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CONGRUENT REPRESENTATION: ELECTION CYCLE IN POLAND 2009-2011

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Abstract

The article presents the results of research on the congruence of the political representation formed in elections held in the years 2009-2011 in Poland. The election cycle included the European Parliamentary elections in 2009, the Polish presidential election, elections to local government in 2010, and the parliamentary elections in 2011. The median citizen, median voter, and their positions on the left-right scale were used as tools for examining congruence. Studies have proven that in Poland, the median citizen and the median voter are positioned on the right side of the left-right scale. The legislature and executive authorities chosen in the elections are located left of the median citizen and the median voter. Studies have not demonstrated the existence of any impact of the electoral system on the positioning of the median citizen and the median voter.

Keywords: elections, political representation, congruent representation, left-right scale

Introduction¹

Elections are an important instrument, allowing for an aggregation to be made of individual voter views on social interests. The elected authorities, on the other hand, should reflect the most important features of the electorate, such as geographical distribution, political views and social structure (Beetham 2004, 61). They serve as a medium which translates social preferences into the legitimacy of authority, and social preferences into their political representation. The periodicity of elections facilitates analysis of the dynamics of political changes, as both the electoral discourse and the electorate's focus on specific postulates make it possible to identify the transformations taking place in the social perception of politics. Beyond the specific issues which form the axis of pragmatic and ideological dispute in each campaign, factors of a more general nature can be identified, which describe the political preference status. Politics makes use of general categories such as ideological formulas or the concept of left and right in order to illustrate important issues in public discourse. They serve to point to the fields of political dispute and to define its elementary features.

Elections identify the most important issues, which, through their social bearing, affect decisions made by voters. They also help attach particular parties and voters to the said issues. In addition, elections allow voters to identify with the values they

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represent, contributing to enhancing their attachment to the existing system of norms and values (Rose & Mossawir 1967, 176). The picture of political preferences reflected by means of elections may take the form of two basic models. In the first, citizens, by making an electoral decision, express their views regarding specific issues, which are the subject of the pre-election discourse. Every election is held in a different (sometimes very dramatically different) socio-economic situation, which establishes different areas of social interest. In times of deep change and economic crisis, social attention focuses on such issues. In times of economic stability and sustainable economic growth, interest is shifted towards axiological affairs, which may deprioritise economic postulates in political competition. This, in turn, can lead to the impression that the election of representatives and the policies they establish is of a relatively lesser importance (Rose & Mossawir 1967, 181). The second model of political preference has to do with a certain generalisation, in which the role of specific postulates in the electoral discourse is replaced by the ideological auto-identification of the voters. Since voters use generalised concepts (left, right, centre) for describing and structuring their views, then certain characteristic social dimensions of left- and right-wingism can be identified (Huber & Powell 1994, 298-303). In addition, especially at the beginning, the attitude towards communism played a crucial role, as it determined the initial division between the right and left, both for political parties and for their voters. As a result, a generalised picture is obtained in which voters pay attention mainly to the congruence of their auto-identification with the left-right orientation of parties, rather than with concrete postulates (Wiatr et al. 2003, 228-230).

The aim of the paper is to examine the congruence between the representation formed as a result of the election process and the state's voters and citizens. The analysis covers elections held in Poland in the election cycle of 2009-2011. The median voter, median citizen, and legislative and executive bodies were used as tools for examining congruence. In the case of elections to the European Parliament, the party representation of Polish MEPs was used. In the election for the position of Polish president, a comparison was made between voters who supported Bronisław Komorowski, with all the other voters and non-voters. In local elections, a study was made of the political composition of the regional legislatures (provincial assemblies) and regional executives (provincial boards). In the case of parliamentary elections, the level of congruence covered the Sejm representation (legislature) and the cabinet of Donald Tusk (executive). Four research hypotheses have been formed in the paper: H1. Both the median citizen as well as the median voter in Poland are positioned on the right side of the left-right scale, especially on account of the electoral system used; H2. The electoral system used will differentiate the position of the median citizen and median voter; H3. The position of the median citizen and the median voter in each general election will affect the positions of the legislature and the executive formed; H4. The representation of the legislature and executive formed is in line with the position of the median citizen and the median voter on the left-right scale. A generalised picture of society and the electorate was created using an 11-point left-right scale. Empirical data was derived from pre-election studies carried out in the years 2009-2011 on representative samples of adult Polish citizens.

Congruence of political representation

The catalogue of political objectives achieved in the election process is relatively broad, but in the case of democratic regimes, an attempt can be made to generalise it along three general planes. First, due to democratic elections, it is possible to legitimise the authority of the political victors. Second, the possibility to hold the individuals in power accountable by having them re-elected (or not) is also an important feature of democratic elections. Finally, if following a period of governance, voters fail to re-elect those in power, the conditions for alternation of power appear. In the case of pluralistic societies with a heterogeneous structure, yet another aspect of the elections is present, namely that of ensuring representation to minorities (Antoszewski & Herbut 2001, 210).

For an empirical verification of congruence, Bingham Powell (2006, 181) uses tools consisting of the median citizen and median voter. Their position on the left-right scale is the only option that is preferred more than others by the majority of citizens or voters. The concept of the median voter is related to the statistically median citizen, as the principles of modern democracy preclude the universality of the right to vote. However, Bingham Powell (2006, 181) could not determine whether their positions lead to the distancing of governments and other political actors away from the median citizen. The method of examining congruence being proposed in the paper seems to eliminate this inconvenience and allows for the identification of this distance.

Congruence is a function of the existing options, which voters express their preference for in the election process, and their final aggregate shape. Such an approach may, however, be of little use in models studying congruence at the general level, in which the concept of the left and right is demonstrated by certain abstracts, specific to individual party systems. Its low effectiveness is caused by two main issues. First, the individual points of the left-right scale can signify totally different perceptions of the same postulates not only in different states, but also in different elections (Powell & Vanberg 2000, 385). Second, only in relation to concrete issues is it possible to determine the point of the statistically median voter on the scale, where the same amount of voters appears on the left and right side. To defend the presented approach, it is worth indicating its useful role in determining the dissonance between the preferences revealed in the elections as to the specific postulates of the political parties and their subsequent implementation. This happens in situations where the decisions being made move away from the position of the median voter, leading to increased preference for the demands of the minority in place of those of the majority.

It is the intentions shown in the decision-making process (whether it be regarding legislature or policymaking), which are based on the views expressed by the majority that define the median voter.

In addition to the doubts presented above, it is worth mentioning at least two more elements that show the need to modify the original Bingham Powell model. The first stems from the fact that it is difficult to designate a universal measure capable of illustrating congruence, and, in particular, the preferences of voters and their reflection in legislative bodies and governments (Laver & Budge 1992, 427-428). Polish studies and experience suggests that the value assigned to the individual political parties is a more effective measure

than the statistically median voter on the left-right scale, as it contains information on the nature of the support expressed for the entities participating in the electoral competition, which eventually form legislatures or governments. The specificity of the support generated by political parties in terms of the ideological identification of their voters allows not only for their position on the left-right continuum, but also makes it possible to perform stratification analysis. Such analysis makes it possible to determine which parties have the support of different ideological groups, and which enjoy a homogeneous voter structure (Turska-Kawa & Wojtasik 2010, 136). The second objection, linked to the application of the concept of the median voter, is rooted in the radicalism of extreme political stances and in the doubts felt in relation to those voters who declare a centrist political affiliation. In the first case, especially when the electoral system is an obstacle for small political parties (which often represent extreme attitudes), this may lead to a reduction in the congruence of the representation formed (Powell & Vanberg 2000, 390). In the second case, among those who identify themselves to be centre-oriented, there may be quite a large number of people who choose such an affiliation for their lack of defined views. For individual reasons, such voters consider it appropriate to make such a declaration (even though they have the choice to select the response: I do not know/I can't say/I have no opinion), although it is not true (Żerkowska-Balas & Cześnik 2011, 191). If this mechanism should occur with significant frequency, it will, in a one-dimensional political space, result in the placement of the median voter closer to the centre even though that might not be the case in reality. The doubts being raised about the relationship between the intensity of the voiced views and the distance of the individual from the centre is difficult to verify. This is due to the objective, which is usually determined by the research process – whether it is an analysis of the political auto-identifications of the voters, or whether it is to do with their ranking and aggregation (Powell 2006, 185-186). The basis for further deliberations in this regard could be the claim by Bingham Powell (2006, 187) about the measure of congruence, which is the distancing of the median voter away from those in power. The larger the distance, the weaker the congruence, and conversely, the smaller the distance, the greater the congruence. When studying the distance between the individual and those in power, two basic measures can be used. The first of these is the distance from a given legislative institution, which may be a parliament or other legislature. The second is the distance of the median citizen from the party forming the government or from the elected president (or another institution of a personalised executive). In the first case, the political composition of parliament, i.e., its structure, is taken into account, which is determined by the political parties having political representation. Each party can be characterised by means of three parameters: (1) position on the left-right scale; (2) the number of votes obtained in elections, and (3) the number of seats in parliament. The position on the left-right scale is determined by the declarations of the voters of the party being investigated and as a result, a median measurement is obtained. The information on the number of votes will be the basis for determining the position of the particular parties on the left-right scale, the aggregate of which determines the position of the entire parliament. Similarly, in the case of the number of seats in parliament, the importance of each party will be determined by the number of mandates it receives and its position on the left-right scale.

A specific situation takes place when the parliament is bicameral. Such a situation provides the opportunity to study the congruence of both chambers or of each chamber separately. As in the case of parliament, the position of the institutions of the executive is defined by their political composition, weighted by the importance of the party in case of the government, and, in the case of one-person executives, on the basis of the position of the voters on the left-right scale. The political composition of the government is a reflection of the results of negotiations that took place within the coalition, and the proportional principle of determining political power on the basis of the number of positions held in the government does not always apply.

However, the rationality of the sphere of politics and the pragmatics of governance ensure that in most cases, the relationship between the parliamentary position of the party and its importance in government, referred to as the number of positions created in the cabinet, is retained (Laver & Schofield 1990, 191). Therefore, apart from a few individual cases, the potential of a party within a coalition can be measured by its percentage share of seats in the parliament. In this case, the position of the government on the left-right scale will amount to a median position on the scale of all the parties forming the government, weighted by the number of seats in parliament. In the case of the president, the congruence here can be tested by comparing the position of his voters on the left-right scale with the general public's position (Wojtasik 2012, 136-138).

The left-right scale

The left-right scale is used as a tool to reflect a one-dimensional space, in which both the citizens and the political parties can structure their preferences. Not only is this the most easily available single measure of civic preferences in different countries, but also a good tool allowing for comparative analysis of the general attitudes of citizens and general attitudes of political parties, which are competing with each other and aspiring to govern (Powell 2006, 179). The tool also allows the degree of congruence achieved in an election to be studied, which is a useful measure of the congruence of preferences between citizens and politicians (Hellwig 2008, 689). Despite the fact that its design may differ significantly (10- and 11-point scales are used most often, but other scales such as five- or seven-point scales are also found [Ray 1999, 283-306], some even utilising 20-point scales [Laver, Hunt 1992, 18-24]), the very concept allows for the ranking of generalised preferences in a linear dimension (Castels & Mair 1984, 73-88). The scale makes it possible to stratify the position of given political postulates or axiological issues and is also useful in constructing temporal models of behavioural standards. Moreover, it is also used in electoral studies to describe the fields of political party competition (Powell 2006, 180).

A more complex tool used to describe the impact of elections on politics, but one that makes use of the principles of the left-right scale, is taking into account the views of political parties in determining the preferences of citizens. The objective here is to obtain as generalised a picture as possible, without any reference to programme postulates or axiological preferences (Laver & Budge 1992, 26-29). In a situation where parties or coalitions governing and forming state policy are relatively close to the preferences of the

citizens who occupy a particular place on the left-right scale, it can be assumed that the election, as a tool in the democratic process, carries out its functions properly. The greater the distance between voters and parties, the more disparate the congruence between the political representation and the preferences of the electorate is (Powell 2006, 180). Here it should be pointed out, however, that the tool is methodologically inconvenient, as studies on the leaders and political elites, which could determine their outlook on politics and position on the left-right scale, are carried out much less frequently (Huber & Inglehart 1995, 93-111).

As previously shown, the position of political parties on the left-right scale is determined mostly by the auto-identification of the voters, the opinions and evaluations of experts, and by examining the documents and political programmes of parties (Laver & Hunt 1992, 31-34). The auto-identification of voters of particular parties makes it possible not only to determine their position in the political spectrum, but also to define their position in relation to one another. Expert analyses are a form of verification of conformity of the general understanding of the location of the party in the eyes of people with higher levels of political knowledge and practice, and using both methods jointly makes it possible to compare the obtained results (Keman 2007, 76-89). In the case of expert opinions, the methodological inconvenience here is the assumption that such people view politics using the same criteria as the generality of voters do, which means that the different positions on the scale carry the same symbolic meaning (Laver & Hunt 1992, 262-265). This assumption is controversial, especially in light of the possibility of the occurrence of different mechanisms, which define the place of political parties among voters and experts. The position of voters may result to a greater degree from their emotional perception of the world of politics, which is the result of subjectively felt political sympathies and antipathies. Experts may (but they need not to) perceive the political space in a more objective manner (e.g., by the presumption of having "expert" knowledge), which may pose serious problems when trying to compare their opinions with those of the voters (Castels & Mair 1984, 74-75). The doubts presented as to the merits of utilising expert opinions and studying political programmes, guide us to search for a tool to study congruence that would be based on the opinions of citizens and their exposure in the framework of making political decisions. The verification of political programmes makes it possible to conduct a comparison between generalised programme postulates with the axiological and ideological standard, which is based on a doctrinal perception of the conceptual aggregates of the right and left-wing (Gabel & Huber 2000, 94-103).

Problem

Studies aimed at determining the degree of congruence of the representation formed as a result the election process, make it possible to obtain generalised data on the fulfilment of the basic functions of democratic procedures. In the case of countries where elections to different bodies take place, they make it possible to compare the congruence between the representation and its citizens and voters. If, however, the direct (e.g., Polish presidential election) or indirect (appointment of the government by the Sejm) effect of elections is

the formation of an executive, these studies allow for a comparison to be made of the congruence between the legislature, the median voter, and the median citizen.

The studies presented allow for the attainment of the following research objectives:

- determination of the degree of congruence of the representation formed as a result of the following elections: elections to the European Parliament in 2009; Polish presidential election in 2010; elections to the provincial assemblies in 2010; and parliamentary elections in 2011.
- determination of the differences in the level of congruence among the legislative bodies (in the case of the European Parliament, an analysis is made of its Polish representation and not its entire composition).²
- determination of the differences in the level of congruence among the executive bodies.³
- identification of common factors influencing the diversity of the level of congruence in the particular elections.

The empirical verification of congruence was carried out on the basis of post-electoral results of research carried out in the years 2009-2011, and based on an 11-point scale of left-right political auto-identification of citizens. The study was carried out within the framework of the national research project entitled "Political Preferences" and was based each and every time on a representative group of adult Polish citizens. The first study was carried out in 2009, in the months of November and December on a representative nationwide sample of adult citizens (N=1086). The 2010 study was carried out in the months of November and December on a representative nationwide sample of adult citizens (N=1088). The 2011 study was carried out after the general elections in the months of November and December, on a representative nationwide sample of adult citizens (N=1099). In all cases, only those with an active right to vote were taken into consideration.

Table 1. Average values on a left-right scale in the years 1993-2011

	1993*	1997	2001	2005	2007	2011	Mean
Left-right	6.35	6.00	5.15	6.20	6.07	5.28	5.84

* Value transposed from a 10-point scale.

Sources: (Żerkowska-Balas & Czeńnik 2011, 192); (*Preferencje Polityczne* issue 3/2012).

² Value calculated using the equation:

$$S_P = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n a_n}{n}$$

Where: n – number of parties in the legislative body; a – product of the % of seats of the particular parties in the legislative body and the median position of its voters on the left-right scale.

³ Value calculated using the equation:

$$S_E = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n a_n}{n}$$

Where: n – number of parties forming the cabinet; a – product of the % of seats of the particular parties forming the coalition and the median position of its voters on the left-right scale

No study had been carried out previously on the congruence of representation using the proposed method. Previous research focused on determining the median citizen using the left-right scale, and the position of the different political parties specific to the electorates (Wojtasik 2011, 63-69). Table 1 shows average values on an 11-point scale (where 0 represents the most left-wing, and 10 the most right-wing stance) achieved in the parliamentary elections.

In each of the studies, the values of the voters' declarations were located on the right side of the scale, generating the highest values in 1993 and 2005. In 2005, the government was formed by Law and Justice (PiS). However, the one formed in 1993 is all the more interesting as the cabinet then created was the work of the left-wing Democratic Left Alliance-Labour Union (SLD-UP) coalition. The reason for this, however, was the disintegration of the right wing and the non-participation of a number of votes cast for right-wing parties in the distribution of seats (as a result of election thresholds). The lowest value (but still to the right of the scale) was achieved in 2001 (Wojtasik 2012, 187-188).

Congruence of representation in the electoral cycle of 2009-2011

The first elections in the 2009-2011 cycle took place in June 2009. Poles, for the second time in history, elected their representatives to the European Parliament. In their case, the congruence of the representation formed as a result of the election process can be presented by means of the category of the median citizen and median voter as well as by the position held by the various groups on the left-right scale. Taking into account the consequences of using electoral systems, it should be noted that in the case of proportional elections, congruence achievement will definitely be more difficult, and in some cases even impossible. The majority system, despite its preference for building a bi-polar reference system, will provide a greater ability to achieve a congruent representation in such a dimension (Powell 2006, 182). The specifics of the electoral system used in elections to the European Parliament (more: Glajcar 2010, 51-74) means that instead of examining the relation to concrete issues in order to determine the statistically median voter, the position on the left-right scale occupied by voters of the particular political groups was used instead. The value that is assigned to the individual political parties includes information on the nature of the support for the groups participating in the elections.

On the basis of the study, the position of the median citizen on the 11-point left-right scale was defined at a value point of 5.46, whereas the median voter was defined at a value point of 5.59. Both obtained values were thus positioned on the right side of the scale (5.33 respectively for non-voters). The shape of the legislative authority formed as a result of the election (in this case its Polish representation) was characterised in relation to all voters as more right-wing oriented, and assumed the value of 5.62. The presented outcomes lead to the conclusion that the electoral formula used in the elections generated a representation which was shifted towards the right in relation to the median citizen, but to a lesser degree in relation to the median voter. In the case of elections to the European Parliament, the institutional factor deprives us of the possibility to treat the election results as possible expectations of the composition of the executive. This is due to the fact that, as the elections

do not lead to its formation, political parties do not declare possible alliances in the cabinet area. The government-opposition setup existing at the time of the election campaign, also determines the nature of the competition with regard to parties forming the government. This is because it is difficult to expect that the main firepower in the competition would be directed against the coalition partner. In the proposed framework, in accordance with the second-order elections model, the elections to the European Parliament resembled more of a poll of support for specific parties held in-between terms rather than a real election determining the future course of politics (Wojtasik 2010, 133-148).

The next election in the analysed electoral cycle took place outside of the normal electoral calendar. As a result of the tragic death of President Lech Kaczynski, the Polish presidential election was rescheduled and moved to July 2010. The degree of congruence of representation can be viewed directly through the prism of its results. In this case, one does not need to look at the transposition of research results through the support expressed for individual parties, which was highlighted by Bingham Powell (2006, 182), who considered the use of this method regarding majority elections as more justified and less cumbersome. Strategic voting can be the main factor affecting the aforementioned phenomenon. On the basis of the study, the value of the median voter was defined in the first round of the presidential election at 5.47 (median citizen 5.48) and thus on the right side of the scale (non-voters were positioned at 5.50). The values assigned in the course of the study among the main candidates were as follows: J. Kaczynski 6.84; B. Komorowski 5.27; G. Napieralski 3.18; W. Pawlak 5.30; other candidates 5.97. As can be seen, candidates situated on the right side of the scale qualified to the second round of the election, where the distance of J. Kaczynski from the point of the median voter (and the middle of the scale) was much further away than that of his main opponent. In the second round of the election, the distance increased between the median voter (5.59) and the non-voters (5.28), who this time had approximated themselves clearly towards the centre. This may indicate that the political and personal alternative developed in the second round of the election did not meet their expectations (especially the expectations of the more left-wing voters, who, in some part, decided not to vote). The median voter of B. Komorowski moved significantly to the left side (4.95) in the second round, which in the case of J. Kaczynski was extremely rare (6.76). This seems to be an indication that the president was chosen due to the votes of the centre and left, which he managed to gain before the second round of elections. In part, this support could have been of a tactical nature (strategic voting), with the intention of preventing the election of the leader of PiS. Interestingly, the elected executive authority was located to the left both of the median citizen and the median voter (regardless of whether values from the first or the second round of the election are taken into account).

In accordance with the electoral calendar, local government elections took place in the second half of 2010, and embraced authorities of all levels of local government in Poland. Their peculiarity, especially with the proposed research procedure, make it possible to narrow the analyses and conclusions down to the regional level. Local elections include elections to the provincial assemblies, which function as the political representation of the administrative regions of Poland. Similarly to the elections to the European Parliament,

instead of examining the relation to concrete issues in order to determine the statistically median voter, the position on the left-right scale occupied by voters of the particular political groups was used instead. Locations of the median citizen, the median voter, and the legislative and executive power created after the elections in the various provincial assemblies are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Congruence of representation in elections to the provincial assemblies in 2010

	Median citizen	Median voter	Provincial assembly	Coalition in the assembly*
Dolnośląskie	5.43	5.36	5.31	4.91
Kujawsko-pomorskie	5.21	5.13	5.18	5.26
Lubelskie	5.56	5.61	5.58	5.22
Lubuskie	5.11	4.95	4.9	5.25
Łódzkie	5.21	5.28	5.26	5.26
Małopolskie	5.6	5.47	5.35	5.29
Mazowieckie	5.42	5.4	5.36	5.24
Opolskie	5.24	5.22	5.18	4.88
Podkarpackie	5.88	6.14	5.71	4.86
Podlaskie	5.54	5.39	5.31	5.23
Pomorskie	5.6	5.43	5.37	5.29
Śląskie	5.42	5.33	5.17	5.24
Świętokrzyskie	5.63	5.42	5.29	5.19
Wamińsko-mazurskie	5.39	5.31	5.22	5.25
Wielkopolskie	5.34	5.3	5.21	5.26
Zachodniopomorskie	5.22	5.29	5.27	5.26

* calculated for the first coalition formed after the elections

By analysing the data, it is worth noting a few regularities. As in previous cases, the median citizen is situated on the right side of the scale, which is further proof of the existence of an advantage of this type of auto-identification in Polish society. Apart from the provinces of Lubelskie, Podkarpackie, Łódzkie, and Zachodniopomorskie, the median voter is closer to the centre of the scale than the median citizen. Apart from Zachodniopomorskie, the mentioned provinces, compared to the others, are characterised by relatively high support for PiS. Party representation at the level of the assemblies, apart from the Kujawsko-pomorskie province, was more left wing than the median voter, but in each case (except for the Lubuskie province) was located on the right side of the scale. In the case of the Kujawsko-pomorskie province, this may have been the result of a relatively strong position of SLD-UP, as compared to other regions. Coalitions established in the assemblies, in the majority of cases, were a reconstruction of the parliamentary layout, which was reflected in similar values on the left-right scale. The assembly of the Lubuskie province was an exception, where the formed coalition was situated to the right of the median citizen and the median voter.

The studied 2009-2011 election cycle ended in parliamentary elections in November 2011. In the case of the Polish parliament, the study covered only the results of elections to the first chamber. This is due to its asymmetrical bicameralism and the specificities of the electoral system. The left-right scale, in spite of the doubts as to the effectiveness of the tool used, namely that of the statistically median voter in the case of proportional elections, provides the possibility of examining congruence in relation to the bodies formed as a result of the election process. The obtained data allow for a comparison to be made between the levels of congruence achieved in the particular elections. However, similarly to the elections to the European Parliament and the local elections, instead of examining the relation regarding concrete issues for the sake of determining the statistically median voter, the position on the left-right scale occupied by voters of the particular political groups was used instead. The value assigned to the individual political parties includes information on the nature of the support for the groups that won representation in parliament, which have formed the government, or which are competing with each other during the elections. Study results have helped position the median citizen at a value point of 5.28 on the scale. The point of the median voter, among all the voters, was located at 5.23, i.e., on the right side of the scale (for non-voters the result was 5.31 respectively). The parliamentary representation of the voters, achieved as a result of the elections, was characterised, for all the voters, by a shift towards the right, assuming the value of 5.48, while the executive created in the form of Civic Platform (PO) and the Polish People's Party (PSL) was positioned closer to the centre of the scale – 5.15. The results shown prove that the elections formed a Sejm, which was, in general, shifted to the right regarding the median voter (with the Senate oriented even more to the right at 5.67), while the ruling coalition was positioned to its left.

Conclusion

The results of studies on the congruence of representation in the electoral cycle of 2009-2011 indicate that there is prevalence for right-wing auto-identification in Poland. This is consistent with both the global trends in this regard, and the preference for more right-wing political attitudes, which is observed among voters in democratic states (Noel & Therien 2008, 33-38). The reasons for the shift in the position of the median citizen on the left-right scale can be attributed to the voters' greater focus on the values sphere, with specific emphasis on religious values. Political auto-identification stems from acceptable values, applicable rules of conduct, the normative system, and traditional customs, resulting from environmental impact and the interaction between the individual and other actors in the political process (Turska-Kawa & Wojtasik 2010, 7-8). The relative weakness of left-wing auto-identification may result from the relatively small variation in economic views among Polish citizens. They exhibit a significant level of acceptance for the market economy, which is not conducive to manifesting left-wing attitudes (Wojtasik 2010, 153-172). All of this means that the H1 hypothesis can be considered positively verified, as with the exception of the Lubuskie province assembly, the median citizen and the median voter were positioned on the same side on the left-right scale. In this one case, the median voter was located slightly to the left (4.95) and the median citizen to the right (5.11).

The presented results of research performed in the period 2009-2011 make it possible to assess the congruence of political representation in all the four types of general elections held in Poland. The research tools used made it possible to make a comparison of the impact of the electoral system. In spite of the fact that in three of the four examined elections a proportional representation system applies, the results are not conclusive. This means that the H2 hypothesis failed the verification process. On the basis of the data obtained, it is impossible to prove that the electoral system differentiates the position of the median citizen and the median voter. In the case of elections to the European Parliament and the Sejm, the formed legislature was shifted to the right relative to the median citizen and voter. In provincial assemblies, no single clear trend can be captured in this regard. However, there is a clear advantage of legislatures located to the left of the median citizen and voter (but with only one case of it being located on the left part of the scale). In the case of the executive, the elections to the Sejm, most provincial assembly elections, and the Polish presidential election, a tendency for producing results positioned to the left of the median citizen and voter was visible. The results obtained result in a negative verification of the H3 hypothesis.

In the case of the congruence of political representation in legislative bodies, the comparison may be facilitated by taking into account a similar electoral formula. Elections to the European Parliament, provincial assemblies, and the Sejm are carried out by means of a system of proportional representation. The political composition of the legislative bodies formed as a result of the elections are characterised by two, opposing trends. In the case of the European Parliament and the Sejm, there is a shift towards the right in the representation achieved. This mechanism is visible both for the median citizen, as well as the median voter. The elections to provincial assemblies of 2010 showed a reverse trend. In the vast majority of cases, the representation of regional legislatures was shifted to the left. This mechanism was visible both regarding the median citizen and the median voter. However, only in the case of the Lubuskie province did this shift go beyond the centre of the scale and the representation in the legislature assumed a position to the left of the centre.

The degree of congruence of the political representation in executive bodies was identified on the basis of the cabinet coalitions created after the elections to the state assemblies and parliament. In the case of the Polish presidential election, the measure of the median voter of B. Komorowski was used. In analysing the results obtained, it can be seen that the executive bodies formed are shifted to the left in relation to the median citizen and the median voter. Only in the case of three coalitions in provincial assemblies (Kujawsko-Pomorskie, Lubuskie, and Łódzkie), were the executives formed located to the right of the median citizen, or (and) of the median voter. The shape of the executive in the provinces followed a tendency of reproducing the parliamentary coalition consisting of PO and PSL. Where this was not possible, the composition of the coalition was expanded, most commonly by SLD. This resulted in the shift of the executive towards the left side of the scale. An extreme example of such was the coalition from the Podkarpackie province, which was shifted in relation to the median citizen and voter by over one point. The above findings have provided for a positive verification of the H4 hypothesis regarding the European Parliamentary elections, elections to the Sejm, presidential elections (first

round), and most of the elections to the provincial assemblies. In the case of the second round of the presidential election, and four cases of provincial assembly elections, the representation was located on the opposite (left) side of the median citizen and voter.

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