

RELIGIOSITY AND ELECTORAL PARTICIPATION. THE CASE OF POLAND

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ABSTRACT

The paper presents an analysis of the impact of religion on electoral participation in Poland. Verification of the main research hypotheses took place on the basis of results of post-elections empirical studies conducted in the years 2009-2012, encompassing all country-wide and regional elections in the national electoral cycles. The authors introduced the distinction between voters and non-voters, while verifying the specific hypotheses about the determinants of electoral motivations arising from the impact of religion on the political sphere. The first group of separated variables is axiomatic in nature, and is related to the declared attitudes of the citizens to the religious value system. The second refers to the impact of institutional factors, conditioned by the form and intensity of the respondent's declared religious activity and all its manifestations

Настоящий текст представляет анализ влияния религии на участие в выборах в Польше. Проверка главных исследовательских гипотез была проведена на основе опроса после выборов, проведенных в 2009-2012 годах, в национальном избирательном цикле, охватывающим все национальные и региональные выборы. Авторы выделяют в своем исследовании участвующих и не участвующих в голосовании с целью определения избирательных факторов мотивационного влияния религии на политику. Первая группа факторов имела аксиологический характер и была связана с декларированным отношением к системе религиозных ценностей. Вторая группа состояла из факторов декларированной религиозной активности респондентов и способов ее проявления.

Ключевые слова: избирательное участие, религиозность, электоральная активность, религиозные ценности

INTRODUCTION

Electoral participation is the basic, main form of citizens' political participation, described as "activity that has the intent or effect of influencing government action either directly by affecting the making or implementation of public Policy or indirectly by influencing the selection of people who make those policies" (Verba, Scholzman and Brady 1995: 38). Contrary to other forms of political activity, voting requires only minimal commitment for a short period of time, while the electoral participation rate remains one of the key indicators of quality of a democracy (Franklin 2001: 148]. Therefore, in particular in terms of civic motivation, „turning out to vote is the most common and important act citizens take in a democracy and therefore is one of the most important behaviours for scholars of democratic politics to understand" (Aldrich 1993: 246). Research on electoral participation is focused on the three main aspects: political awareness, environmental conditions and cultural patterns of behavior. Political awareness is a

function of the cognitive dimension of political attitude, and can be conditioned by the process of understanding (real or imaginary) the appropriateness and value of active participation in politics, especially when assessing the probability of achieving one's objectives. Environmental conditions are a derivative of the resources held by the individual combined with the opportunities for their effective use, arising for example from the current assessment of the situation. Patterns of behavior are rooted in the widely accepted values, existing rules of behavior, the normative system and traditional customs, which are the result of the impact of the environment and interaction between the individual and other subjects of the political process (Turska-Kawa and Wojtasik 2010).

One of the main determinants of electoral participation is religion, constituting both an axiomatic and institutional component of the motivation to vote. In the studies of electoral motivation, researchers have not formulated a clear position regarding the influence of religion. On the one hand, the important role of the religious factor in motivating voters to be active is stressed (Putnam 2000), along with the conviction that the sphere of religious axiology is connected to democratic values (Harris 1994; Legee 1993) and that religious institutions present important socializing functions (Greenberg 2000; Jones-Correa and Leal 2001). The opposing position emphasizes the possibility of lowering the level of political participation due to religious activity (Wuthenow 1999), the competitiveness of the public's trust in their own religious group at the expense of the general social capital (Uslaner 2000), or even the reducing function religious activity holds for political knowledge and competence of citizens (Scheufele, Nisbet and Brossard 2003).

The paper presents an analysis of the impact of religion on electoral participation in Poland on the basis of results of post-elections empirical studies conducted in the years 2009-2012. The authors introduced the distinction between voters and non-voters, while seeking answers to questions about the determinants of electoral motivations arising from the impact of religion on politics. In addition, religion was considered on two planes (two factors), due to the specific nature of the relationship between the sacred and the profane in Poland. The first group of separated variables is axiomatic in nature, and is related to the declared attitudes of the citizens to the religious value system. The second refers to the impact of institutional factors, conditioned by the form and intensity of the respondent's declared religious activity and all its manifestations.

ELECTORAL PARTICIPATION AND RELIGION

The definition of political participation quoted at the beginning of the papers assumes its voluntary character, and the individual's free will in undertaking political activity. Three main factors impact the possibility of pursuing electoral activism: (1) the resources to participate; (2) psychological engagement with politics; and (3) recruitment networks that bring citizens into politics. Together, they form a model constituting a „road map for the understanding of political participation in any democracy” (Verba et al. 1995: 25). Similar views on conditions of political participation are presented by Mark N. Franklin (2001: 149), who indicated three determinants with decisive impact on possibility of electoral activity: (1) resources; (2) mobilization; (3) the desire to affect the course of public policy (what we shall call instrumental motivation). The resources possessed by the citizens (knowledge, wealth and time) allow to bring about the necessary potential into democratic processes, revealing their potential for subjectivity¹. Mobilization is the result of increased awareness of citizens as to their role in politics, and can be created with the involvement of social institutions, political parties or the media. Instrumental commitment and resulting activity stem from the citizens' sense of citizens' on the political process and their belief in the effectiveness of interventions they undertake (Franklin 2001: 149).

Religious freedom is an integral part of the axiological sphere of democratic societies, as a factor contributing to pluralism of the political discourse. In the initial stages, after the

1 Within their resources theory, as factors conducive to political participation Wilson and Musick name the following: civic skills, free time, good health, and social connections (1997: 696).

Reformation and divides in the Western Christianity¹, a model of engagement in the public affairs resulting from the religious values system represented by the individual was established (Toffler and Toffler 1994: 34). It was based on the separation of the sacred and the profane, with mutual respect for both. Nowadays, the secular character of democratic societies and further processes of social secularization indicate the growing discrepancies between those who recognize and respect the religious values, and those who present no religious motivation in their political activities. This leads to polarization of political behaviours, and a process called "renationalization of religion". It consists of individualization of motivations for political participation, despite on the whole being based on the same religious value system, leading to diversification of the range of possible behaviors, as „renationalization can be dual process of repolitization of private religion and moral sphere as well as establishment of norms in economic and politic spheres" (Casanova 1994:13). Hence not only the division into believers and non-believers can provide material and premises for electoral participation research. The studies that examine differences in electoral participation among those declaring themselves as believers seem particularly interesting; even moreso as there exists no consensus among researchers as to the reasons for these differences, or the political consequences of the observed discrepancies (McBride 2008).

In the studies of correlations between religion and electoral participation, two basic positions are most widely represented. According to the first one, the religious factor promotes political participation by referencing a similar pattern of social engagement, what happens through institutionalization of social behavior within the churches and communities, which may contribute to the promotion of political activities and behaviour (Harris 1994). Religious institutions serve both as a media providing the believers with true political information and a recruitment arena for political organizations and initiatives (Jones-Correa and Leal 2001: 754). Most sociologists emphasize the communication function of church organizations in building social capital, what leads to them affecting the character of civic engagement also when it comes to the realm of politics (Willaime 2006: 83). Both the religious activity and political participation may refer to similar mechanisms of mobilization, or be built on similar resources of an individual. The political mobilization itself is a factor decreasing the individual costs of electoral participation, and thanks to the involvements of the church, citizens have the ability to access information that in other circumstances it would require greater resources and expertise to obtain (Goldstein and Holleque 2010: 580). Within this model, participation in religious communities determines the possibility of promoting among their participants of the attitudes focused on the common good and civic values (Putnam 2000). The above results from the similar system of values on which both the democracy and Christianity are built, a similar organizational structure of the civil society and religious communities, and finally the corresponding methods of mobilization for action employed (Greenberg 2000). In the presented approach, the religious activity is part of general social activity. A contaminator of promotion of political participation by religion is the reference to the common values made by the part of the political elite who represent the religious beliefs, and makes it a context of political mobilization (Leege 1993).

The second position posits that religion plays a demobilizing role on political participation, treating religious involvement as competing with any electoral activity. Within this broad approach, one can distinguish two models differing in the opinion on the nature of influence of religion on the political sphere. In the tension model, the religious dimension will always compete with the political activity and, consequently, will shifted the interest of individuals towards the religious issues. This will happen because of the limited amount of resources that citizens can allocate to all types of their activity, and thus involvement in the life of a church

1 Reference made to only the Western Christianity stems from: (1) the genealogical reconstruction of particular historical processes of secularization within Latin Christendom (rather than viewing secularization as a general universal process of human and societal development); (2) the restriction of the study to mainly Catholicism and Protestantism as particular forms of religion; and (3) the restriction to Western (European and post-colonial) societies (Casanova 2008: 103).

organization will simultaneously reduce the possibility of participation in other areas of social activity, including the political sphere (Wuthenow 1999). In addition, high confidence in religious institutions may also reduce confidence in other institutions and thus the overall social capital (Uslaner 2000). The second, intensity model, draws attention to the level of religious dogmatism of individuals exhibiting it, and on its basis draws conclusions about the negative effects of extreme (religious) doctrinal commitment to the political and electoral participation. On the one hand, such situation results from the relationship between extreme religious involvement and frequency of participation in religious rituals, and on the other hand - from the negative impact of participation in church institutions on commitment to activities in the secular institutions (Scheufele et al. 2003: 318-319). Dietr A. Scheufele, Matthew C. Nisbet, and Dominique Brossard (2003: 319) emphasize another aspect of a strong religious commitment - it coincides with lower level of political skills and weaker sense of efficacy in this area, which affects their capacity for mobilization.

The opposing interpretations of the relationship between religion and electoral participation were one of the reasons the authors have undertaken research on the issue in Poland, following the statement by Mark N. Franklin: „The most striking message is that turnout varies much more from country to country than it does between different types of individuals. It matters whether one is rich or poor, educated or uneducated, interested in politics or not; but none of these things matter nearly as much as whether one is an Australian or an American” (2001: 150). Empirical research results from the studies by John Musick and Mark Wilson (2008: 279) show that over half (53%) of Americans attending church every or nearly every week have engaged in volunteer work in the past twelve months, compared to 19% of non-churchgoers, what indicates significant differences in social participation depending on involvement in religious practices. This correlation invites further study of the relationship between religion and civic activity, as according to Mark Warren (2001: 28) we still have not managed to identify the specific set of institutional mechanisms that can make that connection. What is particularly interesting, over 95% of Poles declare themselves as believers, 90% as Catholic, and 50% as regularly participating in religious rituals (Wojtasik 2011). Such national specificity begs for a deeper study of impact of religion on motivation to political activity, in particular in the context of „differences in participatory endowments rather than differences in the way that participatory factors translate into activity” (Burns, Schlozman and Verba 2001: 299).

RELIGIOSITY IN POLAND

With regard to the Polish society, the consequences of World War II have fundamentally changed its structure. Changed borders and mass deportations during the post-war period meant that the multi-ethnic and multi-religious society Poland used to be was turned into a country with a high degree of ethnic and religious homogenization - in more than 95% it was inhabited by Catholic Poles. Such identification with the cultural and religious model of social identity took place both made within the religion and religiosity, and within the relationship of the individual's position in the social structure (Wojtowicz 2004: 166). The political consequence of the war was the loss of sovereignty and entry into the sphere of influence of the Soviet Union, with its anti-religious doctrine directed against both the social manifestations of religiosity, as well as its institutional formula. Thus, especially in the initial period (until 1956) the Catholic Church has been subjected to oppression, and later, until the democratic breakthrough in 1989, its activities were under surveillance by the secret services. In times of democracy, although the Catholic Church formally remained politically uninvolved, its representatives often offered support to political parties and politicians drawing in their activities on Christian values, sometimes even granting patronage to political and electoral initiatives. This approaches Poland more to the Mediterranean model of political involvement of religious institutions (like for example in Italy, Spain and Portugal) than the examples of Germany, the Benelux countries or Scandinavia. The above remains obviously connected to the dominant (as it is in Poland) influence of Catholicism in the listed countries, in contrast to the countries where relatively greater importance was gained by the churches rooted in the Reformation.

The twentieth-century history of Poland decided on the different determinants affecting the relationships within the social structure in comparison to consolidated democracies. Classic socio-political divisions (cleavages) have not emerged there (similarly as in other communist

countries), including the rooted in axiology church-state division (Lipset, Rokkan 1967). This fact is decisive for the particular nature of determinants of voting behaviour in post-communist countries. An attempt to present this particular nature is the model construed by Herbert Kitschelt (1992), which among the three major axes of political divisions in Central Europe pointed to the conflict individualism-collectivism and which, in the described context, is a substitute for the church-state division. As a result, a specific model of the social structure was generated, one having almost nothing in common with the ideological or identity criteria. Politically, it very rarely exceeded the genetic division lines of political parties, while presenting a special relationship with religiosity and the preferred model of state-church relations (as an exemplification of respectively liberal and authoritarian political attitudes) (Wojtasik 2012: 183). Under such conditions, the differences within the group of voters declaring themselves as believers are much more important for the actual participation in the elections in Poland than those between the believers / non-believers

The described differentiation is important for two reasons. The first is, noticeable from the beginning of the systemic transformation, the preference to participate in the elections among those declaring themselves as believers and regularly practicing their religion. Especially the latter category, important from the point of view of social manifestations of religious attitudes, is important for studies examining the relationship between religious and electoral participation, as the Polish religiosity is widespread and, unlike in Western European countries, no particular intensity of secularization process is observed in the country (Staworski 2004). On the other hand, studies of the Catholic Church Statistical Agency show the deepening polarization of religious attitudes. This is manifested by a decline in the proportion of the believers participating in the Sunday services (*dominantes*), which since the early 1980's, has been slowly, but steadily decreasing (from 51% in 1980 to 40.1% in 2011), while at the same time the number of the faithful joining Communion regularly (*communicantes*), has increased from 8.7% in 1980 to 15% in 2011 (*Religijność Polaków 1991-2012*). The said polarization may be furthered by the political division among the church hierarchy into supporters of social modernization (identified with the conservative-liberal politicians of the Civic Platform) and the national-traditionalist wing, represented by the Law and Justice Party.

METHOD AND PARTICIPANTS

The presented analysis is based on four independent studies conducted on a representative sample of adults in Poland in the years 2009-2012. The years 2009-2011 were a period in which elections were held in Poland at all levels: to the European Parliament (2009), presidential and local government elections (2010) and finally also parliamentary elections (2011). In these years, the respondents answers were referenced to the actual voting behaviour in specific elections. In 2012, the analysis was made in the context of the declared electoral behaviour in the possible elections to the parliament, had they been held on the upcoming Sunday.

In every election year, the study was conducted in the post-election period by local coordinators in the various provinces of Poland. The sample had been selected using the stratified-quantitative sampling. Population stratification encompassed a complete and disjointed division into urban and rural population, while the quantitative sampling procedure covered sex and age. Attention was also paid so that the distribution of other not-controlled socio-demographic variables was as varied as possible. At each stage of the study, the questionnaire¹ was completed only by legal adults, having the right to vote.

Distribution of key characteristics of the tested sample in various years is presented in Table 1.

1 The presented research is part of the nation-wide project „Political Preferences. Attitudes-Identifications-Behaviour”.

Table 1. Selected socio-demographic characteristics of respondents in various years.

	2009		2010		2011		2012	
	number	percentage	number	percentage	number	percentage	number	percentage
SEX								
Female	557	51,3	563	51,7	571	52,0	555	51,0
Male	529	48,6	525	48,3	528	48,0	533	49,0
EDUCATION								
No education	4	0,4	5	0,4	4	,4	10	,9
Primary/lower secondary	67	6,2	72	6,6	59	5,4	59	5,4
Vocational	187	17,2	212	19,5	202	18,4	223	20,5
Upper secondary/post-secondary	433	39,9	436	40,1	414	37,7	353	32,4
Tertiary (bachelor or master's degree)	395	36,4	363	33,4	420	38,2	443	40,7
AGE								
18-24	149	13,7	149	13,7	137	12,5	130	11,9
25-34	219	20,2	220	20,2	223	20,3	209	19,2
35-44	170	15,7	174	16,0	169	15,4	171	15,7
45-54	211	19,4	200	18,4	200	18,2	198	18,2
55-64	166	15,3	165	15,2	182	16,6	187	17,2
>65	171	15,7	180	16,5	188	17,1	193	17,7
DOMICILE								
Country	398	36,6	400	36,8	435	39,6	438	40,3
Town up to 20 thousand inhabitants	84	7,7	118	10,8	110	10,0	101	9,3
Town 20 -100 thousand inhabitants	234	21,5	193	17,7	164	14,9	134	12,3
City 100 -200 thousand inhabitants	128	11,8	115	10,6	143	13,0	108	9,9
City over 200 thousand inhabitants	242	22,3	262	24,1	247	22,5	307	28,2

Source: own research.

Questions taken into account in the analysis cover two distinguishing factors that the authors deem relevant to the specifics of the Polish society. It should be stressed that these variables are referenced in the study to the Catholic religion, which is justified by the declarations of the Polish population who in more than 95% describe themselves as religious, and of which the vast majority (over 97%) identify as Catholics (Wojtasik 2011). The first of the factors identified in this study is the Catholic religiosity, understood as an authentic spiritual faith, an inner need to bear witness to one's faith, by following the teachings of the Catholic Church. A religious persons follows the commandments and directions of the Catholic religion, usually with a deep faith in their meaning (for example participates in ceremonies and religious rites). Religiosity leads to the consolidation of a certain belief system based on faith in the dogma, reinforced by faith in moral compass of the religious role models. The second factor was defined in the *study as the role of the Catholic Church in public life*. The authors understand it as the relationship between *the sacred and the profane* - the place of the Catholic Church in public life, which is associated with its direct and indirect influence on the social and political activities, which do not constitute part of the purpose of religious institutions.

The above contexts were overlaid with electoral behaviours of the Polish society in the 2009-2011 elections cycle and the electoral declarations of 2012. Research objectives, which the authors pose themselves on the basis of theoretical considerations, concern the verification of the relationship between religiosity and the perceived role of the Catholic Church in public life and electoral behaviour.

RESULTS

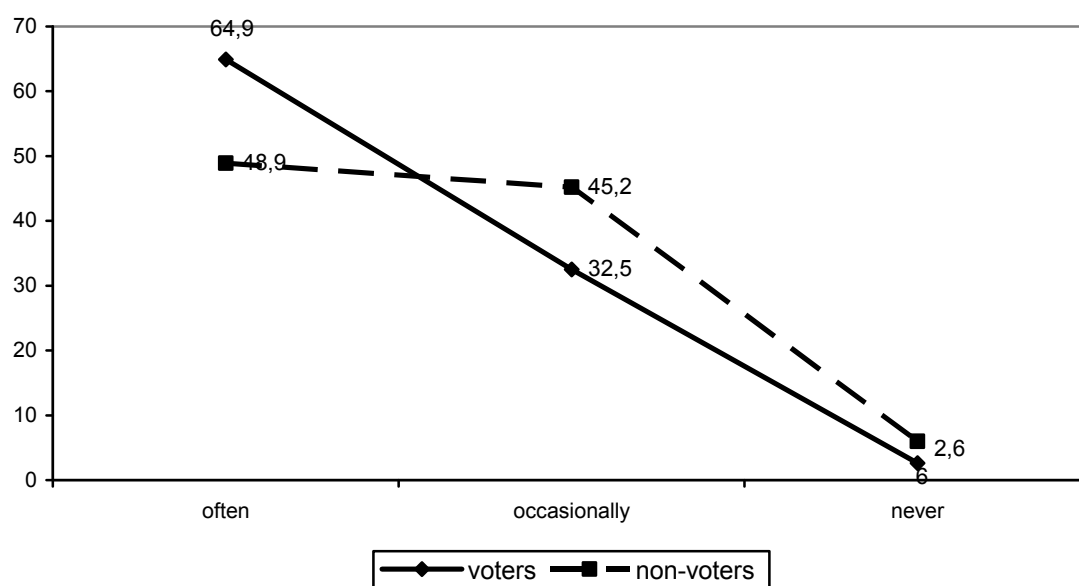
CATHOLIC RELIGIOSITY AND ELECTORAL BEHAVIOUR

Table 2. *How often do you participate in religious ceremonies and other practices?* – quantitative and percentage distribution of responses to the question among the persons active and passive in the European Parliament elections in 2009 (N=1086).

		<i>How often do you participate in religious ceremonies and other practices?</i>							
		often		occasionally		never		total	
		number	percentage	number	percentage	number	percentage	number	percentage
2009 European Parliament election	voters	353	64,9	177	32,5	14	2,6	544	100
	non-voters	260	48,9	240	45,2	32	6,0	532	100
	do not remember	1	10,0	7	70,0	2	20,0	10	100
	ogółem	614	56,6	424	39,1	48	4,4	1086	100

Source: own research.

Figure 1. *How often do you participate in religious ceremonies and other practices?* – quantitative and percentage distribution of responses to the question among the persons active and passive in the European Parliament elections in 2009 (N=1086).



Source: own research.

More than half of the respondents (56.6%) often participate in religious practices, while two fifths (39.1%) participate in them occasionally. It should be noted that the rate of those completely not participating in religious ceremonies is only several percent (4.4%). The comparison of religious involvement and electoral behaviour shows interesting results, as a clear positive correlation between electoral activity and the level (intensity) of religious practice is observable. More likely to participate in elections were those individuals that have declared a strong commitment to religion (64.9% vs 48.9%), while sporadic religious involvement was more often declared by respondents inactive in elections (45.2% vs 32.5%).

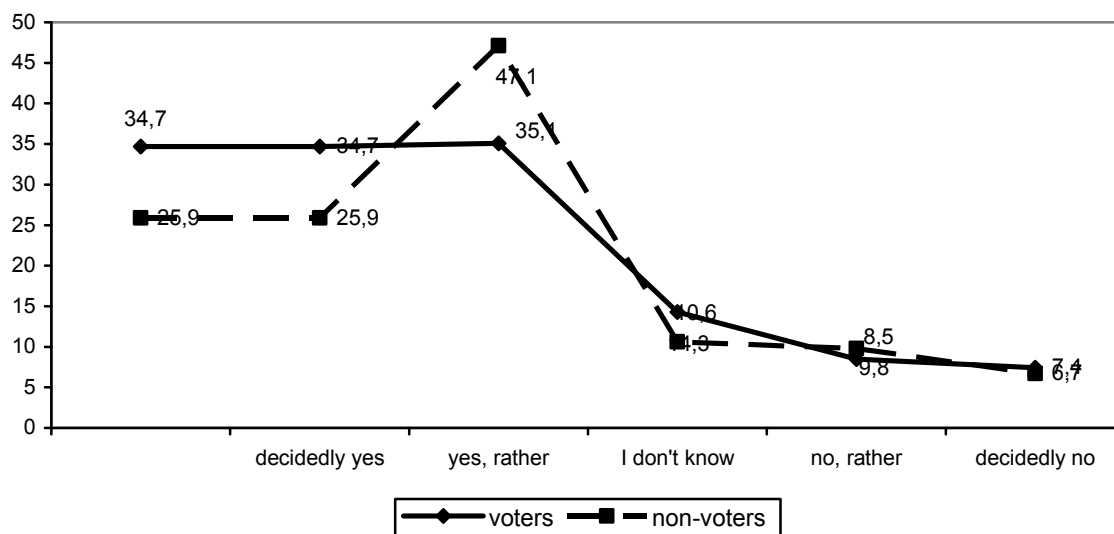
It is worth noting - as clearly shown in Figure 1 - that the differences between the electorally active and passive groups in terms of frequency of religious participation increase along with intensification of religious practices. Lack of religious practices only weakly differentiates these two groups.

Table 3. *The Decalogue is for me a benchmark on how to live my life*- quantitative and percentage distribution of responses among those declaring activity and passivity in the Parliamentary elections, if they were to be held the next Sunday - 2012 (N = 1088).

		<i>The Decalogue (10 Commandments) is for me a benchmark on how to live my life.</i>											
		Decidedly yes		Yes, rather		I don't know		No, rather		Decidedly no		Total	
		number	percentage	number	percentage	number	percentage	number	percentage	number	percentage	number	percentage
Parliamentary election	voters	289	34,7	292	35,1	119	14,3	71	8,5	62	7,4	833	100
	non-voters	66	25,9	120	47,1	27	10,6	25	9,8	17	6,7	255	100
	total	355	32,6	412	37,9	146	13,4	96	8,8	79	7,3	1088	100

Source: own research.

Figure 2. *The Decalogue (10 Commandments) is for me a benchmark on how to live my life*-quantitative and percentage distribution of responses among those declaring activity and passivity in the Parliamentary elections, if they were to be held the next Sunday - 2012 (N = 1088).



Source: own research.

The Decalogue is a set of basic moral precepts, applicable initially to members of the Judaist community, then taken over by many Christian churches, including the Catholic Church. The 10 Commandments contain guidelines for the relationship between the people and God, and governing principles for life in a community.

In the study performed, it can be seen that the Decalogue plays a big role in the lives of citizens in Poland - 2/3 of responses point to using the commandments as determinants of conduct in their lives (70.5%), the opposite view is held only by one in six respondents (16.1%). Significant variation in answers can be seen in the context of electoral behaviour, but only in the division of responses into categorical and conditional - individuals who declare a *decisive* support of the Decalogue more often participate in elections (34.7% vs 25.9%), while those who declare they follow the 10 Commandments *conditionally* more often would choose passivity in the upcoming parliamentary election - (47.1% vs 35.1%).

In the visual presentation of the results obtained for the electorally active and passive groups, we can once again see the trend outlined in the previous question. With the increase of declarations denying the role of the 10 Commandments in the lives of individuals, the differences between the groups of Poles active and passive in the elections become blurred, what particularly emphasizes the symbolic role of the Decalogue in mobilizing electoral participation.

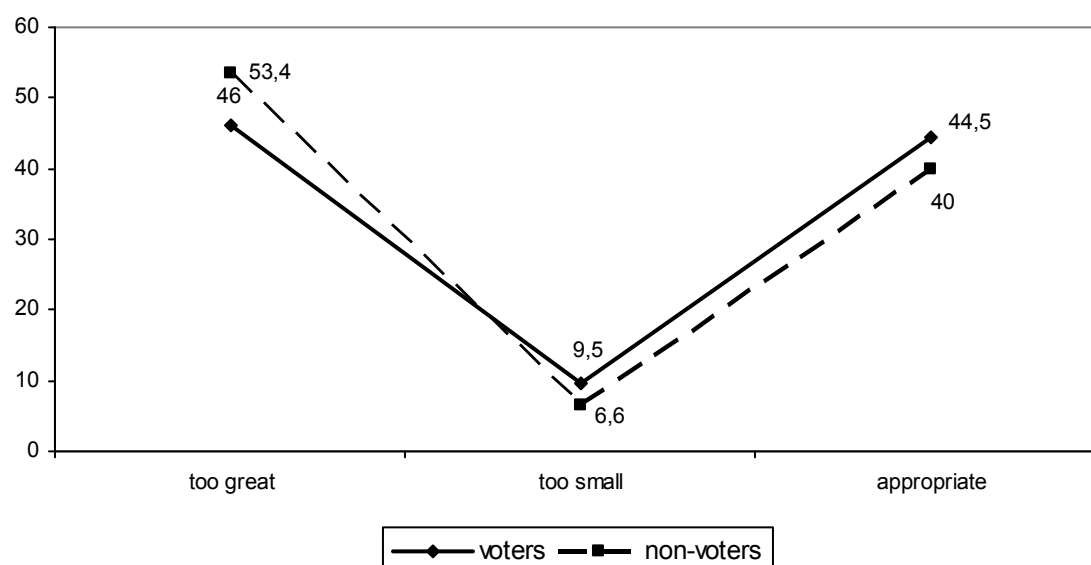
PERCEPTION OF THE ROLE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN POLAND AND ELECTORAL BEHAVIOUR

Table 4. *What is, in your opinion, the role of the Catholic Church in public life?* - quantitative and percentage distribution of answers to the above question among the electorally passive and active group in the elections to the European Parliament in 2009 (N = 1086).

		<i>What is, in your opinion, the role of the Catholic Church in public life?</i>							
		too great		too small		appropriate		total	
		number	percentage	number	percentage	number	percentage	number	percentage
2009 European Parliament election	voters	250	46,0	52	9,5	242	44,5	544	100,0
	non-voters	284	53,4	35	6,6	213	40,0	532	100,0
	do not remember	8	80,0	1	10,0	1	10,0	10	100,0
	total	542	49,9	88	8,1	456	42,0	1086	100,0

Source: own research.

Figure 3. *What is, in your opinion, the role of the Catholic Church in public life?* - quantitative and percentage distribution of answers to the above question among the electorally passive and active group in the elections to the European Parliament in 2009 (N = 1086).



Source: own research.

Overall, almost half of the respondents (49.9%) indicate that the role of the Catholic Church in public life is too great, less than one in 10 respondents (8.1%) feels this role is too small. Two fifths of the study participants (42.0%) fully accept the current role of the Catholic Church in public life as appropriate. With regard to the voting behaviour, a greater number of passive individuals is observed among those see the role of the church as too large (53.4% vs 46.0%), while other answer categories show a slightly greater number of electorally active voters..

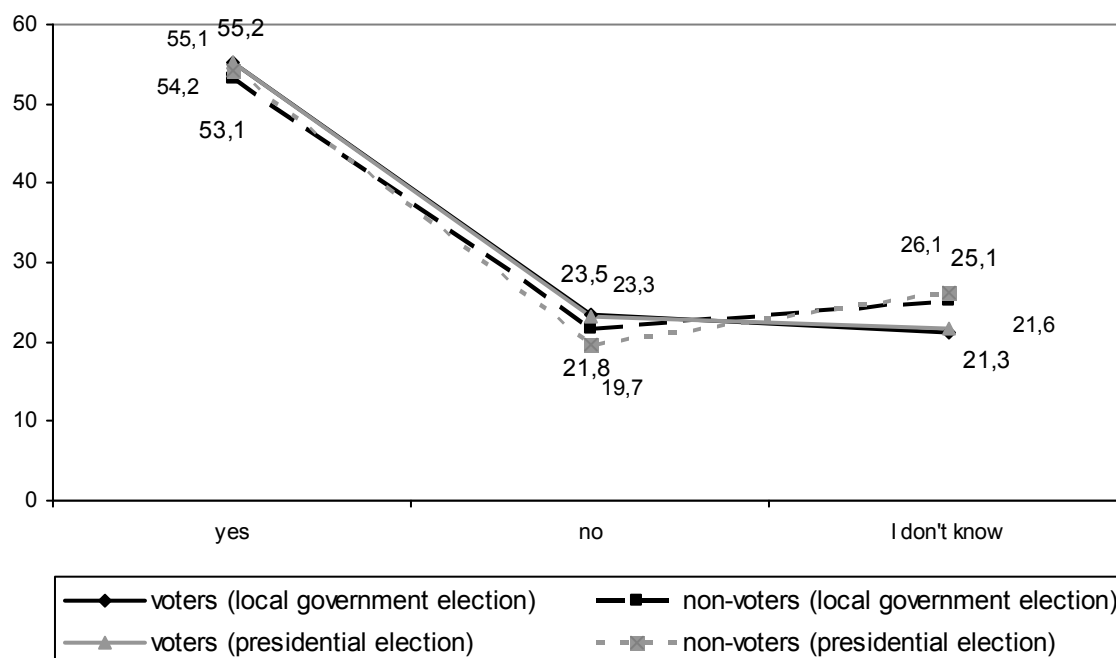
Table 5. *In your opinion, should religious values be respected in public life?* - quantitative and percentage distribution of answers to the above question among the groups of electorally

passive and active respondents in the 2010 local government election and first round of the 2010 presidential election (N = 1088).

		<i>In your opinion, should religious values be respected in public life?</i>							
		yes		no		I don't know		total	
		number	percentage	number	percentage	number	percentage	number	percentage
Local government election 2010	voters	388	55,2	165	23,5	150	21,3	703	100,0
	non-voters	195	53,1	80	21,8	92	25,1	367	100,0
	do not remember	12	66,7	1	5,6	5	27,8	18	100,0
	total	595	54,7	246	22,6	247	22,7	1088	100,0
Presidential election 2010 (I round)	voters	485	55,1	205	23,3	190	21,6	880	100,0
	non-voters	110	54,2	40	19,7	53	26,1	203	100,0
	do not remember	0	0,0	1	20,0	4	80,0	5	100,0
	total	595	54,7	246	22,6	247	22,7	1088	100,0

Source: own research.

Figure 4. *In your opinion, should religious values be respected in public life?* - quantitative and percentage distribution of answers to the above question among the groups of electorally passive and active respondents in the 2010 local government election and first round of the 2010 presidential election (N = 1088).



Source: own research.

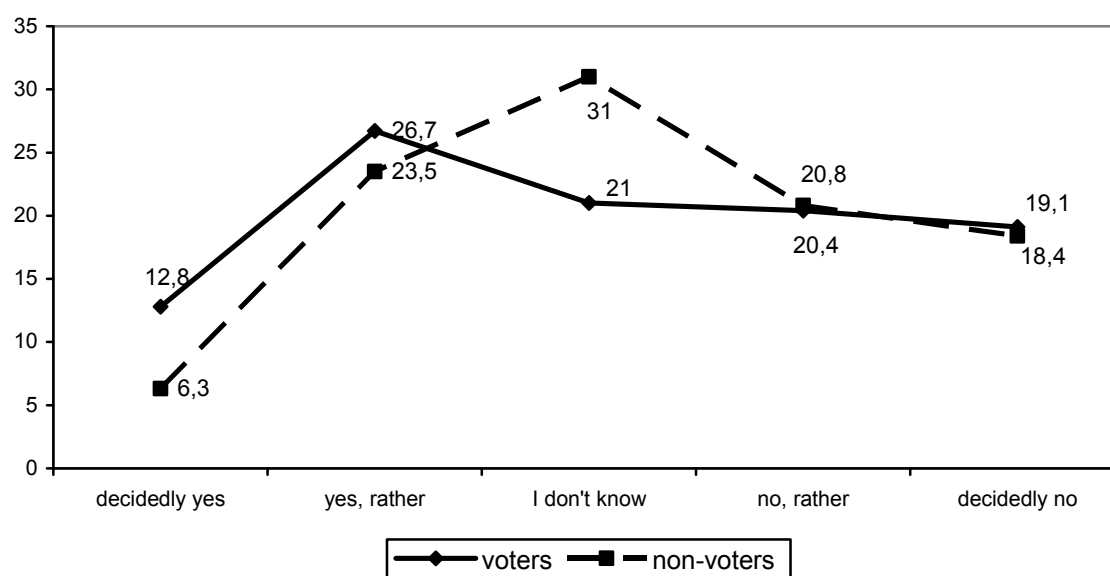
The question of respect for religious values in public life was referenced to voting behaviour in both the 2010 local governments elections and the 2010 presidential election. The results are very similar. More than half of respondents believe that religious values should be respected in public life (54.7%), the opposing view is held by one in five respondents (22.6%), similar number (22.7%) have no opinion on the matter. In terms of differences in voting behaviour, it is difficult to indicate clear differences between the two groups, both in for the local government election and the presidential election.

Table 6. *I trust the Catholic church priests* - quantitative and percentage distribution of responses among those declaring activity and passivity in the Parliamentary elections, if they were to be held the next Sunday - 2012 (N = 1088).

		<i>I trust the Catholic church priests</i>											
		Decidedly yes		Yes, rather		I don't know		No, rather		Decidedly no		Total	
		number	percentage	number	percentage	number	percentage	number	percentage	number	percentage	number	percentage
Parliamentary election	voters	107	12,8	222	26,7	175	21,0	170	20,4	159	19,1	833	100
	non-voters	16	6,3	60	23,5	79	31,0	53	20,8	47	18,4	255	100
	total	123	11,3	282	25,9	254	23,3	223	20,5	206	18,9	1088	100

Source: own research.

Figure 5. *I trust the Catholic church priests* - quantitative and percentage distribution of responses among those declaring activity and passivity in the Parliamentary elections, if they were to be held the next Sunday - 2012 (N = 1088).



Source: own research.

One third of the respondents (34.6%) declares strong or conditional trust in the Catholic church priests in Poland, with the slightly higher prevalence of decisive declarations recorded in the group of citizens active in elections (12.8% vs 6.3%). Nearly two fifths of the respondents (39.4%) presented the opposing view, but in this case, voting behaviour was only poorly differentiating the firm and conditional response categories. Close to one in four citizens (23.3%) have no opinion on whether or not they trust the Catholic church priests; among this answer category, the number of electorally passive respondents is visibly greater than of the active ones (31.0% vs 21.0%).

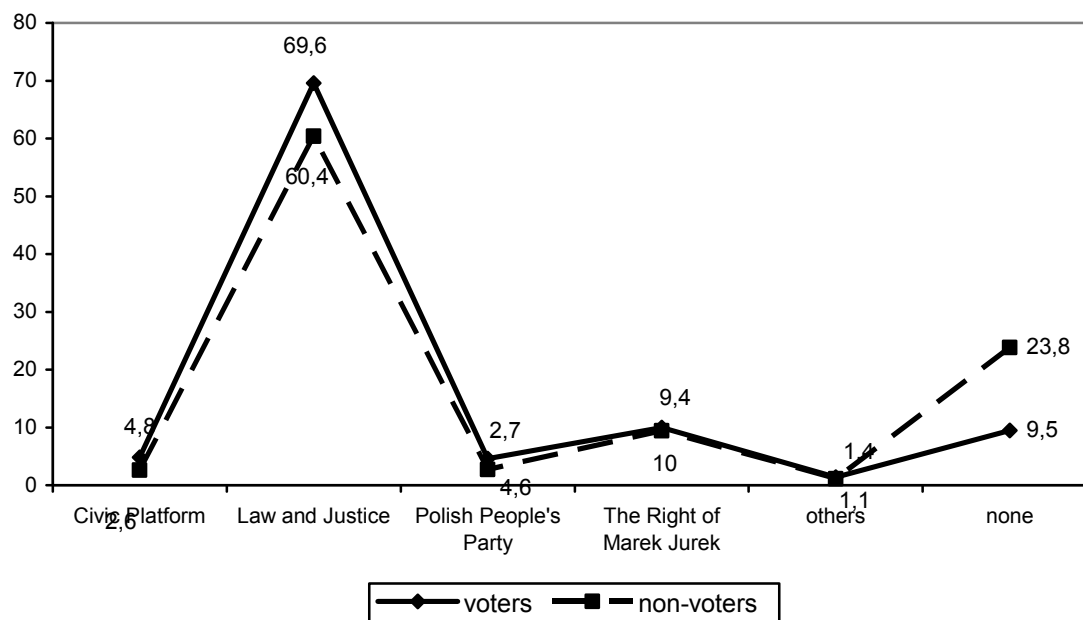
Presentation of the results in a figure indicates that a the groups of citizens active and passive in the elections are to a greater degree differentiated by responses indicating decisive or conditional trust in the priests. These differences are almost non-existent among the respondents declaring lack of confidence in the priests of the Catholic church.

Table 7. Which of the parties participating in parliamentary elections in 2011 does, in your opinion, represent the interests of the Catholic clergy the most? – quantitative and percentage distribution of answers to the above question among the electorally passive and active voters in the 2011 parliamentary election (N = 1099).

		<i>Which of the parties participating in parliamentary elections in 2011 does, in your opinion, represent the interests of the Catholic clergy the most?</i>													
		Civic Platform		Law and Justice		Polish People's Party		The Right of Marek Jurek		others		none		total	
		number	percentage	number	percentage	number	percentage	number	percentage	number	percentage	number	percentage	number	percentage
2011 Parliamentary election	voters	39	4,8	569	69,6	38	4,6	82	10	12	1,4	78	9,5	818	100
	non-voters	7	2,6	160	60,4	7	2,7	25	9,4	3	1,1	63	23,8	265	100
	do not remember	0	0,0	9	56,3	1	6,3	2	12,5	0	0,0	4	25,0	16	100
	total	46	4,2	738	67,2	46	4,2	109	9,9	15	1,4	145	13,2	1099	100

Source: own research.

Figure 6. Which of the parties participating in parliamentary elections in 2011 does, in your opinion, represent the interests of the Catholic clergy the most? – quantitative and percentage distribution of answers to the above question among the electorally passive and active voters in the 2011 parliamentary election (N = 1099).



Source: own research.

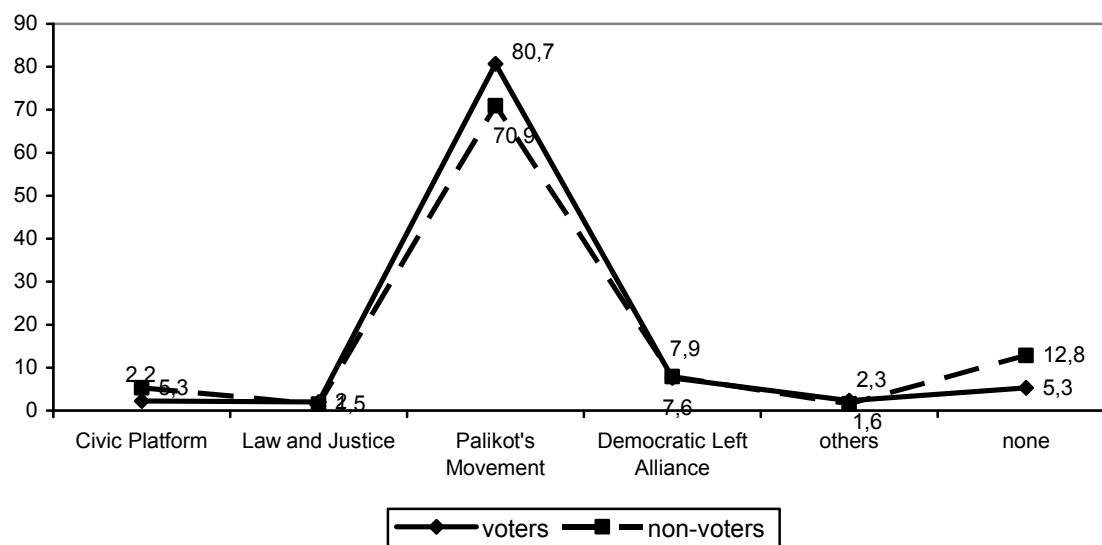
According to two thirds of the respondents (67.2%), the Law and Justice party the greatest extent represents the interests of the Catholic clergy on the Polish political scene. Other parties indicated by the respondents received far fewer votes, within the range of 4,2-9,9%. It is worth noting that the participants active in the elections more often indicated individual political parties in terms of representing the interests of the Catholic Church, while clearly a greater number of passive voters (23.8% vs 9.5%) replied that none of the parties represent the interests of Catholic Church.

Table 8. Which of the parties participating in parliamentary elections in 2011 will, in your opinion, strive to limit the role of the Catholic church in Polish public life the most? – quantitative and percentage distribution of answers to the above question among the electorally passive and active voters in the 2011 parliamentary election (N = 1099).

		Which of the parties participating in parliamentary elections in 2011 will, in your opinion, strive to limit the role of the Catholic church in Polish public life the most?													
		Civic Platform		Law and Justice		Palikot's Movement		Democratic Left Alliance		others		none		total	
		number	percentage	number	percentage	number	percentage	number	percentage	number	percentage	number	percentage	number	percentage
2011 Parliamentary election	voters	18	2,2	16	2,0	660	80,7	62	7,6	19	2,3	43	5,3	818	100
	non-voters	14	5,3	4	1,5	188	70,9	21	7,9	4	1,6	34	12,8	265	100
	do not remember	0	0,0	2	12,5	12	75,0	0	0,0	0	0,0	2	12,5	16	100
	total	32	2,9	22	2,0	860	78,3	83	7,6	23	2,1	79	7,2	1099	100

Source: own research.

Figure 7. Which of the parties participating in parliamentary elections in 2011 will, in your opinion, strive to limit the role of the Catholic church in Polish public life the most? – quantitative and percentage distribution of answers to the above question among the electorally passive and active voters in the 2011 parliamentary election (N = 1099).



Source: own research.

Nearly four fifths of the respondents (78.3%) considered that the new party on the Polish political scene - Palikot's Movement - will in its activity strive to undermine the position of the Catholic Church in Polish public life. Indications of other parties are within a range of few percent. Palikot's Movement was pointed out by a slightly greater percentage of voters active in the 2011 parliamentary elections (80.7% vs 70.9%), opinions indicating other parties were only poorly differentiated by the voting behaviour of respondents.

CONCLUSIONS

The results of the above studies highlight the important role of the Catholic Church in Poland. It can be observed both in the group of factors relating to the variable *Catholic religiosity*, as well as the second variable - *the role of the Catholic Church in public life*. However, in the latter case, the results are not so unambiguous. The studies carried out have shown that the Poles are a nation with significant intrinsic need to bear witness to their faith by following the teachings of the Catholic Church, what was reflected for example in declarations of more than half of the respondents, who stated that they participate in religious practices and ceremonies, as well as statements of two thirds of the respondents for whom the Decalogue is a determinant of their conduct in everyday life. The responses show clearly that Poland fits well within the current of research seeing in religion a mobilizing factor of political participation. Frequency of religious practices and declared importance of the 10 Commandments in everyday life very clearly differentiate the groups of citizens passive and active in the elections..

As stated above, the results obtained for the second factor taken into account in the analysis, namely, the role of the Catholic Church in public life also emphasize the important role of Catholicism in Poland, although in a less clear-cut way. Close to half of the respondents believe that the role of the Catholic Church in public life is too great, but only a slightly smaller number claim it is appropriate. Similarly ambiguous are the results concerning people's trust in priests – over one third of study participants do not trust them, slightly less declare that they trust the representatives of the Catholic Church. Most Poles, however, are of the opinion that religious values should be respected in public life, which may indicate the need to translate the determinants of respondent's own conduct in everyday life into the public sphere, in which political actors should respect the principles which citizens trust.

The collected responses indicate that the Poles appreciate the values and teachings of the Catholic Church, and apply them to a large extent in their behavior. Moreover, they acknowledge that these values should also have their place in public life. However, they do not profess clear trust in Catholic priests, which may be related to their perceived negative impact on the social and political spheres, going beyond the declarative religious purposes of the Church's existence.

The Polish political scene is flanked at its extremes by two parties, which in the context of the present analyzes should be given special attention. The first one is the Law and Justice party, to which the respondents clearly allocate the role of the political grouping representing the interests of the Catholic clergy to the greatest extent. This opinion runs parallel to the process of polarization of views of Catholic Poles regarding their political representation - Law and Justice enjoys the support of traditional, conservative environments, which can even be described as reactionary in their approach to the Catholic Church after the election of Pope Francis to the Holy See. The second party is the Palikot's Movement, which the citizens to an equally decisive extent see as the party that strives to weaken the role of the Catholic Church in Poland the most. The success of the party in the parliamentary elections in 2011 can be seen as a response to the radicalization of the other – Catholic – side of the political dispute. The anti-clerical party orientation appealed to those supporting the clear socio-political separation between the state and the church, the very separation which is one of the most primitive and universal axes of conflict in democratic societies. While the group firmly supporting the church-state separation is not a newly emerged socio-political division in Poland, before 2011, despite attempts of different political forces to appeal to it, it remained politically inactive. It took Janusz Palikot, who saw the right moment for activation of the political potential of anti-clericalism, what was brought about by the series of events following the Smolensk plane crash, resulting in a strong radicalization among political circles associated with the Catholic Church (Wojtasik 2012A: 168).

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