

The problem of women's crime. Selected tendencies*

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1. Introduction

Since the earliest time a woman has been considered a weaker person, more delicate than a man and requiring protection. Indeed, it is difficult to contest the obviousness of this claim which, considering the unquestionable bio-psychological conditions, remains relevant. However, for the same reasons for which the necessity to eliminate any threats a woman may be exposed to is perceived, the fact is sometimes challenged that a woman can herself become such a threat to others, as if the gender condition could determine the execution of crime or prevent it. In the collective consciousness an image of a woman — a wife, a woman — a mother and a woman — a caretaker, who fulfils social roles assigned to her, concentrating on daily activities, was generated and has been preserved for ages. Another image of a woman — a perpetrator, is obviously in conflict with the concept of female roles developed in such a way. Until recently, identification of a woman as an entity executing only caretaking and parental (motherhood) activities blocked the ability to perceive her also from another, not necessarily positive perspective and accepting a possibility

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of woman's participation in deviant or criminogenic behaviours¹. A look at a woman as a person exceeding legal standards continues to generate extreme pejorative social feelings, from condemnation to terror, and emerges as a specific taboo. As currently stressed: "Despite huge changes in terms of a woman's role in the society media continue to suggest that we should be appalled when hands caring for children are able to steal, rob and beat, as if femininity were to serve as a vaccine against crime. Due to the fact that women, as compared to men, so rarely inflict feelings of disgust and disapproval, female perpetrators are treated as a certain phenomenon"². At the same time, the claim formulated by J. Błachut seems extremely legitimate in this context, questioning the sense of asking the question why women commit crime. The reason is that there is no doubt that crime is the type of behaviour which may be performed both by a man and a woman. Thus — as the author indicates — it would be even strange if women refrained from such behaviours altogether³.

At this point, concentrating on the phenomenon of female crime, it seems necessary to search for an answer to the question what the general features of such crime happen to be, what its conditions are and what triggers such crime, rather than why women happen to be perpetrators of criminal offences.

Considering the fact that although from a statistics perspective women's crime is always placed at a level lower than men's crime, criminologists currently observe its sustainable and quite radical growth⁴.

¹ E. Sosnowska, "Społeczne uwarunkowania przestępczości kobiet", *Prace Naukowe Akademii im. Jana Długosza w Częstochowie* 2009, no. XVIII, p. 297; E. Zielińska, "Kobiety i wymiar sprawiedliwości", *Prawo i Pleć* 2001, no. 1, pp. 5ff.

² M. Cabalski, *Kobiety jako sprawczynie przestępstw i aktów przemocy*, Warszawa 2014, p. 27.

³ J. Błachut, *Kobiety recydywistki w świetle badań kryminologicznych*, Wrocław 1981, pp. 47–48.

⁴ J. Błachut, A. Gaberle, K. Krajewski, *Kryminologia*, Gdańsk 2007, p. 93; R. Szczepanik, "Teoretyczne perspektywy interpretacji przestępczości kobiet i mężczyzn", [in:] *Teoretyczne perspektywy badań nad edukacją rodzajową*, red. M. Chomczyńska-Rubacha, Łódź 2007, p. 156; Z. Majchrzyk, *Kiedy kobieta zabija. Motywy, osobowość, relacja sprawca-ofiara, strategie obronne*, Warszawa 2009, p. 34; H. Machel, "Przestępczość kobiet i wobec kobiet — spojrzenie kryminologiczno-penitencjarne", *Resocjalizacja Polska* 2014, no. 8, pp. 15–16.

Perhaps this phenomenon is a result of the variability of a previously developed, less aggressive pattern of women's response to difficult and conflict situations, perhaps it is an indicator of the basic evolution in women's reaction to stress or diversified threats or, potentially, a result of volatility of female socialising schemes. Combination of presented doubts justifies the search for an answer to the question concerning the growth, rather than existence, of such crime in various criminological theories, with diversified aetiology. Unfortunately, research related to explaining the specific nature of female crime carried out so far is neither satisfying nor conclusive⁵. Its excessive generality is often stressed or narrowing its scope only to the analysis of isolated conditions (biological, cultural, psychological, etc.) of crime for the examined category of female perpetrators. Unfortunately, even the change in research methods and creating hybrid theoretical constructions (combining elements of diverse theories), aimed at a comprehensive explanation of the analysed pathology, is not legitimate since it allows for formulating only ad hoc and unsustainable conclusions, instead of generic assumptions explaining the genesis of the phenomenon and components of this process⁶. From this perspective, focusing on determining the most symptomatic properties of women's crime seems justified for the purpose of deeper understanding of its specific nature.

2. Selected tendencies of women's crime

In 2005, in the *Progress of Psychiatry and Neurology* journal, a thesis was formulated that violence in interpersonal contacts is a common phenomenon since it occurs in all social layers and latitudes, as well as in

⁵ K. Sitnik, "Teorie biologiczne w procesie wyjaśniania etiologii przestępczości kobiet", *Folia Iuridica Universitatis Wratislaviensis* 1, 2012, no. 2, pp. 191–206; D. Woźniakowska-Fajst, "Przestępczość kobiet i dziewcząt — wybrane teorie kryminologiczne", *Archiwum Kryminologii XXIX–XXX*, Warszawa 2007–2008, pp. 242–243; M. Marczak, "Uwarunkowania przestępczości kobiet w świetle wybranych teorii", [in:] *Ciągłość i zmiana w obszarze profilaktyki społecznej i resocjalizacji*, ed. D. Rybczyńska, Zielona Góra 2002, p. 63.

⁶ J. Błachut, "Płeć a przestępczość", [in:] *Nauka wobec przestępczości. Księga ku czci Prof. T. Hanauska*, ed. J. Błachut, M. Szewczyk, J. Wójcikiewicz, Kraków 2001, pp. 166ff.; Z. Majchrzyk, *Zabójczynie i zabójcy*, Warszawa 2008, pp. 130ff.

each cultural circle. The authors studying the problem of crime among women — M. Makara-Studzińska, A. Grzywa and R. Turek — found that they mainly use verbal aggression against their victims (screaming, insults), whereas physical violence is used only if they are forced to use it. They usually resort to its use in self-defence acts against a man. In the researchers' opinion, the claim of women's passivity and helplessness is also not true since elements of aggression often occur in their behaviour, therefore the conviction that only men are aggressive and women usually remain helpless does not reflect the truth⁷. However, the final observation arising from presented research remains the key issue, according to which the frequency of using violence and demonstrating aggressive behaviours is similar for both genders, nevertheless the patterns of those behaviours remain diversified⁸.

Looking at the social role of women today, it should be indicated that radical change in areas of their activity is visible. They undertake new professional tasks and obligations more frequently, strive to satisfy their aspirations, confidently entering areas of activities once designed exclusively for men. Unfortunately, this presence of women in the social space has also a broader dimension and is more strongly marked at the level of criminogenic behaviours⁹. Accordingly, criminal offence once characteristic mainly of men (e.g. robbery, theft and extortion, fight) currently starts to be committed also by women. In this sense, their competing with men enters into a very dangerous space since it enhances dissemination and consolidation of negative, often pathological patterns of behaviour among female perpetrators, until recently reserved exclusively for men, increases the level of their aggressive reactions, implying the adverse legal effects, and enforces application of specific counteracting measures¹⁰. As criminological studies show, unfortunately women have

⁷ M. Makara-Studzińska, A. Grzywa, R. Turek, "Przemoc w związkach między kobietą a mężczyzną", *Postępy Psychiatrii i Neurologii* 14 (2), 2005, p. 131.

⁸ M. Makara-Studzińska, A. Grzywa, R. Turek, "Kobiece oblicza stosowania przemocy", *Postępy Psychiatrii i Neurologii* 14 (3), 2005, p. 201.

⁹ F. Adler, *Sisters in Crime: The Rise of the New Femal Criminal*, New York 1975.

¹⁰ M. Grzyb, E. Habzda-Siwiek, "Płeć a przestępczość. O problemie dysproporcji płci wśród sprawców przestępstw z użyciem przemocy", *Archiwum Kryminologii* XXXV, 2013, p. 98.

already crossed their only incidental (until recently) presence in the criminal world, penetrating its consecutive areas more and more intensively.

The issue of aggression accompanying women's crime remains one of the key aspects. The reason is that the essential question emerges what conditions trigger it to such an advanced level that they may affect the fulfilment of offence attributes¹¹. As stressed in psychology, aggression in women is more of a defensive nature (contrary to men's aggression of a definitely offensive nature), in the sense that women usually feel the need for its expression as a response to provocation by men. Therefore, if they decide to attack, the goal is self-defence or defence of themselves or their closest relatives (usually children)¹². However, the presented scheme does not always prove effective, especially if aggression in a woman's activity remains targeted at the removal of the cause of her failure, then a female perpetrator — a mother or an offender — is able to act radically and drastically, wishing to eliminate direct threat personified by a child or a partner¹³. At the same time, the scheme of aggression use by women, fulfilling the attributes of offence, remains heterogeneous, sometimes a certain external error triggers female aggression, making a woman capable of defending other goods (usually life or health), on the other hand, sometimes its occurrence is of a defensive nature, determining the strive to fulfil individual intentions.

The studies performed by R. Szczepanik on a group of women perpetrators who committed the crime of robbery (demonstrating a highly masculine nature), certainly requiring the occurrence of an aggressive attitude, however, it does not mean determining such aggression by studied women holding and domination of certain masculine properties¹⁴. The perpetrators undergoing examination behaved in accordance with the stereotype of own gender, demonstrated female features. Therefore,

¹¹ M. Cabalski, op. cit., p. 22 and pp. 49–55; M.D. Pełka-Sługocka, L. Sługocki, "Przestępstwa przy użyciu przemocy popełniane przez kobiety", *Studia Kryminologiczne, Kryminalistyczne i Penitencjarne* 1983, no. 13, p. 100.

¹² M.D. Pełka-Sługocka, L. Sługocki, op. cit., p. 100; A. Siemaszko, B. Gruszczyńska, M. Marczewski, *Atlas przestępczości w Polsce*, vol. 4, Warszawa 2009, s. 324.

¹³ Zob. M. Budyń-Kulik, *Zabójstwo tyrana domowego. Studium prawno-karne i wiktymologiczne*, Lublin 2005; J. Brzezińska, *Dzieciobójstwo. Aspekty prawne i etyczne*, Warszawa 2013.

¹⁴ R. Szczepanik, op. cit., pp. 165–166.

the author attributes the nature of their reaction (use of aggression) to poor individual skills in overcoming conflicts and a lack of ability to perspective resolving of difficult situations. Considering the fact that the examined women received poor education and came from families with low economic status, it may be presumed that their execution of “male offence”, significantly marked by aggression, was the result of conditions of aetiology other than gender (e.g. biological, psychological, social)¹⁵.

The tendencies for enhanced aggressive activity of women, resulting in the intensification of criminal acts, are also confirmed by sociological observations. In the framework of conducting a social experiment known as the Social Diagnosis, in 2005 the team led by J. Czapiński indicated that a generation of aggressive female teenagers emerged in Poland, described as the “transformation generation”. Its principal feature was a marked growth in aggressive attitudes, presented by the youth subject to studies. It was observed that pathological behaviours were the specific domain of girls who often used violence, to fight with each other but also with boys, were offensive and did not refrain from mistreating the weaker, overused alcohol, drugs and cigarettes. Due to the exceptionally destructive features of girls’ behaviour, this generation was dubbed a “female tsunami”, due to its scale and catastrophic nature consequences for the society¹⁶. Unfortunately, the authors of the report recorded the following comments:

[...] everywhere radical growth in the percentage of girls aged 16 to 18 falling by the wayside is visible, accompanied by a lower growth and, in some cases, even the decline in the percentage of their rude peers. In general, the recent gap in bad behaviours between boys and girls at the edge of adulthood in the current generation of 16–18 year old teenagers has disappeared almost completely. The equality of genders has been accomplished. Girls are as active as boys in alcohol drinking, use of drugs [...] and have overtaken them in terms of the quantity of cigarettes smoked¹⁷.

The presented results of research were consolidated by consecutive Social Diagnosis studies performed in 2007 and 2009, based on which it was possible to observe that in the scope of aggressive and auto-destructive

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ http://www.diagnoza.com/pliki/raporty/Diagnoza_raport_2005.pdf, pp. 177–178;
http://www.diagnoza.com/pliki/raporty/Diagnoza_raport_2007.pdf, pp. 204–205.

¹⁷ Ibid.

tive behaviours, full equalization of girls and boys takes place and such behaviours become consolidated. Moreover, the indicated types of behaviours become intensified even in the youngest age groups, once again, particularly among girls¹⁸. The continuously developing phenomenon of enhancing brutal behaviours occurs and the so-called “female tsunami” is unfortunately disseminated in the society.

In one of his interviews, J. Czapiński stated that the studied female teenagers were extremely ruthless, they lacked tolerance and conservatism in their case referred only to consolidation of the social structure based on the hierarchy of force. The image of reality created by them was dominated by cruel, strong individuals who were at the top of this structure, on the other hand, other individuals, i.e. weaker ones, were recognised as necessary to eliminate¹⁹. Such an approach to daily existence unquestionably fostered multiplication of deviant behaviours among girls and their existence in pathological reality.

Among the principal reasons for growth in aggressive attitudes among girls and the emergence of the transformation generation demonstrating predominance of deviated female teenagers J. Czapiński indicates, first of all, social and system transformations which required parents to secure well-being to their children under new conditions of the changing political and economic system. Weaker attention and sometimes also lack of custody or concentration on a child could have resulted, especially in case of girls, in the search for the model of behaviours allowing for overcoming perceivable loneliness in early childhood. Moreover, attention was paid to the fact that the transformation generation also had to face changes in the education system through participating in education at a level of junior high school which could have been the environment fostering the development of moral corruption through enhanced feeling of frustration and discrimination on the part of female pupils. However, it seems that the authors of the Diagnosis formulated the most pertinent

¹⁸ D. Woźniakowska-Fajst, *Nieletnie. Niebezpieczne, niegrzeczne, niegroźne?*, Oficyna 2010, pp. 48–49.

¹⁹ M. Cabalski, “‘Żeńskie tsunami’ — fala agresji i zachowań autodestrukcyjnych wśród dziewcząt”, *Rodzina i Prawo. Kwartalnik Sędziów Rodzinnych* 2010, no. 16, pp. 55ff.; D. Krzemionka-Brózda, “Pokolenie transformacji — żeńskie tsunami”, *Charaktery*, December 2005.

observation in 2007 by stating that the evolution emerging, in particular, in the generation of girls entering adulthood, is the effect of serious cultural changes which go beyond the territory of Poland²⁰. They consist in re-modelling of consolidated patterns in the scope of distribution of gender roles and associated social expectations, particularly towards women. The confirmation of the stated thesis was an earlier occurrence of a similar trend in the countries of Western Europe (the United Kingdom, Ireland, Denmark). However, it may also happen that this intensification of perception of “bad girls and aggressive women” is the expression of deeper studies and increased attention towards the phenomenon of women’s crime which has not been subject to comprehensive analyses before. The conviction of the dramatic weakening of female attitudes, associated in particular with their gentle and caring approach, is essentially wrong since, just like among men also among women atypical, deviant, or even pathological individuals occur, however, the scale of such behaviours remains undoubtedly lower in women than in the case of men²¹.

3. Statistical data — tendencies

While examining the tendencies for women’s crime in Poland, it seems essential to determine a catalogue of prohibited acts most commonly committed by female perpetrators and to indicate the intensity of their occurrence. Such assumption remains even more justified in view of the fact that the criminal activity of women still tends to be narrowed down to criminal acts committed in secret, only in the family environment against the closest relatives, which obviously needs to be challenged.

Below the three groups of studies are presented the aim of which was to compare those categories of offence where participation of women was associated with the use of violence. Consequently, the results obtained in this manner will enable us to find out whether women’s crime

²⁰ http://www.diagnoza.com/pliki/raporty/Diagnoza_raport_2007.pdf, p. 206.

²¹ I. Desperak, “Złe dziewczynki i potworne kobiety — dlaczego media lubią je tak przedstawiać”, [in:] *Zachowania dewiacyjne dziewcząt i kobiet*, ed. I. Pospiszyl, R. Szczepanik, Łódź 2007, pp. 45–46; R. Szczepanik, “Płeć jako zmienna różnicująca orzeczenie stopnia demoralizacji nieletnich dziewcząt i chłopców”, [in:] *Role płciowe. Socjalizacja i rozwój*, ed. M. Chomczyńska-Rubacha, Łódź 2006.

oscillates towards the development of relevant criminal law aggressive behaviours as well as whether similar tendencies become also visible in the generation of maturing girls.

In statistical studies performed in 2014 by M. Cabalski the following categories of criminal acts executed by female perpetrators were selected²²: murder, severe health injury, participation in a fight or beating, robbery, theft and extortion, abuse of a family member and infanticide. In order to gain possibility to assess whether the criminogenic activity of women followed any transformation, the author compiled statistical data obtained in two study periods, i.e. 1975–1979 and 2007–2011.

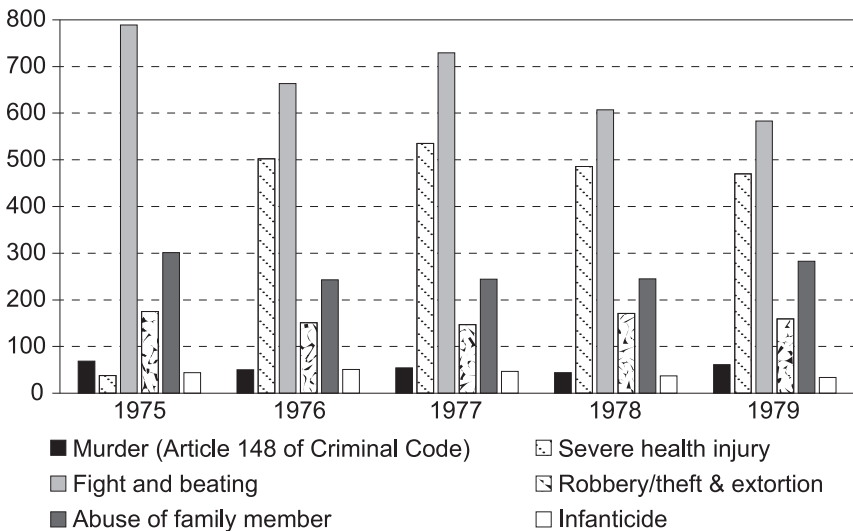


Chart 1. Aggressive crime with participation of women in the years 1975–1979

Source: M. Cabalski, *op. cit.*, Annex 1, pp. 559–560.

The statistics presented indicate that in the first study period (1975–1979) the offence prevailing in women's activity was a fight or beating which, despite a certain decline in frequency (from 800 to almost 600 cases, i.e. by 25% over 5 years), remained at a high level (Chart 1). Severe health injury was the successive prohibited act committed by female perpetrators. What is interesting, in 1975 its very low level was

²² M. Cabalski, *op. cit.*, pp. 280–285.

recorded (only 38 cases), to observe a sudden, definite (fourteenfold) growth in frequency of this offence (even 535 cases in 1977). Chart 1 indicates that subsequently, although less frequently, women executed the attributes of abuse (from 301 to 244) and robbery/theft and extortion (from 147 to 175 cases), as well as murder (on average, 23 criminal acts per year). The share of infanticide in the group of aggressive criminal acts committed by women was marginal (on average, 43 cases per year).

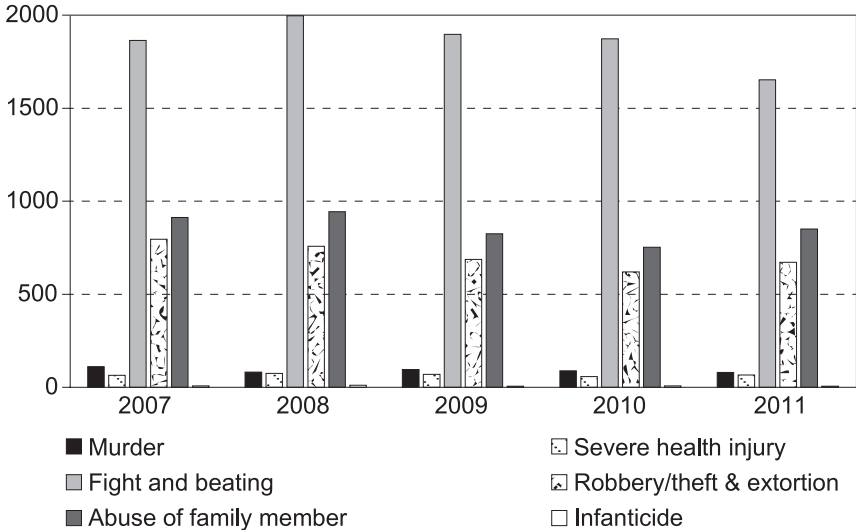


Chart 2. Aggressive crime with participation of women in the years 2007–2011

Source: M. Cabalski, *op. cit.*, Annex 1, pp. 564–566.

Looking at Chart 2, it is possible to notice certain divergences in the structure of women's crime in the years 2007–2011 as compared with the earlier study period. First of all, a significant (almost threefold) growth in the frequency of occurrence of the fight and beating offence was recorded which remained at a very high level in the studied period (from 2000 to 1635 cases). A slightly lower level was recorded in case of consecutive criminal acts committed by female perpetrators, i.e. abuse (approximately 850 cases per year) and extortion (on average, 706 criminal acts per year). The lowest level of aggressive female crime, however, with a high level of social harm, was recorded in relation to murder (on average,

95 criminal acts) and infanticide (only 8 murders of this type). Based on the statistics presented it can be stated that differences in women's crime between the studied periods are significant. The conclusion of a general nature which should be expressed refers to the overall growth in the frequency of individual types of criminal offences (besides infanticide and severe health injury), whereas its highest level was recorded in relation to the offence of fight and beating (almost threefold) as well as the crime of abuse and extortion. Interestingly, the studies indicate that the crime of infanticide has almost completely disappeared and the offence of severe health injury has dropped extremely radically (from 535 cases in 1977 to 58 in 2010). Unfortunately, the number of murder cases increased by almost a half in the studied periods, although their general level is not excessively high.

It should be noted that, particularly in the second of the studied groups, the number of criminal acts committed by women clearly increased (2007–2011). In addition, all criminal acts indicate a positive growth dynamics (in the studied periods it is higher in case of women when compared to men). What is interesting, in the statistics presented, mainly offences against property dominated: robbery/theft and extortion²³ as well as fight and beating. Thus, a growth in criminal offence with aggression elements was noticeable, however, it is not particularly advanced among the most severe crime — murder. Even if a permanent growth in aggressive activity may be indicated in the criminogenic behaviours of women, their underlying conditions still remain different than in the case of men. M.D. Pełka-Sługoicka and L. Sługoicki studying the nature of female crime stressed in the 1980s that its causes should be searched for neither in the strive of female perpetrators to show particular power nor in gaining recognition, or a high social position²⁴. They are rather resultant of a coincidence of situational conditions, serious conflicts with high level of complexity or long-term use of various forms of violence against future female perpetrators, or their persistent humiliation.

²³ A. Siemaszko, B. Gruszczyńska, M. Marczewski, op. cit., p. 324.

²⁴ M.D. Pełka-Sługoicka, L. Sługoicki, op. cit., p. 100.

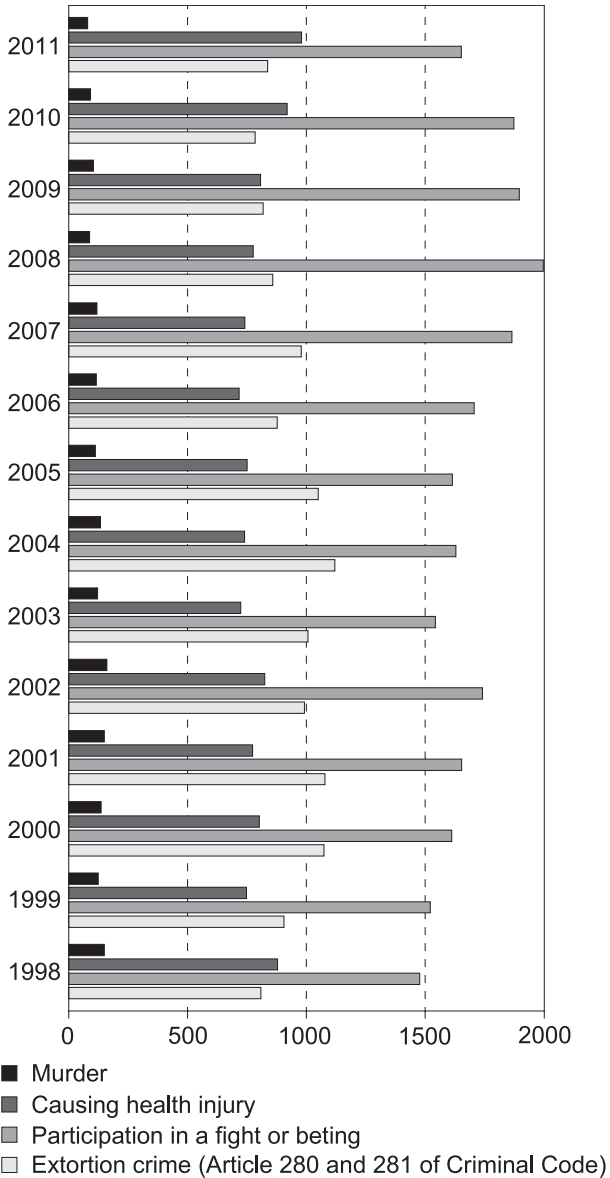


Chart 3. Criminal acts with the use violence committed by women

Source: M. Grzyb, E. Habzda-Siwek, op. cit., pp. 111–122.

In terms of the data presented it should be noted that infanticide²⁵ recognised as an exclusively female crime does not prevail among the prohibited acts committed by women and its frequency dropped radically, in particular in the period of 2007–2011. The symptomatic female nature of this crime is therefore visible from the perspective of a female perpetrator committing it, rather than in terms of frequency of fulfilling its attributes.

Similar tendencies as those mentioned above were observed during the analyses of female crime done by M. Grzyb and E. Habzda-Siwiek²⁶, who presented them in 2013 in the Criminology Archives (Chart 3). Based on the statistical data obtained it was noted that in the years 1998–2011 the most numerous group of female perpetrators comprised of women who had fulfilled attributes of a fight and beating, whereas the highest level of this category of crime was recorded in the years 2007–2009 (from 1864 to 1997), and in the overall study period (throughout 14 years) it exceeded 1500 cases per year. The next category of criminal offence was extortion (Art. 280, 281 of the Criminal Code). Its frequency in the years 2000–2007 remained high and stayed at a level of almost 1000 cases per year. However, since 2008 its decline by approximately 20% has been recorded (over 800 cases per year). At consecutive places in the compilation the following offences appeared: health injury (a slight growth tendency is noticeable in 2009–2011) and murder. Interestingly, the last of the aforementioned criminal acts, demonstrating the highest level of social harm, was not excessively frequently committed by women, moreover, it showed a clear downward tendency (from 150 cases in 1998 to 80 in 2011, a decline by approximately 90%).

On the other hand, the data presented by the General Police Headquarters (Chart 4) indicate that among girls up to the age of 16, those who committed the crime of theft constitute the most numerous group (in 2010 even 1545 cases, whereas in 2002 — only 777 cases — a growth by 100%). Its highest indicators were recorded in 2010 and

²⁵ Statistics on infanticide have been added to the summary by the author of the elaboration in order to compare the results of the study with other groups of crime.

²⁶ M. Grzyb, E. Habzda-Siwiek, "Płeć a przestępczość. O problemie dysproporcji płci wśród sprawców przestępstw z użyciem przemocy", *Archiwum Kryminologii* XXXV, 2013, pp. 111, 114, 118, 122.

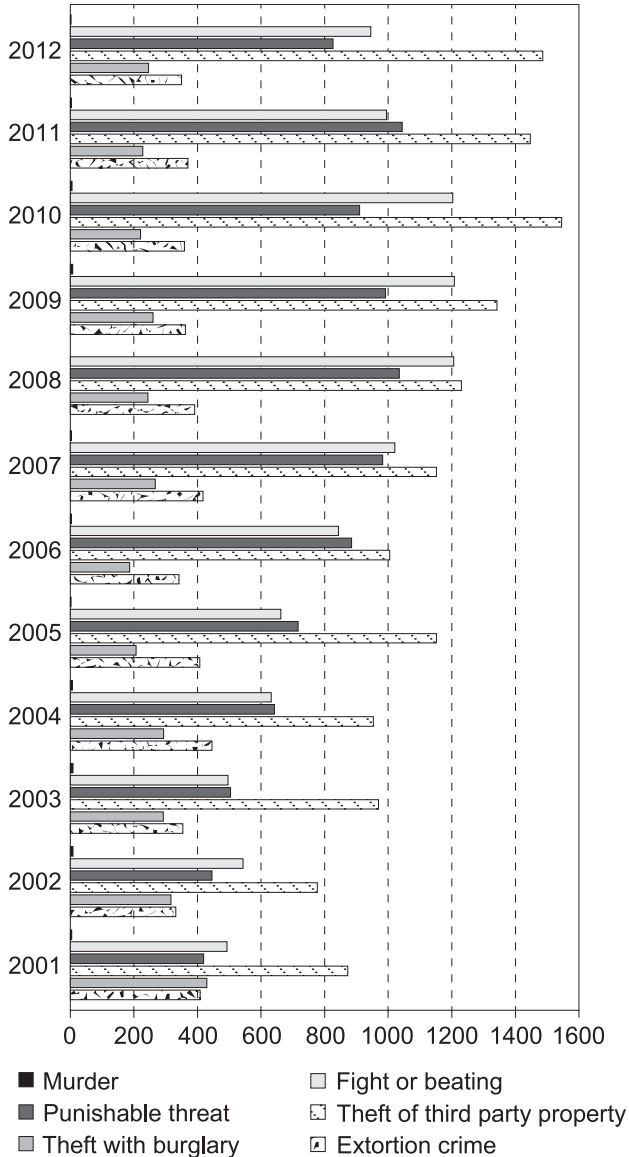


Chart 4. Number of suspected women aged up to 16

Source: <http://www.statystyka.policja.pl/st/wybrane-statystyki/przestepczosc-kobiet/50869,Przestepczosc-kobiet.html>.

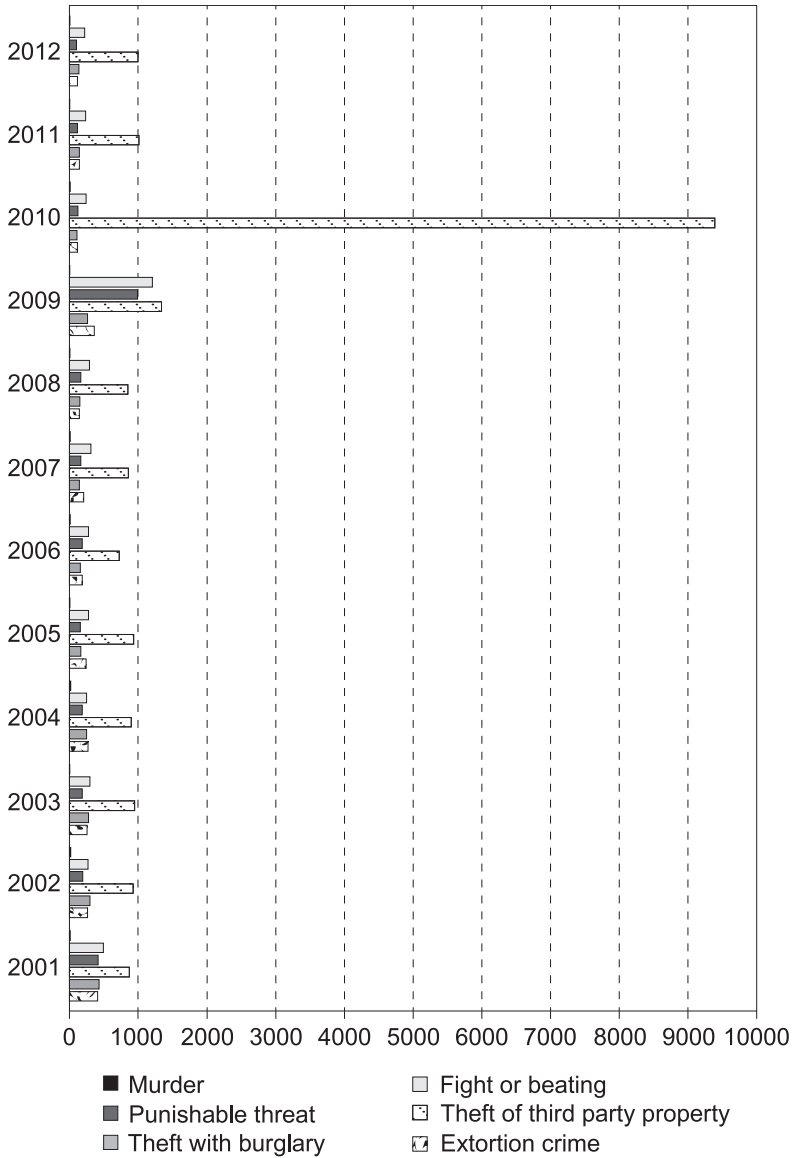


Chart 5. Number of suspected women aged 17 to 20

Source: <http://www.statystyka.policja.pl/st/wybrane-statystyki/przestepczosc-kobiet-t/50869,Przestepczosc-kobiet.html>.

2012 (1545 and 1485 cases, respectively)²⁷. The data related to the offence of fight and beating are interesting, which recorded a growth trend until 2008, followed by a persistently high level (2008–2010), to show a slow downward trend as of 2011. Unfortunately, an alarming growth trend also referred to the offence of punishable threats (in 2011 — 1044 cases), the crime of extortion also remained at a high level (approximately 380 cases per year). Only incidentally girls fulfilled attributes of the crime of murder (only several cases per year).

On the other hand, among young female perpetrators aged 17 to 20, suspected of committing criminal acts (Chart 5) theft remained definitely a dominating type of crime (approximately 1000 cases per year, exceptionally over 9000 in 2009), followed by fulfilling attributes of the fight or beating offence (its highest frequency was recorded in 2009 — even 1208 cases), although at a much lower frequency than theft. In the meanwhile, another tendency in the studied group of women was a significant decline in the number of three consecutive crime categories: punishable threats, theft with burglary and the crime of extortion (robbery/theft and extortion). Their level over a period of 12 years decreased by almost 75%. Similar to the previous group of girls recorded in the statistics, also in the analysed population of perpetrators murder was committed incidentally (from several to a few cases).

4. Conclusions

Concluding, it should be stressed that the groups of female perpetrators characterised in the study basically commit such categories of criminal offences which demonstrate a high level of aggression, whereas such aggression shall not necessarily constitute any of the attributes of a prohibited act committed by a woman, however, the criminal act remains directly determined by the aggression. The growth in aggression should be noted, which is more alarming, among young women (aged 17 to 20), and even among girls entering the period of adulthood (up to the age of 16). Aggres-

²⁷ K. Biel, *Przestępczość dziewcząt — rodzaje i uwarunkowania*, Kraków 2009, pp. 71ff.

sion is shown by them not only in their close family circle but also, unfortunately, in peer groups or organised criminal groups they start leading.

The prevailing categories of prohibited acts committed by women include diversified offences against property (theft, theft with burglary), the crime of extortion (robbery, theft and extortion) as well as crimes against life and health, in particular, a fight and beating or severe health injury, definitely less frequently — a murder. On the other hand, infanticide recognised as the sole, exclusively female crime, loses such a nature in view of the complete decline in the frequency of its occurrence. In principle, its share in the overall number of criminal acts committed by women is incidental.

The analysis of the presented catalogue of female crimes currently committed in Poland allows for explicit challenging of the claim that female perpetrators most commonly commit offences against their close relatives (in particular, partners or children) in the home shelter, trying to hide their acts. This claim is undermined by the level of frequency of murder and infanticide (committed in the years 2011–2012) as well as by presented statistical analyses in which other categories of criminal offence prevail.

In view of the growth in “aggressive” crimes among women the fact remains particularly alarming that the dynamics of criminal acts presented in the study is radically positive (except infanticide) and its growth takes place in the case of women at a pace much faster than in the case of men. It means that female perpetrators who decide to enter into conflict with the law demonstrate a significant or advanced level of aggression and this practice is unfortunately spreading. Sociological studies indicate that the syndrome of the so-called female tsunami has recently appeared in the Polish society — girls at the doorstep of adulthood demonstrate diversified symptoms of deviant behaviours which may result in undertaking criminogenic activities in the future. Unfortunately, it has been found that the trend of time perspective is of a sustainable nature, showing even explicitly expansive tendencies.

Summary

The objective of this article was to indicate basic tendencies, currently characteristic for women's crime in Poland. Based on the presented statistical data it has been found that a definite growth in criminal offences with elements of aggression is currently being recorded and deviant behaviours are not only the domain of mature women but they also occur among young female perpetrators. Moreover, the claim has been challenged stating that women commit criminal acts only against their close relatives in the family environment as currently the prevailing prohibited acts committed by women in Poland include: fights and beating, offences against property, the crime of extortion (robbery, theft and extortion) as well as severe health injury and murder. It should be highlighted that the only female crime, namely, infanticide, takes a marginal dimension.

Keywords: women's crime, female perpetrators, aggression.