

## Female Citizenship in Poland in the Light of Florian Znaniecki's Ideas

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## *Female Citizenship in Poland in the Light of Florian Znaniecki's Ideas*

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### **Abstract**

The subject of this paper is the civic activity of women in the public sphere. Citizen activity is a type of social action that fosters the expansion of the public sphere, the strengthening of democracy and the emergence of civil society. These actions, on the one hand, are based on formalised rules and laws. On the other hand, they are conditioned by the cultural area in which they arise, spread and gain social acceptance. Citizen activity, therefore, is structured in organisational and institutional terms, but above all, it is shaped by habits of culture, environmental habits, symbols, habits, and other informal elements that become so persistent in the individual's social personality that they define Type and scope of activities undertaken by it. Each community generates its own model of active citizenship or takes it from others, adjusting to its own realities or internal conditions. Citizenship patterns are influenced by many factors, among which gender is a very important socio-cultural construct. Gender citizenship arises as a result of collective gender stereotypes, that is, with regard to how different communities perceive gender based on the characteristics of the sex attributed or gendered. The views on citizen activity presented by contemporary sociologists are widely known, whereas works published on this subject in Polish by Florian Znaniecki are not. Therefore the article presents Znaniecki's concept of the Ideas of Nation-Society under Democratic Conditions on the Example of contemporary Poland.

Keywords: Florian Znaniecki, civic activity, women, public sphere

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## **1. Introduction**

The aim of the paper is to present selected theses of Florian Znaniecki, which can be used as part of describing civil activity of women in Poland. Referring to the Znaniecki's concepts in the analysis is justified for at least two reasons. Firstly, Znaniecki can be considered as the initiator of thinking about the civil society as a category expressed in social actions and in the values that guide them (Znaniecki, 1987). In his view, the ability to cooperate and leadership skills, that underlie modern society, should become the goal of education (Znaniecki, 1973), because they form a democratic, pluralistic and equality society. Democracy is conditioned by: the possibility and willingness to participate in political power – on the basis of the support of other citizens; the existence of educated elites; the co-decision of various interest groups (Znaniecki, 1936). Secondly, Znaniecki closely watched dynamic socio-cultural changes that required innovation and the introduction of new elements into cultural systems. He wrote: 'we have entered a period when the changeability caused by new ideas becomes an ordinary trait of cultural life and not only is it improbable that this changeability will diminish, but on the contrary, everything suggests that it will continue to increase' (Znaniecki, 2001: 67). The change in social order, synonymous with the transformation of the cultural order, has brought new norms and values. These include the inclusion of women in the public sphere made in progress gender equality process and women's empowerment. Znaniecki considered the role and place of women in creating civil society – his interest in women's civic activity is clearly evident in his empirical work 'A city in the Consciousness of its Citizens.' This book was written in 1931 – at a time when the women's issue began to appear more and more often in the socio-political discourse: after a dozen or so years had passed since Poland regained independence and granted women active and passive voting rights; when they could study and take up professional work. Nevertheless, as Znaniecki argues, in social consciousness they still remained second-class citizens.

## **2. Civil activity: preliminary findings**

Citizen activity is a type of social action that fosters the expansion of the public sphere, the strengthening of democracy and the emergence of civil society. These actions, on the one hand, are based on formalised rules and laws. On the other hand, they are conditioned by the cultural area in which they arise, spread and gain social acceptance. Citizen activity, therefore, is structured in organisational and institutional terms, but above all, it is shaped by habits of

culture, environmental habits, symbols, habits, and other informal elements that become so persistent in the individual's social personality that they define type and scope of activities undertaken by it. Each community generates its own model of active citizenship or takes it from others, adjusting to its own realities or internal conditions. Citizenship patterns are influenced by many factors, and depend on individual and collective experiences, beliefs or social attitude, and on the geographical environment because 'each group with its total civilization becomes geographically localized' (Znaniecki, 1919: 293).

In academic and public discourse, civic activity is most often associated with democratisation, pluralisation, and an inclusive public sphere – which is open to all citizens, owned by the public, without marginalisation or discrimination, for common and general. As Craig Calhoun writes, 'in which rational-critical arguments rather than the statuses of actors are decisive' (Calhoun, 1993: 269). The degree of civic activism reflects the quality and strength of democracy, and it is also an indicator of egalitarianism, the rule of law, freedom and civil liberties (Putnam, 1995; Putnam, 2008; Barber, 1984; Loinger, Nemery, 1997; Keane, 1989). Citizenship is the basis of democratic governance, where all citizens are free and equal before the law, and thus have the power to influence the policies of the state and to decide on matters of the general public. Citizenship, built on generalised trust and public engagement, strengthens capital and social networks, thereby creating the emergence and development of civil society. This statement seems so certain and justified that where civic activity is suppressed, sanctioned or ruled by law, there is a totalitarian or authoritarian system. For this type of system, the ubiquity and omnipotence of the state prevents citizens from freely and expressively acting in the public sphere, replacing the individual's political autonomy with censorship, harshness, and sometimes violence and terror. Totalitarian states suppress all manifestations of civic activity, using the means of delegation of civic organisations, or bringing close supervision and control over them. They often set up their own total organisations, which annihilate the basic characteristic of the civic sphere – 'spontaneous socialisation' (Szawiel, 2003). In the absence of spontaneous private initiatives, independent decisions are blocked, and homogeneous diversity, building democracy and civil society becomes a difficult task. At the same time, paradoxically, in some cases, totalitarianism can strengthen civic activity, because it induces civil disobedience, passive resistance or other nonconformist behaviours. In this case, selected individuals or groups rebel against the ideology imposed by the system while trying to create an alternative political order and disseminate a new vision of the social world.

In the context of Znaniecki's theory, civil activity can be understood as 'human activity', which should be the basic subject of research. This is because

it is an 'empirical fact' that is part of the theoretical and practical order. Social action is a conscious action, which means that the subject of this act knows what he is doing, and he is aware of the changes it is causing. 'The activity throughout its course reveals the gradual shaping of the purpose, which is gradually realized as it develops.' (Znaniński, 1971: 344). Thus civic activity refers to activities that are directed at inducing some social change, most often associated with the emergence and development of civil society. This activity is based on the rational, legal, effective use of the rights and dispositions that result from the privilege of being a citizen in order to multiply socio-cultural capital and build up the networks of citizens. This is primarily a matter of broadening the civic sector, consisting of non-state institutions, non-governmental organisations, associations and civil movements, and any other social structures that are independent of the state budget, beyond explicit or concealed political control, cut off from the influence of lobbying or monopoly groups. Civic activism is a pro-social activity that aims at establishing and strengthening the fabric of civil society. These are voluntary and community activities which confirm the fact that they belong to the civic community while conditioning its existence. Citizen activity consists in the active participation of individuals or compact social groups in the public sphere and co-decision on important issues relating to the general public. Participation is understood here in two ways: first, as the institutionalised participation of various social actors in the public sphere management process. Second: as a practical manifestation of democracy and proof of the existence of civil society, where all free and equal rights citizens have the right to decide about the fate of the political community to which they belong. Citizenship, based on partnership, compromise and agreement, enables you to present and argue your points of view in the process of making publicly important decisions whose consequences are significant for certain segments of society. In this sense, it is a power distribution tool. The very presence and participation of citizens in the public sphere obliges the state to share power, to resign from the monopoly of decisions and decisions (monopoly of reason, truth, knowledge often happens, and is a derivative of the false conviction of the rulers of absolute power). Citizen activity is a good means of eliminating the dysfunction of the inefficient state due to poor political leadership and the disappearance of elites; growing ideological radicalism that hampers dialogue between representatives of opposition party camps, and lack of rational and substantive public debate, which replace demagoguery or populism.

Citizenship is a result of belonging to the political community and a sense of belonging to the members of the community. This bond has two planes: the first involves relationships between people resulting from the sharing of territory, language, culture. The other is a state or conscious act of feeling

connected with others and interdependent, which is manifested in certain attitudes, behaviours and actions (Rybicki, 2005). The awareness or feeling of this bond raises a number of ethical obligations towards others: co-responsibility for members of the community, interest in their lives and problems, sensitivity to the fate of the community. The pro-social aspect of citizenship Robert Putnam has described as: being a citizen means actively participating in public affairs, being a member of the civic community. Although citizens are not required to be altruists, they should be guided by a well-defined self-interest – that is, their own interests, defined in the context of broader needs and public goals. Participation in civic community means a sense of socialism and a strong orientation towards shared interests. Although citizens of the civic community are not selfless saints, public affairs are more than a struggle for their own particular interests (Putnam, 1995) Florian Znaniecki suggests that all 'social activities' be considered in relation to values – because 'every human activity is a limited, dynamic system of interdependent, variable values' (Znaniecki, 1971: 332). Thus the basis of active citizenship is care and concern for the common good<sup>1</sup>, which (apart from solidarity, responsibility, loyalty, honesty, reciprocity, trust) are about civic virtue. Classically understood 'civic virtue'<sup>2</sup> refers to the fair and rational use of public goods, while opposed to those who cynically, with complete premeditation, bend the adopted laws, rules or remain indifferent to explicit public policy violations. Cynicism, arrogance and nihilism of individuals generate pathological and antisocial behaviour, leading to the degradation of culture and civic structures. The effect of weakening civic morality (or its total disappearance) is an anomy that causes a threatening society to the state of axiological deregulation. The condition for the survival of the community is the maintenance of moral order, which includes four axiological levels. The first level deals with institutional and cultural norms, values, orders, prohibitions, regulating the behaviour of individuals and the relationship between these individuals and social groups.

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<sup>1</sup>In the view of Jan Turowski, 'common good' means 'a set of means, values and things that the community can satisfy the needs of its members (designated by the boundaries of the community goal). From a personal point of view bonum commune means the purpose of the individual community.' J. Turowski, *Sociology. Small social structures*, Lublin 1993, p. 32.

<sup>2</sup>Adam B. Seligman, analysing the history of the idea of civic virtue, points out that both the virtue category and civil society have their origins in the intellectual traditions of Western Europe, the doctrines of natural law, the philosophy of ancient Greece and republican Rome. Both categories played an important role in modernity - to weaken feudalism and the influence of the Catholic Church - became the basis of a new organisation of society. The popularity of both categories has not dwindled over the ensuing centuries. Although it is not possible to define both concepts clearly, it is certain that they relate to the idea of social good and moral community, which is the foundation of social life. A.B. Seligman, *Comments on civil society and civic virtue in the last decade of the twentieth century*, in: *Neither prince nor merchant ...*, (p. 176).

The second level corresponds to this system of attitudes, actions, responsibilities related to the sense of duty. Level three includes assessing these attitudes in terms of good or bad. Level four defines individual sanctions (remorse, mental discomfort) and social (disapproval and condemnation from the environment) resulting from violations of the moral rules adopted in a given environment (Budzyńska, 2007). While the axiomatic system is not universal for all societies, the recognition of culturally sanctioned rules and compliance with accepted laws testify to the degree of organisation of the social system. The greater the morality, the more civilised the community, and therefore the more civil the society. This is particularly important in the context of the postmodern conception of the world, which assumes the fluidity and instability of the social order. Living in a libertarian society, sometimes misrepresented with moral relativism, does not mean any interpretation of imponderabilia or rejection. Freedom does not mean that everyone is free; that no limits exist. On the contrary, freedom implies the designation of boundaries that can not be violated. It is values - as a 'link of action' - set the direction of human actions, and as a consequence they shape the image of the world that arises as a result of the activities of individuals and collectivity (Znaniecki, 1987).

### **3. Reconfigurations of women's civic activity – Florian Znaniecki's approach**

Civic activity – as a social, cultural and political phenomenon – is so dynamic and diverse in the form and context of occurrence that all attempts at its diagnosis are marked by the relativity of time and place. In Florian Znaniecki's approach, the most important issue is the issue of women's civic engagement and citizens' attitudes towards women. The place of observation and research is Poznań – it is perceived by Znaniecki as a 'typical city', this, to some extent, allows generalization of research results and conclusions. Poznań is for Znaniecki a 'social laboratory' which he perceives as a humanistic and non-spatial whole. Research (dozens of interviews in which respondents are invited to speak freely about their observations) is based on statements of members of the urban group, those who 'consider themselves inhabitants of the city' (Znaniecki, 1931: 4-5). It is worth adding, however, that the reflection is contextually supplemented with a comparative summary of previous analyzes and material collected by judicial, police and charitable institutions.

Participants in the study point out that the social activity of women has a relational character and depends on the social class to which women belong or which social layer they represent. One can see here the great diversity of the female community: from women very involved in the public sphere, ending



with 'girls who do nothing', they spend time 'at parties, visits, gossip and games.' These women, as emphasized by Znaniecki, do not make a useful contribution to society, they waste their civic potential because 'they cannot raise their children to be good citizens' (Znaniecki, 1931: 125-127). This division into social classes, and the degree and type of involvement associated with it, was particularly evident during the partitions (there were three territorial divisions of Poland, conducted by the Kingdom of Prussia, the Habsburg Monarchy, the Russian Empire). Znaniecki writes that women from the intelligentsia supported the ideas of Polishness by promoting patriotism, popularizing the Polish culture, cultivating national traditions, particularly in the educational process of youth (Znaniecki, 1939). The situation of women in Poland during the partitions was particularly difficult due to restrictions of civil liberties, especially in the field of universal education. Under Austrian annexation, Polish education was legal, while under Russian and Prussian precepts the opportunity to teach was strictly regulated. Numerous difficulties resulted from the creation of the women's assets, which were trained on secret teacher training courses, and then worked as teachers (Kondracka, 2000). For women, this was a particularly popular profession, for two reasons especially. Firstly, the work was low-paid, laborious, and therefore reluctantly undertaken by men and secondly, it was claimed that a woman has a natural predisposition and ability to perform caring and educational roles (Renzetti, Curran, 2008). The professional work of women during this period can be considered a symbolic beginning of women making their way into the public sphere and take a stand on the social matter (Bukusiński, 1999). The active participation of women in the various partitions took on a number of forms and conventions. In all partitions women were discriminated in the area of family law (total subordination to the husband, lack of possibility to dispose of property, father's authority in the family), nevertheless in some instances they could manifest their female citizenship. During Prussian occupation, women had relatively decent civil rights e.g. they could organise rallies and demonstrations, among other things, in defence of the Polish language in schools and during public appearances (the so-called muzzle paragraph) (Abram, 1999). In Silesia, the rallies were a very popular form of presenting their views, always well prepared in terms of content and organisation for bringing together many of the new participants. In the Russian partition, the women were allowed to join and organise themselves only after the 1905 revolution. At this time the Polish Women Equality Association was established and then the Women's Equality Association (Siemieńska, 2005). The aim of both organisations was to achieve equal civil rights for women and men. These organisations were apolitical – the lack of connection with any lobby made it possible to mobilise all women regardless of their origin and ideological

preferences (but which was particularly problematic among the working and peasant milieus).

Gender equality has gained momentum since the beginning of the 20th century. Women are slowly beginning to occupy important places in the public sphere, primarily because they formally received the right to education at all levels. However, the right to education has remained a subject of heated debate. Reluctant to express some orthodox church environments that 'warn of the damaging effects of awakening in women excessive ambition... taking on the road of competition with men in the professional field, or being present at any cost in public life is at the expense of the family is contrary to natural law. This can lead to the distortion of personality and the fall of a moral woman' (Lechicki, 2001: 33). Education has become the cornerstone of the economic and mental independence of women. Some women have taken up a job in a profession which has allowed them to earn a living and become financially independent. Roman Wapiński sees equality for women in the universality of education, as a result of all this, there was an increase public awareness, which is of fundamental importance in shaping female citizenship. The effects are individual factors, generational changes resulting from the progressive emancipation movement and general factors caused by war and occupation (Wapiński, 1996). Most men, the only survivors of the family, did not return from war, so women were obliged to take over the obligation of keeping the house. While before the First World War women worked primarily in industry, which is related to the process of industrialisation, in the post-war years they worked in public administration (offices, banks) or engaged in commerce (Kalwa, 2001). Access to higher education, work in the professional or public function was the beginning of breaking the stereotype of gender on many levels of social life.

Emancipation was also fostered by the development of the women's press, in which a model of educated, modern, confident women was propagated. Emerging magazines ('Contemporary Woman', 'Rudder', 'Ivy', 'Woman in the Workplace') have shown readers new opportunities for self-fulfilment and encourage civic engagement and commitment to the country's political life. The awakening of political ambitions has strengthened emancipatory movements in Poland and in the world. The issue of electoral rights for women has become a central theme. Women's civil activity combined with their right to education and the promotion of social, civil and labor rights. Women have become financially independent from men, thus ensuring their relative independence. Changes in the education and social welfare system have fuelled the process of women's social emancipation.

In Poland, the fight for the electoral rights went hand in hand with the struggle for independence. In each of the partitions women were deprived of

political rights. Men were in the same situation, so Poles were rarely entrusted with any positions in the administration (Siemieńska, 1990). In this situation, women appeared as a collective entity, fighting on behalf of the collective. The priority objective of women's activism was to win civil rights for the whole of society, without dividing the interests of women and men. Attention has to be drawn to the fact, because:

'The convergence of the time of the rise of the Polish state and the obtaining of women's political rights contributed to the dissemination of information that Polish women were not fighting for equality because it was not necessary.' (Kalwa, 2001: 117).

Nowadays, it is difficult to say unequivocally whether women would have acquired civil rights without additional treatment on this issue, without effective affirmative action, as well as public demonstration or protests against the occupation and pressure on political leaders. Although granting women's electoral rights was subordinate to the regaining of independence, it cast light on the social status of women. Although women have not been active in politics yet, their basic social roles have always been politicised – for example, the 'mother-Polish' myth symbolised the relationship of the private sphere (the idea of motherhood) to the public sphere (the idea of patriotism). In Florian Znaniecki's approach, it is the role and type of social relationship that determine the place of man in dynamically changing cultural systems. The mother's role, as the most common in all the communities, is the first relationship in which the individual actively participates. This means that it should be seen as fundamental in the process of shaping citizenship among the young generation. This activity is included in the concept of 'social motherhood' (Znaniecki, 2011: 143-170).

In Poland, all citizens (irrespective of sex) obtained full voting rights on November 28, 1918, under the decree of Józef Piłsudski. In the March 1921 Constitution, this provision was confirmed by an appropriate provision. The moment of equality Zofia Grossek-Korycka described it as follows: 'a woman has become an individual, just as a man: a citizen of the world' (2001: 118). Women became an important subject of social change, so they could articulate their needs to the state and society and indicate how they would be realised (Kalwa 2001). This situation required the creation of a new image of a woman – an emancipated, independent, self-aware and capable of realizing own aspirations. Women's then absence in the public sphere and the strength of the stereotype of the womanhood made it difficult to even imagine the presence of women in the socio-political space. Ignacy Daszyński wrote about it: 'I can not even imagine what will happen to the life of mankind, if half of it – women will really enter into this life with conscious will, with force not only corresponding to their number but also to women's values, which are stronger than men's' (as

cited in Kalwa, 2001: 140). Breaking gender stereotypes, which is tantamount to women's entry into the sphere previously reserved for men, proved to be very difficult. Women, unable to find themselves in the structures created by men, began to create their own, directly related to women's issues including: the Association of Accoucheuses, Military Family, Women's Fighting Police, Women's Union of Higher Education, Club Political Progressive Women, Trade Union of Women Working in Trade, Medical Association, and very important for the left wing – Polish Women's League (Dufrat, 2001). The political and economic situation in Poland caused the organisations to take a position on general issues concerning the whole society. These organisations have differently seen the role and position of women in society – depending on who directs them, what mission they have, who is their members, what is their attitude towards religion and politics. Some of them, like the Polish National Council, propagated the traditional image of women – mothers, babysitter, wives, housewives. According to this concept, women were assigned to the private sphere, being able to engage in public affairs in some aspects, such as reading, helping the poor and supporting the needy, showing compassion and concern for others. The Orthodox part of the conservative wing was church organisations, such as the Catholic Women's Union, which subordinated women to men and denied any activity of women outside the home and church. On the other hand, there were standing women's organisations created on the model of European feminist organisations who spoke bold slogans of emancipatory issues concerning the fight against stereotypes and patriarchy, economic and legal inequalities and restrictions on women's political activity. These organisations include: the Political Women's Club and the Women's Union of Labor (Chojnowski, 2001).

The emancipation of women influenced the functioning of political parties. After 1918, two camps were formed on the Polish political scene: supporters and opponents of gender equality. *Endecja* (short for National Democracy – a national-conservative political movement) recognised the idea of equality as an attempt to disintegrate the nation; the weakening of the previous ethnic community. Socialists and social democrats saw in this the attempt to overthrow class unity and ethics of the proletariat. The Christian Democrats saw the destruction of the natural order, and the whole status quo being challenged (Kalwa, 2001). Soon all the parties were forced to recognise women's civil rights and to appreciate the female electorate. In order to motivate as many women as possible to vote for the party, special flyers, newsletters and posters were targeted to women during the first election. The electoral turnout was relatively high (in some cities even above 60%), but there were allegations of low participation of women in the referendum. One of the PPS activists, after the parliamentary elections in 1919, said that women are not interested in major

national problems, law, international relations, taxes. Meanwhile, increasing women's attention in this area can empower women and is necessary to achieve gender equality (as cited in Śliwa 1996). The opinion of the politician perhaps was due to the actual post-election situation, perhaps because of the disappointed hopes of the socialists who had counted on a higher score in the women's election – in their belief, women been considered as important social actors in the processes of changing the institutional and non-institutional order.

Florian Znaniecki advocated a rigid division of roles – according to him, some roles are reserved for women, others for men (Znaniecki, 1984), but women's entry into the political sphere increased the chances of gender equality. It was especially about the presence and visibility of women in important political bodies: the Sejm, the Senate, and city councils – which at the same time meant including women in the decision-making process. An effective way to engage the female electorate was to provide them with seats on the electoral lists, which was supposed to be an institutional guarantee of their interests. Among the candidates were the most deserving citizens: Zofia Daszyńska-Golińska, Justyna Budzińska-Tylicka, Gabriela Balicka-Iwanowska, Jadwiga Dziubińska, Anna Piasecka, Irena Kosmowska, Maria Moczydłowska, Zofia Moraczewska, Zofia Sokolnicka, Franciszka Wilczkowiakowa. However, only a few of them took first place on the electoral lists, other female names were at the end, which illustrates the then attitude towards women as potential politicians; and argued that their marginalization in political life was a premeditative action on the part of decision makers.

The women's elite elected in subsequent elections in the Second Republic of Poland were mainly concerned with issues related to the protection of women's rights, social protection, education and school reform. There was a social law that guaranteed the protection of mothers and teens working (Śliwa, 2000). Women engaged in self-government activities under two separate decrees. The first was about municipal council elections on the grounds of the former Congress Kingdom of 18 December 1918, and the second, on 14 February 1919, concerned the municipal self-government. The electoral law was in line with the five-pronged right to vote (Łukaszewicz, 2000). In 1933, the electoral law was changed. In the case of women, these changes concerned the minimum age for exercising the right to vote – in active law from 21 to 25 years, in passive law from 25 to 30 years. The positive effect of organizational and awareness changes was the better access of women to institutional fields previously dominated by men – as Znaniecki diagnosed, social roles previously played only by men are becoming available to women (Znaniecki, 2011).

The shape of civil society and its gender (or lack thereof) was influenced by political and historical background, namely the moment of active and passive civil rights by both sexes. Poland, as one of the first European countries,

guaranteed women full electoral rights. On November 11, 1918, Józef Piłsudski granted women active and passive voting rights. The magnitude of this event influenced the social consciousness, according to which value systems common to the cultural tradition of the Second Polish Republic were forming.

In spite of that, Florian Znaniecki emphasizes that the respondents' opinions about the place and role of women in society are sometimes extremely simplified and stereotypical. Respondents describe women as: uneducated, slow-witted, vain, bored, caring only for their external appearance, dealing with fashion, makeup and corporeality, waiting to compliments, cheating and agreeing on betrayal by her husband. In the social awareness of the population of Poznań, the most important female roles are: marital, sexual, family, caring, and pleasuring. Znaniecki aptly emphasizes that the change in the system of values and positioning of women was influenced by: the crisis of the family, the disappearance of home-made production, lower parenting responsibilities due to the growing importance of school. Although in the respondents' opinions, negative depictions predominated, Znaniecki notices the new emancipation path that women are following. It leads through intellectual development, appropriate education, active participation in socio-cultural matters, and the inclusion of women's voice in public debate. The sociologist notes – based on the collected empirical material – the empowerment of women, which results from the fact that society expects them to leave the private sphere and to have a permanent presence in the public sphere.

#### **4. Conclusions**

In the Light of Florian Znaniecki's Ideas women's civic activism has many development trajectories. Tracks on which women's civic activism develops depend on the role, class and social position that the woman was engaged, which type of social participation were preferred, which institutional fields she worked in or which emancipation she aspired to. Znaniecki's Qualitative approach to research was able to provide the 'close-up' shot of a situation of women in public sphere. Sociologist emphasizes that women's activity in the public sphere is limited in many aspects of their functioning. There should be a stereotypical way of perceiving the role and place of women in society, unequal access to public functions and positions, lower evaluation of women's competences and skills, underestimation of opportunities by referring them to socially assigned tasks in the private sphere. Nevertheless – as 'a precursor to the sociology of citizenship actively expressing himself in the public sphere' (Halas, 2014: 128) – he points out that the inclusion of women and granting

them due voice is a condition for the emergence of a new civilization, based on tolerance, acceptance, diversity, rejection of stereotypes and prejudices.

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