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## THE ELECTORATE IN POLAND'S LARGE AND MEDIUM-SIZED CITIES AND TOWNS AND ITS INFLUENCE ON THE RESULTS OF THE 2007 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

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**ABSTRACT.** Urbanization is regarded among the most significant factors affecting election-related behaviour in Poland. In order to identify the importance of Poland's municipal electorate, a procedure of reverse elimination was applied to the electorates of successive largest cities in Poland, followed by a structure of supporting the strongest political parties at each stage of the cities' rank elimination. Whenever each successive elimination is followed by dwindling support for a given party, this party is referred to as pro-metropolitan.

**KEY WORDS:** Poland, urbanization, pro-urban and anti-urban parties, rank-size rule.

### URBANIZATION VS. SUPPORT FOR THE MOST SIGNIFICANT PARTIES IN THE ELECTIONS IN EARLY 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

The Polish Parliament's term at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century witnessed disintegration of the large post-Solidarity movement conglomerate, i.e., Akcja Wyborcza Solidarność – AWS (*Solidarity Electoral Action*), contributing to a change in Poland's political arena. In the spring of 2001, the former AWS transformed into new political parties, including Platforma Obywatelska – PO (*Civic Platform*) and Prawo i Sprawiedliwość – PiS (*Law and Justice*). On the other hand, a national and Catholic party had been formed before the May 2001 elections, devoid of the post-Solidarity movement roots. The party's name was Liga Polskich Rodzin – LPR (*League of Polish Families*). The elections of 2001 witnessed also the emergence of a populist Samoobrona (*Self-defence*) party, unsuccessful in the former elections held in 1991, 1993 and 1997. The winners of the parliamentary elections of 2001 was a coalition of two leftist parties: Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej – SLD

(*Democratic Left Alliance*) and Unia Pracy – UP (*The Labour Union*). The latter failed in 1997 to cross the threshold of 5% of support outside the coalition. As a result of the mentioned elections, parliamentary mandates were also secured for the new PO and PiS parties, the ancient Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe – PSL (*Polish Peasant Party*) and two strong parties: LPR and Samoobrona, strongly remonstrating against the results of the country's economic transformation. The coalition threshold of 8% was not reached by the remains of the Solidarity movement conglomerate, Akcja Wyborcza Prawicy; Unia Wolności – UW (*Freedom Union*) failed to reach the threshold for single parties (5%).

March 2004 marked a faction within SLD and the resulting emergence of another leftist party Socjaldemokracja Polska – SdPI (*Social Democracy of Poland*) which submitted a separate list in the parliamentary elections of 2005. On the other hand, Unia Wolności, annihilated in the political arena after the 2001 elections transformed into Partia Demokratyczna (*Democratic Party*). In the 2007 elections, Partia Demokratyczna joined the leftist alliance (SLD, SdPI) thus creating a new albeit unstable conglomerate: Lewica i Demokraci (*Left and Democrats*).

Urbanization is regarded among the most important exogenic factors affecting electoral behaviour in Poland since the very first free parliamentary elections of the 1990s (cf. Matykowski, Tobolska, 1994; Węclawowicz, 1995; Matykowski, 2007; Śleszyński, 2007). The Pearson-Bravais correlation coefficient has been most frequently applied as the measure of correlation between the level of urbanization and the extent of support for specific political parties in the successive elections. Therefore, by resorting to the correlation coefficient in order to identify the degree of correlation between the level of urbanization and the extent of support for specific political parties in the parliamentary elections

Table 1. The power of correlation between urbanization and the extent of support for specific political parties: correlation coefficients across 41 constituencies

Political party	Parliamentary elections		
	in 2001	in 2005	in 2007
Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe	-0.812*	-0.751*	-0.780*
Liga Polskich Rodzin	-0.618*	-0.645*	-0.499*
Samoobrona	-0.600*	-0.585*	-0.446*
Prawo i Sprawiedliwość	+0.408*	-0.058	-0.574*
Platforma Obywatelska	+0.432*	+0.727*	+0.775*
Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej / Lewica i Demokraci (in 2007)	+0.496*	+0.419*	+0.391

\* statistically relevant correlation coefficient at  $\alpha=0.01$  |  $r \geq 0.398$

Source: Author's own work

in 2001–2007, one can select parties of rural (anti-urban) features and those of pro-urban features.

The anti-municipal parties of the early 21<sup>st</sup> century include primarily Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe, Liga Polskich Rodzin and Samoobrona (see Table 1). However, the correlations between support for the latter two parties and urbanization slumped especially during the 2007 elections when support for them clearly waned. On the other hand, Platforma Obywatelska became a distinct pro-metropolitan party in the 2005 elections ( $r = +0.727$ ) and reinforced this feature in the 2007 elections ( $r = +0.775$ ). Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej also enjoyed some features of a pro-metropolitan party in the elections of 2001 and 2005 (see Table 1). On the other hand, at the 2001 elections, another important party in Poland's political arena Prawo i Sprawiedliwość also had certain pro-metropolitan characteristics ( $r = +0.408$ ). However, they were lost in the successive elections, leaving PiS as an anti-metropolitan party in 2007 ( $r = -0.574$ ). Similarly, several parties enjoying smaller support had stronger ties with the metropolitan electorate by partaking in elections, especially those of 2005 (see Table 2).

Table 2. The power of correlation between urbanization and the extent of support for specific political parties undergoing transformations and of ephemeral character: correlation coefficients across 41 constituencies

Political party	Parliamentary elections	Correlation (r)
Unia Wolności	2001	+0.760*
Partia Demokratyczna	2005	+0.648*
Platforma Janusza Korwin-Mikke	2005	+0.687*
Socjaldemokracja Polska	2005	+0.620*
Polska Partia Pracy	2005	+0.465*

\* statistically relevant correlation coefficient at  $\alpha = 0.01 \mid r \geq 0.398$

Source: Author's own work

### THE INFLUENCE OF THE BIGGEST CITIES' ELECTORATES ON THE RESULTS OF THE 2007 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

The goal of this article is to analyse the influence of the electorates in Poland's cities and towns on the results of the 2007 parliamentary elections as well as to arrange a typology of these cities and towns with respect to the voting structures.

The analysis of the influence of the electorate in Poland's biggest cities on the results of elections disregards the results of voting abroad since the majority of the voters are ascribed to Constituency 19 in Warsaw; otherwise they would

significantly change the support structure in the country's capital (e.g., in the 2007 parliamentary elections, the inhabitants of Warsaw cast 53.47% valid votes in favour of PO and 27.35% in favour of PiS). After adding the votes cast abroad, the support structure would have been as follows: 54.01% for PO and 27.66% for PiS. Polish cities and towns have been arranged in line with the rank-size, i.e., with reference to the Auerbach-Zipf rule, while the size criterion relied upon the number of individuals eligible for voting in a specific town. Next, a procedure of reverse elimination was applied for Poland's successive biggest cities; it was followed by a structure of supporting the strongest political parties at each stage of the cities' rank elimination. Whenever each successive elimination is followed by dwindling support for a given party, it may be assumed that support for this party is affected by urbanization and enjoys metropolitan features. On the other hand, growing support for a specific party is evidence of its anti-urban (pro-rural) nature.

Table 3. Basic electoral indicators of the 2007 parliamentary elections for territorial arrangements after eliminating the biggest cities

Analysed territorial arrangement	Attendance (%)	Support for the following parties (%)			
		PiS	PO	PSL	LiD
Poland: entire country	53.72	32.13	41.36	8.98	13.20
Poland excl. Warsaw	52.79	32.45	40.56	9.41	13.19
Poland excl. 10 biggest cities (the last of the eliminated: Katowice)	51.02	33.41	38.22	10.62	13.17
Poland excl. 25 biggest cities (the last of the eliminated: Rybnik)	50.16	33.81	37.08	11.44	12.88
Poland excl. 50 biggest cities (the last of the eliminated: Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski)	49.43	34.59	35.93	12.20	12.29
Poland excl. 75 biggest cities (the last of the eliminated: Piekary Śląskie)	48.97	34.82	35.35	12.80	11.93
Poland excl. 100 biggest cities (the last of the eliminated: Sieradz)	48.61	34.96	34.80	13.28	11.77

*Source:* Author's own work based upon the National Electoral Committee

In the 2007 parliamentary elections, the biggest number of valid votes on the national level (excluding the constituencies abroad) was enjoyed by: Platforma Obywatelska (41.36% of valid votes) and Prawo i Sprawiedliwość (32.13%); the anti-metropolitan Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe gained 8.98% of valid votes. After excluding the Warsaw electorate, the parties would have enjoyed the following support: 40.56%, 32.45% and 9.41%, respectively. After excluding Poland's 10 biggest cities, the support structure would have been the following: PO – 38.22%,

PiS – 33.41% and PSL – 10.62% (see Table 3). As the successive biggest cities are excluded, turnout also tends to drop; this is a clear indication that the electorates in these cities strongly affect attendance in parliamentary elections. Platforma Obywatelska is the party distinctly losing support when successive biggest cities are excluded. It is worth noting that after excluding from the collection of units the town of Nysa, ranked 93<sup>th</sup>, support for PO (34.92% of total votes) is weaker than that for the competing PiS (34.93%), all things considered. Fig. 1 presents these various trends in changes to support as a result of excluding the biggest cities. Similarly, another pair of parties: LiD and PSL, tend to have a pro-metropolitan and anti-metropolitan nature. While on the national scale (excluding votes cast abroad), support for LiD amounted to 13.20% and for PSL to 8.98%, after excluding the country's 50 biggest cities and towns, support for these parties changed dramatically. Support for PSL clearly increased to 12.20% while support for LiD slowly dropped to 12.29% (See Table 3). After excluding from the collection of territorial units the town of Ostrów Wielkopolski, ranked 53<sup>th</sup>, support for PSL all over the country (12.27%) will exceed support for LiD (12.23%) in that area. Fig. 2 presents the changing support for LiD and PSL as a result of excluding the electorates of Poland's biggest cities.

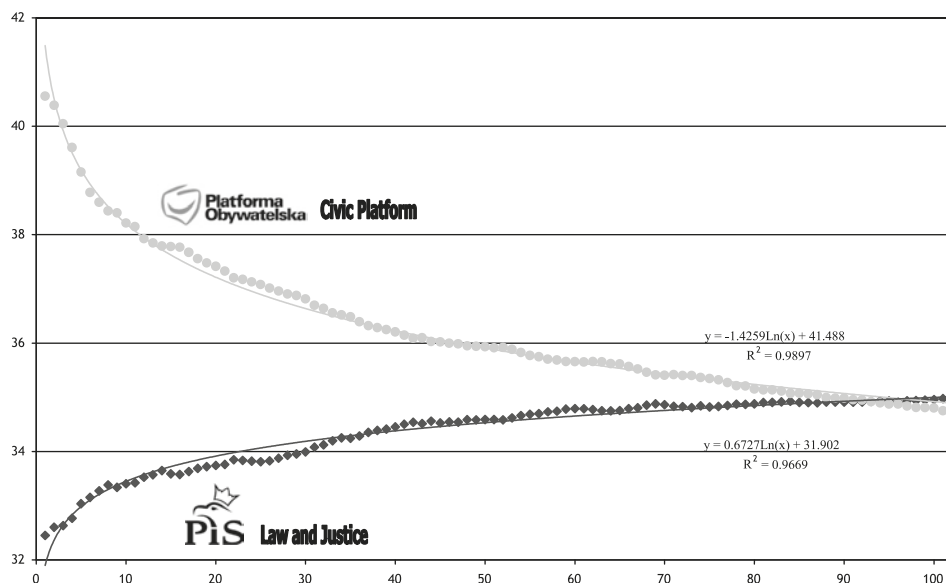


Fig. 1. Level of support for the Civic Platform and Law and Justice on elimination of the successive biggest cities in Poland

Source: Own calculations on the basis of the State Election Commission data

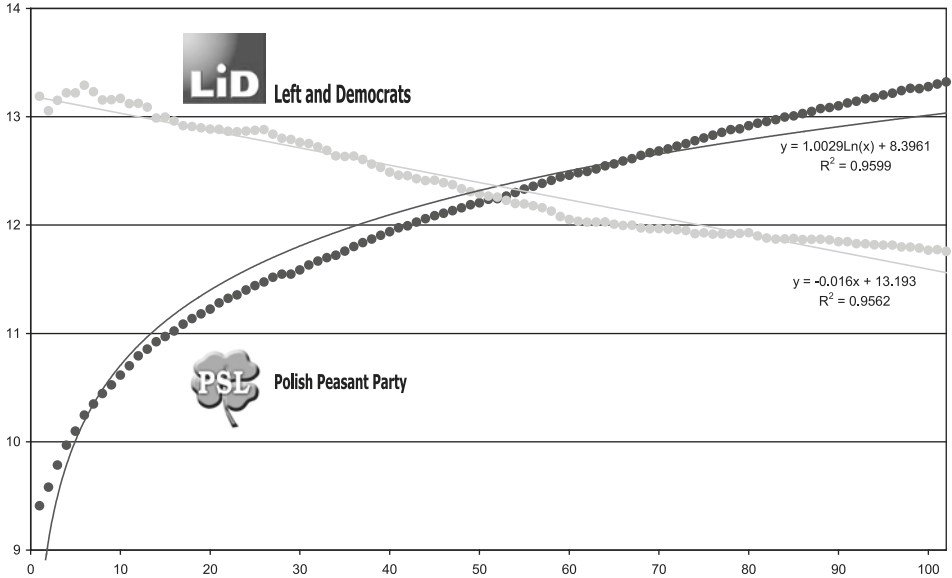


Fig. 2. Level of support for the Polish Peasant Party and Left and Democrats on elimination of the successive biggest cities in Poland

Source: Own calculations on the basis of the State Election Commission data

## ELECTORAL TYPES OF POLISH CITIES AND TOWNS WITH REFERENCE TO THE RESULTS OF THE 2007 ELECTIONS

In order to obtain a synthetic picture of a similar electoral support structure in Poland's 102 biggest cities and towns (where the number of eligible voters exceeded 35 thousand) in 2007, an analysis of principal components resulting from the correlation matrix was applied. The analysis included the support (a) for Liga Polskich Rodzin, (b) for Prawo i Sprawiedliwość, (c) for Platforma Obywatelska, (d) for Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe, (e) for Samoobrona, and (f) for Lewica i Demokraci. Therefore the observation matrix had the dimension of 102 cities and towns x 6 features. The transformation of the features into the principal components led to selecting the first component accounting for the 38.38% of changeability in the original features. The first component ( $V_1$ ) had a statistically important correlation (at  $\alpha = 0.01$ ) with four features: (a) support for Platforma Obywatelska ( $r = -0.878$ ), (b) support for Prawo i Sprawiedliwość ( $r = +0.856$ ), (c) support for Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe ( $r = +0.669$ ), and (d) support for Liga Polskich Rodzin ( $r = +0.541$ ). This component may be interpreted as a component of the electorate focused on approving the remodelling changes

and the electorate focused on tradition and conservative electoral platforms. On the other hand, the second component ( $V_2$ ) was most strongly correlated with the following original features: (a) support for Lewica i Demokraci ( $r = -0.837$ ), (b) support for Samoobrona ( $r = -0.751$ ), (c) support for Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe ( $r = -0.338$ ), and (d) support for Platforma Obywatelska ( $r = +0.336$ ). This component explained the 27.63% of changes in the original features. The second component may therefore be deemed an indicator of a conflict between the electorate susceptible to populist claims and social programmes and the electorate expecting “moderate peace”. On the other hand, the third component ( $V_3$ ) explained the 13.38% changes in the original features and was strongly correlated with the following features: (a) support for Liga Polskich Rodzin ( $r = +0.732$ ) and with (b) support for Samoobrona ( $r = +0.365$ ). This component can be interpreted as a component of the electorate expecting conservative solutions in the realm of morality, and radical solutions in the realm of social policy. This component was juxtaposed with the electorate expecting moderate and balanced solutions. The values of the first component were divided into three classes: (A) the electorate’s big remodelling expectations ( $V_1 < -0.85$ ), (B) neutral attitude towards changes ( $-0.85 \leq V_1 \leq +0.85$ ) and (C) strong adherence to tradition and expectations of a conservative election platform ( $V_1 > +0.85$ ). On the other hand, the values of the first component (1.  $-V_2 > 0.00$ ; 2.  $-V_2 < 0.00$ ) as well as the third component (a.  $-V_3 < 0.20$ ; b.  $-V_3 > 0.20$ ) were divided into two classes. The distribution of the first component resulted in selecting three basic types and within each of them, with reference to the distribution of the two successive components, four sub-types (see Table 4). Among Poland’s 39 biggest cities and towns (over 100 thousand inhabitants in 2007), as many as 21 were among the electorate expecting remodelling changes (incl. Warsaw, Łódź, Wrocław, Katowice, Sosnowiec); 13 were associated with a neutral attitude to changes and only 5 cities belonged to the type referring to tradition and the conservative trend (Lublin, Radom, Rzeszów, Płock and Tarnów).

Table 4. Types of electorates in Poland's 102 biggest cities and towns, selected with reference to the results of the 2007 parliamentary elections

Types of metropolitan electorates with reference to the distribution of the principal components			Cities / towns
V <sub>1</sub>	V <sub>2</sub>	V <sub>3</sub>	
Expecting remodelling changes (A)	Moderate peace (A.1)	Expecting balanced and moderate solutions (A.1.a)	Warszawa, Wrocław, Poznań, Katowice, Gdynia, Gliwice, Zabrze, Siemianowice Śląskie, Świętochłowice, Legionowo,
		Expecting conservative solutions in the realm of morality and radical solutions in the realm of social policy (A.1.b)	Gdańsk, Olsztyn, Opole, Chorzów, Leszno, Świdnica, Tczew, Racibórz,
	Susceptible to populist claims and social election platforms (A.2)	Expecting balanced and moderate solutions (A.2.a)	Bydgoszcz, Sosnowiec, Toruń, Dąbrowa Górnicza, Wałbrzych, Grudziądz, Jelenia Góra, Inowrocław, Ostrów Wielkopolski, Piła, Gniezno, Będzin, Kołobrzeg,
		Expecting conservative solutions in the realm of morality and radical solutions in the realm of social policy (A.2.b)	Łódź, Szczecin, Elbląg, Zielona Góra, Koszalin, Słupsk, Kędzierzyn-Koźle,
With a neutral attitude to principal changes (B)	Moderate peace (B.1)	Expecting balanced and moderate solutions (B.1.a)	Kraków, Białystok, Kielce, Bytom, Bielsko-Biała, Ruda Śląska, Rybnik, Tychy, Jaworzno, Mysłowice, Przemyśl, Tarnowskie Góry, Piekary Śląskie, Pruszków, Wodzisław Śląski,
		Expecting conservative solutions in the realm of morality and radical solutions in the realm of social policy (B.1.b)	Częstochowa, Zgierz, Nysa, Starogard Gdański, Wejherowo,
	Susceptible to populist claims and social election platforms (B.2)	Expecting balanced and moderate solutions (B.2.a)	Gorzów Wielkopolski, Włocławek, Kalisz, Konin, Lubin, Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski, Pabianice, Głogów, Suwałki, Żory, Zawiercie, Skarżysko-Kamienna, Zduńska Wola,
		Expecting conservative solutions in the realm of morality and radical solutions in the realm of social policy (B.2.b)	Legnica, Stargard Szczeciński, Ełk,
Referring to national traditions and expecting conservative electoral platforms (C)	Moderate peace (C.1)	Expecting balanced and moderate solutions (C.1.a)	Radom, Rzeszów, Nowy Sącz, Mielec, Bełchatów, Radomsko, Dębica,
		Expecting conservative solutions in the realm of morality and radical solutions in the realm of social policy (C.1.b)	Lublin, Tarnów, Stalowa Wola, Łomża, Ostrołęka, Puławy, Krosno,
	Susceptible to populist claims and social election platforms (C.2)	Expecting balanced and moderate solutions (C.2.a)	Płock, Jastrzębie Zdrój, Piotrków Trybunalski, Starachowice, Kutno, Skierniewice, Ciechanów,
		Expecting conservative solutions in the realm of morality and radical solutions in the realm of social policy (C.2.b)	Siedlce, Chełm, Tomaszów Mazowiecki, Zamość, Biała Podlaska, Tarnobrzeg, Sieradz,

Source: Author's own work



## CONCLUSION

Not only does urbanization affect the structure of electoral support as reflected in the array across 41 constituencies, it also influences the arrangement of Poland's biggest cities. The procedure of reverse elimination of the electorates in Poland's successive biggest cities made it possible to identify the structure of support for the most significant political parties at each stage of the cities' rank elimination. This gives ground for recognizing a strong influence of the network of Poland's biggest cities on the support for the country's most significant political parties. Therefore, exclusion of successive biggest cities revealed dwindling support for Platforma Obywatelska and Lewica i Demokraci accompanied by growing support for Prawo i Sprawiedliwość as well as Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe (see Fig. 1 and 2). Therefore, the curve of support for PO crosses the curve of support for PiS. Similarly, the curve of support for PSL crosses the curve of support for LiD. The intersecting curves are scissors-shaped; putting it figuratively one can say that in political science terms, urbanization in Poland resulted in the emergence of "scissors" of Kaczyński (PiS leader's) and Pawlak (PSL leader).

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