
BETWEEN PERSONAL FAITH AND FAÇADE RELIGIOSITY STUDY ON YOUTH IN THE SOUTH-EASTERN POLAND

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Abstract

Polish region called Podkarpacie (Subcarpathian) is often considered as a very Catholic part of Poland and the European Union. In this region, still a very big percentage of people are practicing Catholicism. However, secularization processes are becoming more and more visible, especially when it comes to young people. Building on the data collected in empirical research, the religiosity of young people living in this area has been documented. A comparison with other countries and regions has also been made. The study reveals that youth religiosity has changed in recent years. A decline in personal faith is visible and religiosity is becoming more and more facade. This means that young people still participate in religious practices, but not because of personal beliefs, but rather because of external motivations such as parental and community expectations. This article explains why religiosity is changing today in this region deemed the mainstay of Catholicism.

Keywords: young, Catholics, religious, identification, Poland

1. Introduction

Against the background of European countries, Poland is perceived as a stronghold of religiosity, in particular that of Catholicism [1]. Still, a large percentage of the population declares that they believe in God and participate in religious activities. However, it turns out that the young generation of the Polish are subject to the same trends that are visible in Western Europe. The fact that an increasing percentage of Europeans declare atheism or agnosticism [2], or at least distance themselves from institutional religion is indisputable [3]. What is also particularly visible is the general resignation from participation in religious services. This is deemed the phenomenon known as the ‘denomination of society’ even though religion is still clearly visible in culture [4].

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In relation to the social group of adolescents, laicization and secularization are becoming ever more dynamic. Nevertheless, there are exceptions to this rule. One is the region called Podkarpacie, located in south-eastern Poland and inhabited by circa 2 million people. This phenomenon requires an in-depth analysis, because the acquired empirical data indicates that it is a very Catholic region of Poland, and thus the European Union.

The religiosity of young people in south-eastern Poland is a surprising phenomenon. Research shows that as many as 82% of them declare faith in God. Only 2.3% consider themselves non-believers and 7.8% are indifferent to any religion. As many as 75% of the respondents pray several times a week, 40% of whom pray every day. Compared to Europe, such situation is unique. Even compared to other areas of Poland, the Podkarpacie region significantly exceeds them in terms of religiosity. This is related to the strong attachment to the traditions, culture and religion of the people living in this area as well as to the strong institutional position of the Church. This is indicated by the extensive research performed in the second half of 2019 [D. Kiełb, *Religiosity of youth in the south-eastern Poland*, unpublished research conducted in 2019], which will be analysed in this article.

In order to address the question on the current religiosity of adolescents living in the Podkarpacie region, a study of selected parameters has been carried out. This will enable the presentation of the religiosity of young Poles living in this area. In this paper, the results of our research on the religiosity of youth in Podkarpacie will be confronted with that on youth from all over Poland. The presentation of this data will allow us to obtain a holistic picture of the investigated reality.

2. Religiosity of youth in Europe

A report from pan-European research conducted by St. Mary's University and the Institute Catholique de Paris in 2014-2016 indicates that on the Old Continent, the level of religiosity of the young generation is gradually weakening [1, p. 3]. However, there are large discrepancies in the religious beliefs and affiliation of young people in the 22 countries where the sociological research was carried out. Czechs and Estonians dominate the ranking of the most secularized societies, as 91% and 80% of young people, respectively, do not declare any religious affiliation. Moreover, young people from Sweden, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom or Hungary demonstrate only slightly higher levels of religiosity. Indeed, in the great majority of European countries, the proportion of unbelieving young people exceeds 50%. As research demonstrates, Poland is an 'exceptional case' due to the high level of religious faith in young people aged 16 to 29, supported by a high (almost 50%) participation rate in public religious practices and the practice of personal prayer, which is declared by 60% of all respondents. Even when we compare it to Eire (The Republic of Ireland), which is also a Catholic country, the share of young people in public religious practice there is half that [1, p. 10]. Therefore, Poland is currently,

without any doubt, the most Catholic country in the European Union - and the region of Podkarpacie is the most religious. Therefore, it is worth carrying out research on this phenomenon and presenting it against the background of wider changes in religiosity.

3. Changes in religiosity in Poland

Religiosity as “a set of institutional beliefs, values, symbols and related behaviours shared and fulfilled by a group of people” [5] is still clearly marked in Polish society. It also plays a significant role in the world of young people. However, in recent years the discrepancy between declarations and the real life of adolescents has clearly grew, especially that between faith and moral life.

Recent research on young people allows us to ascertain that secularization has reached Poland, which until recently was a culturally and religiously homogeneous country [6]. This is further proved by empirical data suggesting that in Poland as many as 61% of young people do not accept the theological and moral teachings of the Catholic Church, especially those concerning the resurrection of human body, existence of Satan, eternal life and experience of sexuality. At the same time, the faith followed did not affect the political views and moral attitudes in 89% of Polish [7]. According to other data, 88% of all young people participate in religious education, 63% declare religious faith, and 31% take part in religious practices. Moreover, 17% declare their commitment to the life of the Church, but only 6% of all young people fully accept the moral teaching of the Church [8]. This data has significantly changed over the last dozen or so years, which is indicated by the measurements of religious identification among adolescents in Poland (Figure 1).

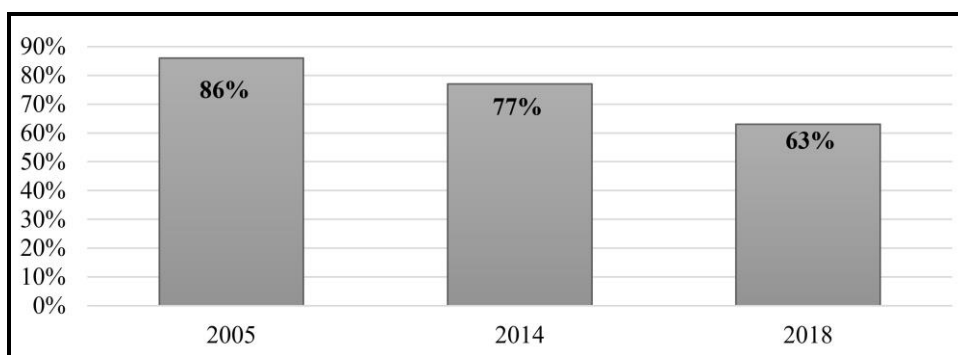


Figure 1. Declaration of faith of young people in Poland (2005-2018). Source: own study based on [9-11].

To show the change of the parameter, namely the declaration of faith, the results of the research from 2005, 2014 and 2018 have been cited [9-11]. The presented data show that the percentage of religious youth has decreased by as much as 23% over several years. Many young people approach Catholic faith and morals in a subjective and selective way, so that their faith and religiosity are no

longer institutional, but become purely private. Thus, they practically cease to be Catholics, as the Catholic Church requires its faithful to adopt a strictly defined canon of truths and moral principles. These phenomena indicate a clear shift in religiosity, as the lifestyle of young Poles is more and more inconsistent with the teaching of Church authorities, and attachment to tradition and culture is gradually weakening.

Nevertheless, the course of these processes is different in each of the Polish regions. The reason for this is the fact that the religiosity of people living in particular regions is influenced by various and numerous factors. The factors with significant impact on that process are geographical location, urbanization rate, social and economic development, level of education, including religious education, the social position of clergy and the social influence of the Church. The aforementioned aspects have significantly affected and continue to affect the religiosity of young people living in the Podkarpacie region.

4. Characteristics of the Podkarpacie region

The Podkarpacie region, when categorized geographically, is the most south-eastern region of Poland. Although it is located at the intersection of two main communication routes, it is noted for its significantly lower economic development than the remaining areas of Poland. It also has the lowest rate of urbanization and the most densely populated rural areas, especially in the areas bordering Ukraine. It is, therefore, often referred to as the 'eastern wall', or 'eastern Poland' and sometimes even 'Poland B'. These terms have negative connotations, which indicate the neglect of development in the Podkarpacie region on almost all levels, but especially at the level of economic development, which results in a relatively lower standard of living when we compare it to other regions of the country or to access to education and culture [12].

The population residing in large and small towns constitutes approximately half of the population, the other half living in rural areas, especially in the areas near the border with Ukraine. The population of the Podkarpacie region constitutes 5.5% of the Polish population. The average population density is 119 people per km². Women constitute 51.5% of the population and men 48.5%, respectively. The average age of the population is 38.5 years, which means that the population is relatively young. The population in terms of religion and nationality is homogeneous and consists of Poles of the Catholic faith. Ethnic and religious minorities constitute less than 1% of the population. The profile of traditional religiosity, in which faith and the Catholic Church are the basic points of reference in life [13], is the dominant one.

There is a strong phenomenon of labour migration in this region. It is estimated that in the last decade, approximately half a million people of working age have left the Podkarpacie region for work, mainly to Germany, France, Italy, Great Britain, Ireland, Norway and the Netherlands [14].

The crucial causes for the current level of religiosity in this area seem to have a historic background and should be traced back to the nineteenth century, when in that area, back then part of the Austrian governance, compulsory religious education was introduced. This was conducted in schools by clergymen who frequently also held other offices at that time. Religious education had, hence, a decisive influence on the process of shaping and educating religious attitudes among children and adolescents. The influence of clergymen on society was universal and any contestation of the influence of the Church, mainly by resigning from religious practices, due to the state offices held by the clergy, could result in numerous sanctions. The result was the adoption of a strong institutional position of clergy and the Church [15]. The aforesaid seems to form the historical cornerstone for the level of religiousness of young people in the Podkarpacie region.

The crucial question is why, despite the passage of many years, the ratio of declarations of faith, religious practices and acceptance of the moral teaching of the Church remains so high in Podkarpacie? Despite the decline that it witnessed in recent years, it is still at the top of the ranking of the religiosity of European Union citizens.

5. Methodology

Sociological research takes into account various parameters of religiosity that indicate its specific functions and aspects among which the most commonly described are declaration of faith, religious practices, as well as moral and life attitudes [16, 17]. In order to measure the aforementioned parameters, an empirical study of adolescents aged 14-16 was performed, i.e. in the period of life in which virtually every sphere of human life develops dynamically, starting from the most visible physical changes, through psychological and social changes, to the development of the worldviews and human religiosity. These transformations are sudden and dynamic, related to the 'new situation' of adolescents and the transformation of a child into an adult is their result [18]. At this age, the attitude towards religious faith is also being redefined towards personal choice or negation [19].

Adolescents' strong willingness to comment on their own faith, religious practices, morals, the Church and clergy, which results from a strong sense of autonomy at this age, constitutes the strength of the study. On the other hand, the weak aspects of the study of this social group include the still low level of abstract thinking, high pace of responses as well as the lability of dynamically changing views under the influence of various factors, e.g. peer groups and social media.

The CAWI (Computer-Assisted Web Interview) approach was selected as the survey research technique. This method is based on collecting information through quantitative research in which the respondents are asked to complete an electronic questionnaire. In order to carry out the measurement, the research tool was placed in the Google environment (GoogleForms). This technique has many advantages, including rapid access to many respondents, the ability to quickly fill

in and thus collect empirical material, reduced risk of errors by interviewers, full anonymity of the respondents and the fast preview of research results. It should be noted that the CAWI technique, apart from the advantages mentioned above, also has disadvantages. The biggest issue is with the representativeness of the research, i.e. the question to what extent, on the basis of the obtained results, it is possible to infer in relation to the entire population. The second major disadvantage is the danger of superficial responses, because the online survey may suggest a high pace of selected responses without stimulating the respondent to deeper reflection. Research has also shown that the online survey method gives an average 11% lower rate of reliable answers [20].

In order to eliminate the above-mentioned drawbacks, the study was carefully planned and a detailed research tool was constructed. A large research sample was appropriately selected, which made it possible to relate the conclusions to the entire surveyed population of youth in Podkarpacie, aged 14-16 [21].

A questionnaire developed by the authors was used in the process of collecting empirical material. The research tool contained 80 questions that concerned demo-social characteristics, religious identification, religious practices and moral attitudes. In order to minimize common methodological errors, the questionnaire was divided into parts. Questions regarding the individual components of religiosity have been placed on separate pages. The respondents could not go on to the subsequent parts of the questionnaire if they omitted to answer the previous questions. The respondents received a link generated by religious education teachers, to whom it had been sent by e-mail, with the request to complete a questionnaire on behalf of the authors. The teachers' personal acquaintance with the students influenced the motivation to participate in the research, as 526 of the 600 questionnaires sent were completed.

The respondents were selected with the use of a random-targeted method. The authors aimed to select a research sample that would reflect the socio-demographic characteristics of the entire population. The research group constituted a representative part of the population proportionally selected from large cities 42%, small towns 10% and villages 48%. Girls constituted 55.7% (293 persons) and boys 44.3% (233 persons) of the entire research group. Such a selection of respondents allowed for a statistical and typological analysis focused on qualitative inferences. Participation in the study was voluntary, anonymous, and participants were not rewarded for it. Data was collected from October 1 to October 14, 2019. The procedure was approved by the relevant Research Ethics Committee.

The vast majority of the respondents come from Catholic families, in which 62.5% of fathers and 74.5% of mothers actively practice the Catholic faith. The preponderance of the surveyed youth live with both parents 91%, while the remainder live only with their mother 6.3%, father 1% or a legal guardian 1.7%. Virtually all respondents, i.e. 99%, attended Catholic religious education classes conducted in schools that are not compulsory in Poland. The analysis mainly used

quantitative and qualitative data interpretation methods, thanks to which the values of the key parameters of religiosity will be presented.

6. Research results

6.1. Religious identification

Religious identification shows the general role of religion in human life. It is one of the most common measures of religiosity known as the global profession of faith, the essence of which is the recognition of the existence of God. The vast majority of young people (82%) who live in the Podkarpacie region declare their faith in God, while 16.7% consider themselves to be deeply religious. The data is synonymous with the belonging to the Roman Catholic Church, which is the dominant religion in this area. Only 2.3% of the surveyed youth identify as non-believers, and 7.8% are religiously indifferent. Moreover, 8% of the respondents said they had doubts about God's existence.

Research shows that there is a strong correlation between religious identification and place of residence. 17.1% of respondents declared a complete lack of religious faith in large and small towns, while the percentage amounted to only 2.7 in villages. On the other hand, identification with the Catholic faith was declared by 74.3% in large urban centres, 70.2% in small centres, and 90.8% in rural areas. This data proves that adolescents living in villages identify themselves with the Catholic faith much more often than their peers from larger towns.

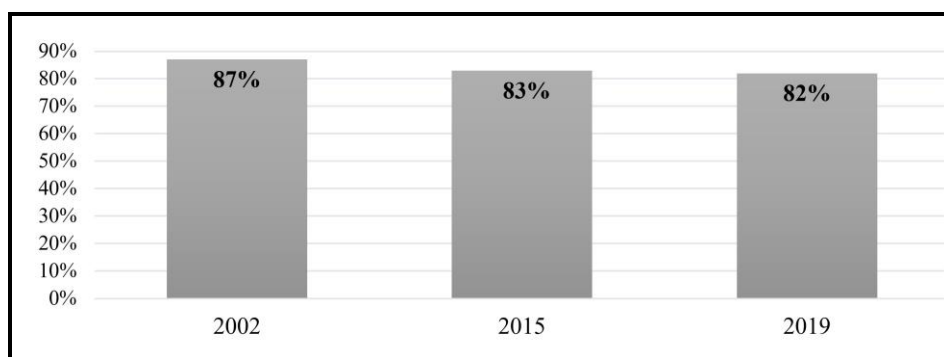


Figure 2. Declaration of faith of young people in Podkarpacie (2002-2019).

Source: Self-reported data on the basis of the research of Święs [17, p. 91], Winiarski [22] and Kielb [*Religiosity of youth in the south-eastern Poland*].

In order to verify these research results, the respondents were also asked about the subjective feeling of closeness to God. The vast majority of respondents (77.1%) often feel God's closeness in their lives, 16.9% admit they experience it sporadically, while 4% of the surveyed youth never feel God's closeness. Figure 2 presents a comparison of the current declaration of faith of young people in Podkarpacie with their past declarations.

The comparison of the results of the research conducted in 2002, 2015 and 2019 indicates that the number of people declaring their faith in God is quite stable. However, a steadily decreasing tendency can also be observed since in about 17 years the percentage of young people declaring themselves as believers decreased by 5 percentage points. It is also worth mentioning the fact that this religiosity parameter is undergoing dynamic changes in relation to the whole country. According to the Public Opinion Research Centre, in 2005-2018 there was a decrease of 23% in the number of people declaring their faith in God and currently 63% of young Poles declare that they believe in God. 17% of young people in Poland identify as atheists, while in Podkarpacie it is only 2.3% [9, p. 68-69; 10, p. 111; 11]. Therefore, it is clear that this region is unique and that in terms of religious identification no deep laicisation has yet been observed.

6.2. Religious practices

An important parameter of religiosity, especially in terms of its institutional dimension, is participation in religious practices, which, in a broad sense, include “any behaviour of individuals or groups that result from and are determined by religious experiences” [23]. Religious practices constitute an important indicator of the religious vitality of particular individuals or social groups. With regard to Catholicism, these are mainly prayer, attending Mass every Sunday and on religious holidays, receiving Holy Communion and Confession. This is because the Catholic Church imposes the above-mentioned obligations on all the faithful and not fulfilling the religious duties is considered a sin. The results of the research on the religiosity of young people from the Podkarpacie region with regard to this parameter are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Religious practices of young people from the Podkarpacie region.

Type of religious practice	Frequency		
	Every day	Seldom	Never
Prayer	40.5%	54.2%	5.3%
	Every Sunday and on religious holidays	Seldom	Never
Attendance at Mass	78.7%	19.8%	1.5%
	Once a month or more	Seldom	Never
Receiving Holy Communion	49.8%	46.2%	4.0%
	Once a month or more	Seldom	Never
Confession	82.5%	14.2%	3.2%
	Once a month or more	Seldom	Never
Catholic association meetings	25.1%	38.9%	38.0%

The results of the conducted research demonstrate that a significant proportion of young respondents prays every day, half of them do that rarely and some 5% - never. Moreover, a very large percentage, as many as 78.7% of all young people from the Podkarpacie region, participates in every Sunday mass, yet

every fifth respondent does it rarely. Only 1.5% of the respondents claim that they never take part in the liturgy. It is worth noting that 4.6% of the surveyed youth go to Mass every day. When it comes to the Holy Communion, 49.8% of the respondents often receive the Eucharist, 46.2% receive it rarely and 4% do not receive the Holy Communion. According to the teachings of the Catholic Church, the condition for receiving Holy Communion is life without grave sin, in the event of which, it is necessary to obtain sacramental absolution during confession. In this context, it is worth noting that a very large percentage of the surveyed youth, i.e. 82.5%, often go to confession, 14.2% rarely confess and only 3.2% never go to confession. The results of the research on participation in religious practices presented above prove that the Podkarpacie region is one of the most Catholic region of the European Union. Some researchers point out that the reason for this is the strong institutional position of the Catholic Church, and, therefore, participation in public practices should not be overestimated [24]. However, in-depth research shows that 39.4% of the youth of the Podkarpacie region fulfil religious practices because of an internal need for spiritual survival, and 29.2% do so due to a sense of duty towards the Church. In turn, 17.8% of the surveyed youth implement religious practices due to the requirements imposed by their parents, and 9% due to the requirements set out by their religious education teachers.

It should be noted that the participation in religious practices of young people from the Podkarpacie region is also unique when compared with the results of the research from all over Poland, where currently 35% of the respondents regularly participate in Sunday mass, 29% attend the liturgy sporadically and 35% of young Poles say that they never go to church. The comparison of the participation of young people from all over Poland and the Podkarpacie region in religious practices is illustrated in Figure 3.

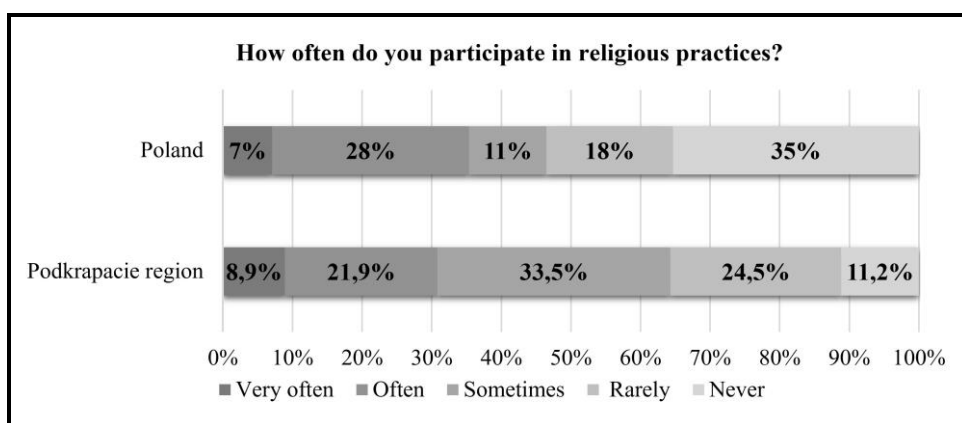


Figure 3. Religious practices of young people from all over Poland and the Podkarpacie region. Source: self-reported data on the basis of the research of Public Opinion Research Centre and National Bureau for Drug Prevention 2018 [25].

It should also be noted that the number of young people participating in religious practices has dropped rapidly over recent years, which is illustrated in Figure 3. The decline of this dimension of religiosity is much more dynamic than the changes in the declared level of faith. However, it does not apply to the Podkarpacie region, which was proved by the results presented above.

Gabriel Le Bras [26] believes that the decline in the participation in religious practices can be treated as a proof of secularization of the society, the main reasons for which are globalization, industrialization, as well the increasingly accepted ideological materialism, utilitarianism or hedonism. Though Poland can be treated as an exception, also in this country secularization is becoming more and more widespread. There is a significant percentage of people who are religiously involved, but also those who are not committed to any religious community [27]. Interestingly, the trends presented above do not apply to young people in the Podkarpacie region at all or just to a small extent, which might be explained by the fact that it is primarily an agricultural region with few large cities and numerous small towns and villages. This observation is confirmed by the results of the conducted research and their correlation with the place of residence of the respondents. The obtained results confirm that respondents who live in the village definitely more often undertake both private and public religious practices. On the one hand, this might be due to the fact that people who live in the village evince a deeper attachment to the tradition and the Catholic Church, but, on the other hand, it may be suggested that this is due to strong social pressure in small towns. Undoubtedly, the institutional position of the Catholic Church in this region is also very strong. Moreover, the Church often cooperates with political authorities and shapes the social life of the towns. This thesis is confirmed by the research according to which as many as 30.2% of the youth from the Podkarpacie region who consider themselves unbelievers or religiously indifferent take part in the Mass and 47.2% go to confession. Undertaking religious practices against their beliefs may result from external factors, such as strong social pressure, especially that from parents. Against Poland as a whole, the percentage of unbelievers who regularly attend religious services is 8% [11, p. 154], which is definitely less in comparison to the Podkarpacie region.

Another argument explaining a great number of young people from Podkarpacie who attend religious practices is a very strong position of family in this region. The research shows that there is a strong correlation between faith and participation in religious practices of parents and that of their children [28-30]. The factor that influences young people's practice of faith is also the relatively frequent interactions of young people with Catholic priests. In this area, the number of clergymen is much higher than in other areas of Poland [31] and even more so in other EU countries, which undoubtedly affects the frequency of meetings between clergy and young people, and, consequently the frequency of their religious practices.

6.3. Moral attitudes and values

The attitudes and moral values of young people are a key manifestation of religiosity defined as its consequential element, as it confirms the degree of religious commitment. Among sociologists of religion and theologians there is no uniformity as to the understanding of the operationalization of this parameter. According to Stark and Glock [16], as well as Piwowarski [32], moral attitudes and values concern religious principles that set the framework for the behaviour of people belonging to a particular religious community. The study of this parameter is about establishing basic moral and ethical orientations associated with the approval of specific principles and the rules of conduct. In the case of Catholicism, it is especially about the Church's moral teaching based on the Decalogue and the Evangel's blessings. Therefore, the attitude of young people to such matters as magic and divination, homosexual marriages, euthanasia, in-vitro fertilization, abortion, contraception, divorce, and premarital sex were examined. The results obtained are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Acceptance of Catholic Church's moral teachings by the youth of the Podkarpacie region.

Opinions about	Accordance with the teaching of the Catholic Church (%)	Relative (%)	Not in accordance with the teaching of the Catholic Church (%)	No opinion (%)
The use of magic and divination	28.7	46.0	2.7	22.6
Homosexual marriages	33.1	28.1	25.9	12.9
Euthanasia	33.8	23.6	6.1	36.5
In-vitro fertilization	22.6	29.7	16.3	31.4
Abortion	56.3	26.2	5.5	12.0
Contraception	16.3	31.6	26.6	25.5
Divorce	9.1	63.7	19.6	7.6
Premarital sex	29.7	8.9	34.2	27.2

The presented research results exhibit not only the differences of views within the group of young people from the region of the European Union, but, above all, the lack of acceptance of the Catholic moral teaching by a large proportion of young people. In general, with the exception of abortion, less than half of the surveyed agree with the moral guidelines of their own religious community. When it comes to such issues as divorce or contraception, the percentage of respondents who accept the teaching of the Church is very small.

The indecisiveness and lack of opinion of a large percentage of respondents is particularly visible when it comes to issues such as euthanasia, in vitro fertilization, contraception or premarital sexual intercourse, all of which are

inconsistent with Catholic morality. The described trends are the result of a general tendency to contest the moral teaching preached by the Church. However, the intensity of this phenomenon varies, depending on the social or environmental status. Young people from villages are more conservative and attached to tradition, while young people from larger towns become more permissive through access to education and their higher material status. Moreover, research demonstrates that despite the deviation from the Catholic worldview in matters of morality, the family remains at the top of the hierarchy of values. Young people indicate that it is a successful family life that is by far the most important goal of their lives [33]. Nevertheless, we should emphasize the significant ambivalence of declarations of goals of life and professed values, which are subject to frequent shifts caused by different situations in life.

Comparing the obtained data with the research conducted in the whole country it can be stated that in terms of the Catholic morality, the youth from the Podkarpacie region do not differ significantly from the youth from all over Poland. The research has revealed comparable views on such issues as abortion, euthanasia, in-vitro fertilization, contraception and same-sex marriage. On the other hand, with respect to premartial sexual activity, 24.2% of the respondents in Poland and 29.7% in the Podkarpacie region agree with the teaching of the Church [8, p. 117]. These data testify the fact that contemporary Catholics, especially the younger ones, are selective about the teaching of the Church and usually reject difficult moral requirements. While the influence of tradition and family upbringing can still be seen at the level of declarations of faith and public behaviour, it is difficult to see them in relation to lifestyle and moral choices. Undoubtedly, the youth of Podkarpacie are adopting an increasingly liberal lifestyle and system of values. The globalization process is also visible here, especially the impact of mass media. Therefore, one can agree with the statement that “in the Polish society, moral relativism is becoming strengthened and the existence of unchanging and universal moral principles is being more often questioned than before, which is visible primarily in youth environments” [34].

7. Discussion

Contrary to the popular belief that Poland is a Catholic country, more and more studies indicate that practicing Catholics are now a minority in Poland, well below the threshold of cultural obviousness. The fact is that for an increasing number of Poles, religiosity is becoming more of a social phenomenon than a strictly spiritual one. This, in turn, means that they follow certain traditions of religious origin, even taking part in the religious-social rituals, but this is not accompanied by individual religious experience. Moreover, recently a slow trend to move away from basic religious traditions such as baptism and church marriage has been observed. Basing on the conducted research, we may state that there are still regions where the vast majority of the population demonstrates well-grounded Catholic religiosity, which we understand as “a set of institutionalized beliefs, values and symbols, and the behaviours associated therewith, shared and

followed by a group of people” [5, p. 138]. Podkarpacie, located in south-eastern Poland, is such a region. It is undoubtedly a scarcity on a European scale. Moreover, research also indicates that in this region, too, young people are religious on an unprecedented scale, when it comes to the level of religiosity in the population. Most of them still consciously declare faith in God and belonging to the Catholic Church, take part in religious practices and try to live according to the teachings of this Church. We can state that Podkarpacie is currently probably the most Catholic region of the European Union.

Despite the still high parameters of religiosity, the conducted research also reveals that while the religiosity of adults is relatively stable, the religiosity of younger generation is subject to dynamic changes. Even with a significant part of younger people residing in Podkarpacie declaring that God and religion are important for them and following religious practices, it not always identifies itself internally with the Catholic values and norms. It seems that many young people practice the Catholic faith only because of their parents and social pressure in their homogeneous, Catholic environment. The consequence is the clearly growing discrepancy between declarations and the real life of young people - between their faith and moral life. A common trend among them is to make individual choices that oppose or reinterpret church teaching. The religiosity of the youth of the Podkarpacie region is thus privatized and selective. These phenomena indicated a clear shift in religiosity, because the lifestyle of young Catholics is ever more divergent from the teachings of church authorities. Many of the attitudes of the youth of Podkarpacie can no longer be called Catholic [35]. It can even be said that the last, very Catholic region of the European Union is slowly but steadily secularizing. This phenomenon is visible mainly in cities whose residents are usually less attached to tradition and religion.

The reasons for this phenomenon are probably very complex, but we can identify several of them. Some people see the causes of changes in religiosity in the increase in the level of education of societies [36]. It also points to widespread individualization, changes in people's lifestyle, an increase in the material standard of living, and changes in the hierarchy of existential values and meanings [37]. However in the Podkarpacie region, the key cause of the changes in the religiosity of young people seems to be the broadly understood globalization, and the pluralism of worldviews related to it. Young people, especially on the Internet, encounter a wide variety of views, philosophies, religions and lifestyles. So they come to the conclusion that the faith and religiosity instilled in them by their parents and their local community is not the sole choice, but just one of the many options available. They construct their worldview by selecting various elements from the learned philosophies and religions, creating an individual and syncretic system of ideas and beliefs. This phenomenon is also overlapped by the crisis of authority of the Catholic Church related primarily to the reprehensible lifestyle of some of the clergy, including the sexual abuse of minors. This subject, widely covered by the media, makes people doubt what the representatives of Church are praying, both in the sphere of faith, and in the sphere of morality. This phenomenon is further boosted by the fact that

the demands of the Church are perceived by young people as incomprehensible and very difficult to follow. During the research, the respondents repeatedly indicated excessive ‘interference of the Church and clergy in private life’ as the main reason for rejecting its moral teaching. They also emphasized that their ‘life choices are their private affairs, and no one should interfere therewith’. Young people from the Podkarpacie region under study no longer agree to views and life models that do not result from their internal convictions, but which they consider to be imposed from outside by the Church, society or family. Therefore, they increasingly consciously reject Catholicism as a personal, internal and integral system of beliefs and behaviour, confining to external behaviours forced by social pressure.

This issue can be explained by researching the basic and key parameter of religiosity, i.e. an individual prayer. As presented above, a relatively large number of young people in the Podkarpacie region participate in public religious practices, but a much smaller percentage of young people practice personal prayer. Sociologists who analyse this phenomenon describe it as “religiousness for show” [38]. This model of religiosity can also be called ‘facade religiosity’ when young people take part in religious practices only to meet their families’ and social expectations, and thus build a ‘facade’ of being religious, but such participation does not affect the development of personal faith and religious life.

8. Conclusion

The research conducted by Pew Research Centre [2] indicates Poland as a global leader when it comes to the decline of religiosity. Due to various conditions this decline has much lower dynamics in south-eastern Poland. This region is still considered the most Catholic part of Poland and even of the entire European Union. However, the results of the research analysed in this article shows that the religiosity of young people in this region is becoming more and more façade and less and less personal. Such religiosity is characterized by a participation in public religious practices, but it is not reflected in the moral life or involvement in the ecclesial life. In today’s cultural context, this phenomenon is prone to destruction, thus it can be expected that in the future there will be a systematic decline in all the dimensions of religiosity.

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