
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.34768/r1.2020.v462.17>

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**FAMILY, RELIGION, HOMELAND – THE TRADITIONAL
VALUES OF POLES IN THE PROCESS
OF TRANSFORMATION**

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OF POLES IN THE PROCESS OF TRANSFORMATION

Keywords: family, religion, homeland, secularization, traditionalism, postmodernism.

Based on the results of national research, official data and selected concepts of value transformations, the article presents a review of trends regarding recognized and realized values considered as traditionally Polish, such as the family, religion and homeland. Although they are subject to changes, the direction of these changes is not always clear and straightforward. The results of the review prove that there is a lot of ambiguity when it comes to declarations and behaviors concerning family life, Polish religiousness is

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drifting between secularization and desecularization, and declarative patriotism often does not manifest itself in practice and is sometimes identified with nationalism.

RODZINA, RELIGIA, OJCZYZNA – TRADYCYJNE WARTOŚCI POLAKÓW W PROCESIE TRANSFORMACJI

Słowa kluczowe: rodzina, religia, ojczyzna, sekularyzacja, tradycjonalizm, postmodernizm.

W artykule dokonano przeglądu trendów dotyczących wartości uznawanych za tradycyjnie polskie, takich jak rodzina, religia i ojczyzna, opierając się na wynikach badań krajowych, oficjalnych danych oraz wybranych koncepcjach zmian w obszarze wartości. Choć wartości te podlegają zmianom, kierunek tych zmian nie zawsze jest jasny i jednoznaczny. Wyniki przeglądu dowodzą, że istnieje wiele niejasności co do deklaracji i zachowań dotyczących życia rodzinnego. Polska religijność balansuje na granicy sekularyzacji i desekularyzacji, a deklaracyjny patriotyzm często nie przejawia się w działaniu i czasami utożsamiany jest z nacjonalizmem.

Theories of value transformations

Values in the sociological approach refer to both basic and general approaches to goals and aspirations in terms of life orientation. They apply to social groups, society, culture and humanity as a whole. They do not create pure and unchanging ideas, but are the result of complex historical, socio-cultural processes of change. This means that the values are historically variable and culturally relative. They depend on the overall social relations existing in society and to some extent reflect it. In rapidly changing social conditions, values may undergo even far-reaching transformations and modifications (Mariański 2006a, p. 335).

From the sociological point of view, the socio-cultural context plays an important role in shaping values, ethical beliefs, world views, lifestyles, or ways of valuing, and, as we know, in the contemporary world a radical change of this context can be observed. Rapid civilizational transformations, characteristic of the modern world, are therefore not without influence on the sphere of applied norms and professed values. In his studies on Protestant ethics, Max Weber already pointed out that the changes in values,

judgments and moral norms are closely related to social and economic or civilizational development (Weber 2011).

An important feature of pluralistic societies, especially those entering the post-modern phase of development, is the loss of absolute importance of moral values and norms (Mariański 2006b, p. 157). In this context, one should suppose that the political transformation in Poland and the evolution of the market society were not without influence on the axiological sphere of life of Poles and that what used to be socially significant could now become less important.

The concepts of value transformations suggest that in richer countries, with higher economic development indices and education levels, as well as indicators of liberalism and political freedoms, there is a higher acceptance of secular-rational, individualistic and post-materialistic values (Inglehart 1990, Inglehart, Norris 2006), as well as a greater relativization of moral judgments and permissiveness, especially in terms of personal and family morality (Jasińska-Kania 2008). Based on broad empirical material, R. Inglehart (1990) proved that the transformation of values taking place in developed societies includes primarily religion, family and homeland. In Poland, his concept is developed, applied and also criticised by I. Borowik (2002), A. Jasińska-Kania (2012), R. Siemieńska (2004), K. Slany (2002), U. Swadźba (2012), P. Zdziech (2010), and M. Ziółkowski (2000), among others. More than 30 years after the political transformation, it is worth asking whether a patriotic and Catholic Pole who is family-minded is a thing of the past, or maybe just a stereotype? Or are traditional and community values – despite the mentioned civilizational changes – doing well or maybe even better in Poland? We will try to answer these questions mainly on the basis of the results of quantitative research carried out by CBOS on representative samples of adult Poles as well as official data and other statistics.

Family in the value system of Poles

The changes concerning the family in contemporary Poland are heterogeneous in nature. Some data and indicators suggest its strengthening and growing role, while others, on the contrary, point to its weakening.

The family – according to declarations – is a key value in the life of Poles. Since 2005, family happiness has invariably been ranked first on the list of the most important values that Poles follow in their everyday lives, and is indicated by more than four fifths of respondents (CBOS 2020). The same number of people have been saying for years that one needs a family to achieve full happiness. Only every ninth Pole believes that one can live as happily without a family (Boguszewski 2019c, p.4). In addition, at present,

more often than in 2013, the CBOS respondents assign a maximum value on a 10-point scale to the importance of the family in their lives. All this allows us to think that the vast majority of Poles build their happiness based on family and this foundation does not change over the years, or even gets stronger in some respects.

The meaning of the family in the life of Poles, going beyond the declarations themselves, is visible, for instance, in the forms of spending free time. Poles relax mainly with their families and the most important Catholic holidays they celebrate have such a nature (family rather than religious) (Bożewicz 2019a, Głowacki 2020). Celebrating religious holidays and opinions about them are anchored in the strong and stable family ties of Poles. In 2019, in comparison with the study conducted 6 years earlier, an intensification of contacts with family members such as: parents, adult children living separately and grandparents was noted (Feliksiak 2019, p. 3). The high frequency of meetings with loved ones is fostered by territorial concentration, which is characteristic for most families in Poland.

In addition, the popularity of the multi-generational family as a preferred model is growing – a large family, where more than two generations live together, is currently considered the best form of life by almost every third Pole, which is a significant increase since 2008 (Bożewicz 2019b, p. 32). The preferred number of children has also changed over the last dozen or so years – more and more people would like to have three of them, while increasingly fewer consider having one child as an ideal solution. All these indicators prove the stable and significant role of the family in the life of Poles, or even its growing position. On the other hand, however, preferences do not translate into reality. The fertility rate in Poland has for years remained below the simple generational replacement (GUS 2020, p. 219). Even though fertility in Poland increased slightly between 2015 and 2017 (from 1.29 to 1.45), in 2018 this trend slowed down (the value of the coefficient was 1.44). Thus, there is a visible inconsistency between fertility preferences and their realization in life.

The preferences for the family model are changing; the definition of the family is changing as well. The significance of this notion in the social consciousness is expanding – the view that people in informal relationships and those who bring up children from these relationships constitute a family is gaining in popularity (Boguszewski 2019c, p. 6). Also the so-called patchwork model, where people who are presently in an informal relationship raise children from previous relationships together, is considered a family by more and more Poles. Simultaneously, there is a growing conviction in Polish society that love and trust are the most important elements of a rela-

tionship, and it is less relevant whether the couple decides to get married or consciously does not enter into a formal relationship (Boguszewski 2019b, p. 8). The acceptance of being single is also growing, although Poles more and more rarely say that people who consciously decide to live without a permanent partner have a more interesting life than those in long-term relationships (Boguszewski 2019b, p. 11).

The declared openness to new family forms is reflected in official data (GUS 2019). In Poland, there are over 62,000 divorces a year, and the number of newly married couples is only three times higher than the number of divorces. In the long run, however, it can be seen that after an intensive increase in the number of divorces, recorded until 2006, this trend has clearly slowed down and has since then remained relatively stable. But on the other hand, the number of marriages has decreased quite significantly after 2008. Also this trend has slowed down in recent years, but the current annual number of marriages still remains one of the lowest ever. In 2018, there were about 192,000 marriages in Poland, which is only 12,000 more than in 2013, when this number was the lowest in history (180,000). The indicator expressing the ratio of marriages entered into and dissolved as a result of divorce in 2013 reached the lowest level, then slightly increased and since 2014 has remained at a similar – still relatively low – level of about 3.00. This means that in recent years there has been one divorce for about three marriages. This fact means that the problem of divorce affects – directly or indirectly – an increasing number of people. As a result, the social consent to divorce is growing: the percentage of people who generally do not support it, but in certain situations consider it acceptable, is decreasing, while the share of strong supporters of divorce is growing – currently they constitute a group almost three times larger than the ardent opponents (12%) (Boguszewski 2019a, p. 2).

The changes concerning the family are therefore not clear-cut and it is difficult – also on the basis of the research mentioned above – to determine the direction they will take. This is because some areas of family life are stable, others reveal the strengthening of the role of the family, and others, adequately to the phenomena observed in everyday life, indicate the liberalization of views, including the acceptance of not starting a family or dissolving marriages by divorce.

Religion in the value system of Poles

In the system of the most important values in the life of Poles, religious faith currently occupies the fifth place (CBOS 2020). It is preceded by family happiness, good health, peace and an honest life. However, looking at these

results in retrospect, it should be noted that the percentage of people who indicate faith among the three most important values has increased between 2013 and 2019 and amounts to 17%, the same as in 2010. Based solely on this indicator, it can be concluded that the importance of religious faith in the life of Poles is not diminishing or is even increasing slightly. However, at least one more study is necessary to determine whether the last survey is the beginning of the upward trend.

Attitudes in the area of religiousness are changing very slowly in Poland. They are only visible when one traces data from a possibly long period of time, because in the last few years the oscillations are in the range of one (or even less than one) percentage point. Based on the self-declarations of Poles defining their attitude to faith and religious practices, it can be stated that since the end of the nineties, invariably more than 90% of the surveyed people (91%-97%) consider themselves to be believers¹, of whom approximately every tenth (lately every twelfth) assesses their faith as deep. The data for 2020 (collected between January and March) reveals the lowest percentage of believers in history – it amounts to 91%, with the percentage of deep believers being stable since 2011 (about 8%). The percentage of people who are rather or completely non-believers is slowly growing: in 2007 it amounted to 4%, and in 2019 it was already twice as high (8%) (Bożewicz 2020a, p. 1).

The participation of Poles in religious practices, measured in a declarative way, also indicates a very slow weakening of religiousness in the society. In the long trend it can be seen that between 1997 and 2005 the level of practices was stable and then started to decrease. And although every year the changes oscillate around one percentage point, between 2007 and 2019 the percentage of people practicing their faith regularly decreased from 57% to 47%. At the same time, the share of non-practitioners increased from 10% to 15%. The greatest stability is shown by the percentage of irregular practitioners (once a month or several times a year), ranging from 33-39%. The slow decrease of the religiousness of Poles is well reflected in the term used by Janusz Mariański: “creeping secularization” (Mariański 2014).

The combination of declarations of faith and religious practices shows that after a period of decline in the percentage of believers and regular practitioners (2005-2012), there has been a stabilization, with a slight drop between 2018 and 2019. The share of those who believe and practice irregularly fluctuates between 31% and 37% over the period under examination but seems to be rather stable over the last 10 years. The percentage of non-

¹CBOS utilizes annual compilations resulting from the aggregation of data from twelve monthly surveys carried out in a given calendar year.

believers and non-practitioners is growing slightly, but this is visible only in a very long trend – with some fluctuations, this group has grown from 3% to 7% over the last 13 years.

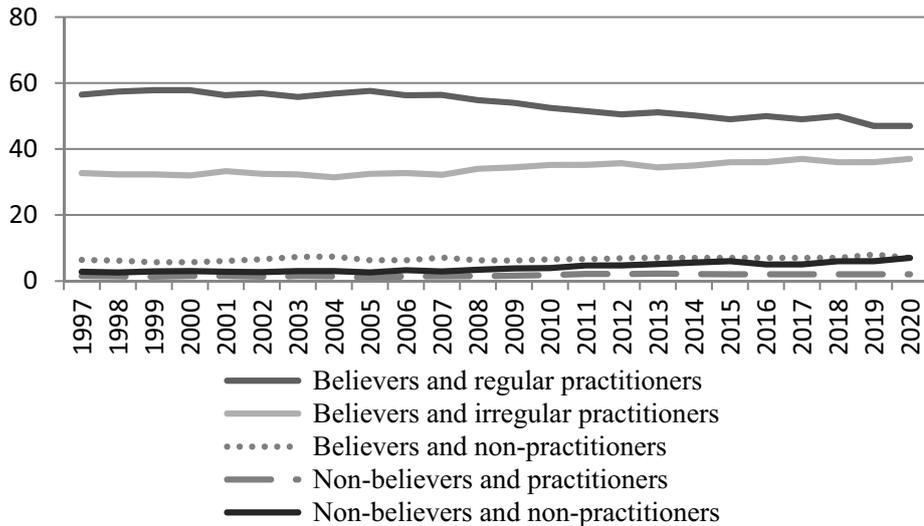


Figure 1. Declarations of faith and religious practices.

Source: Author's own study based on aggregated data from 1997-2020. The data from the year 2020 are based on surveys carried out from January to March (inclusive).

Stabilization, if not a minor religious revival, is also recently demonstrated by the data collected by ISKK (Institute for Catholic Church Statistics) and presented annually as dominicantes and communicantes indicators (ISKK 2020, p. 23). These studies are based on counting the number of people present at masses in all churches in Poland on a selected Sunday in fall each year. According to the 2018 survey, 38.2% of the believers took part in Sunday Mass, and 17.3% of the Catholics received Holy Communion. The dominicantes score was only 2 percentage points lower than in 2008, which is in line with the thesis of creeping secularization, while the communicantes score rose by 2 percentage points over the same period and is rather increasing in the long run, which may indicate an increase in religious involvement of people attending masses.

At the same time, the already mentioned desacralization of Christmas is visible in Poland. Easter is more often treated as a family holiday (67%) than a religious experience (51%) (Głowacki 2019, p. 3). The situation is similar with Christmas – since 2011, more than half of the adult population of Poland is of the opinion that for them it is primarily a family holiday,

while the percentage of people treating it mainly as a religious event is falling from year to year and in the last survey was only 23% (Bożewicz 2019a, p. 1).

To sum up, there is a certain polarization in the religiousness of Poles – the strengthening of committed (consistent) faith and, at the same time, consistency in the lack of faith. Several important dimensions show a decline in the religiousness of Poles, and some, for example, the importance of faith in life or receiving Holy Communion on Sunday, suggest its growth. This confirms the thesis that in the Church there is a decrease in the number of “religiously lukewarm” people, while the number of “cold” people is increasing. (Catholic Information Agency 2018, p. 5).

Homeland in the value system of Poles

Just behind religious faith, on the sixth place in the CBOS survey of 2019, in the system of values most appreciated by Poles, was the prosperity of the homeland (CBOS 2020). Interestingly, the importance attributed to this value has recently increased significantly (from 3% in 2013 to 14% in 2019). Poles invariably declare their pride in their nationality, while only a few admit that they are ashamed of it. Moreover, it turns out that a high sense of national pride is an increasingly common phenomenon in Poland – from 2010 to 2018, such declarations increased from 60% to 71% (Głowacki 2018, p. 2). For Poles, patriotism means, above all, showing respect for national symbols – the emblem, flag and anthem, caring for national traditions, knowledge of the history of their own country, taking care of instilling love to their homeland in their children, respect and observance of the law and participation in elections (Głowacki 2018, p. 7-8).

However, it should be noted that the patriotism of Poles is also often associated with a tendency to accept statements of a nationalist nature. The vast majority of those surveyed by CBOS in 2016 stated that one should choose Polish products rather than those from abroad, and that Polish land should not be sold to foreigners. In their assessment of history, a very large percentage of respondents agreed that Poles were harmed more often than other nations in the past and behaved more nobly than others. However, it is important to note that support for these statements does not translate into a generalized aversion to foreigners or a conviction of the superiority of Poles as an ethnic group (Boguszewski, Głowacki 2016, p. 20), as well as into describing themselves as nationalists. A relatively small percentage of all Poles, i.e. 7%, identify themselves in this way (Boguszewski, Głowacki 2016, p. 15). It is, however, significantly higher among youth graduating from secondary education – it reaches 11% (Głowacki 2017, p. 134). Natio-

nationalistic tendencies may be evidenced by support for national movements, such as the National Radical Camp or All-Polish Youth. They are declared by every sixth adult Pole (17%) (Boguszewski, Głowacki 2016, p. 14) and over a quarter of youth entering adulthood (28%) (Głowacki 2017, p. 135).

Considerably more frequent among Poles, and almost common in relation to the declaration of nationalism, is calling themselves patriots – this applies to as much as 88% of adult Poles (Boguszewski, Głowacki 2016, p. 9-10) and 73% of young people graduating from secondary education (Głowacki 2017, p. 130-131). However, also in this aspect of the values analyzed, the declarations do not fully match the behavior. Patriotism in Poland manifests itself mainly in cheering Polish athletes and feeling proud of their achievements (57% of indications). Only less than half of adult Poles regularly display the flag to celebrate national holidays or on other occasions (44%), as well as broaden their knowledge of various events in Polish history (45%). The CBOS respondents declare much less frequently that they participate in the celebrations of national holidays (24%), and only an eighth of the adult population admits to taking up voluntary and unpaid work for the benefit of the local community (13%) (Głowacki 2018, p. 9-10).

The feeling of influence of Poles on the affairs of the country has been relatively small for years (concerns slightly more than one third of the respondents) (Felixiak 2020b, p. 1-2), and their social involvement – despite the upward trend (Bożewicz 2020b, p. 4-7) – still leaves a lot to be desired on an international scale. What is more, the perspective in this respect does not seem to be too optimistic, as the young generation of Poles – according to the research – has no instilled pro-social attitudes and shows limited commitment to others. Young Poles are not interested in public affairs (Badora et al. 2019, pp. 94-98), do not participate in school self-government elections (Bożewicz 2018, pp. 65-66), and having the opportunity to participate in the general voting for the first time in their lives (after coming of age), in 2018 they were much less eager to take advantage of this privilege than older voters (Boguszewski 2018, pp. 143-144). Generally speaking, the voter turnout in Poland has been quite low for years, although – encouragingly – it has been growing slightly in recent years (State Election Commission 2020), and not participating in elections meets with disapproval of only less than half of Poles (Boguszewski 2013, pp. 4-7). This rather pessimistic picture is complemented by an almost universal and unchanging lack of trust in others (Omyła-Rudzka 2020, p. 1-2).

Conclusions

The socio-cultural changes and the accompanying phenomena of globalization, liberalization, individualization, secularization or multiculturalism do not cause a significant departure from traditional values in Poland. What is more, in some respects they are even becoming stronger. Thus, despite the liberalization of Poles' views on marital and family behaviors, the desacralization of religious holidays, the slow increase in the percentage of non-practitioners, the lack of trust in others and the fairly strong focus on one's own good rather than on creating a community, traditional values, which include family, religion and homeland, invariably maintain a relatively strong position in social awareness. However, the consolidation of these values is largely declaratory in nature and is part of the assigned identity, since in reality there is a considerable inconsistency of attitudes and their significant diversity, if only because of age. The results of research carried out among the youth may suggest that one should rather expect a slow departure from traditional values and, at the same time, greater consistency of declarations and attitudes in the discussed aspects.

The question is, however, whether the potential departure from traditionalism and communality will result in following the trajectory outlined by Roland Inglehart (Inglehart, Welzel 2005) in his theory of human development and concept of postmaterialism? Although in Poland we are dealing with an increase in individualism, the belief in the possibility of deciding for oneself and the willingness to do so, it is difficult to say at this point whether this will take the direction of human development, making the world more postmaterialistic, or whether, as a result of external turbulence, it will cause an increase of risk and uncertainty, and maybe, together with further economic development, will foster the development of the concept of McDonaldization (Ritzer 2011), destroying the individualization that is only apparent. All the more so because, as Paweł Zdziech notes, in Inglehart's concept, the key element of post-modern existence and the condition for the human development process is the assumption of social security, which, in the context of the risk and uncertainty that concern both the sense of existential security, the stability of the political, ecological and especially economic situation – also in relation to the hitherto stable European or American economies – is no longer so certain and irreversible (Zdziech 2010, pp. 227-228) – especially in the context of the current social and economic destabilization caused by the coronavirus epidemic. With this in mind, “if one assumes that the basic condition of man in the postmodern era is risk and uncertainty (including the uncertainty of livelihood), then both the postmaterialistic transformation of values and the transformation of values

towards self-expression are difficult to justify” (Zdziech 2010, pp. 227-228), and this in turn may create opportunities for a return to traditional values, which in times of uncertainty provide a kind of stability.

In all this, however, one should remember that the transformations of values, although related to the processes of modernization and systemic transformation, often follow different paths, along different trajectories, determined not only by the specificity of culture and historical experience, but also by the influence of specific situational factors, such as changes in the economic situation or the direction of state policy, e.g. as a result of elections (Jasińska-Kania 2008, p. 19). Moreover, what is important is that the theory of the relationship between the economic situation, culture and politics and the adopted moral values and norms refers not only to differences between countries, but also to divisions within societies (Jasińska-Kania 2008, p. 27), which should also be taken into account in such generalizations.

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