

SOCIOCULTURAL ASPECTS OF POLITICAL ACTIVISM: A NEW MODEL PROPOSAL

Keywords:

political activism; value orientations; socio-cultural model; political party members..

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Summary

This paper analyses the correlation between political activism, political participation, and certain value orientations, as crucial parts of modern governance in society today. A sample of the survey were members of the ruling and opposition parties, who were structured by age, place of residence, political affiliation, and role in local parliaments in six cities in Serbia. Results show a mixture of pre-modern (traditional), modern, and postmodern values, with traditional values still being viable, which could be one of the factors that significantly reduces the process of social transition. Socio-demographic variables and value orientations (autocratic-democratic, traditional-modern), along with the aspects of political culture, determine political behaviour to a large extent. The model of political activism, on which the study is based, is the model of socio-economic status. The results of the research suggest that a new, enhanced model should be proposed, entitled socio-cultural model of political activism.

INTRODUCTION

During the process of an insufficiently well-managed transition, from an economically stable and respectable country, Serbia has become a country of relatively low national income and low gross national product, technological backwardness, a huge rate of unemployment, unresolved social relations and thriving corruption. Even though the World Bank now classifies Serbia as a middle-income country and its economy is transitioning from being dominated by the state sector to a market-driven model, the country's internal problems with modest natural resources and a low population density are still manifest. Burdened with the previous wars in the region, the number of political problems related to the territory, ownership structure, and restitution, all made it even more difficult to overcome the economic problems, in which the service sector accounts for more than half of the country's gross domestic product. A high percentage of population are poor or on the verge of poverty. The deconstruction of the socialist system is a still present, long lasting process and is reflected in all spheres of life, changing the forms of stratification and inducing new criteria of differentiation in society. In contrast to the socialist system in which the social status was largely determined by the workplace, alterations in the new social system have contributed to changes in factors that establish the structure of society. The specific problems are related to the slow and non-transparent administration, underdevelopment of procedural arbitration, limited infrastructure, low investments in education and science, increased urbanisation, cherished culture of poverty and many others (Nešić et al., 2019).

The role of political parties in the country has increased significantly during the

described transition process. Research in developed countries has shown that political parties can influence citizens' activism and behaviour (Sevd & Whiteley, 2004). Following up Theorell's (2006) distinction of three types of political participation, which differ substantially from one another to influence attempts, direct decision-making and political debate, the research task of this manuscript is to determine what exactly political participation of party members in Serbia is. Numerous authors have researched the issue of members of political parties, the way they approach parties and their party role (Kosirara-Pedersen et al., 2017), as well as the differences between political parties and interest organisations in a changing environment imposed by new rules of political behaviour (Fraussen & Halpin, 2016). According to the results of the analysis done by Heidar and Wauters (2019), members of political parties differ in relation to the observed population. According to their findings, there is a higher probability that party members are older, male and with a higher socio-economic status. The importance of such research in listed circumstances lies in the scientific understanding of the factors that contribute to faster integration into European trends and, consequently, to the rapid development of the country.

1. ACTIVISM AND/OR PARTICIPATION?

Numerous research states that political activism and political participation include various forms of activities. These activities involve not only members of political parties and associations, but also the locally organised communities (Nešić et al., 2019).

Political activism implies conscious, responsible self-initiated activities related to issues considered important for society.

Activism can contribute to the preservation of the current social division (Parry et al., 1992), or exist as a form of civic loyalty to the political system, or it can be directed to the criticism and denial of certain political views.

Political scientist Pippa Norris states that three main components define political activism. These are political information, political participation and political trust (Norris, 2000). According to political scientist van Deth, political activism is the foundation on which democracy is established and structured (van Deth, 2014).

Political participation represents civic (social and civil) engagement that emphasises the state and government institutions and their position as the most important (often one can say that voting is the base of political participation in modern states). In the 1940's and 50's political participation was almost exclusively considered as voting and participating in elections. Since then, the focus has shifted and extended, including first domains of conventional, and then also domains of unconventional participation (Verba et al., 1978; Axford et al., 1997). As pointed out by Riley and associates, political engagement has traditionally been viewed as a set of rights and duties which include formally organised civil and political activities, because political participation has often been defined using terms such as political engagement or the involving of the public in decision-making (Riley et al., 2010). At the same time, the endless expansion of the stated modes of political participation in modern democracies does not result in an endless conceptual expansion.

In this study, political participation is perceived as a narrow phenomenon, that relates to voluntarily taking part in already designed and organised activities.

A unique view of political activism was expressed by Verba, Brady and Schlozman

(Verba et al., 1995), who considered voting and activism as two manifestations of a single phenomenon which tends to mutually reinforce one another (Van Deth, 2001). Political activism refers to the activism of citizens who have the intention and feel the need to influence state structures and bodies, and contribute to collectively binding decisions regarding the distribution of public wealth through voting or other forms of activism (Milbrath & Goel, 1977; Verba et al. 1978). Political participation implies all legal citizen activities which are more or less directly focused on the choice of actions to gain power. Diemer (2012) sees political participation as an engagement in the political system using traditional mechanisms such as voting in elections or joining political organisations. Considering participation only through the prism of elections is insufficient for understanding political participation in any structured society. Thus, political participation needs to be considered on a wider scale – through protest movements, or current, new social movements (Van Deth, 1997; Fox, 2014).

These definitions are highlighting the formal nature of both political activism and political participation. In other words, they clearly set a reference framework of a repertoire of political practice within the conventional political norms, unlike other theories in which participation includes activities of influence on political authority (Huntington & Nelson, 1976). Depending on the type of participation and argumentation and depending on whether participation represents the operation within the system or is imposed from outside, it can be perceived in different ways: participation as a policy, participation as a strategy, participation as communication, participation as conflict management, and participation as therapy (Wengert, 1976).

By observing previous research on measuring political participation and political activism the authors could not bypass the famous research by Whiteley, conducted on a sample of 36 countries, which showed that membership in political parties has a significant decline in most countries, pointing out that membership represents a dynamic phenomenon, and that the largest number of party members are in Israel, Norway, Bulgaria and Sweden, and the lowest in Ireland and Portugal. An extensive exploration, called the International Social Survey Programme, showed that the decline in the number of party members is the consequence of excessive state interference and, very often, a close relationship between the parties and the state, which has a negative impact on activism (Whiteley, 2011). Very interesting indicators of studies of young people's political activism have shown that young people are more often engaged through forms of participation that are more civil and social than political. Exploring youth activism in Italy using qualitative interviews showed that such activism could be interpreted as a lifestyle, with a dose of clear political connotation (Genova, 2018).

2. CORRELATION BETWEEN POLITICAL ACTIVISM AND VALUE PREFERENCES

In addition to other spheres of life, values and value orientations also shape the political sphere. Early research in politics has mostly considered the individual differences in preferences, attitudes and motives of voters and political leaders. The most significant studies on the subject of individual values in political behaviour were related to conservatism (McClosky, 1958), dogmatism and power (Rokeach, 1960). According to Rokeach, the concept of value as a disposition consists of two elements: focus on the achievement of

goals that are desirable and worthy of a human being, and that it is a disposition which is one of the core components of a human personality which drives one permanently and powerfully to perform specific activities. Numerous studies of authoritarianism in Serbia point to the existence of high levels of authoritarianism among citizens, a lack of connection between authoritarian syndrome and level of education, high authoritarianism in a politically passive as well as active population, with moderately engaged people being the least authoritarian. These results differ significantly from those obtained in research of authoritarianism in developed countries where there is a linear negative correlation between authoritarianism and the intensity of political activism. Representatives of sociological interpretation of authoritarianism (Lipset, 1959; Gabennesch, 1972) identified the variables that expressed dynamic, though not logical, views in relation to prejudices contributing to authoritarianism. An individual who displays democratic values is politically tolerant, he believes in political freedom, he is distrustful towards political authorities, ready to support democratic institutions and processes, tolerant and involved (Gibson, 1996). In an attempt to explain the understanding of relationship between ideology and authoritarianism, Rokeach (1960) believe that there are people with authoritarian characteristics similar to those which determine authoritarianism. Rokeach similarly believes that authoritarianism is characterised by the tendency towards dogmatic thinking.

Altemayer (1996) explains right wing authoritarianism as submissiveness to perceived authorities, especially those who have already come to legal power, which can be identified in any political system. It is essential for the development of democratic val-

ues in transitional countries, informing and training citizens about democracy and creating value frameworks that contribute to the adoption of European patterns of social culture and European identity. One of the most important characteristics of transition from socialism to a market economy refers to the change from a collectivist to an individualist culture (Triandis & Gelfand, 1998). Starting from the functionalist idea of values as primary sources of legitimisation of the system, or standards adopted by members of a society, Inglehart talks about a value change which emerges in Western societies as the result of entering into the post-industrial phase of development where people increasingly prefer post-materialist values over the traditional, materialistic values. Post-materialist values refer to a whole range of issues that arise as a result of meeting the basic needs and emergence of free political room for new issues, such as the quality of living, gender equality, anti-nuclear initiatives, disarmament, solidarity, health insurance, education and environmental issues. Classical materialistic values include economic and political stability, as well as individual physical safety (Inglehart, 1995).

Traditional values include the acceptance of customs and patterns imposed by the specific traditional culture. Normative patterns also include value orientations such as nationalism, ethnocentrism, as well as conformist values. Societies dominated by modern values have passed through the process of modernisation. Modernisation explains all social phenomena which are based on industrialisation, development of science and technology, a modern state, urbanisation and secularisation. As opposed to traditional values, values of a modern society include the individualism of people who perceive themselves as rational beings, opting for a lifestyle liberated from

tradition and customs, and material sources of power.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The goal of studying the participation of members of political parties in the Serbia is to consider the ways in which members of political parties take part in political life, as well as the relation between specific values and political activism. As the members of political parties are the bearers of political activities, and political activism is the basis of political behaviour, studying their attitudes should contribute to understand political behaviour.

Basic questions answered in this study are the following: what is the extent to which members of political parties display political activism and what is the extent to which their behaviour reflects a mere participation in the already defined political activities? Is the active political behaviour based on democratic and modern values and what is the relationship between activism and values in political behaviour? Is political activism really associated with current cultural conditions and factors or do they only indirectly influence the political behaviour in Serbia? What is the nature of the political participation of party members who have already opted for a political party? To what extent is this an instrumental approach? To what extent are they opting for political activities in conditions of long-term political instability in Serbia? How does activism relate to the dominant system of values?

Based on the subject research and stated research questions, the following research hypotheses were also defined:

H 1 - There are differences in attitudes about political activism between party members in relation to demographic characteristics.

H 2 - There are differences in opinion on political activism between party members in relation to dominant traditional /modern values or autocratic/democratic values.

H 3 - Based on the research results, it is possible to define socio-cultural predictors of political activism between party members.

RESEARCH SAMPLE

Research was conducted during the winter of 2018. and the research sample consisted of 406 members of political parties from six towns in Serbia. When it comes to the age of respondents, the largest category consisted of respondents 25-34 years in age (34%). Other age spans were as follows: 35-44 (23.4%), 45-54 (18.7%), 55-64 (11.1%), 15-24 (7.4%), 65+ (5.4%). The highest percentage of respondents in the research hold a faculty degree (49.3%), followed by those holding a secondary education degree (34.2%), high school (12.3%), trade education (2.2%), primary school (1, 7%), and those without having completed primary school (0.2%). Of the total sample, 68.5% of the respondents are employed, 20.9% are unemployed, and 8.9% are pensioners, while 1.7% have a dependent person status.

RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

The study was conducted using a questionnaire that measures attitudes towards political activism in the form of a Likert-type scale of attitudes with five levels of agreement consisting of 19 statements. The study also included value-measuring scales for investigating modern-traditional values (with ten statements) and autocratic-democratic values (with eight statements), as well as questions relating to the attachment to narrower or broader territorial entities, the attitude

towards religion and, of course, questions about the respondents' general demographic characteristics. Psychometric characteristics of the scales have shown that the reliability of instruments used in this study is satisfactory, given that Cronbach's alpha for each scale exceeds or is approximate to the ideal coefficient of 0.70. The internal consistency for the scale of traditional-modern values is extremely low and fails to exceed 0.70.

FACTOR ANALYSIS

Data obtained using the scale of political activism was subjected to factor analysis. The adequacy of the sample data was confirmed by the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin coefficient of representativeness, which is 0.835. Bartlett's test of sphericity has reached statistical significance ($p = 0.00$) which also justifies the factor analysis. The factors were extracted using the principal component analysis with Oblimin rotation and Kaiser normalisation. Three factors were extracted with characteristic roots greater than 1, which explain 68% of the total variance. The first extracted factor is called political activism, which explains 40% of variance. The factor displays saturation across 6 items related to activities based on which people actively participate in politics. The second factor is called participation in the elections, and showed saturation across 3 items and refers to voting on elections at various levels. This factor explains an additional 16% of variance. The third extracted factor is called social activism. It displayed saturation across 3 items, which explains an additional 11% of variance. Eight items of the scale which examines traditional and modern value orientations were subjected to factor analysis using the method of principal components analysis with Oblimin rotation and Kaiser. Using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin coefficient of represen-

tativeness, which is 0.656, the recommended value of 0.6 has been reached. Bartlett's test of sphericity showed statistical significance ($p = 0.000$), so that the factorability of the matrix has been accepted. Two factors were extracted with characteristic roots greater than 1 which explain 45% of the total variance. The first extracted factor, which explains 28% of variance, is named modern values because it consists of the items that express modern attitudes. The factor that explains the remaining 17% of variance is called traditional values, given that it consists of views which express traditional views. The items of the scale of the questionnaire which measures the value system were subjected to factor analysis using principal components analysis with Oblimin rotation and Kaiser normalisation. The factor analysis was preceded by the assessment of data suitability. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin indicator of representativeness, which was 0.774, as well as the statistically significant Bartlett's test of sphericity ($p = 0.000$), have confirmed justification of matrix factorisation. Two factors were extracted based on the Kaiser criterion which explains 43% of the total variance. The first extracted factor explains 30% of variance. The items that saturate this factor refer to authoritarian attitudes, so that the factor was called autocratic orientation. The second factor explains 13% of variance and is saturated by three items which express democratic attitudes, i.e. they measure democratic orientation.

4. THE RESEARCH RESULTS

A review of average values of answers across these scales shows that male respondents displayed higher levels of engagement in the party and social activism. Across the factor of engagement in the party, respondents aged 45-54 have showed higher levels

of engagement than the respondents of all groups, except for the group of respondents aged 35-44; there is no statistically significant difference between them.

A statistically significant difference has been found across the factor of participation in elections between the age group of 15-24 years and all age groups except 65+. Respondents from the youngest age group showed the lowest statistically significant values across the factor of participation in elections. Based on the results of the survey, the age of respondents also proved to be a significant predictor of political activism. Specifically, a statistically significant difference of $p < 0.05$ has been found across the following factors: engagement in the party, participation in elections, and democratic orientation. The differences between the answers obtained across the tested factors in relation to the respondents' level of education have been examined using one-way analysis of variance. Statistically significant differences were obtained in the answers across the following factors: modern values, democratic and autocratic orientation. By examining the differences between the answers across the tested factors in relation to the respondents' level of education statistically significant differences have been found across the following factors: modern values, democratic and autocratic orientation. Post hoc tests for determining the differences across the tested factors between the respondents with respect to the level of education were not conducted because one group of the respondents (incomplete elementary school) consisted of less than 2 respondents, so the condition for conducting statistical analysis was not met.

Based on one-way analysis of variance statistically significant differences were found between the respondents of different occupations across the following factors: mod-

ern values and authoritarian orientation. Based on the post hoc analysis, statistically significant differences were found between respondents with occupations in technical professions, who showed lower values across the factor of modern values than those coming from humane professions, occupations related to independent jobs and service providing occupations.

Across the factor of authoritarian orientation statistically significant differences were found between the respondents practicing technical professions, occupations in humane professions, and occupations of state-administrative character, where respondents of technical occupations show higher levels across the tested factor. Based on one-way analysis of variance statistically significant differences were found between the respondents of different occupations across the following factors: modern values and authoritarian orientation.

Based on post-hoc analysis statistically significant differences were found between the respondents practicing technical professions, who showed lower values across the factor of modern values than those coming from humane professions, occupations related to independent jobs and service providing occupations.

Based on one-way analysis of variance statistically significant difference of $p < 0.05$ was found across the factor of modern values.

The post hoc test of the one-way analysis of variance revealed that the group of respondents who are single, display higher levels of modern values than groups who are married, living in domestic partnership and the widowed.

Marital status as a predictor of political activism has shown the following results: the group of respondents who are single shows higher levels of modern values than groups of married people, living in domestic part-

nership and the widowed, where statistically significant difference of $p < 0.05$ was found.

After the one-way analysis of variance a statistically significant difference was found across the factor of authoritarian orientation. The post-hoc analysis revealed differences between pensioners and employed respondents across the factor of authoritarian orientation, with pensioners displaying higher statistically significant levels of this factor.

The t-test for independent samples revealed statistically significant differences between the respondents who are members and those who are not members of other social organisations across the following factors: engagement in the party, modern and traditional values, and democratic and autocratic orientation. These results showed that the respondents, who are engaged in other social organisations display higher level of engagement in their parties, appreciate modern values and autocratic orientation, while respondents who are not engaged in other social organisations display higher levels of appreciating traditional values and democratic orientation.

The result which draws attention is that only 17.2% of the respondents are also members in some other social organisation (in addition to their own political parties), while 82.8% of them are not active in any other social organisation, indicating that it is only a participation in political behaviour rather than activism.

The question of whether the respondents are members or not in other social organisations revealed differences across the following dimensions: engagement in the party, modern and traditional values, and democratic and autocratic orientation. The results indicate that respondents, who are engaged in other social organisations display higher levels of engagement in their party, appreci-

ate modern values and autocratic orientation, while the respondents who are not engaged in other social organisations display higher levels of appreciating traditional values and democratic orientation. This is a contradictory result and points to the possibility that the respondents either inadequately understood the question, or considered the activities related only to their parties as a sufficiently democratic act, regarding other activities unnecessary.

The results indicate that the respondents who are engaged in other social organisations display higher levels of engagement in their parties.

CORRELATION DRAFT

The relationship between the dimensions of political activism and appreciation of traditional-modern values has been investigated

using the Spearman correlation coefficient (Spearman's rho). Preliminary analyses were conducted to prove that the assumptions of normality, linearity and homogeneity of variance are satisfied (Nešić, 2016).

Medium and high correlations of a positive sign were obtained for the examined factors of political activism which contributes to increasing the constructive validity of the tested variable ($p < 0.01$). When it comes to the correlation between the factors of appreciating modern and traditional values, the obtained correlation is small and of negative sign ($p < 0.05$), which means that high values across one scale are accompanied by low values across the other scale [Table 1].

Table 1: Correlation between political activism and its dimensions and appreciation of traditional-modern values

			Correlations							
			POLIT_ ACTIV	PARTY_ ENG	PART_ ELECT	SOC_ ACTIV	MODERN_ TRAD	MODERN	TRAD	
Spearman's rho	POLIT_ ACTIV	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.943**	.477**	.750**	.133**	.109*	.023	
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000	.000	.008	.029	.649	
		N	405	405	405	405	405	405	405	
	PARTY_ ENG	Correlation Coefficient	.943**	1.000	.377**	.539**	.101*	.078	.009	
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000	.000	.043	.118	.852	
		N	405	405	405	405	405	405	405	
	PART_ ELECT	Correlation Coefficient	.477**	.377**	1.000	.248**	.096	.087	.036	
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.	.000	.054	.080	.466	
		N	405	405	406	406	406	406	406	
	SOC_ ACTIV	Correlation Coefficient	.750**	.539**	.248**	1.000	.142**	.132**	.025	
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.	.004	.008	.609	
		N	405	405	406	406	406	406	406	
	MODERN_ TRAD	Correlation Coefficient	.133**	.101*	.096	.142**	1.000	.838**	.326**	
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.008	.043	.054	.004	.	.000	.000	
		N	405	405	406	406	406	406	406	
	MODERN	Correlation Coefficient	.109*	.078	.087	.132**	.838**	1.000	-.184**	
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.029	.118	.080	.008	.000	.	.000	
		N	405	405	406	406	406	406	406	
	TRADIT	Correlation Coefficient	.023	.009	.036	.025	.326**	-.184**	1.000	
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.649	.852	.466	.609	.000	.000	.	
		N	405	405	406	406	406	406	406	
	**.			Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).						
	*.			Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).						

The overall political activism [Table 2] showed a positive correlation of low intensity with traditional-modern values ($r = 0.133$, $n = 405$, $p < 0.01$), but also with the factor of modern values ($r = 0.109$, $n = 405$, $p < 0.05$). The factor of party engagement showed a low pos-

itive sign correlation with the overall modern-traditional values ($r = 0.101$, $n = 405$, $p < 0.05$), as well as the factor of social activism with factors of overall modern-traditional values ($r = 0.142$, $n = 405$, $p < 0.01$) and modern values ($r = 0.132$, $n = 405$, $p < 0.01$).

Table 2: Correlation between political activism and its dimensions with autocratic-democratic orientation

		Correlations							
		POLIT_ACTIV	PARTY_ENG	PART_ELECT	SOC_ACTIV	DEMOC_AUTO	DEMOCRAT	AUTORIT	
Spearman's rho	POLIT_ACTIV	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.943**	.477**	.750**	-.098*	-.065	-.090
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000	.000	.048	.192	.070
		N	405	405	405	405	405	405	405
	PARTY_ENG	Correlation Coefficient	.943**	1.000	.377**	.539**	-.063	-.060	-.052
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000	.000	.207	.226	.300
		N	405	405	405	405	405	405	405
	PART_ELECT	Correlation Coefficient	.477**	.377**	1.000	.248**	-.099*	-.061	-.087
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.	.000	.046	.217	.079
		N	405	405	406	406	406	406	406
	SOC_ACTIV	Correlation Coefficient	.750**	.539**	.248**	1.000	-.142**	-.064	-.145**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.	.004	.201	.003
		N	405	405	406	406	406	406	406
	DEMOC_AUTO	Correlation Coefficient	-.098*	-.063	-.099*	-.142**	1.000	.720**	.950**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.048	.207	.046	.004	.	.000	.000
		N	405	405	406	406	406	406	406
	DEMOCRAT	Correlation Coefficient	-.065	-.060	-.061	-.064	.720**	1.000	.497**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.192	.226	.217	.201	.000	.	.000
		N	405	405	406	406	406	406	406
	AUTORIT	Correlation Coefficient	-.090	-.052	-.087	-.145**	.950**	.497**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.070	.300	.079	.003	.000	.000	.
		N	405	405	406	406	406	406	406
	**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).								
	*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).								

The correlation between the dimensions of political activism and autocracy-democracy orientation was investigated using Spearman rank correlation coefficient (Spearman's rho). Preliminary analyses were conducted to prove that the assumptions of normality, linearity and homogeneity of variance are satisfied.

Between the inspected factors of autocratic-democratic orientation, high positive sign correlations were obtained, which contribute to increase the constructive validity of the tested variable ($p < 0.01$).

Correlations of negative sign were obtained between the overall autocracy-de-

mocracy orientation and overall political engagement ($r = -0.098$, $n = 405$, $p < 0.05$), between the overall autocracy-democracy orientation and the factors of participation in elections ($r = -0.099$, $n = 405$, $p < 0.05$), and between the overall autocracy-democracy orientation and the factor of social activism ($r = -0.142$, $n = 405$, $p < 0.01$). Among the extracted factors, a statistically significant (negative) correlation was obtained only between the factor of authoritarian orientation and the factor of social activism, where higher levels of authoritarianism lead to lower levels of social activism. The resulting negative sign across all correlation coefficients indicates

the nature of relation between these constructs, where the increasing autocracy-democracy orientation leads to reduced political activism. As the value of the resulting correlation coefficient is lower than or close to

0.10 (which some authors consider to be the lowest limit for interpreting the correlation as small), these results can be interpreted as an extremely low level correlation [Table 3].

Table 3: Correlation between variables of multiple regression models

		POLIT_ACTIV	MODERN	TRADIT	DEMOCRAT	AUTORIT	Gender of the respondent	Place of residence
Pearson Correlation	POLIT_ACTIV	1.000	.154	.042	-.084	-.113	-.203	.035
	MODERN	.154	1.000	-.164	-.342	-.456	.112	-.231
	TRADIT	.042	-.164	1.000	.200	.303	.036	.120
	DEMOCRAT	-.084	-.342	.200	1.000	.437	-.092	.134
	AUTORIT	-.113	-.456	.303	.437	1.000	-.010	.165
	Gender	-.203	.112	.036	-.092	-.010	1.000	-.078
	Place of resid.	.035	-.231	.120	.134	.165	-.078	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	POLIT_ACTIV	.	.001	.198	.047	.012	.000	.239
	MODERN	.001	.	.000	.000	.000	.012	.000
	TRADIT	.198	.000	.	.000	.000	.238	.008
	DEMOCRAT	.047	.000	.000	.	.000	.032	.004
	AUTORIT	.012	.000	.000	.000	.	.418	.000
	Gender	.000	.012	.238	.032	.418	.	.057
	Place of resid.	.239	.000	.008	.004	.000	.057	.
N	POLIT_ACTIV	405	405	405	405	405	405	405
	MODERN	405	406	406	406	406	406	406
	TRADIT	405	406	406	406	406	406	406
	DEMOCRAT	405	406	406	406	406	406	406
	AUTORIT	405	406	406	406	406	406	406
	Gender	405	406	406	406	406	406	406
	Place of resid.	405	406	406	406	406	406	406

Previous studies have shown that the relationship between the values and political views depend on the level of individuals' political refinement. Those less refined are unable to relate the signs of political messages they receive with their own values, which prevent them from forming a strong connection between the values and attitudes (Zaller, 1991).

5. DISCUSSION

The results of studies aimed at defining the importance of socio-economic characteristics of respondents using the t-test of significance have shown that there are statistically significant differences in manifestation of studied

dimensions between male and female respondents. Differences were obtained across the scales of engagement in the party, social activism and appreciation of modern values in a way that male respondents displayed higher levels of engagement in the party and social activism, while females displayed higher levels of appreciating modern values. This result is interesting and opens the way for new research and discussion. If women display higher levels of appreciating modern values than men, while men being significantly more engaged and socially active, could this be one of the explanations for the slow transition? When it comes to studies at a global level, Conway, one of the political activism researchers argues that despite the reduc-

tion in gender related differences in political activism, the male population is still much more active in political life than the female population (Conway, 2001). This behaviour is certainly affected by cultural, educational and religious factors, but possibly also by phenomena such as a glass ceiling, prejudices and social distances.

The age of respondents also proved to be a significant predictor of political activism. Specifically, a statistically significant difference was found at $p < 0.05$ across the following factors: engagement in the party, participation in elections, and democratic orientation. In contrary to this study, another research conducted by Jennings and Markus found that older respondents are less politically active. In their study of correlation between demographic characteristics and political engagement Jennings and Markus (1988) found lower levels of participation among older respondents since older people become less willing to participate and are less trained in new technologies that lead to the development of new levels of participation. Surprising is the result that the highest levels of democratic values are not maintained by the youngest respondents but by those aged 25-34, as well as by those in the oldest age group of 55-64 years. As the transition process for senior citizens was a bad experience, leaving them without jobs, service years and the right to a future, there is a possibility that their engagement is only the result of the urge to fight for their lost rights in the transition process. When it comes to the level of education, statistically significant differences were obtained in relation to appreciating modern values, democratic and autocratic orientation. In their research, Verba and colleagues (Verba et al., 1995) found education to be a dynamic predictor of political participation. The lack of difference in activism of the employed

and unemployed indicate that the status of employment is insignificant for political activism of the surveyed members of parties. Few surveys of political parties in non-Western countries have added to the ambiguity in explanation of how political parties function. A study by Koo (2018) found that party members who positively evaluate their party's internal democracy remain less active, which is a paradox and difficult to explain rationally. Over time, the functioning of political parties has changed greatly by turning from voluntary organisations into state agents, who are politically indistinguishable from one other and offer few real opportunities for political participation (Katz & Mair, 2018). Would the result be different if the sample consisted of unemployed and employed who are not members of (any) party? Is this result another indicator of semi-active, more formal participation of party members?

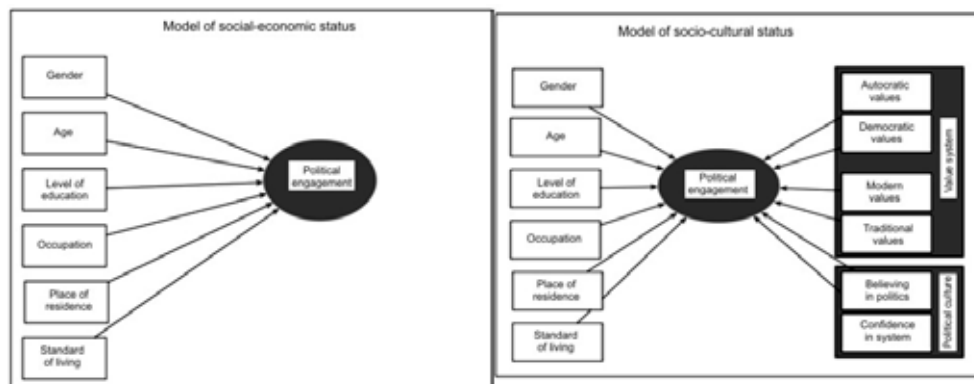
In numerous studies socio-demographic characteristics were considered as important factors of political activism. Vecchione and Caprara (2009) have found gender, education and age to be important factors influencing political activism. Specifically, they found people with higher education, especially men, as well as older people, to be more involved in political activities than the other surveyed categories of citizens. They found income as an insignificant factor in political participation. Reviewing previous studies, Stolle and Hooghe (2011) have also identified gender, education and age as important factors of influence on political participation. Also, it is of great importance to scientifically research political parties, because the debatable role of political parties in the election and voting processes raises a number of questions about party members and their actions, and above all the causes and objectives of party action (Ferreira & Gyourko, 2009).

6. CONCLUSION

The model of political activism which made the starting point of this study is the socio-economic status model, because it is believed that the basic (socio-economic) characteristics such as gender, age, occupa-

tion, education and living standard perception are important for political engagement. In their studies back in 1972 Verba and Nie have contributed to the creation of the theory and model of socio-economic status as a way of explaining mass political behaviour [Figure 1], which they later verified.

Figure 1: Model of socio-economic status (Verba et al., 1995; Wolfinger & Rosenstone, 1980)



Afterwards many studies have confirmed the tendency of higher levels of participation and organisation of people with higher levels of education, income and professions in political life, while political campaigns have more impact on people with lower socio-economic status (Conway, 2001; Verba et al., 1995). Education, according to the socio-economic status model, contributes to political engagement by providing people knowledge and skills that facilitate engagement. The socio-economic model status emphasises the importance of participants' occupation in political engagement since it is an important indicator of knowledge and social contacts.

Based on the results obtained in this study, the socio-economic status model is extended into the model of socio-cultural status by adding a value system that has proved to be an important factor in political activism: traditional-modern values and autocratic-democratic values.

The results which facilitate understanding the significance of the value system for political activism are the following indicators, which associate modern values with: Socio-economic characteristics: the respondents' gender, education level, marital status, personal attitude towards religion, and occupation, Place of residence – towns in Serbia, village/town, Standard of living, Activism in other social organisations.

Autocratic-democratic values are represented in a somewhat different way in perceiving political activism, while attitudes towards authoritarianism and democracy are more complex. Their influence is significant in the following aspects: Age (Democratic), Level of education (Authoritarian and Democratic), Personal attitude towards religion (Democratic), Occupation (Authoritarian), Place of residence, with the criterion town/village (Authoritarian and Democratic), Standard of living (Authoritarian), Engagement

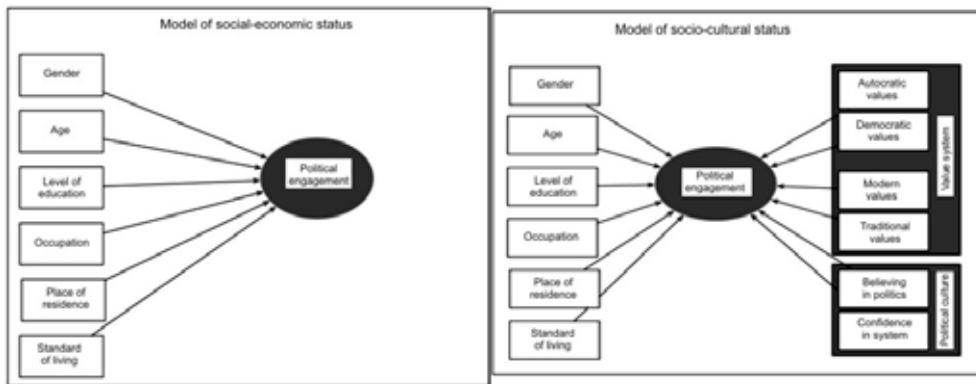
in other social organisations (Authoritarian) and significant negative correlation with the overall political engagement, as well as confidence in politics and participating in elections. The results of the research confirmed all three hypotheses.

Unlike the modern-traditional values, where modern values are predominantly influencing political behaviour, levels of authoritarianism-democratic proved to be affecting political behaviour across both

dimensions, and should be taken into account genuinely.

The authors of this paperwork believe that political participation is reflected through a socio-economic status model, and that the concept of political activism is a bit complex, that it requires a responsible, conscious and active individual, which establishes activity on a value system, and this model is the model of socio-cultural activism [Figure 2].

Figure 2: Model of sociocultural status in political activism



The results have shown that all the values i.e. autocratic-democratic, traditional-modern, are significant determinants of political behaviour.

The analysis of political culture in post-communist societies has pointed out significant differences among the studied countries (Farnen et al., 1996; Gibson, 1996; Inglehart & Welzel, 2009). The main characteristic of this change is reflected in the increasing importance of post-materialistic values in relation to the previously prevailing materialistic, traditional values. Dimensions of values that stand out in Inglehart's study are traditional, as opposed to secular-rational values. Traditional values consist of respect for authority –religious, national or family. The authors believe that along with the growth in

indicators of human development in the society, value orientations, which are adjustable to development, will grow as well (Inglehart, 2010). The results of other studies have also shown that there is a mixture of pre-modern (traditional), modern and postmodern values in Serbia, with traditional values still being alive which significantly reduces the process of transition. Serbia is slow in relieving of the so-called values of poverty, which further reduces the already prolonged and ineffective process of transition. The entire development of political behaviour and its research, highlights the relevance of political action, especially with regards to how participation has changed in Europe, over time and across borders (Memoli & Vassallo, 2016). As the authors Mudge and Chen (2014) conclud-

ed, new levels of research that integrate new approaches and directions are obligatory and further research directions need to include such considerations.

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SOCIOKULTURNI ASPEKTI POLITIČKOG AKTIVIZMA: PREDLOG NOVOG MODELA

Ključne riječi:

*politički aktivizam;
vrijednosne orijentacije;
socio-kulturni model;
članovi političkih partija.*

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Oblast:

Sociologija

Rezime

U ovom radu analizira se korelacija između političkog aktivizma, političke participacije i određenih vrednosnih orijentacija, kao važnih delova savremenog političkog konteksta društva. Uzorak empirijskog istraživanja u ovom radu činili su članovi vladajućih i opozicionih partija, strukturisani po godinama, mestu stanovanja, političkom opredeljenju i ulozi u lokalnim parlamentima, u šest gradova u Republici Srbiji. Rezultati istraživanja pokazuju mešavinu predmodernih (tradicionalnih), modernih i postmodernih vrednosti u društvu, pri čemu su tradicionalne vrednosti i dalje veoma žive, što bi moglo da se tumači kao faktor koji značajno usporava proces socio-ekonomske tranzicije. Socio-demografske varijable i vrednosne orijentacije (autokratsko-demokratsko, tradicionalno-moderno), uz precizirane različite aspekte političke kulture, u velikoj meri određuju političko ponašanje. Model političkog aktivizma, koji je bio teorijsko-istraživačka osnova rada, bio je model socio-ekonomskog statusa. U ovom istraživanju, na osnovu dobijenih rezultata, predlaže se novi, unapređeni model, nazvan socio-kulturni model političkog aktivizma.

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