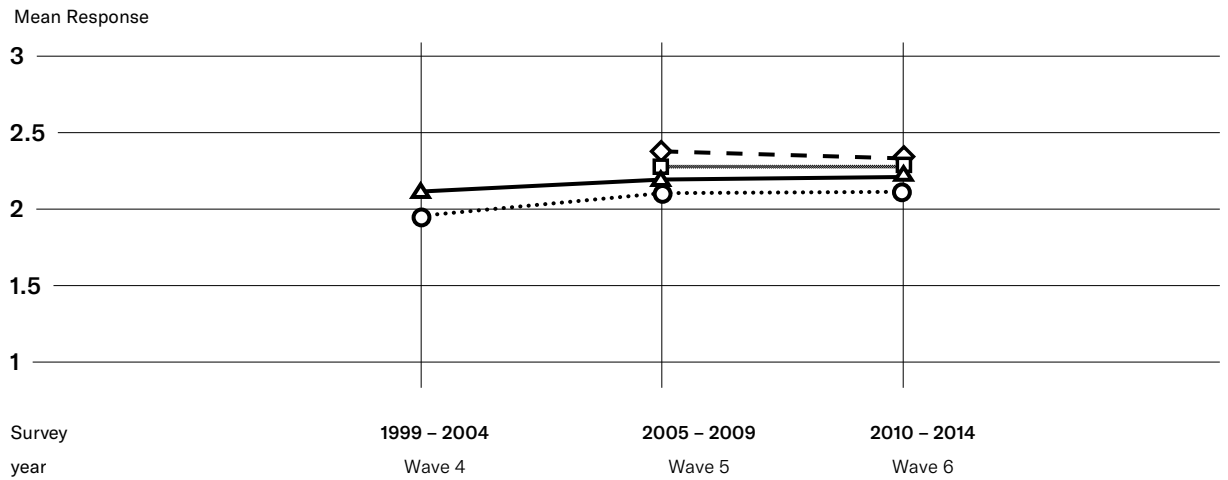


“When jobs are scarce, employers should give priority to (Americans/Poles) rather than immigrants”

0 = Disagree
1 = Agree



Chart 4.
 Mean Response of Polish and American Respondents
 by Gender on Respect for Human Rights (World Values Survey)



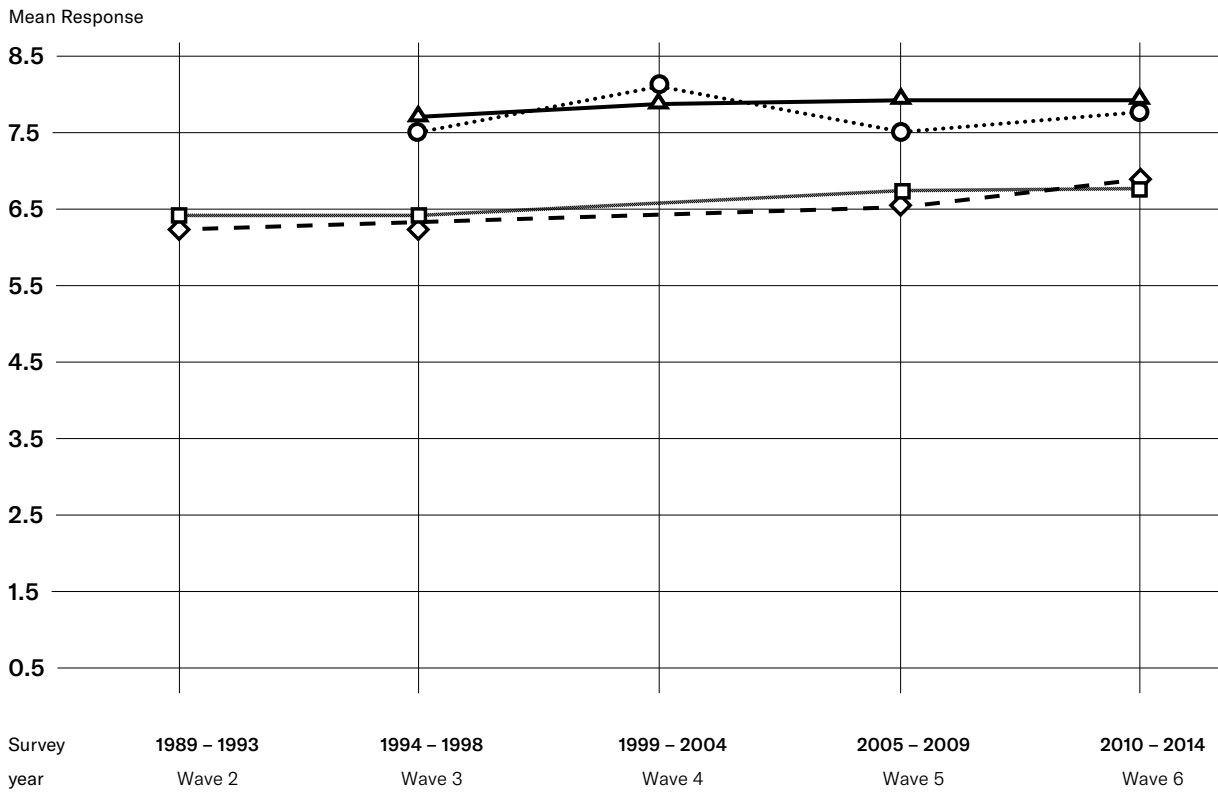
“How much respect is there for individual human rights in this country?”

- 1 = There is a lot of respect;
- 2 = There is some respect;
- 3 = There is not much respect;
- 4 = There is no respect at all

- ...○... US Men
- Polish Men
- △— US Women
- ◇- Polish Women

Chart 5.

Mean Response of Polish and American Respondents
by Gender on Choice and Freedom (World Values Survey)

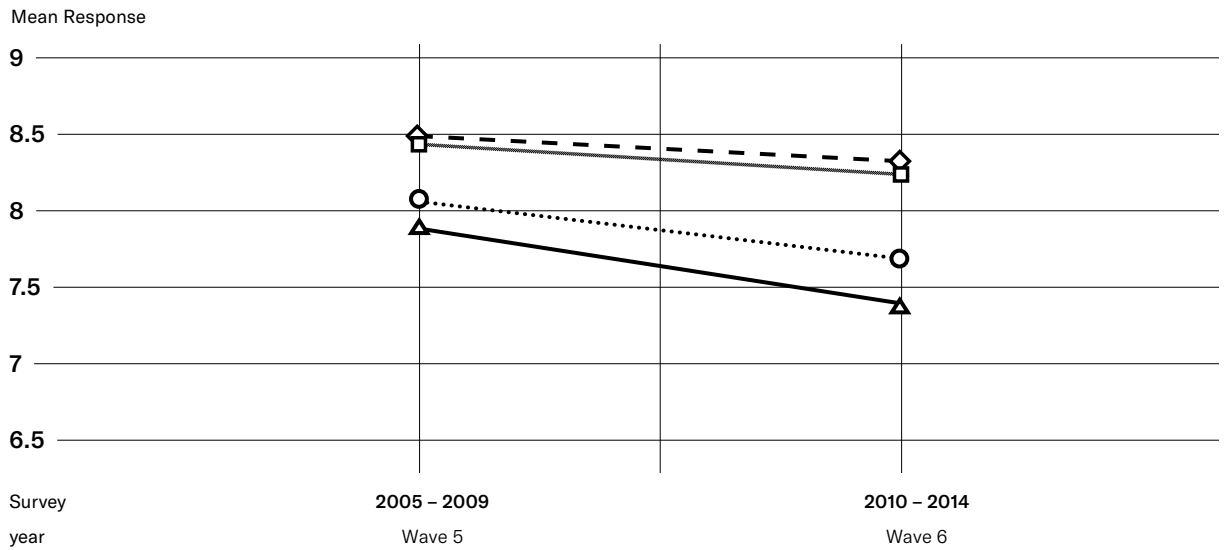


“How Much Freedom of Choice and Control do you feel you have over the way your life turns out?”

1 = None at all;
10 = A great deal

- US Men
- Polish Men
- △— US Women
- ◇- Polish Women

Chart 6.
Mean Response of Polish and American Respondents
by Gender on Democracy Question (World Values Survey)



“Civil Rights Protect People’s Liberty Against Oppression.”

1 = Not an essential characteristic of Democracy;
10 = An essential characteristic of Democracy

- US Men
- Polish Men
- △— US Women
- ◇- Polish Women

T-tests are used to test for significance in the mean differences. Finally, we use multivariate regression models which include measures of respondent's age and education to examine the stability of the gender and country effects on public opinion.

Comparisons over time

Charts 1 through 6 show changes over time by gender in Poland and the U.S. on attitudes toward a number of measures of freedom, liberty, and democracy. Chart 1 shows responses to a statement about men making better political leaders. American women are the most likely to disagree, and it is American men, not Polish women, who have attitudes most like those of American women. Polish men are the least likely to disagree with this statement. However, the trend in Chart 1 shows an overall increase in disagreement with the statement about men and women among all groups.

Trends in Chart 2 show responses to the question about men having more right to jobs than women do when jobs are scarce. As in the first chart, American women are the most likely to disagree with this statement, with American men just slightly lower. Note how much lower Poles score in Chart 2. The results show a complex trend for Poles, with large changes in attitudes after the transition from communism. However, in waves 5 and 6 it was Polish men, not Polish women, who were more likely to disagree with the statement about men having more rights to jobs.

Chart 3 displays figures for attitudes about immigrants having priority on jobs when jobs are scarce. Again, American men and women are more likely than their Polish counterparts to disagree with this statement throughout the entire timeline, but the pattern fluctuates, with U.S. women being more likely to disagree in some years and men in other years. The trends for Poles show women slightly more likely to disagree in wave 2, men slightly more likely to disagree in waves 3 and 5, and the two groups virtually identical in wave 6.

Trends in Chart 4 show responses to the question "How much respect is there for individual human rights in this country?" The trends here are somewhat different from the trends in other graphs. Polish men and women are more likely than American men and women to claim that there is no respect for individual human rights in their country in wave 5 (especially Polish women). By the 6th wave the genders and

countries have converged due to a decline in the score on human rights for Poles and an increase in the score for Americans.

Chart 5 shows responses to the question "How much freedom of choice and control do you feel you have over the way your life turns out?" U.S. men and women report higher scores on this question than Polish men and women do, with U.S. men somewhat less likely than U.S. women to view freedom of choice as plentiful in all but the fourth wave. Polish men report slightly more freedom of choice in the 2nd and 3rd waves but by wave 6 Polish men and women are virtually in agreement.

Finally, Chart 6 shows responses to the question about the characteristics of democracy: "Civil rights protect people's liberty against oppression." For the first time in these cross-time analyses of attitudes about freedom, liberty, and democracy, Poles, both men and women, score higher than Americans, i.e., they are *more* likely than their American counterparts to say that the protection of civil rights is an essential characteristic of a democracy. Polish men and women are nearly identical in their responses to this question in both waves 5 and 6 and show only slight declines over this time period. U.S. men and women, on the other hand, are less likely than Poles to consider the protection of civil rights as critical in a democracy, with U.S. women scoring the lowest in both waves 5 and 6. For Americans of both genders, the trend lines markedly decline over time, indicating less emphasis on the importance of civil rights protections in a democracy.

Comparisons of means on attitudes in wave 6

Figures in Table 1 show means on the attitudes about freedom, liberty, and democracy measured in the most recently available WVS data (wave 6, 2010-2014). Comparisons are made by gender within country and by country within gender. The first four columns show comparisons on attitudes by gender in Poland and in the U.S. With just one exception, the results show virtually no gender differences in Poland, the exception being that Polish women are significantly more likely than Polish men to agree with the statement that people should have more to say on how things are done in the country. U.S. respondents score lower on this attitude, and it is men, not women, who are in more agreement. There are four other significant

gender differences in attitudes in the U.S. These differences all involve measures of freedom – gender, speech, choice and control, and religion. On all but one of these items it is U.S. women who are more likely to support the freedom. U.S. men are more likely than U.S. women to support freedom of speech.

The next four columns in Table 1 show comparisons by country separately by gender. For both men and women significant country differences exist on all but one item (respect for human rights). On all but the two democracy items, both U.S. men and women score higher on their support of freedoms and liberties. There is a reverse pattern on the democracy items, with both Polish men and women showing significantly more support. The differences are largest on the aspect of democracy involving the protection of civil rights, with Poles being much more likely than Americans (both men and women) to support this aspect of democracy.

Multivariate Analyses

Although our main focus in this paper is on bivariate differences in attitudes toward freedom, liberty and democracy, other factors undoubtedly shape these attitudes as well. To address this possibility, we fit a series of ordinary least squares regression models for each of the ten dependent variables in Table 1. In each regression model we added respondents' educational attainment and age as predictors in order to determine what effect, if any, these demographic variables have on the original bivariate associations. A loss of significance is an indication that education and/or age are more important factors than nation and/or gender in shaping attitudes, while a gain of significance suggests that either or both of the control variables suppressed the original bivariate association. We summarize results from these models here.

The findings on gender and democracy related items in Table 1 are quite stable. Of the forty regression model fits – ten each within Poland and the U.S. separately by gender and ten each among men and women separately by country – in only ten models do changes from the bivariate results occur. Among Poles the only change was that the originally nonsignificant association between gender and attitudes toward freedom of religion became significant when education and age were controlled, with Polish men significantly

more likely than Polish women to show tolerance on religious freedom. Among Americans four changes to the bivariate results occurred: the originally significant differences between men and women on the degree of religious freedom and of the importance of allowing people more say on how things are done in their country both became nonsignificant in the multivariate models; conversely, the originally nonsignificant associations between gender and the degree of respect for human rights and the role of democracy in protecting civil rights became significant, with women more likely than men to see less respect for human rights, but more likely to argue that democracy is key to protecting civil rights.

Analogously, among women the originally nonsignificant relationship between country and attitudes toward respect for human rights became significant, with U.S. women more likely than Polish women to view respect for human rights as lacking in their countries. The originally significant relationship between country and attendance at peaceful demonstrations became nonsignificant. Finally, among men, the originally nonsignificant association between country and views of respect for human rights became significant, with Poles more likely than Americans to consider respect for human rights to be lacking in their country, while the originally significant relationships between country and freedom of religion and of attendance at a peaceful demonstration became nonsignificant. Below, we discuss the implications of our findings.

Summary

Conclusions

This paper used the lens of gender to undertake a comparative analysis of Poland and the U.S. on public opinion regarding freedom, liberty, and democracy. All analyses of World Value survey data focus on gender differences in these areas of public opinion. Comparisons between Polish men and women, between U.S. men and women, and between men and women in Poland and the U.S. were of interest. The motivation for the paper derives from the confluence in 2019 of the 100th anniversary of the establishment of Polish-U.S. diplomatic relations and the 30th anniversary of Poland's freedom from communist rule.

Table 1. Means on Freedom, Liberty, and Democracy Attitudes for Men and Women in Poland and the U.S. (World Values Survey, 2010–2014)

		Poland		U.S.		Women		Men	
		Man	Women	Man	Women	Poland	U.S.	Poland	U.S.
Freedom	1) Rights								
	Gender: mens rights jobs	.70	.66	.90*	.94*	.66*	.94*	.70*	.90*
	Immigrants: jobs priority immigrants	-.15	-.15	.30	.33	.15*	.33*	.15*	.30*
	Human: respect for human rights	2.28	2.28	2.25	2.31	2.28	2.31	2.28	2.25
	2) Freedom of:								
	Speech	.05	.06	.20*	.14*	.06*	.14*	.05*	.20*
	Choice + Control	6.65	6.68	7.60*	7.86*	6.68*	7.86*	6.65*	7.60*
	Religion	2.68	2.58	3.04*	3.13*	2.58*	3.13*	2.68*	3.04*
Civil Liberties	People should have more to say on how things are done in the country	-.32*	-.40*	.16*	.13*	.40*	.13*	-.32*	.16*
	Attended peaceful demonstration	.09	.07	.15	.13	.07*	.13*	.09*	.15*
Democracy	Democracy, civil rights protect	8.42	8.41	7.56	7.37	8.41*	7.37*	8.42*	7.56*
	Democracy: women same rights man	8.93	8.77	8.19	8.25	8.79*	8.25*	8.93*	8.19*

*t-test significant at 0,05

Both men and women were involved in these diplomatic relations and fights for freedom, hence a gender perspective is critical to an analysis of democracy, liberty, and freedom. Bivariate results show that across countries and gender, U.S. women tend to be the most supportive of the freedoms and rights measured here. It is often Polish women who are the least supportive and U.S. men who are closest in support to the U.S. women. There is one exception, with U.S. men, not women, being most supportive of freedom of speech. On the issue of civil liberties and freedoms, both U.S. men and women are more supportive than Polish men and women. When public opinion on democracy is examined, both Polish men and women show more support than their U.S. counterparts.

It is interesting to note that there are virtually no differences between the public opinion of Polish men and women on these measures of freedom, democracy, and liberty. The one exception is that Polish women are more likely than Polish men to say that “people should have more to say on how things are done in

the country.” On the other hand, U.S. men and women show significant differences in their opinions on half of the survey items. In both countries, men and women are in agreement on issues involving democracy.

When the additional predictor variables of age and education are added to the models the findings remain largely unchanged. However, a number of significant effects appear and a few significant effects become non-significant. The largest number of changes in the multivariate models appear in the gender comparisons for U.S. respondents. When these controls are considered, men and women agree on religious freedom and people having more to say but women score higher on respect for human rights and men score higher on democracy and the protection of civil rights.

Charts showing the evolution of public opinion across time for men and women in the U.S. and Poland indicate that Polish men and women trend very similarly across time, with the exception of Polish men’s gains on women’s right to jobs and Polish men’s persistent ranking below Polish women (across time) on

women making good political leaders. On some items (e.g., rights of women to jobs) there was considerable increase in support of women's rights in Poland in the post-communist period – especially for men. Increases were smaller for U.S. men and women. On other items (e.g., immigrants' rights) both Polish men and women's public opinion took a steep dive in this period, with a slight recovery in the 2000s. In most areas of public opinion on the democracy, freedom, and liberty items there was an increase in support over time. However, there was a lessening of support for the democracy question asking about civil rights protecting people's liberty – especially in the U.S. Interestingly, there was little change in the post-communist period in Polish men's and women's public opinion on how much freedom of choice and control they had over their lives.

Discussion

Findings from this research support the notion that studies of freedom and democracy are incomplete without a consideration of gender. Democracy is not just about the right to vote and the multi-party system, but it includes the essential aspect of equality [Tremblay]. The diversity of thinking on democracy is revealed in our research on gender and democracy. Women do not necessarily take the approach of men to democracy and freedom (as shown here in the U.S. data). Additionally, women (and men) across countries do not necessarily share ideas on democracy and freedom (as shown here in the contrasts between Polish and U.S. women and men).

An interesting set of findings in the paper involves the greater support of gender rights (by both men and women) in the U.S. relative to Poland, the equal support for human rights (by both men and women) in Poland and the U.S., and the greater emphasis on some aspects of civil rights (by both men and women) in Poland than in the U.S. These findings are consistent with the historical opposition between state and society in Poland which stressed civil rights over women's rights (Eberts; Hanson and Gadowska; Heinen and Portet).

Complexity in our understanding of gender and democracy is also revealed in the equal support of women's rights among Polish men and women and the greater support expressed by both U.S. men and women (relative to Polish men and women). That

is, we cannot make assumptions about women being more supportive of women's rights than men. As feminist scholarship suggests, women's support of gender rights may not be observed in places where a traditional dominant group has the potential to influence women's unique voices (Mansbridge).

It is also important to note that time adds complexity to our findings, with the past decades showing increased support for some aspects of democracy, freedoms, and liberties in Poland and the U.S. but decreased support for others. These fluctuations are sometimes experienced similarly by men and women and sometimes differently. Finally, the inclusion of other important predictors does change some of the bivariate results (although most remain stable). This complexity involving the issue of causality should be further evaluated in future research.

It is hoped that the findings from this paper will add further insight into democracies. Additional research is needed on the process whereby distinct histories lead to distinct democracies and views of democracy held by women and men. It is important that researchers use cross-time data since democracies are not stagnant but rather constantly in flux with social, economic, and political changes.

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ABSTRACT

Sandra L. Hanson, Steven A. Tuch
A Cross-Time Comparison of Men and Women's Public Opinion on Freedom, Liberty, and Democracy in Poland and the U.S.

In 2019 Poland will celebrate the centennial anniversary of the establishment of Polish-U.S. diplomatic relations and the 30th anniversary of freedom from communist rule, making this an opportune time to compare Polish and American views of freedom, liberty, and democracy. Using data from the World Values Survey, waves 2 through 6 (1989-2014), this paper examines diversity in public opinion on a range of freedom issues, including democracy, women's rights, immigrants' rights, civil liberties, freedom of speech and of religion, and human rights, with a particular focus on gender diversity. Findings show considerable variation between U.S. men and women – but not Polish men and women – on freedom-related attitudes and beliefs. Cross-country comparisons show that, with some exceptions, U.S. men and women tend to express more liberal ideas, though Poles' views are becoming more progressive over time. We conclude that a gender perspective is essential to a full understanding of comparative attitudes toward democracy, liberty, and freedom.

Keywords: freedom, democracy, public opinion, gender, Poland, U.S.