Political Participation and Socioeconomic Status: Gender Gap in Hungary?

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to clarify the differences between men and women in Hungary regarding their level of political participation and how their socioeconomic status influences these differences. The theoretical framework suggests that the level of political participation as well as the socioeconomic status when only including occupation and income is higher for men than for women in Hungary. Education is expected to be higher for women than for men. Additionally, it is expected that socioeconomic status will have a positive effect on political participation. Moreover, the expectation is that the positive effect of education on political participation will be stronger when women already have a high level of occupation and income. The study uses ESS data from round 9 in Hungary with a sample consisting out of 1661 respondents. Using SPSS, several analyses were conducted to test the hypotheses. The results show that the level of political participation is higher for men than for women in Hungary. However, there is no significant effect found regarding socioeconomic status except for income; this is higher for men than for women. Furthermore, for both women and men, their socioeconomic status improves their level of political participation. But only for women, an interaction effect was found.

Keywords: political participation, socioeconomic status, gender, education, occupation, income

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Introduction

The political participation of women has made a lot of progress in the last couple of years; for example as of 2015, women in almost every country in the world have the right to vote (Masad, 2020). Furthermore, there are countries where women are an active part of the government and have a political function (Masad, 2020). However, there is still a lot of work to do in this area. Women are still underrepresented in politics, parliaments, and public life. To express this in numbers; women make up less than 23 per cent of parliamentarians while men make up more than 77 per cent (Masad, 2020). However, it differs extremely among countries to what extent men are overrepresented in politics (Paxton et al., 2007). Women's representation in politics can be of great importance for women's political participation; for example, through more representation women may perceive the political system as more welcoming and are more motivated to participate (Liu & Banaszak, 2017).

Women's political participation is an important goal within the European Union. The European Parliament strongly supports women's empowerment and gender equality in political decision-making. In 2017, they called upon the EU leadership to make gender equality a priority (European Union, 2019a). Some countries which are members of the European Union are doing very well, for example, Sweden and Finland. However, some countries do not meet the gender equality standard. A country in the EU that stands out is Hungary (European Union, 2019b). Hungary has the lowest share of female politicians in both national parliaments and governments in Europe (Kafkadesk, 2019). When looking at the history of women's political participation in Hungary, it is visible that the road to for example women's suffrage had several setbacks. In 1922 women finally received the right to vote (Várnagy, 2013, p. 4). However, this right to vote had a lot of constraints resulting in still little female political participation (Várnagy, 2013, p. 4). In 1945 women in Hungary finally attained full suffrage, nevertheless, due to the communist political system they did not profit from this right (Várnagy, 2013, p. 4). Eventually, communism was replaced by a democratic system, but this still did not contribute to the increase of women making political decisions (Várnagy, 2013, p. 4). The traditions, values, and language of the political system are still characterized by male norms; to increase women's political participation this has to change (Berger & Dorsch, 2010). Furthermore, within Hungarian politics there are a lot of inter-parties and personal conflicts; this makes it even harder to get female participation in politics on the agenda. Since the democratic transition, female participation in politics stayed low;

women were unable to enter and play an active role within the political arena (Ilonszki, 2006, p. 56). Moreover, in an international forum on women's political empowerment there were other challenges mentioned regarding women's political participation; for example their limited access to political networks and parties and unfavourable portrayal of female politicians by the media (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, 2018).

Women's political participation is of great importance and has a lot of influence on the world. Active political participation of females is extremely needed to achieve equality, sustainable development, peace, and democracy (Mlambo et al., 2019, p. 2). Since Hungary is part of the European Union, Hungary is supposed to adjust to the measures taken by the EU in order to increase women's political participation. Also, there is not a lot of research regarding this specific country and the studies which do focus on Hungary are often outdated. Moreover, Hungary is officially a democracy, however, Hungary lacks a lot of democratic freedoms, so it can be doubted if this is really the case (Beauchamp, 2018). Because of this specific country characteristic, the result might deviate from earlier research on other countries and will therefore contribute to the existing literature on political participation. In addition, there are a lot of different definitions used in research for the concept political participation, with all different outcomes (Van Deth, 2014). In a lot of studies they only looked at how women are represented in parliament and other formal political institutes (e.g. Várnagy, 2013; Ilonszki, 2006; Kumar, 2017), however, in this research there also will be looked at the informal side (e.g. demonstrating, boycotting, etc.) of political participation. This makes this research very relevant for the contribution towards studies on political participation. Furthermore, it is interesting to look at which factors influence political participation. Research has suggested that the factors which influence women's political participation vary with the level of socioeconomic development, geography, culture, and the type of political system (Mlambo et al., 2019, p. 2). With regard to the level of socioeconomic development, there can be looked at the socioeconomic status; which is often described as education, income, and occupation (Brady et al., 1995). For example, education can enhance political interest, which will increase some forms of political participation (Brady et al., 1995, p. 271). A lot of research has been done about how socioeconomic status can influence political participation, but not how this differs between men and women regarding their political participation. Hence, the following research questions are formed:

1. *To what extent does the level of political participation differ for men and women in Hungary?*
2. *How does the socioeconomic status (SES) influence this effect?*

These research questions will be answered by using the European Social Survey (ESS) data from round 9 (2018) in Hungary. The next chapter in this thesis will cover the theoretical framework and the definitions of the several variables in this research. Then, this study will discuss the methodology and after that, the results will be shown. Finally, a conclusion and discussion will be given regarding these results.

Theory

Political participation

Political participation is a complicated concept; there are a lot of definitions established within different studies. The definition of political participation has a lot of consequences for the outcomes of research. When a more restrictive and conventional conception of political participation is used, the conclusions for the changing nature of participation differ from when a more inclusive conception is used. (Van Deth, 2014, p. 350). Thus, when only formal activities like voting are included, which is a more restrictive conception of political participation, the outcome of research differs from when also informal activities like boycotting are included. This shows how crucial it is to use a well-constructed definition for political participation. An example of a definition is from Conway (2001, p. 231); ‘’the activities influencing the structure of government, the selection of government authorities or the policies of government’’. Within the literature, there are a lot of definitions similar to this one. Cohen et al. (2001, p. 729) also conceptualized political participation as the activities that have the intent or effect of influencing governmental action. Additionally, Van Deth (2014, p. 351) discussed a simple definition of political participation, namely, citizens’ activities affecting politics. Van Deth (2014) elaborated this definition by including four aspects of political participation which are common in literature and relatively unproblematic. Therefore, this research will be based on this definition. The first point Van Deth (2014, p. 351) mentions is that political participation is considered as an activity or action; this means that for example watching a political program does not constitute participation. What is considered as an activity, is for instance voting, campaign work, protest activities, or attending political meetings (Cohen et al., 2001). Secondly, political

participation applies only to people as citizens, not as politicians or other political positions (Van Deth, 2014, p. 352). A third point he makes is that political participation should be voluntary, therefore, something that is enforced by the law or rules cannot be counted as political participation. The final point is that political participation is targeted and located at the political sector of society and that it is not restricted to a specific phase (e.g. only policy-making) or area (e.g. only national elections); it is about everything that deals with the government, politics or the state (Van Deth, 2014, p. 352).

When looking at the relationship between gender and political participation over time, it is visible that the literature draws the same conclusions; the political participation for women is often lower than for men (Welch, 1977; Conway, 2001; Paxton et al., 2007; Liu & Banaszak, 2017). The relation between political participation and gender is something that has a long history of research. There are different arguments for why this phenomenon still occurs within countries.

Paxton et al. (2007) differentiate between supply-side factors and demand-side factors when talking about women's level of political participation. Supply-side factors focus on personal characteristics like knowledge and interest and resources such as time, education, and economic resources (Paxton et al., 2007, p. 266). Especially time is an important resource within political participation; women have less time than men to participate in politics. Around the world, women still hold the biggest share in household work, they need to cook, clean, and take care of the kids; this leads to less free time that can be spent in political activities (Paxton et al., 2007, p. 267). This has been researched in several countries, with the same conclusions (Craig & Mullan, 2013). In Hungary this is no different; it has been researched that conservative gender roles attitudes and preferences are dominant in Hungary (Scharle, 2015). According to these traditional gender roles, women should not get involved in politics and should be focussing on the household and caretaking of children, therefore, this could be a reason for a lower level of political participation among women (Valentova, 2016, p. 154). Moreover, it has been found that all over the world men are more interested in politics and have more political knowledge than women, which can lead to more political participation among men (Paxton et al., 2007, p. 267). The second kind of factors, demand-side factors focus on the characteristics of countries, electoral systems, or political parties (Paxton et al., 2007, p. 266). An important characteristic of a country is its democratic system; democracies can have a lot of influence on the access of women to political positions (Paxton et al., 2007, p. 268). There are two contradicting theories about this; in democracies, there is a lot of transparency which helps women to understand how the political system works and how

they can have a political function. However, the other theory is that in systems where there are no elections, women can be easily placed into power even when they have no support from the citizens (Paxton et al., 2007, p. 268) When looking at Hungary, the second theory is probably not the case. Even though Hungary is officially classified as a democracy, their system says otherwise; Prime Minister Orban, who has been in power since 2010, replaced the democracy with an authoritarian regime which undermines democratic freedoms like freedom of speech and free press (Beauchamp, 2018). Furthermore, the elections in Hungary are unfair and the media is controlled to such an extent by the government that opposition parties cannot get a fair hearing (Beauchamp, 2018). According to the second theory, this would mean that the Hungarian government could place women in political functions without the support of citizens and other parties. However, Prime Minister Orban and his government are having a conservative view on gender; they think that women should not be in politics but should take care of their household and children (Kafdadesk, 2019). Therefore, women would not be appointed as political leaders or other functions. More likely would be the first theory; according to the United Nations (2011), democracy promotes gender equality and with that the political participation of women. Thus, because of the lacking democratic values, the political participation of women in Hungary would probably be quite low. Paxton et al. (2007), mostly focussed on formal political participation like running for and holding political office, even though this is not the same definition of political participation as is used in this research it influences informal political participation as well. This is explained following the research of Liu & Banaszak (2017).

Liu & Banaszak (2017) discussed in their research how women's descriptive representation in politics can influence women's political participation. The representation of women can be a huge factor in how political participation is established (Liu & Banaszak, 2017). They mention four specific effects; first, women's political participation can be hindered by the perception of the political system. When not many women are represented in politics, women may perceive the system as not welcoming or think that women cannot become successful in this particular arena, which will reduce women's political participation (Liu & Banaszak, 2017, p.134). The second factor they mention is the lack of political ambition among women. It has been researched that women often have lower self-confidence and fewer aspirations to run for political office than men; when having political female role models their political ambition can be increased. They will see opportunities for success in political action and this will increase actual forms of political participation (Liu & Banaszak, 2017, p. 134). Thirdly, when seeing the great influence female politicians can have, women

are more likely to believe that political participation by citizens can have a huge impact on society and are inspired to become more politically active (Liu & Banaszak, 2017, p. 135). Finally, when women hold powerful positions within politics, the institutions themselves are changed by women's input. This can lead to more attractive and welcoming political institutions for female citizens, which leads to a higher likeliness of female political participation (Liu & Banaszak, 2017, p. 135). Thus, the main point is that by seeing more women in politics the political participation of women will increase. However, in Hungary, the descriptive representation of women stayed below 10 per cent from 1990 until 2018; this is very low (Ilonszki & Vajda, 2019). According to the theory of Liu & Banaszak (2017), it can be assumed that women's political participation in Hungary is also low.

When taking all the above-mentioned research into account, the following hypothesis is formulated:

[H1] The level of political participation is lower for women than for men in Hungary.

Furthermore, when talking about resources, it is found that the largest differences in participation are due to status-related aspects like income and education. Moreover, people who are highly educated and have a higher social status participate more often in politics than people with a lower status (Campbell, 2013, p. 37). Therefore, it is important to look at socioeconomic status.

Socioeconomic status

Socioeconomic status can be stated as a measure of the combination of someone's economic and social status. The most common measures of socioeconomic status are education, income, and occupation (Baker, 2014).

As already mentioned before, Hungary is a very conservative country where traditional gender roles are normalized (Horn & Keller, 2015). Men in Hungary spend half the time doing domestic work than women (Horn & Keller, 2015, p. 280). Additionally, women in Hungary often have lower positions in the labour market than men. This is again due to the traditional gender roles; they hinder women in building their careers, and as a result, only a few women have prestigious positions in the labour market (Czibere, 2015). This hinder can be for example through the burden of childcare for women; women are sometimes forced to give up their jobs and take care of their kids instead (Amnesty International, 2020). Furthermore, there is a visible wage gap between Hungarian men and women; this is already observable at the labour market entrance (Horn & Keller, 2015, p. 283). Horn & Keller (2015)

have concluded with their research that the wage gap in Hungary is due to gender culture or some form of discrimination since they could not find any institutional factors explaining this gap; employers pay 15 per cent less to similarly educated and skilled women (Horn & Keller, 2015, p. 294). Thus, when only focusing on occupation and income as part of socioeconomic status it can be concluded that men probably have a higher SES than women in Hungary. However, when looking at education, it is visible that as in most countries Hungarian women already surpassed the level of education of men (Horn & Keller, 2015, p. 285). Therefore, the following hypotheses are formulated:

[H2] The level of socioeconomic status is lower for women than for men in Hungary when only including income and occupation.

[H3] The level of education is higher for women than for men in Hungary.

It has been found in previous research that higher educated people find political information more accessible and interpretable. Furthermore, higher education can stimulate politically relevant skills and political contacts; this results in high levels of political participation (Scott & Acock, 1979; Persson, 2015). Moreover, Cohen et al. (2001, p. 731) suggest that people with a higher socioeconomic status participate more in politics than people with a lower socioeconomic status. The particular reason behind this might be that citizens with higher SES have more resources that help them in the political participation process. These people often have more opportunities to participate and more personal contacts with persons related to politics (Cohen et al., 2001, p. 731). For example, when someone has money to spend, they may donate to a political organization which will increase their contacts with this organization. Additionally, people with a higher SES feel more obligation and peer pressure to participate in politics since they have a higher status (Cohen et al., 2001, p. 731).

According to Nie et al. (1996), education does influence political engagement through life circumstances like occupational status and wealth. In this model, education would work like a sorting mechanism in which a higher education relative to other people would mean a closer assigned rank to political networks, which will in turn positively influence levels of political engagement (Nie et al., 1996, p. 6). This model is also used in the research of Campbell (2013, p. 38), here it is suggested that education only drives political participation through its role in determining SES, so not looking at one's possessed knowledge. This can mean that when someone has a high level of education, the positive relationship between education and political participation will be stronger when they also have a high level of income and occupation. To explore this relationship two hypotheses are set up:

[H4] The level of political participation will improve for women in Hungary if they have a high socioeconomic status.

[H5] The higher the occupational status and income, the stronger the positive effect of level of education on political participation of women in Hungary

See Appendix A for a visualisation of the hypotheses.

Data and methodology

Data

In this research quantitative data is used to answer the questions to what extent political participation differs for men and women in Hungary and how socioeconomic status influences this effect. The data included in this research is the quantitative data of the European Social Survey (ESS) from 2018, round 9. The European Social Survey (ESS) is a biennial cross-national survey of attitudes and behaviour. ESS uses cross-sectional probability samples which are representative of all persons aged 15 and over resident within private households in each country (European Social Survey, 2021). To ensure comparability, all countries must use random probability sampling (European Social Survey, 2021). The data is collected via face-to-face CAPI interviews (European Social Survey, 2021). For this research, only the data from Hungary in round 9 is used. There were 1661 respondents in total from Hungary in round 9. For the first two hypotheses, both women and men were included, and when correcting for missing values the total *N* was 748. For hypothesis 3 and 4 women and men were separated (*N* females = 445, *N* males = 303).

Variables

Political participation (polpart). The variable political participation was created by taking nine questions regarding political activities. The first question was: 'Did you vote in the last Hungary national election in [month/year]?' (*vote*). The answer options for this question were: Yes (1), No (2), Not eligible to vote (3), Refusal (8), Don't know (8). This question is eventually removed from the variable due to a low Cronbach's Alpha. Further explanation can be found under 'Methods'. The second question was: 'During the last 12 months, have you contacted a politician, government or local government official?' (*contplt*). The third question was: 'During the last 12 months, have you worked in a political party or action group?' (*wrkprty*). The fourth question was: 'During the last 12 months, have you

worked in another organisation or association?' (*wrkorg*). The fifth question was: 'During the last 12 months, have you worn or displayed a campaign badge/sticker?' (*badge*). The sixth question was: 'During the last 12 months, have you signed a petition?' (*sgnptit*). The seventh question was: 'During the last 12 months, have you taken part in a lawful public demonstration?' (*pbldmn*). The eighth question was: 'During the last 12 months, have you boycotted certain products?' (*bctprd*). Finally, the ninth question was: 'During the last 12 months, have you posted or shared anything about politics online, for example on blogs, via email or on social media such as Facebook or Twitter?' (*pstplonl*). The answer options for all of these questions were the same, namely: Yes (1), No (2), Refusal (7), Don't know (8).

Gender (gndr). Gender is a dichotomous variable with the answer options: Male (1), Female (2).

Income (netinum). To measure the level of income the net pay/pensions/social benefits of the respondent were assessed. This was measured by the question: 'What is your usual weekly/monthly/annual net pay/pensions/social benefits after tax and compulsory deductions?' This was an open question.

Occupation (isco08). The variable occupation was measured with three questions, namely: 'What is/was the name or title of your main job?', 'In your main job, what kind of work do/did you do most of the time?', 'What training or qualifications are/were needed for the job?' These were open-ended questions and depending on the answer it has been sorted into categories based on the ISCO-08 categorization. ISCO-08 contains ten major group categories namely: Managers (1), Professionals (2), Technicians and Associate Professionals (3), Clerical Support Workers (4), Services and Sales Workers (5), Skilled Agricultural, Forestry and Fishery Workers (6), Craft and Related Trades Workers (7), Plant and Machine Operators and Assemblers (8), Elementary Occupations (9), Armed Forces Occupations (0). This variable is eventually recoded into a Standard International Socio-Economic Index of occupational status, the ISEI scale. This is a scale that is based on the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-08) (Ganzeboom, De Graaf & Treiman, 1992). A higher score on this scale means a higher occupational status.

Income + Occupation (*occ_inc*). The variable Income + Occupation is the combination of the z-scores of the variables income and occupation. A higher score means a higher level of occupation and income.

Education (isced). Education has been measured through the question: 'What is the highest level of education you have successfully completed?' The answers to this question are generated into a new variable according to the ISCED classification. This variable had the

following categories: Less than lower secondary (1), Lower secondary (2), Lower tier upper secondary (3), Upper tier upper secondary (4), Advanced vocational, sub-degree (5), Lower tertiary education, BA level (6), Higher tertiary education, >=MA (7), Other (55), Refusal (77), Don't know (88).

Socioeconomic status (ses). The variable socioeconomic status is the combination of the z-scores of the variables income, occupation and education. A higher score means a higher socioeconomic status.

Age (agea). The variable age is calculated out of the variable year of birth. This was measured through the open question: 'In what year were you born?'

Methods

Before analysis, the dataset was checked for missing data and outliers. The data was then analysed using statistical software SPSS. The dataset has already been filtered so that only respondents from Hungary were included in the analysis.

First of all, the answer options for the 9 variables for political participation are recoded into No (0) and Yes (1). To know whether the 9 questions can be added together a reliability analysis is conducted. The Cronbach's Alpha was 0.559 for the 9 questions together. When removing the variable vote, the Cronbach's Alpha increased to 0.674. Therefore, vote is not going to be a part of the variable political participation (see Appendix B for more details). The variable political participation is created by taking eight questions together regarding political activities; this is the dependent variable. Secondly, the variable occupation is recoded into the ISEI scale. According to the definition of political participation, politicians should not be included in the analysis. Therefore, the respondents who answered 'Legislators' when asked about their occupation are removed from the analysis (value on the ISEI scale = 68.77); this was 1 respondent. Another job category that could include politicians was 'Senior Officials of Special-interest Organizations'; the concerned job would be political party leader (International Labour Office, 2012). This was again 1 respondent, however, this person answered 'No' on the question of whether he has been working in a political party or action group, during the last 12 months. This means that he does not has a job as a political party leader and therefore, can be included in the analysis. Socioeconomic status is calculated by creating z-scores of occupation, education and income and adding them together. Income + Occupation is created by combining the z-scores of occupation and income. The beforementioned variables are all independent variables.

The first hypothesis, the level of political participation is lower for women than for

men in Hungary; the second hypothesis, the level of socioeconomic status is lower for women than for men in Hungary when only including income and occupation; and the third hypothesis, the level of education is higher for women than for men in Hungary, are tested through conducting several independent samples t-tests. Hypothesis 4, the level of political participation will improve for women in Hungary if they have a high socioeconomic status, and hypothesis 5, the higher the occupational status and income, the stronger the positive effect of level of education on political participation of women in Hungary, are tested through multiple linear regressions. There is controlled for age with the last two hypotheses because it has been researched that the level of political interest will increase with age (Neundorf et al., 2013, p. 2). Finally, hypothesis 4 and 5 were tested for men as well.

Results

To have an indication of what the dataset looks like, the descriptive statistics of the variables used in this research have been explored. The dataset has been sorted by gender in order to see the first differences between men and women. It is visible in Table 1 that the mean for political participation for both women and men is quite low (*M* females = 0.227, *M* males = 0.360). According to the means, the political participation is slightly lower for women than for men in Hungary, to find out if this difference is significant a t-test will be conducted later on. Looking at the means of the different forms of political participation, it is visible that every form is higher for men than for women, except boycotting. This form is slightly higher for women than for men. Furthermore, it is visible that the average income for men is higher than for women, while the average level of occupation is slightly higher for women than for men. When looking at the averages of the variable of the combination of the z-scores of income and occupation, it can be seen that it is higher for men than for women, this is the same for socioeconomic status. The means of education indicate that on average women have a higher level of education than men, however, this is a very small difference. Furthermore, women are on average a little bit older than men in this dataset.

Table 1

Descriptive statistics dependent and independent variables

		Females		Males		Total	
	Range	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Political Participation	0-5	0.227	0.665	0.360	0.920	0.281	0.780
Contact	0-1	0.065	-	0.086	-	0.074	-
Work Party	0-1	0.000	-	0.007	-	0.003	-
Work Organisation	0-1	0.027	-	0.056	-	0.039	-
Badge	0-1	0.011	-	0.023	-	0.016	-
Petition	0-1	0.036	-	0.063	-	0.047	-
Demonstration	0-1	0.023	-	0.033	-	0.027	-
Boycot	0-1	0.029	-	0.026	-	0.028	-
Online Post	0-1	0.036	-	0.066	-	0.048	-
Income	0-1000000	141478.960	81237.173	166295.780	75675.222	151531.760	79915.129
Income (z-score)	-1.582-9.222	-0.054	0.878	0.214	0.817	0.055	0.863
Occupation	11.560-86.720	36.092	19.201	34.078	18.502	35.276	18.934
Occupation (z-score)	-1.301-2.463	-0.072	0.961	-0.173	0.926	-0.113	0.948
Income + Occupation (z-score)	-1.250-4.110	-0.063	0.760	0.021	0.707	-0.029	0.740
Education	1-7	3.640	1.355	3.610	1.305	3.620	1.334

Education (z-score)	-1.932-2.362	-0.045	0.969	-0.066	0.934	-0.051	0.956
Socioeconomic status (z-score)	-1.440-2.820	-0.058	0.769	-0.008	0.725	-0.054	0.955
Age	20-90	55.980	17.342	53.530	17.329	54.990	17.367

Note. N_{total} = 748, $N_{females}$ = 445, N_{males} = 303.

An independent samples t-test was conducted to test hypothesis 1: the level of political participation is lower for women than for men in Hungary. This t-test will compare the level of political participation between women and men. The results of the t-test are displayed in Table 2. It is visible that the average level of political participation of women in Hungary (*M* = 0.227; *SD* = 0.665) is lower than the average level of men in Hungary (*M* = 0.360; *SD* = 0.920). This difference was significant: *t*(510.712) = 2.157, *p* = 0.031/2 = 0.016. This means that the first hypothesis is supported; thus there is a significant difference in political participation between men and women.

Table 2

Independent samples t-tests (H1, H2, H3)

	Females		Males		
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*t*-test
Political participation	0.227	0.665	0.360	0.920	2.157*
Income + occupation	-0.063	0.760	0.021	0.707	1.129
Income	141478.960	81237.173	166295.780	75675.222	4.216***
Occupation	36.092	19.201	34.078	18.502	-1.439
Education	3.640	1.355	3.610	1.305	-0.289

Note. $N_{females}$ = 445, N_{males} = 303.

*=p<0.05 **=p<0.01 ***=p<0.001.

Again to test the second hypothesis, the level of socioeconomic status is lower for women than for men in Hungary when only including occupation and income, an independent samples t-test was conducted. It is visible in Table 2, that the average level of occupation and income for females in Hungary (M = -0.063; SD = 0.760) is lower than the average level of occupation and income of males in Hungary (M = 0.021; SD = 0.707). However, this difference was not significant: $t(746) = 1.520$; $p = 0.129/2 = 0.065$. This means that the second hypothesis is not supported by the data; it is not proven that there is a significant difference between the level of occupation and income of males and females. When looking at income and occupation separately it is visible that the level of income is significantly higher for men (M = 166295.780; SD = 75675.222) than for women (M = 141478.960; SD = 81237.173): $t(746) = 4.216$; $p < 0.001/2$. While the level of occupation is higher for women (M = 36.092; SD = 19.201) than for men (M = 34.078; SD = 18.502). However, this effect is not significant $t(664.338) = -1.439$; $p = 0.151/2 = 0.076$.

The third hypothesis, the level of education is higher for women than for men in Hungary is also tested through an independent samples t-test. When looking at Table 2, it is visible that the average level of education for females (M = 3.640; SD = 1.355) is slightly higher than the average level of males (M = 3.610; SD = 1.305). Nevertheless, this result was again not significant: $t(746) = -0.289$; $p = 0.773/2 = 0.387$. Therefore, hypothesis 3 is not supported by the data.

To test hypothesis 4 and hypothesis 5 the dataset is filtered so that only females are included. Also, the dataset is adjusted so that all variables have the same N. Now the dataset consists out of 445 females. The fourth hypothesis is tested through a multiple linear regression, with as dependent variable political participation, and as independent variable socioeconomic status. Age was added as a control variable. There has been tested for multicollinearity; this was not the case (see Appendix C for more details). As is visible in Table 3, model 1; there is a significant positive relationship between political participation and socioeconomic status (B = 0.267; $p < 0.001$). When adding age (model 2) it is visible that there is still a significant relationship between political participation and socioeconomic status (B = 0.289; $t(442) = 6.940$; $p < 0.001$). Socioeconomic status does explain a significant part of the variance in political participation ($R2$ = 0.100; $F(2.442) = 24.630$; $p < 0.001$). Age is not a significant predictor (B = 0.003; p = 0.138). Thus, hypothesis 4, the level of political participation will improve for women in Hungary if they have a high socioeconomic status, is supported by the data.

Table 3

Multiple linear regression (H4, females)

	Model 1		Model 2	
	B	*SE B*	*B*	*SE B*
Constant[1]	0.242	0.030***	0.090	0.107
Socioeconomic status	0.267	0.039***	0.289	0.042***
Age	-	-	0.003	0.002

Note. $N = 445$.

[1]Dependent variable: political participation.

*=$p<0.05$ **=$p<0.01$ ***=$p<0.001$.

Hypothesis 5 is also tested through a multiple linear regression. The dependent variable is again political participation and the independent variables are education, the combination variable of income and occupation and there is also an interaction variable added to the model, namely the product of education with income and occupation. Again, age is added as a control variable. When looking at model 1 in Table 4, it can be seen that education ($B = 0.160$); $t(442) = 3.681$; $p < 0.001$) is a significant predictor and it has a positive effect on political participation. The variable of the combination of occupation and income is not significant ($B = 0.094$; $p = 0.090$). When adding age as a control variable (model 2), education is still significant ($B = 0.184$; $p < 0.001$) and income + occupation remains not significant ($B = 0.096$; $p = 0.085$). Age is not a significant predictor ($p = 0.066$). As can be seen in Table 4, model 3, when the interaction variable is added, income + occupation has stayed not significant ($B = 0.067$; $p = 0.239$), education has stayed positively significant ($B = 0.179$; $p < 0.001$) and age is also not a significant predictor ($p = 0.173$). The interaction variable has a significant positive effect ($B = 0.075$; $p = 0.041$). This means that hypothesis 5, the higher the occupational status and income, the stronger the positive effect of level of education on political participation of women in Hungary, is supported by the data.

Table 4

Multiple linear regression (H5, females)

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	B	*SE B*	*B*	*SE B*	*B*	*SE B*
Constant[1]	0.240	0.030***	0.048	0.109	0.054	0.108
Income + Occupation (z-score)	0.094	0.056	0.096	0.055	0.067	0.057
Education (z-score)	0.160	0.044***	0.184	0.045***	0.179	0.045***
Age	-	-	0.003	0.002	0.003	0.002
Occupation + Income*Education	-	-	-	-	0.075	0.036*

Note. $N = 445$.

[1]Dependent variable: political participation.

*=$p<0.05$ **=$p<0.01$ ***=$p<0.001$.

Subsequently, there has been looked whether hypotheses 4 and 5 are supported for men instead of women. The dataset is now filtered for males; which gives an *N* of 304 respondents. Again a multiple linear regression is performed. First, it is tested whether socioeconomic status improves the level of political participation (hypothesis 4). As can be seen in Table 5, model 1, there is a significant positive relationship between socioeconomic status and political participation ($B = 0.392$; $t(301) = 5.628$; $p < 0.001$). When controlling for age this relationship is still significant ($B = 0.411$; $p < 0.001$). Age is not a significant predictor ($B = 0.005$; $p = 0.091$). As well as with females, socioeconomic status does explain a significant part of the variance in political participation ($R2 = 0.322$; $F(2.300) = 17.378$; $p < 0.001$).

Table 5

Multiple linear regression (H4, males)

	Model 1		Model 2	
	B	*SE B*	*B*	*SE B*
Constant[1]	0.363	0.050***	0.096	0.165

Socioeconomic status	0.392	0.070***	0.411	0.070***
Age	-	-	0.005	0.003

Note. N = 303.

[1]Dependent variable: political participation.

*=p<0.05 **=p<0.01 ***=p<0.001.

To test hypothesis 5 for men, the higher the occupational status and income, the stronger the positive effect of level of education on political participation, again a multiple linear regression is conducted. As is visible in Table 6, model 1, education is a significant factor (B = 0.277; t(300) = 3.652; p < 0.001) and income + occupation is not significant (B = 0.081; p = 0.420). When controlling for age (model 2), education remains the only significant variable (B = 0.293; p < 0.001). Age is not a significant predictor (p = 0.065). In model 3, the interaction variable is added; education remains significant (B = 0.263; p = 0.001), income + occupation remains not significant (p = 0.721) and age is also not significant (p = 0.078). Finally, the interaction variable is also not significant (p = 0.099). It can be concluded that hypothesis 5 is not supported by the data for males.

Table 6

Multiple linear regression (H5, males)

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	B	*SE B*	*B*	*SE B*	*B*	*SE B*
Constant[1]	0.376	0.051***	0.087	0.164	0.046	0.166
Income + Occupation (z-score)	0.081	0.100	0.084	0.100	0.037	0.103
Education (z-score)	0.277	0.076***	0.293	0.076***	0.263	0.078**
Age	-	-	0.005	0.003	0.005	0.003
Occupation + Income*Education	-	-	-	-	0.114	0.069

Note. N = 303.

[1]Dependent variable: political participation.

*=p<0.05 **=p<0.01 ***=p<0.001.

Conclusion and Discussion

This research aimed to clarify to what extent the level of political participation differed for men and women in Hungary and how their socioeconomic status influenced this effect. Political participation consisted out of eight different forms; contacting politicians, working in a political party/action group, working in another organisation/association, displaying a campaign badge/sticker, signing a petition, taking part in a lawful public demonstration, boycotting certain products, and finally posting or sharing anything about politics online. Socioeconomic status included three variables namely; income, occupation and education. The hypotheses are formulated using several theories. Liu & Banaszak (2017) and Paxton et al. (2007) gave reasons for the lower level of political participation for women compared to men. Liu & Banaszak (2017) suggested that the descriptive representation of women does affect the level of political participation; the more women are represented in politics the higher the political participation among women. This descriptive representation is very low in Hungary, thus, according to the theory, it will lead to a lower women's political participation. Moreover, Paxton et al. (2007) blamed the supply-side and demand-side factors; women are disadvantaged by factors like time and the country characteristics of Hungary. Women in Hungary have less time to focus on politics since it is expected that they take care of the household and children. Furthermore, the questionable democracy is an important country characteristic and can hinder women's political participation because of the lack of democratic values; after all a democracy promotes gender equality (United Nations, 2011). Using these theories it was expected that women, in general, have a lower level of political participation than men in Hungary. It was confirmed by the results that women indeed have a lower level of political participation than men. However, this difference was not very big; for both women, as men in Hungary, the political participation was quite low. Moreover, for every form of political participation, it was higher for men than for women. This answers the first research question: To what extent does the level of political participation differ for men and women in Hungary.

Furthermore, Horn & Keller (2015) explained how women in Hungary have a lower level of income than men; women have a greater share in domestic work and there is also a wage gap due to gender discrimination. In addition, Czibere (2015) stated that women in Hungary often have a lower occupational status than men because of traditional gender roles. Following these theories, it was expected that the level of income and occupation would be lower for women than for men in Hungary. This was first tested by taking income and

occupation together; this gave no significant result. However, when looking at the variables separately it was indeed confirmed that men had a higher level of income than women. More interestingly, occupation was higher for women than for men but this was not significant. So there is no significant difference between the level of occupation of men and women while there is one regarding their level of income. This can suggest, as mentioned by Horn & Keller (2015), that gender discrimination regarding income is a big problem in Hungary. Furthermore, Horn & Keller (2015) discussed that women have a higher level of education than men in Hungary. This is not supported by the results; there is no significant effect found. However, this might be due to the fact that the average age of women was higher than the average age of men; women of older generations might have had less access to education in their time because of discriminatory social attitudes (Stoet & Geary, 2020).

Scott & Acock (1979), Persson (2015) and Cohen et al. (2001) state that socioeconomic status does positively influence political participation through resources like politically relevant contacts and skills. This is supported by the data; having a high socioeconomic status will indeed improve the level of political participation. The same was found for men, so there are no substantive differences found.

Furthermore, according to the theory of Campbell (2013) and Nie et al. (1996), it was expected that the higher the level of income and occupational status, the stronger the positive influence education has on political participation. Following this theory, it was suggested that education only has a strong effect on political participation when the other factors of socioeconomic status are already high. This was only confirmed for women; thus, the level of income and occupational status for men does not matter for how strong the influence of education on political participation is, while for women it does matter. A possible explanation for this phenomenon might be that men in Hungary already have a higher status in society through gender roles in which they have easy access to political activities (Scharle, 2015), so they might not need these life circumstances like occupational status and income to improve their political participation like women need. Their education might be already enough. Furthermore, it has been researched that education, compared to the other indicators for socioeconomic status, has the strongest relationship with political participation (Cohen et al., 2001, p. 731). When keeping the results of hypothesis 5 in mind, the strength of this relationship might differ between men and women. This can be a starting point for future research. Moreover, age was not a significant predictor, thus the effects are not influenced by age.

When taking all the above-mentioned results together an answer is provided to the

second research question: How does socioeconomic status influence the gender differences regarding political participation?

A limitation of this research is that the variable political participation was not fully reliable. Because of a low Cronbach's Alpha, voting was removed from the variable, however, the Cronbach's Alpha after removal was still not sufficient, namely 0.674. The reason for the low Cronbach's Alpha before removing voting might be that because in comparison with the other measurements for political participation voting might be relatively easy to do. Therefore, it did not correspond well with the other forms like demonstrating, which might be more difficult to do (Liu & Banaszak, 2017, p. 140). The reason for the still not sufficient Cronbach's Alpha after removing voting might be that the several forms of political participation were very diverse; posting something online about politics differs a lot from actually work in a political party. Another point worth mentioning is that a higher N might have had different results for the analyses; for the analyses, there were only 304 men and 445 women used while the whole dataset existed out of 1661 respondents. Furthermore, more control variables could have been used in order to increase the validity of the research.

With this research, there is more information collected on how socioeconomic status influences women's political participation in Hungary and how this differs from men. This research is unique since it is specified for Hungary and the differences in political participation and socioeconomic status between men and women; therefore, it can be a strong basis for future research. Furthermore, this dataset has used random probability sampling which improves the level of reliability. Also, this sample gives the possibility to make inferences about the population because it represents the target population. Another strength of this study is that it looks at a lot of informal forms of political participation. This is not often done in other research; the definition for political participation often is based on formal forms; for example, voting. Also, even though there are not many control variables used, the addition of the control variable age has improved the validity of this research.

This research focused specifically on the supply-side factors of a low level of political participation. To increase knowledge about this subject, future research can look at the demand-side factors (e.g. country characteristics) or there can be looked at other supply-side factors which can influence women's political participation; for example personal characteristics or human capital. Additionally, the findings regarding the gender differences of occupation and income can be more researched in depth; for example, there can be looked at what the specific reason for these differences is and how discrimination and gender roles influence this. Another interesting finding is that the interaction effect of education and

income + occupation on political participation is only significant for women; future research may focus on the reasons behind this phenomenon. Moreover, the dataset could be limited by specific age categories; for example, different results could be found when looking at young women only. Finally, this research focussed on political participation specifically in Hungary; it might be interesting to see if the results are the same in a country with similar characteristics (e.g. Poland or Bulgaria).

To decrease the gender differences found in this research, the Hungarian government must take action to reduce discrimination in the labour market in order to decrease the gender wage gap, mentioned by Horn & Keller (2015). Moreover, Hungary should promote political functions for women (e.g. through gender quota) because this will in turn increase the general political participation of women (Liu & Banaszak, 2017). As was mentioned before, it is questionable whether Hungary is a democracy. However, democratic values are of great importance to reduce gender gaps (United Nations, 2011). This research proves that there are still significant gender gaps in Hungary that should be taken into account when creating policies. Therefore, the government of Hungary should pay more attention to this problem and take measures in order to close this gap.

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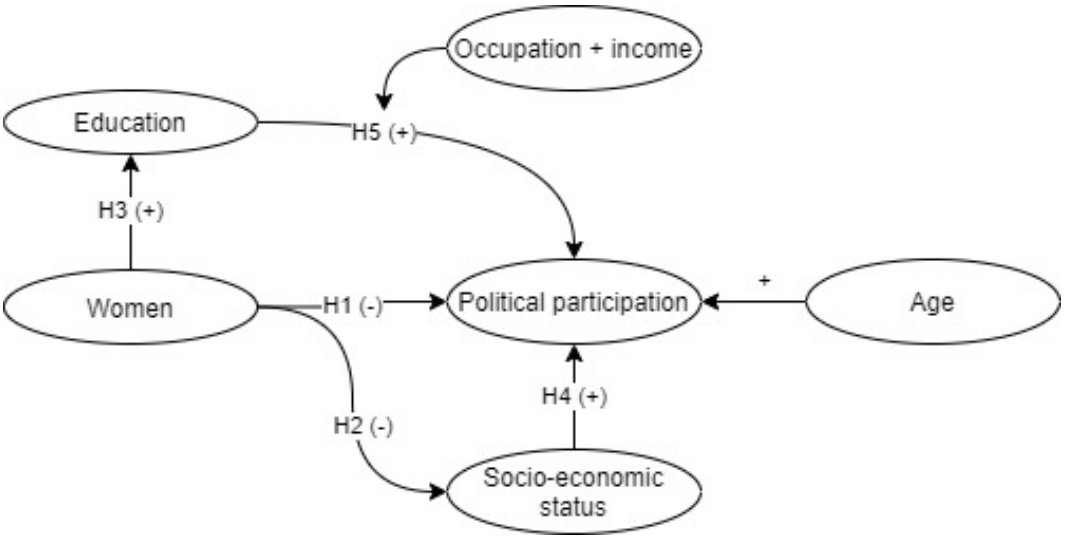
Appendix A

Model A1



Appendix B

Table B1

Cronbach's Alpha Political Participation

	Cronbach's Alpha if item deleted
Vote	0.674
Contact	0.502
Work Party	0.543
Work Organisation	0.504
Badge	0.518
Petition	0.498
Demonstration	0.510
Boycot	0.520
Online Post	0.521

Note. Cronbach's Alpha = 0.559.

Appendix C

Table C1

VIF multiple linear regression hypothesis 4, females

	Model 1	Model 2
	VIF	VIF
Socioeconomic status	1.000	1.145
Age		1.145

Note. *N* = 445.

Table C2

VIF multiple linear regression hypothesis 5, females

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
	VIF	VIF	VIF
Income + Occupation	1.984	1.984	2.111
Education	1.984	2.158	2.165
Age		1.186	1.244
Income + Occupation*Education			1.166

Note. *N* = 445.

Table C3

VIF multiple linear regression hypothesis 4, males

	Model 1	Model 2
	VIF	VIF
Socioeconomic status	1.000	1.028

Age	1.028

Note. *N* = 304.

Table C4

VIF multiple linear regression hypothesis 5, males

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
	VIF	VIF	VIF
Income + Occupation	1.991	1.991	2.153
Education	1.991	2.017	2.132
Age		1.033	1.035
Income + Occupation*Education			1.460

Note. *N* = 304.