

EWA DĄBROWSKA-PROKOPOWSKA 

University of Białystok, Poland

MICHALINA TROCHIMOWICZ 

University of Białystok, Poland

PIOTR PAWEŁ LASKOWSKI 

University of Białystok, Poland

KONRAD TALMONT-KAMINSKI 

University of Białystok, Poland

## ATHEISM, ANTI-CHURCH, FEMINISM AND THE WOMEN'S STRIKE. GROUP CASE STUDY: "GALS 4 GALS" (*DZIEWUCHY DZIEWUCHOM*)<sup>1</sup>

### Abstract

Poland has been entering a period of accelerated secularisation in recent years. The results of the CBOS survey indicate that this process is visible especially in the youngest cohorts of Poles. The Women's Strike, which took place between 2016 and 2020, is described in the academic literature as one of the factors accelerating secularisation processes, mainly in the population of young women with feminist views. In 2021, we surveyed members of

---

Ewa Dąbrowska-Prokopowska, (Doctor of Sociology), Institute of Sociology;  
e-mail: [ewa.dabrowska@uwb.edu.pl](mailto:ewa.dabrowska@uwb.edu.pl); <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8296-365X>

Michalina Trochimowicz, (Master of Sociology), Society & Cognition Unit;  
e-mail: [m.trochimowicz@uwb.edu.pl](mailto:m.trochimowicz@uwb.edu.pl); <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0993-9084>

Piotr Paweł Laskowski (Doctor of Sociology), Society & Cognition Unit;  
e-mail: [p.laskowski@uwb.edu.pl](mailto:p.laskowski@uwb.edu.pl); <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8512-607X>

Konrad Talmont-Kaminski (Doctor of Philosophy, Professor University of Białystok) Society & Cognition Unit; e-mail: [k.talmont-kaminski@uwb.edu.pl](mailto:k.talmont-kaminski@uwb.edu.pl); <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7144-4384>

<sup>1</sup> This work was supported by National Science Centre (Poland) grant nr 2019/34/H/HS1/00654.

the Facebook group “Gals 4 Gals” (*Dziewuchy Dziewuchom*) to describe the diverse relationship between feminism and atheism and to verify our hypothesis that the Women’s Strike was an expression, rather than a cause, of respondents’ atheist attitudes. It was also important for our quantitative research to determine the attitudes of the group members surveyed towards issues such as the political activities of the Catholic Church, the operation of the moral principles of Catholicism, and perceived spiritual needs.

**Keywords:** secularisation, women’s strike, feminism, atheism

## INTRODUCTION

In 2020, the Constitutional Tribunal ruled that a provision of a law that had been in force since 1993, which allowed abortion in the case of severe foetal disability, was incompatible with the Polish Constitution. The announcement of this decision triggered a civic mobilisation in Polish society. A wave of protests lasting several weeks occurred across the country, despite the legal restrictions on public assembly caused by the Covid-19 pandemic [Nawojski, Kowalska 2022: 82]. Although the main objective of the Women’s Strike was to oppose the Constitutional Court’s ruling on the abortion ban, during numerous marches, car protests or street blockades, the protesters significantly expanded their list of demands over time. As a result, the protesters’ criticisms against the Catholic Church came to the fore. This opposition to the government’s policies and its close relationship with the Catholic Church was, for the first time in Poland, publicly linked to the preaching of atheist and feminist slogans by the young protesters. It was mainly young women during the Women’s Strike who hung banners and lightning posters on the walls of churches, and shared their actions on social media. Their individual media involvement in the Women’s Strike was based on proclaimed slogans of the need to build feminist bonds of “sisterhood” and a community of anger against the existing conservative-Catholic social order [Frąckowiak-Sochańska, Zawodna-Stephan 2022: 25]. Graff emphasises that the young people publicly opposed the cultural hegemony of the Catholic Church during the protests, openly rejecting the belief in the non-alternativity of Catholicism as a source of morality for Poles [Graff 2020]. We surmise that the Women’s Strike revealed the effects of a long-standing and progressive process of secularisation in Polish society, which is most pronounced in the youngest cohorts. This is suggested by the most recent CBOS results indicating that in the

youngest cohorts a sharp decline in religiosity and an increase in atheism has been visible for several years compared to older cohorts [CBOS 2021].

The empirical basis of this article is quantitative research – an online survey carried out in a private Facebook group “Gals 4 Gals” (*Dziewuchy Dziewuchom*). The main aim of the study was to illustrate the diverse dimensions of the links between atheism and feminism in Poland using the example of the group selected for the study. The peculiarity of atheist attitudes among women in Poland makes our research an important starting point for understanding the process as a whole. One reason for this may be the attribution of deeper and more frequent religious practices to women in Christianity [Brewster 2013]. If this is true, we can assume that atheism in Poland is taking its own shape, which is being defined in long-term processes. In the first part of the article, we will present the conceptualisation and then the interdisciplinary methodology used. An important aspect of the present research was to determine the exact time at which the religiousness of the studied group members decreased. Our main research hypothesis is that the decline in the religiosity of the respondents will occur in the period up to the age of 25 and will remain unchanged thereafter. In this sense, we assume that atheistic attitudes (linked to feminist views and criticism of the Catholic Church) began to form in the group members surveyed during adolescence. We hypothesised that the respondents’ participation in the Women’s Strike was an expression, rather than a cause, of the atheistic and critical attitudes towards the Catholic Church they represented. In the next section of this article, we will present the results of the research relating to the varying dimensions of the respondents’ atheism in relation to their assessment of the significance of the Women’s Strike, their attitude towards the institution of the Catholic Church and Catholic morality.

## SECULARISATION PROCESSES IN POLAND

In the case of Polish society, the changes in the level of religiosity and the processes of secularisation are generally explained by sociologists by the occurrence of a historical link between national and religious elements within the national identity [Molteni 2017; Grabowska 2018], which emphasise collective religious practices and identification with a religious community. However, it is worth emphasising that this is not a phenomenon typical of Polish society but constitutes a universal form of traditional institutionalisation of religious beliefs. Borowik states that folk Catholicism is characterised by a high level of ritualisation and communal conformity and a lack of deeper religious reflexivity, being a kind of inheritance of religion through family socialization [Borowik 2008]. Most

often in the approaches of Polish sociologists, the specific persistence of a high level of religious faith and practice has its historical roots in the period of the Polish People's Republic. The high level of religiousness of Poles during the communist period is justified by its pro-social significance as collective an identifier of belonging to a national community, viewed as the antithesis of the socialist state. This was a historical period where the Catholic religion owed its high position in Polish society as a result of the synthesis of religious and national values and by linking the activities of the Catholic Church with the Solidarity movement [Sommer 1996; Eberts 1998; Borowik 2016]. During the period of political transformation in Poland, the first indicators of a decline in the religiosity of Poles were noticed by Polish researchers. This was justified by the increase in the level of existential security guaranteed by democratic public institutions, the development of civil society and increasing pluralism. The memory of the oppositional role of the Catholic Church, the reinforcement of the integration of national-religious values and the economic crisis associated with the transition are factors that researchers such as Requena and Stanek claim helped to maintain high levels of religious practice in the first years after the fall of communism [Requena, Stanek, 2013]. Yet by the late 1990s, despite the persistence of high religious self-identifications, levels of political criticism of the activities of church institutions increased significantly and levels of religious practice gradually declined [Marody et al. 2019]. After Poland's accession to the European Union, the pro-social role and moral attractiveness of the Catholic Church began to decline, which is explained by the impact of a more democratic and pluralistic social context.

In the case of Poland, as in other countries undergoing secularization, while modernisation processes progress, successive cohorts are socialised into a more democratic and pluralistic society, where the influence of religious institutions is significantly weakened [Berger 1967; Chaves 1994; Norris, Inglehart 2011]. J. Stoltz emphasises that modernisation is a process caused by higher levels of economic security, higher levels of education, increased pluralism and greater competitiveness of secular ideologies over religious beliefs. This is related to the fact that parents, teachers and other influential people in society pass on religious attitudes to new generations with decreasing intensity. In addition, in modernising societies, children, even when raised in religious families, find religious socialisation increasingly unattractive, unimportant and unrealistic [Stoltz 2020:18]. As a result of these processes, there is a gradual replacement of religious cohorts by more secular ones.

Nowadays, the scale of the advancement of secularisation processes in Poland is becoming increasingly evident through, among other things, an increase in negative evaluations of the functioning of a church deprived of real contact with believers, the spread of social media criticism of the Catholic faith and paedophile priest scandals. It is also evident in the public criticism of the clear links between church and state. Today, more and more young people in Poland are completely turning away from the Church and the Catholic faith. The Pew Research Center's findings show that in 2018, of all the countries in the world in which the survey was conducted, Poland was the society with the largest gap between the younger and older generations in terms of religiosity. Young Poles ranked first in terms of declining religiosity in two categories (attending religious services and considering religion very important), while it ranked second in terms of declining frequency of daily prayer [Pew Research Center 2018]. This means that Poland is now the fastest secularising country among the 108 surveyed by the Pew Research Center. The CBOS Youth Survey represents a clear decline in the level of religiosity of young Poles not only at the level of participation in religious practices, but also at the level of self-declaration. The results show that 63% of respondents considered themselves believers, 21% described themselves as undecided and 17% as non-believers [Głowacki 2019]. This is confirmed by cohort analysis, which indicates that significant differences in the religious practices of contemporary Poles are evident in the two youngest cohorts that M. Grabowska writes about: generation Y (born between 1980 and 1996) and Generation Z (born in 1997 and later). Grabowska emphasises that from generation to generation, the level of regular religious practice has declined in favour of irregular practice (generation X and Y), and in the case of generation Z-non-practice [Grabowska 2018]. The most recent CBOS survey indicates that there has been a decline in the level of self-declaration of faith in Poland over the last 30 years. In 1992, believers accounted for 94% of the total number of respondents, and in 2021 – 87.4%. It is significant that the percentage of non-believers is growing, which in 2021 totalled 12.5% [CBOS 2021]. The cohort analysis presented in the study confirms a significant acceleration of secularisation processes in the youngest generations of Poles. Generation Y entered adulthood with religious faith at only a slightly lower level than the older cohorts, but 10.5% of them lost their faith at a later stage. The generation Z cohort started adulthood with religious faith at a significantly lower level and lost faith even faster: The decline in declarations of faith amounted to 9.8% in less than seven years. The acceleration of the dynamics of the process of abandoning religious practice is also evident. It is pronounced in all age cohorts and is visibly increasing in the two youngest cohorts. The process of abandoning

regular religious practice in generation X (born between 1965 and 1979) clearly accelerates in 2016, in generation Y-around 2018, and in generation Z the abandonment is even more marked. The percentages of non-practitioners in all age cohorts have been increasing since around 2017, most sharply in the two youngest cohorts [CBOS 2021]. The presented cohort analysis confirms the acceleration of secularisation processes in the youngest generations of Poles. This is mainly visible in generation Z, which shows an exceptionally strong decline in religiosity and an increase in atheistic attitudes.

In Poland, the research attention of sociologists of religion is mainly focused on the analysis of research results relating to the hypothesis of deinstitutionalisation and individualisation of religiosity [Grabowska 2018: 171]. At the same time, it is worth noting that justifications for these processes are primarily sought in the specifics of Polish history, and analyses from the period of systemic transformation are based on the influence of modernisation processes and globalisation. The research attention of Polish sociologists, on the other hand, is focused on the assumption that it is possible to identify clear factors determining the contemporary intensification of secularisation symptoms in Poland. It is worth highlighting that this is just as often explained by the unjustified assumption of a simultaneous crisis and rebirth of religion in European countries in new more privatised forms. A representative of this assumption concerning the persistence and hybridisation of the Catholic religion is Mariański. [Mariański 2017: 255]. A fundamental problem with this kind of approach is the lack of a broader picture of the phenomenon of secularisation. The issue here is the extent to which the process that is taking place in Poland is analogous to the process of secularisation that is taking place in other societies. If mainly specific Polish determinants of secularisation are only examined, it might be assumed that there is no such analogy. However, taking into account the work of researchers such as D. Voas [Voas 2009], we consider this assumption to be incorrect. As a result, our research team rejects both the assertion that it is possible to identify specific and specified determinants of the transformation of religiosity in Poland and the unsubstantiated idea that religious beliefs in European countries are particularly durable. This means that secularisation in Poland can only be understood in the context of research on secularisation in other societies and in relation to the phenomena occurring in many of them.

We base our research assumptions on the concept of Voas, whose analysis of European Social Survey data has shown that every generation in every country surveyed, except Israel, is more religious than the previous one [Voas 2009: 155]. Voas points out that although there are slight differences, the rate of decline

in religiosity since the beginning of the 20th century has been constant across the continent [Voas 2009: 167] and that secularisation processes follow a common pattern in all European countries [Voas 2009: 155]. The processes of secularisation consist of three phases: a decline in the level of religious people, an increase followed by a decline in those with so-called “fuzzy fidelity” and finally an increase in the percentage of secular people [Voas 2009; Stoltz 2020]. As a result of the study of our research team, we can conclude that the processes of secularisation are based on a gradual decline in individual cohorts in the first instance in such indicators of religiosity as private involvement and then public participation, while at the same time the level of identification with the religious community is often maintained.

A key stage in the processes of secularisation is the occurrence of the phenomenon of “fuzzy fidelity”. Voas describes this phenomenon as the growth of individual practices of combining religious beliefs with quasi-religious beliefs and magical practices. These are superficial and unstable beliefs [Voas 2009: 161], and their adherents perceive themselves as “spiritualised”. This results in the development of new and diverse forms of spirituality in this phase of secularisation [Heelas 2002], which take hybrid forms [Hervieu-Leger 1997], characterised by a loose and fuzzy belief structure not necessarily related to the Christian religion [Tomka 2010]. Currently, a research team led by Talmont-Kaminski is working on the creation of the Dataset of Integrated Measures of Religiosity. The currently obtained data make it possible to define the course of the secularisation process in Poland over the last hundred years. Its essential feature is the cohort nature and the lack of change in religiosity after the age of 25. The data obtained make it possible to trace changes in the level of religiosity, even in the oldest cohorts. These data indicate the existence of secularisation processes in Polish society since at least the Second World War. The differences between Poland and other countries are essentially due to the later date of the emergence of this process in Poland. On this basis, it can be expected that while the conditions for secularisation will still exist in Poland, here too, we will see patterns of change that have emerged in other secularising societies. Among other things, this means a transitional period of several decades in which the majority of the population will exhibit features of fuzzy allegiance, such as individualised religiosity, weak attachment to religious institutions and a much greater willingness to demonstrate this religiosity on a declarative rather than behavioural level.

## CONTEXT OF THE WOMEN'S STRIKE 2016–2020

The Women's Strike was initiated in 2016 as a result of the rejection by the Sejm (the Polish parliament) of the civic project of the "Save the Women" committee. The flashpoint of the protests was when the radical "Stop Abortion" project authored by *Ordo Iuris* was sent for work in the parliamentary committee. The "Stop Abortion" project significantly radicalised the anti-abortion law in Poland based on the restrictive law of 1993 [Chmielewska, Druciarek, Przybysz 2017]. The bill defined abortion as the "murder of a foetus", with women viewed as "mothers of unborn children". [Korolczuk 2020]. The situation in the country was also exacerbated by the earlier actions of the Law and Justice party. This primarily concerned the so-called "repair laws" of the Constitutional Tribunal, the violation of the Polish Constitution, the negative campaign directed against the anti-violence convention and the refusal to subsidise *in vitro* treatment. Social tensions were reinforced by the activities of the Catholic Church hierarchy and pro-Catholic organisations and movements. This included the increasing activity of anti-abortion and anti-LGBTQ movements in the public space in Poland, whose representatives attacked sexual minorities and equality education, and the intensification of conservative anti-abortion messages in the media by the Catholic Church hierarchy [Bobrowicz, Nowak 2021; Graff, Korolczuk 2017]. Of particular importance in activating the Women's Strike was the work of the *Ordo Iuris* organisation. This is a Catholic organisation that was founded in 2013, but entered politics two years later when Law and Justice came to power. The ruling party's conservative sympathies facilitated *Ordo Iuris*'s access to politics, making it possible for the organisation to gain real influence on legislators in terms of introducing an anti-abortion law in Poland [Curanović 2021].

As a result, at the end of September 2016, demonstrations organised under the banner of a "black protest" took place in nine Polish cities. At that time, the idea of organising a nationwide women's strike also emerged, which took place on Monday 3 October 2016. Approximately 200,000 people took part in protests and marches in almost 150 Polish cities [Ziętek 2020]. The Black Protests in 2016 were a significant success. For the first time in the history of democratic Poland, there was a mass mobilisation of civic opposition to the government's anti-abortion policy and the political influence of the Catholic Church. This forced the ruling party to change its decision, and the *Ordo Iuris* project was rejected after the first reading in the Sejm. An important effect of the 2016 strikes was the publication of the importance of the demonstrations in the media and social media. This translated into a high level of public support. According to a CBOS survey,

knowledge of the black protests was declared by 88% of people surveyed. Interest in the protest was more likely to be expressed mainly by residents of the largest cities (72%), respondents not participating in religious practices (78%) and those identifying politically with the left (76%). Both women (64%) and men (52%) identified with the protests. Only 4% of women and 2% of men declared personal participation in the demonstration [CBOS 2016].

The sense of political threat to women's fundamental rights by the conservative ruling party and the *Ordo Iuris* organisation has led to the normalisation of protests in Poland. The sheer scale and egalitarian nature of the 2016 black protests made it possible to introduce the topic of women's rights, previously treated as an intimate and private issue, on a large scale into the public debate in the media and on social media [Nawojski, Pluta, Zielińska 2018]. This was linked to an increase in criticism of the Catholic Church's activities and teaching on family planning. The internet played an important role in spreading the idea of the Women's Strike. Social networking sites became an important element of mobilisation in the Women's Strike and were key to its inclusivity, dispersal and growth in popularity. Related to this was the fact that the idea of a women's strike was uncomplicated. In order to join it, all one had to do was post a picture of oneself dressed in black with the hashtag *#blackprotest* on a social media site [Korolczuk 2016]. The numerous photos and videos of the demonstrations shared by the participants of the protests also contributed to shaping the sense of a "community of anger" among the strikers. This contributed to an increase in the ability of women and men to simply identify with the black protests on social media. As a result, it initiated a wider public discussion on the articulation of concepts such as women's rights, motherhood, abortion, feminism and their redefinition in opposition to the teaching of the Catholic Church.

The dynamics of Women's Strike activities between 2016 and 2020 were closely linked to the policies pursued by the ruling party and the activities of the Catholic Church. In 2017, the "Grand Coalition for Equality and Choice" was established [Suchomska, Urzędowska 2021]. In 2018, the second International Women's Strike ("8M International Women's Strike") took place under the slogan "We are everywhere" [Korolczuk et al. 2019]. The escalation of discontent among those associated with the Women's Strike occurred in 2020. The Constitutional Court ruled on 22 October, 2020, that abortion in cases where a foetus is found to have a severe and irreversible disability or an incurable disease is incompatible with the Polish Constitution. This judgment introduced an almost total ban on abortion in Poland. The decision of the Constitutional Tribunal was met with widespread public outrage. As a result, Poles took to the streets in large numbers

again on 28 October. The decision to protest was also influenced by a speech by Jarosław Kaczyński (leader of the Law and Justice Party), who called the protesters criminals, immoral, vulgar people and openly encouraged a reaction against the strikers in order to defend the Catholic Church [Nycz 2020]. In addition, the Minister of Science and Education threatened to withhold research grants to universities that officially supported the participation of students in the National Women's Strike [Łukasik 2020]. On 30 October, 480,000 people took to the streets in 410 events [Nacher 2021]. In a CBOS poll, 8% of respondents declared participation in the protests and 63% expressed their support [CBOS 2020]. Support for the Women's Strike was also evident in the social media sphere. Protesters started to use profile picture overlays in the form of a red lightning bolt, the symbol of the Women's Strike since spring, 2020.

The protests, which were called "walkouts", took place across the country, despite the COVID-19 pandemic bans. In demonstrations in the autumn and winter of 2020, protesters under the banner of the Women's Strike expressed their resentment not only against the decision of the Constitutional Court, but also against the increasing power of the church and *Ordo Iuris* in the country, conservative government policies, police brutality and the appointment of the Minister of Education and Science: Przemysław Czarnek. The emotional basis of the 2020 protests easily enabled the involvement of new social circles. This was influenced in no small part by the proliferation on social media of memes and posts with protest slogans that took the form of vulgarities. The sign of the so-called "eight stars" became the slogan of the 2020 protests. It expressed the absurdity of life in Poland, the resentment of young people towards the power of the so-called "Dziaders" and radical dissatisfaction with the conservative policies. It also represented a signal that the possibilities of compromise between citizens, and the government and the Catholic Church had been exhausted [Koczanowicz 2021]. During the Women's Strike, protesters gathered in places of symbolic importance, including the seat of the Constitutional Tribunal, Jarosław Kaczyński's residence, and churches. The choice of these venues points directly to their political and anti-church character. Protesters often expressed their disapproval of the institution of the Catholic Church in religious language. [Motak, Krotofil, Wójciak 2021].

Graff points out that the decision of the Constitutional Tribunal that triggered the 2020 Women's Strike ended the compromise between the Catholic Church and the state in Poland, on which the order of the Third Republic and the identity of Poland after 1989 was based. The compromise was based on the assumption that the Catholic Church was to stabilise the political transition and the process of entering the European Union in exchange for the restriction of women's

rights [Graff 2020]. While the 2016 Women's Strike tended to be deliberately depoliticised in its message, by 2020 it had become much harsher, calling for the ruling party to be removed from power and the withdrawal of the Catholic Church's mandate to meddle in social and political affairs [Polynchuk-Alenius 2022]. As a result, the Women's Strike was not just a demonstration against the abortion ban. Essentially, it was the first mass protest against the restriction of freedom and the violation of women's rights by the ruling party and the Catholic Church. The protests were also a public expression of the feminist views of young women in Poland, with anti-church and atheist attitudes at their core.

### **DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY GROUP AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The research results presented in this article were obtained from a survey carried out on the "Gals 4 Gals" (*Dziewuchy Dziewuchom*) group on the social networking site Facebook. It is worth noting the specifics and history of the sample surveyed. The group is described as feminist, having been created on 1 April, 2016, as a response to the law tightening anti-abortion legislation. The primary goal of the group is to act in defence of the right to abortion in Poland. In 2018, the "Gals 4 Gals" (*Dziewuchy Dziewuchom*) foundation was established as a continuation of the activities of the administrators of the Facebook group and the "Gals 4 Gals" (*Dziewuchy Dziewuchom*) page. Currently, the foundation runs social media channels in which feminist values are popularised and current events are commented on [Kostrzewska 2020]. They take action to integrate women in their shared values and raise civic awareness of women and sexual minorities. An important element of the foundations' activities that is revealed in the analysed group is the fight against stereotypical perceptions of women and sexism. The importance of building bonds of "sisterhood", intergenerational integration and strengthening women's self-confidence, and acceptance of their own bodies is emphasised. The group publicises pro-women initiatives, social actions and thematic campaigns for women's equality and sexual minorities. It also provides a place for the free exchange of information and opinions and enables all those who identify as women to obtain support [Dziewuchy Dziewuchom 2021].

The group on the social networking site is private, which allows for the exclusion of people with different views from those presented by the group. The group currently has 101,200 members, the majority of whom are women. Communication in the group is based on adherence to the rules and regulations, which prohibit hate speech; insulting comments on race, religion, culture, sexual orientation,

gender and physique; non-compliance with privacy; commercial promotions; and political agitation. The most frequently discussed topics in the group are abortion and women's reproductive rights. With regard to the situation in Poland, they are linked to topics concerning the women's strike, black protests, and criticism of the activities of state authorities and religious organisations.

The survey was prepared using sociological and cognitive methodologies. The questionnaire can be divided into four blocks, in which particular aspects of the phenomenon were examined. The first block was a series of retrospective questions that included questions about the level of religiosity at ages 14, 17, 25, 35, 45 and 60 (depending on age). The second series of questions focused on current attitudes towards religion and the Catholic Church. The third block of questions dealt with respondents' beliefs and experiences of supernatural forces. The fourth and final block contained questions exploring respondents' views on moral issues and the role of religion in society. Questions on the relationship between the women's protests in 2020 and the respondents' current religiosity were also an important theme. The questionnaire was also supplemented by a series of demographic questions allowing for a full analysis of the phenomenon. Jong's supernatural behaviour scale [Jong, Bluemke, Halberstadt 2013] was used in the questionnaire. In order to facilitate data comparison and to keep the questionnaire fully transparent, the study also used questions modelled on questionnaires from the Centre for Public Opinion Research, the Central Statistical Office and the Statistical Institute of the Catholic Church. Other questions were developed by the researchers based on sociological and cognitive theories also presented in this article.

The survey was conducted in May 2021. The premise of the survey was to describe the differential relationship between feminism and atheism. The main hypothesis we established was that the Women's Strike was one symptom of atheism, not the cause of atheist attitudes per se. Our aim was to illustrate the different dimensions of the links between atheism and feminism in Poland using the example of the group. Interdisciplinary theory from sociology and cognitive science was used to capture the multidimensionality of the problem. Determining the exact time at which the manifestations of atheism of the respondents occurred was important in our research. The main research hypothesis is that a decline in the religiosity of the respondents occurs in the period up to the age of 25, with no change thereafter.

## RESULTS OF THE STUDY

In the group, 847 people completed the online questionnaire, 83.4% of whom were women. The average age was 38.62 years, with a median of 38 years, and a standard deviation of 10.967. People under 25 years of age made up 12% of the group. Respondents most often had a master's degree (64%), secondary and post-secondary education (20.1%) and a bachelor's degree (14.1%). Most respondents live in cities with more than 500,000 inhabitants (52.5%) and in cities with 151,000 to 500,000 inhabitants (15.6%).

TABLE 1. Gender of respondents.

Gender		
	N	%
Women	706	83,4
Men	141	16,6

Source: own research.

TABLE 2. Age of respondents.

Age		
N	Important	566
	Data gaps	0
average	38,62	
median	38,00	
standard deviation	10,967	

Source: own research.

TABLE 3. Education of respondents.

Education		
	N	%
Master's degree	363	63,8
Secondary and post-secondary education	114	20,0
Bachelor's degree	82	14,4
Basic vocational	6	1,1
Primary	4	0,7

Source: own research.

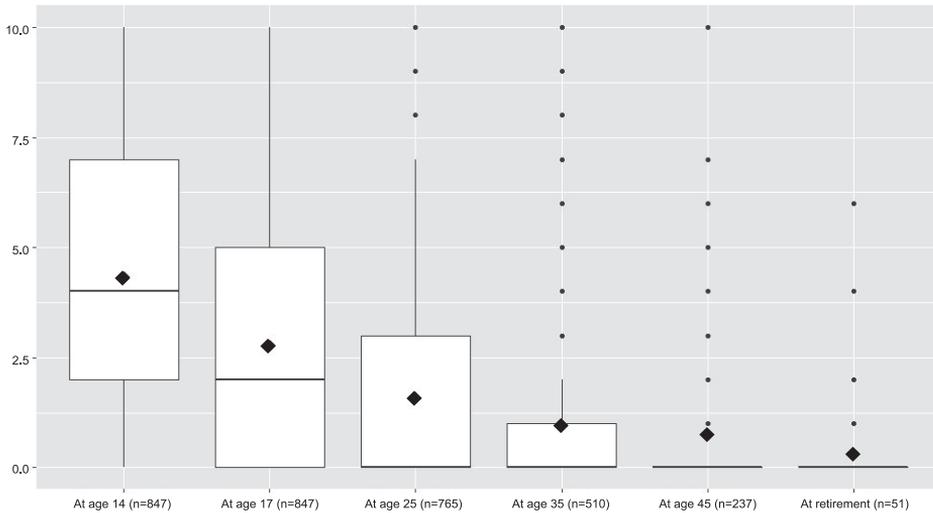
TABLE 4. Respondents' place of residence.

	N	%
Village	91	10,7
City up to 50,000	84	9,9
City between 51,000 and 150,000	95	11,2
City between 151 000 and 500 000	132	15,6
City over 500,000	445	52,5
Total	847	100,0

Source: own research.

Figure 1 shows the declared level of religiosity at different stages of respondents' lives. At age 25, the median is 0 and the mean is 1.58, while at age 14, the mean level of religiosity of respondents was 4.32, with a median of 4. Comparing this with age 17, one can see a decrease in both the mean of 2.77 and the median of 2. Using the Wilcoxon test for the paired variables, we tested whether there was a significant relationship between declared religiosity and age. It turns out that for each pair of variables there is a significant difference between the declared level of religiosity at successive life stages.

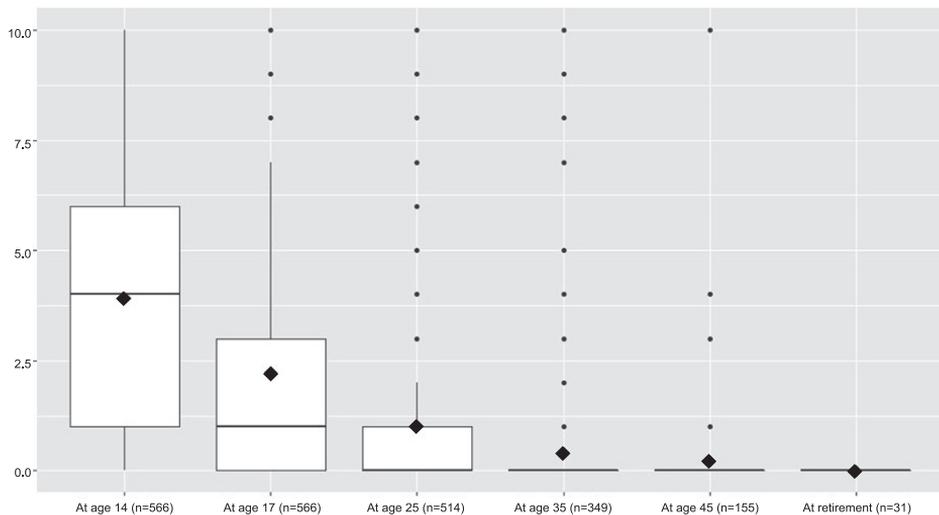
FIGURE 1. Declared religiosity of respondents at different life stages.



Source: own research.

Figure 2 shows the declared level of religiosity at different life stages of respondents who define themselves as atheists. The data obtained show a decrease in declared religiosity at successive life stages of the respondents. In the group of atheists, the median takes on the value 0 from the age of 25 and remains at this level. The highest median value occurs at around the age of 14. At the age of 17, the median drops significantly to 1, with a mean of 2.23. At later stages of the respondents' lives, the mean level of religiosity is negligibly low, ranging from 1.02 to zero. In this group of respondents, the Wilcoxon test for paired variables was also applied to determine whether there was a significant relationship between the declared religiosity of respondents at specific ages. The results indicate that there are no significant differences between the latter two groups. We assume that this may be due to the small sample size for comparisons. In the case of the other variables, there are significant differences between declared religiosity at different stages of life.

FIGURE 2. Declared religiosity of atheist respondents at different life stages.



Source: own survey.

In the study group, almost 80% of respondents do not identify with any religious denomination; 12% of respondents identified with Catholicism. Those identifying with other faiths did not exceed one per cent.

TABLE 5. Religious identifications of respondents.

What is your religious denomination?			
	N	%	
I do not identify with any religious denomination	676	79,8	
Catholicism	102	12,0	
Protestantism	6	0,7	
I don't know	6	0,7	
Refusal to reply	4	0,5	
Islam	3	0,4	
Orthodoxy	2	0,2	
Data missing	Systemic missing data	48	5,7

Source: own survey.

The collected data show that 66.8% of the respondents consider themselves to be atheist. This is followed by 22.7% of respondents declaring that they are not religious, while 5.8% are unable to define their level of religiosity. Only 4.7% of respondents claim to be religious.

TABLE 6. Level of religiosity of respondents.

Whether you attend or do not attend services, would you say		
	N	%
I am an atheist	566	66,8
I am not a religious person	192	22,7
I don't know what kind of person I am	49	5,8
I am a religious person	40	4,7

Source: own research.

The next research results presented will only refer to respondents who declared in an earlier question that they identify themselves as atheists. The separation of this group of respondents is important in order to illustrate the diverse links between atheism and feminism in the analysed group, which will be presented in more detail in the final section of this article [Summary and Discussion of Research Results].

It should be emphasised that in this research we have used both the terms atheism and unbelief/being a non-believer. In the Polish context, the use of these two terms has its logical justification. Tyrała emphasises that in Polish society and the tradition of sociological research, a non-believer is identified as an atheist. The term non-believer, despite being a concept broader in meaning than atheist, is more recognisable in the Polish context and allows for simpler identification by respondents [Tyrała 2015: 177].

The vast majority of respondents cite personal thoughts and beliefs as the source of their disbelief (63.2%), followed by discouragement towards the Church and clergy (13.7%) and life experiences (6.6%). The percentage of people declaring that the source of their atheism is tradition and upbringing is negligible (0.9%).

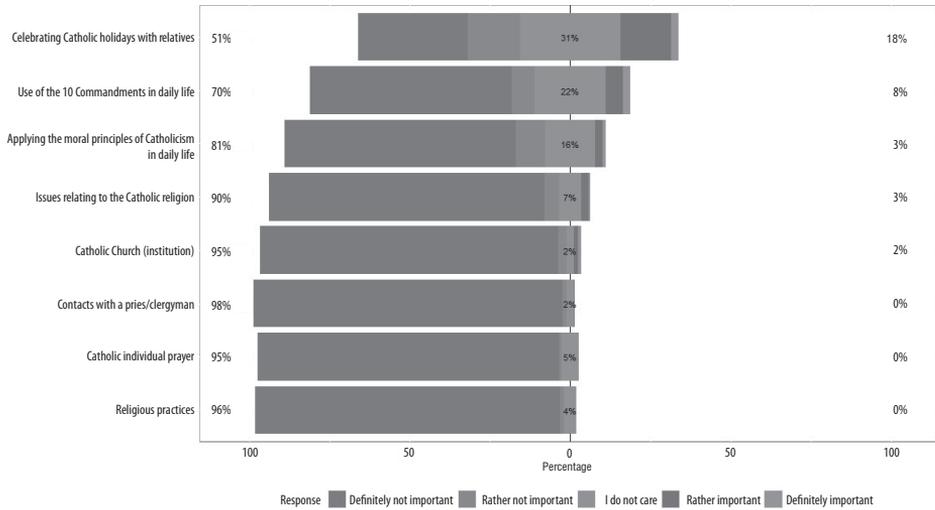
TABLE 7. Source of atheism of respondents.

Please indicate one statement that best relates to the source of your disbelief			
	N	%	
Personal thoughts and convictions	535	63,2	
Discouragement towards the Church and clergy	116	13,7	
Life experiences	56	6,6	
Tradition and upbringing	8	0,9	
Data missing	Systemic missing data	132	15,6

Source: own research.

Figure 3 shows the attitudes of atheist respondents to various aspects of the Catholic religion. The majority of respondents declared that all of the aspects of Catholicism are definitely not important or not important for them. Responses range from 81% to 96%. The exception to this rule is the answers given by respondents to two questions. When asked about their attitude to celebrating Catholic holidays with relatives, 51% of respondents state that it is unimportant to them, 31% do not care and for 18% it is important and definitely important. The second question about the observance of the Ten Commandments in daily life is less important among atheist respondents, with 70% describing it as definitely unimportant and rather unimportant; 22% are indifferent to the Ten Commandments and 8% declare it to be important and definitely important.

FIGURE 3. Respondents' attitudes to particular aspects of the Catholic religion.



Source: own research.

The surveyed atheist group members is the dominant percentage of people who do not attend religious services and do not feel the need to pray individually. According to the results, 95.1% of respondents never attend worship services and 98.9% do not pray individually.

TABLE 8. Frequency of attendance at services of respondents.

How often do you currently attend services?		
	N	%
Never	538	95,1
Less than once a year	20	3,5
Only on special holidays	5	0,9
Once a year	3	0,5

Source: own research.

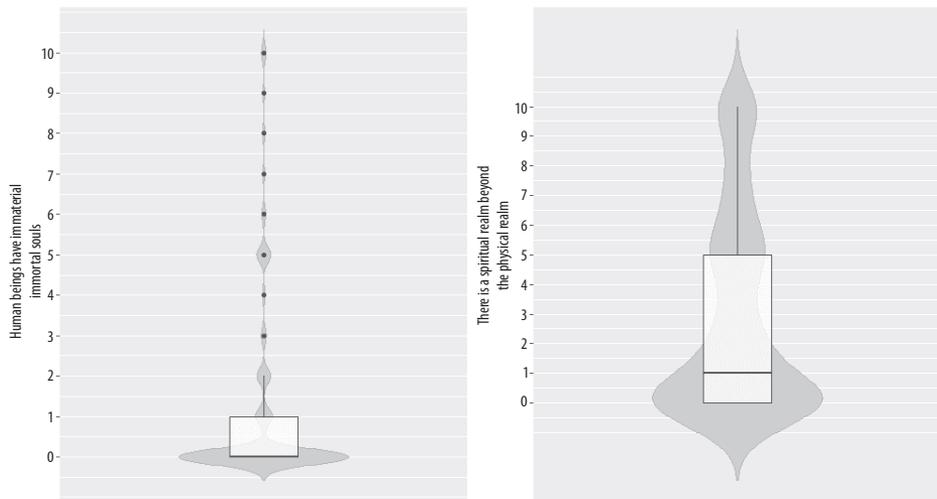
TABLE 9. Frequency of individual prayers of respondents.

How often do you pray?		
	N	%
Never	560	98,9
Less than once a year	5	0,9
Only on special holidays	1	0,2

Source: own research.

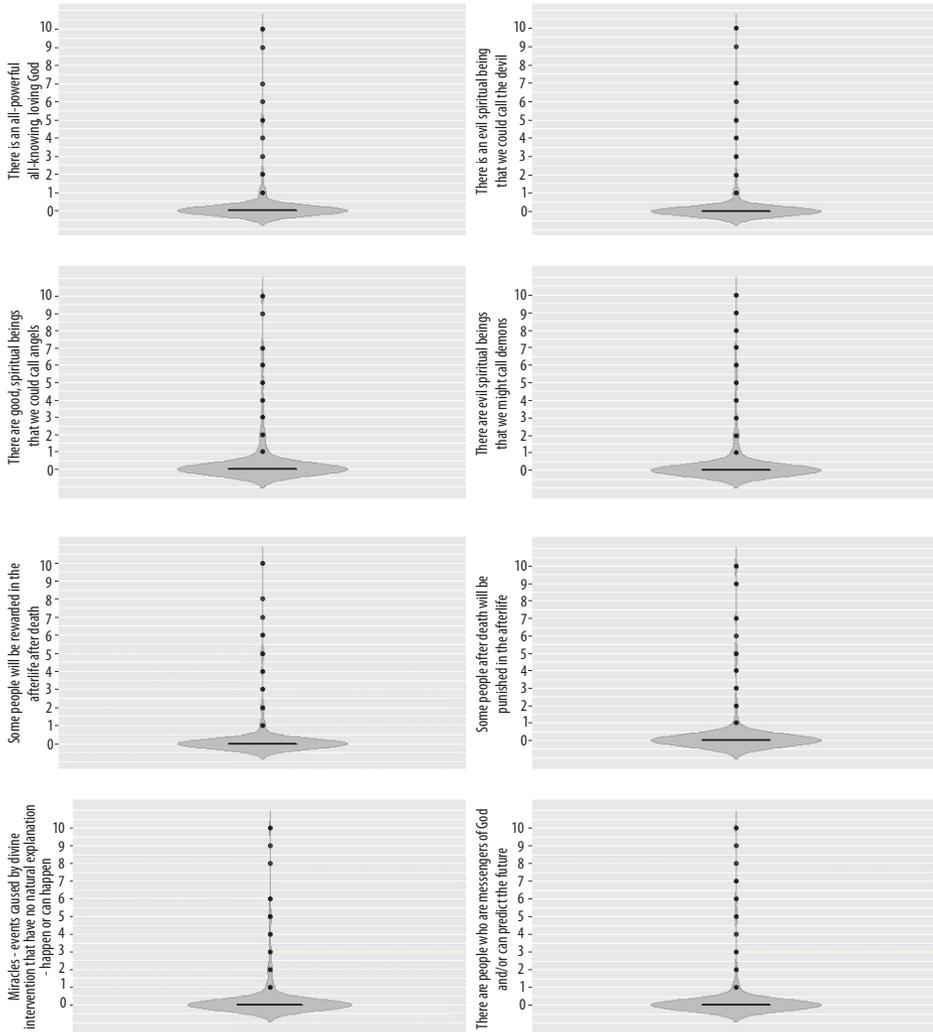
Figure 4 shows the respondents' answers regarding their level of belief in supernatural beings and phenomena. The medians for each statement are 0, and the distributions of the variables also cluster around this value. A few outlier observations (top of the scale) are also visible, but their impact on the average question score was negligible (the mean for each of these variables did not exceed 0.5). Two questions, 5 and 6, received the most differentiating responses for atheist respondents. With the results of the statement "human beings have immaterial, immortal souls", the median is zero. However, we observe a higher mean score here due to the more frequent appearance of answers above zero. For statement 6, "beyond the physical realm, there is a spiritual realm", the mean score is 2.94, with a median of 1. This question is notable from this category as it has more varied answers. In the other scores for questions from this category, the median is 0 and the mean for each question is less than 0.4.

FIGURE 4. Respondents' level of belief in supernatural phenomena and beings.



Source: own research.

FIGURE 4. (cd.)



Source: own research.

In the sample, the majority of atheist respondents (88.5%) declared that “I do not follow a religion and do not consider myself a spiritual person interested in the sacred or supernatural”. Only a small group of them (9.0%) approved of

the statement “I do not profess a religion but consider myself a spiritual person interested in the sacred or supernatural”.

TABLE 10. Level of declared spirituality of respondents.

Which statement best describes you?			
	N	%	
I do not follow a religion and do not consider myself a spiritual person interested in the sacred or supernatural	501	88,5	
I do not follow a religion, but consider myself a spiritual person interested in the sacred or supernatural	51	9,0	
Data missing	I don't know	11	1,9
	Refusal to reply	3	0,5

Source: own research.

According to the results, about 37.6% of the atheists surveyed declare indifference to the religious morality and moral principles of Catholicism. Among this group, 39.9% of respondents consider the religious morality of Catholicism to be alien to them, but consider some moral principles to be right. Significantly fewer respondents approve of the statement that Catholicism's moral principles are completely alien to them (13.6%). A small percentage of respondents (8.7%) selectively recognise that most of Catholicism's moral principles are right.

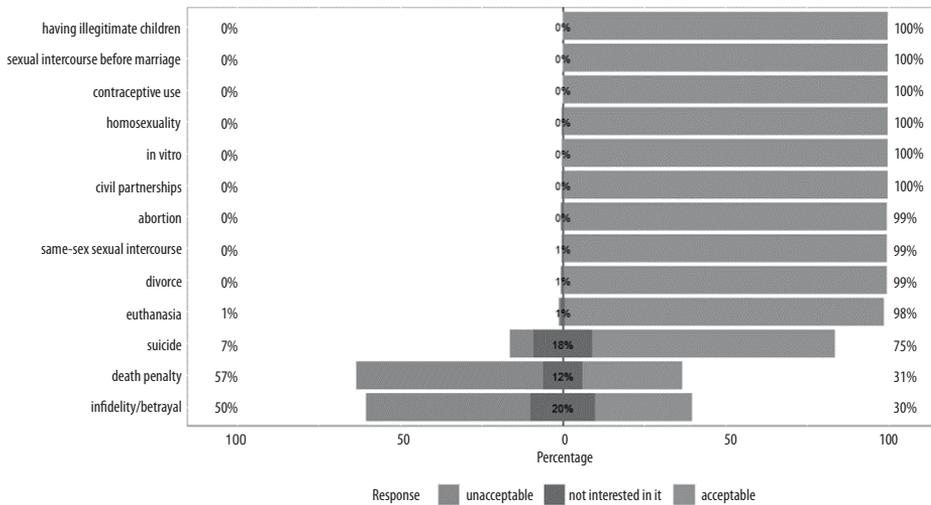
TABLE 11. Respondents' attitudes to the moral principles of the Catholic religion.

What is your attitude to the moral principles of the Catholic religion? Please indicate the answer that is closest to your views		
	N	%
Religious morality is alien to me, but I consider some of the moral principles of Catholicism to be valid	226	39,9
I am indifferent to the moral principles of Catholicism, I am not interested in them	213	37,6
The moral principles of Catholicism are completely alien to me	77	13,6
Most of the moral principles of Catholicism are right, but I don't agree with everything, and moreover, those that are right are certainly not enough for human beings	49	8,7
All the principles of Catholicism are right, but in view of the complexity of life they need to be supplemented by some other principles	1	0,2

Source: own research.

Figure 5 shows atheist respondents’ stated attitudes to various aspects of Catholicism’s moral principles. The only issues where there is a pattern other than acceptance concern the last three statements. These include issues such as suicide, capital punishment and infidelity. Suicide is acceptable to 75% of atheists, while 18% have no opinion on this issue, with 7% of them considering it unacceptable. In the last two statements regarding the death penalty and treason, the unacceptable category is significantly larger than the acceptable category (57% and 50% respectively).

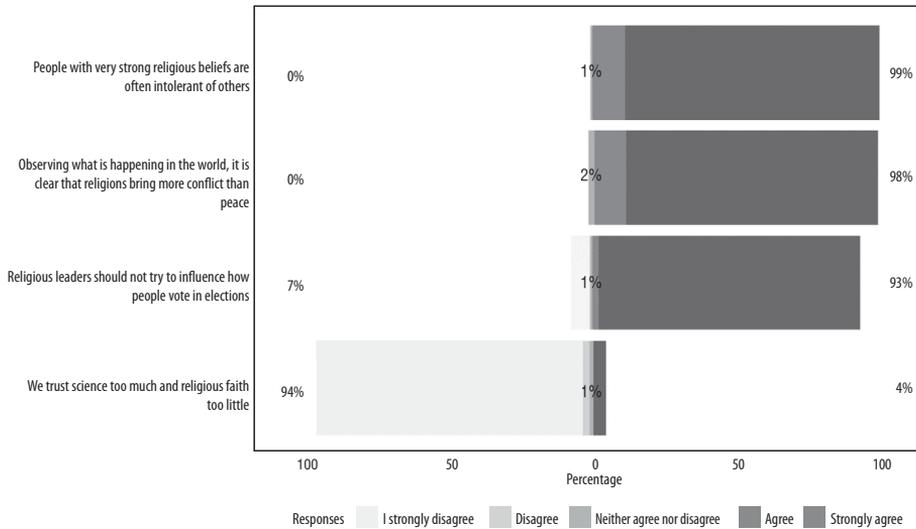
FIGURE 5. Respondents’ attitudes to specific aspects of Catholicism’s moral principles.



Source: own research.

Atheist respondents (Figure 6) say they disagree with the statement: “we trust science too much and religious faith too little”. There is also a clear approval among respondents of the statement that “religious leaders should not influence who we will vote for in elections” (93%). Additionally, 99% of respondents agree that “religion brings more conflict than it promotes world peace”. All respondents perceive people with very strong religious beliefs as intolerant of others.

FIGURE 6. Respondents' acceptance of issues concerning religion and religious people.



Source: own research.

Almost all atheist respondents (98.1%) state that the Church and religious organisations in Poland definitely have too much power and 1.8% declare that their power is too great. When answering this question, no respondent agreed with the statements “definitely too little power” or “too little power” of churches and religious organisations.

TABLE 12. Respondents' attitudes towards the authority of the Church and religious organisations in Poland.

Do you think that the Church and religious organisations in this country have too much power or too little power?		N	%
Definitely too much power		555	98,1
Too much power		10	1,8
Data missing	I don't know	1	0,2

Source: own research.

According to the results, more than 75.1% of atheist respondents declared that their level of religiosity “neither increased nor decreased” as a result of the Women’s Strike. In contrast, 21.4% of atheist respondents declared that their level of religiosity had decreased as a result of the Women’s Strike.

TABLE 13. Respondents' declared impact of the Women's Strike on their level of religiosity.

Impact of the 2020 Women's Strike on religiosity levels		N	%
Neither increased nor decreased		425	75,1
Reduced		121	21,4
Increased		1	0,2
Data missing	Systemic missing data	19	3,4

Source: own research.

## SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH RESULTS

Over recent years, the struggle for the right to abortion and respect for women's rights has begun to form the basis of overt criticism of state policy and the activities of the Catholic Church. The grassroots mobilisation and alternative self-education outside the official institutional message within the Women's Strike was an expression of the need to shape a new and alternative social order in Poland [Nawojski, Kowalska 2022: 99]. This new, civic social order was intended as an antithesis to the vision of the Law and Justice party, which preaches anti-feminist slogans due to its populism and close ties to the Catholic Church. It regards supporters of feminism, liberals and sexual minorities as enemies of the existing social order in Poland [Kasia 2020]. Further, it aims to preserve traditional Polish cultural values rooted in Catholicism and to protect the traditional Polish family model from the threatening influence of liberal ideology, LGBTQ and feminism [Gwiazda 2020]. In this context, the focus on delegitimising the patriarchal and national order imposed by the government and the Catholic Church is particularly evident in the current activities of feminist movements. They declare the need for secularisation and liberalisation of Polish society. In Poland, feminist movements have positioned themselves in opposition to the Catholic Church, identifying its influence as a source of oppression for women and calling for a clearer separation between church and state [Calkin, Kaminska 2020]. Yet the scale of public discontent with the ruling conservative party and the Catholic Church between 2016 and 2020 has allowed the feminist movement to engage outsiders, accomplishing something that feminists had not previously been unable to accomplish [Narkowicz 2018]. This is creating a new wave of feminist activism in Poland, embodied by the youngest generations of women and men, making it more inclusive, creative, media-savvy and bolder in its message.

As a result of growing national-Catholic conservatism, the youngest cohorts are reverting to a liberal current of feminism, characterised by the language of human rights, secularisation and an uncritical view of the European Union [Hall 2019].

In the new feminist movement, social media play an important role in creating a social order alternative to the policies of the government and the Catholic Church and in mobilising participants in protests [Nacher 2021]. The Women's Strike as an independent social movement was created by people committed to the protection of women's rights, the struggle for equality, secularisation and democracy. At the same time, it is a movement that does not have a specific headquarters and a rigid organisational structure, and the place where its members meet together is the internet [Kostrzewska 2020: 112]. "Gals 4 Gals" (*Dziewuchy Dziewuchom*) is one of the most popular and active Facebook groups representing feminist ideology. Our research has shown that it is a group comprising predominantly middle-aged and young women, who also have a higher level education and are from large cities. The group's surveyed members are therefore consistent with the population of people who declared participation in the Women's Strike in the CBOS survey. According to the CBOS survey, more than two-fifths of women aged 18 to 24 (41%) declared participation in the demonstrations, and among those aged 25 to 34, more than one-fifth (21%). Urban residents and those with higher and secondary education were most likely to engage in protests [CBOS 2020: 11]. In our survey, we asked respondents about the impact of the 2020 Women's Strike on their level of religiosity. The answers of respondents who currently declared themselves to be atheists are interesting. The majority of them (75.1%) logically indicated that the protests did not "increase or decrease" their level of religiosity. In contrast, some of them (21.4%) declared that the protests had decreased their level of religiosity. We assume that this type of response indicates the need to emphasise how important the Women's Strike was in terms of strengthening the atheists surveyed in the validity of their views. It also indicates that the Women's Strike was an expression, not a cause, of atheist attitudes for them. It therefore becomes important to answer the question "at what age do the surveyed group members experience a decline in religiosity". In line with our assumptions, the decrease in religiosity declared by all respondents occurred up to the age of 25, primarily between the ages of 14 and 17. After the age of 25, a stabilisation of the respondents' level of religiosity at a low or zero level can be observed (mean: 1.58, median: 0). The results of our study are in line with the data collected within the DIMR database, which essentially confirms Voas's thesis of the existence of a universal pattern in the course of secularisation

processes in European countries [Voas 2009]. The results of the analyses relating to all respondents as well as to declared atheists alone are similar in this respect.

Determining the age at which respondents' religiosity declined is also important due to the specific cultural context of Polish society. Poland is a country where the overwhelming majority of citizens identify themselves with the Catholic Church. Therefore, it can be concluded that this is the default state from which the socialisation of people in Poland begins, including those who later abandon this affiliation. This is confirmed by the results of Tyrała's research on Polish non-believers. According to his study, 88.2% of respondents are former-Catholics, about 5% used to belong to a different religion, while 9.2% have never belonged to any religion. Tyrała's research indicates that the process of conversion to unbelief among Polish atheists is a lengthy one. According to his research, 71.9% of respondents answered that they became non-believers before the age of 19 [Tyrała 2013: 182]. Thus, conversion to non-belief in the case of Polish atheists, as well as the respondents we surveyed, most often takes place in middle and high school. In this context, it is worth mentioning that Poland is a country with a high level of religious participation, with a strong emphasis on religious conformity, both familial and social [Herbert, Bullock 2020: 164]. It can therefore be assumed that the vast majority of atheists in Poland are equipped with religious identities associated with the Catholic Church in their early years. This condition is mainly influenced by two factors: the religiosity of parents and the emphasis on religious practices [Tyrała 2014: 179]. The aforementioned religious identities are also based on conformism towards traditional values related to the family and the role of women, which are contrary to the assumptions of feminism. We therefore assume that the age at which the decline in the religiosity of our respondents took place was similar to their acquisition of both their anti-church and feminist attitudes, which are elements of their new atheist views. However, the verification of this hypothesis will require more detailed research in the future.

It is worth noting that the majority of the group members surveyed grew up in religious families, meaning that their individually adopted atheist attitudes had to be more strongly rooted in their identity [Tyrała 2018]. This also results in a strong need to signal their belonging to a group of similar-minded people. When asked about the sources of atheism, respondents most often emphasised that these sources were the result of their individual reflections and their dislike of the institution of the Catholic Church. Also significant are the results that show that people who identify themselves as non-religious and atheistic reject almost all dimensions of the Catholic religion. Individual prayer, attendance at services, religious practices and contact with clergy are of no importance to them. The results only diverge

when answering questions about the importance of celebrating religious holidays with the family and the use of the Ten Commandments in everyday life. In the case of these questions, the number of atheist respondents who declare that they are indifferent to, and to a lesser extent, accepting of these elements increases. In the case of the relevance of the Ten Commandments for some atheist respondents, their universality as a basis for pro-social rules is revealed here. However, it can be assumed that a positive attitude towards them for atheists will not be based on absolute and comprehensive acceptance. Commandments relating to pro-social norms are more likely to be accepted than those relating to religion and God. It is also worth noting that a small proportion of atheists surveyed (8.7%) indicated that they accept Catholic morality, but that they do not agree with all of its principles. This shows the existence of a small group of surveyed atheists who, despite rejecting the Catholic religion and its institutions, accept some of its universal moral principles as important pro-social norms.

The results also reveal that some respondents are very likely to come from families where religion and related rituals were treated as important events. Mandes points out that in Poland the most important Catholic holidays are usually said to be family holidays. In the traditional religiosity of Poles, it is the extended family that has become the community within which the most important rituals of the Catholic faith are celebrated [Mandes 2012: 246]. Catholicism in Poland, despite its strong institutional dimension, has a predominantly family character. This is indicated by the latest results of the CBOS survey relating to the way Easter is celebrated in Poland. The respondents' declarations show that Easter is above all a family holiday – this answer was indicated by 68% of them. This was followed by Easter as a religious experience (44%) and a nice tradition (38%) for Poles [CBOS 2022]. The emphasis in Poland on celebrating Catholic holidays with the family, often without seeing them through the prism of religious experiences, may explain why some of the atheists we surveyed perceive them as important events in their everyday lives. In this sense, it can be assumed that some atheists will regard the celebration of Catholic holidays exclusively as secular rituals and traditions that integrate their families. However, we assume that this is also related to the fear of some atheists to radically break the tradition of celebrating Catholic family holidays due to the strong rooting of these rituals in Polish culture.

The academic literature points to the existence of a systemic and cultural framework in Poland that blocks the possibility of overt demonstration of feminist and atheist attitudes in the experience of mostly young people. What makes atheist women in Poland unique is their ability to combine elements of

feminism by choice with an angry and open criticism of male domination, which is represented in Poland by the Law and Justice party and the Catholic Church [Trzebiatowska 2019]. In terms of these considerations, it is worth noting the very context of the researched group. It generates in its users the need to create a protective community of people with alternative views. An important aspect of the mobilisation of the members of the studied group in the fight against the government and the Catholic Church is the creation of strong collective identities. In the group, posts tagged with the hashtag #blackprotest and #strajkkobiet allude to relationships of “sisterhood”, mobilisation against government and Church policies, the fight for the legalisation of abortion, and criticism of the conservative-Catholic media discourse. An analysis of the content of the posts presented in the group shows that it is not only aimed at criticising the political activities of the government, the Catholic Church and religious organisations, and rejecting Catholic morality, but above all emphasises the integration of people with atheist attitudes. The Catholic religion is defined by the group as an unrealistic, but very harmful and dangerous myth of Polish society. The purpose of the studied group is to generate awareness among its members that they form a community of people with alternative views to those popularised in Polish society. Based on the results of her research, Trzebiatowska concludes that atheists in Poland identify Polish Catholicism with hypocrisy and conformity. At the same time, she indicates that atheists and non-religious people in Poland have a high level of fear of social ostracism [Trzebiatowska 2021]. The aforementioned fear of being “different” in a Polish culture saturated with the Catholic religion leads to a feeling that opponents need to mobilise to fight for a new, civic social order, but it is also an important factor in terms of integrating the participants of the study group. In our research, we assumed that the members of the study group would generally bring together people with atheistic views, very negatively oriented towards the institutions and morality of the Catholic Church. The results of our research indicate that the majority of respondents declared that they do not identify with any religious denomination (79.8%), although only some of them perceive themselves as atheists (66.8%). This discrepancy between the results is interesting. It may indicate, on the one hand, that some respondents feel apprehensive about identifying themselves as having atheistic views for fear of social rejection. On the other hand, it may also be an indicator of the identification of the respondents with beliefs that are not associated with any known religion, but which are an individual set of views relating to the spiritual or magical sphere. It is worth noting that in the surveyed group of atheists and non-believers, a small proportion of them (9%) declare that they do not follow a religion, but at the

same time consider themselves to be a spiritual person interested in the sacred or supernatural. In essence, it can be assumed that these are people who identify as atheists who have spiritual needs, manifested by feeling the influence of spiritual power, the cosmos or magic. The occurrence of such spiritual needs in people who define themselves as atheists is also confirmed by the research of Tyrała [Tyrała 2018]. This explains the occurrence of a slight variation in respondents' answers in terms of the belief in an immortal soul and the existence of a spiritual sphere outside physical space. Since atheists do not believe in the existence of God, and therefore do not believe that spiritual beings can influence their lives, it may seem counterintuitive that people who identify as atheists experience dilemmas related to the existence of spirituality. One potential reason for this seemingly contradictory finding may be that a significant proportion of non-believers are former believers. In some of them, this causes their identifications with atheism to be quite complex. Thus, the perceived struggles reflect their past feelings towards God and other supernatural beings and the need to supplement their views with other beliefs [Sedlar et al. 2018]. At the same time, this can be a manifestation of so-called "atheistic" spirituality, which is defined as a pattern of "alternative spirituality", as a lived experience of existential questions, and a departure from materialism in order to achieve a sense of subjective well-being, balance and self-development [Rommel, Sillfors 2018]. Other research indicates that the supernatural content of the beliefs of some atheists is not limited to paranormal, superstitious or magical beliefs, but also moral and ethical beliefs. This is because non-believers often believe in the immanent justice of human relationships and in some specific moral order in the world [Herbert, Bullock 2020: 163].

The results presented in this article show that what essentially unites all the atheists we surveyed is a radical rejection of the institutions of the Catholic Church and their representatives. Almost all atheists surveyed (98.1%) indicated that the Church and religious organisations in Poland have too much power. Similar results were also obtained with the statement that religious leaders should not influence people's electoral decisions (93% accepting the statement). The Polish context for the formation of such attitudes is important here. The results of international surveys show that over the past 30 years, strong trust in the Catholic Church has dropped from 45.6% in 1990 to 21% in 2017. At the same time, there is a progressive criticism of the role of the Catholic Church in Poland in terms of its involvement in the political sphere, and an argument that its activities should be limited primarily to the sphere of satisfying human spiritual needs [Marody et al. 2019]. The intensification of the Women's Strike

in 2016–2020, we assume, strengthened the conviction of the surveyed atheists about the harmful activities of the Catholic Church and religious organisations in Poland. Mobilisation in the struggle for a new social order based on bonds of “sisterhood” is treated in the surveyed group as collective resistance against the institution of the Catholic Church. Aversion to the institution of the Catholic Church and to religious people does not actually differentiate the atheists surveyed, as this is taken as an obvious expression of their identity of resistance. This is also expressed in the widespread acceptance by the atheists of the vision of religious people as intolerant. Religion is also seen by them as a source of conflict and war and the antithesis of rational beliefs in science. In the group, moral principles associated with the Catholic religion are completely rejected as hostile to the ideology of feminism. However, the results of our research are not so clear. Despite the very high level of rejection of the basic moral principles of Catholicism by the respondents, there is a small percentage who selectively accept some of them and a much larger group who declare that Catholic morality is alien to them, but that they consider some principles of Catholicism to be right. It can be assumed that some of the moral principles of Catholicism are perceived by the atheists surveyed as universal pro-social norms. The respondents’ answers also differ with regard to such moral issues as marital infidelity or suicide, despite their radical rejection of almost all specific determinants of Catholic morality such as the prohibition of abortion, in vitro fertilisation and research, divorce, or the non-acceptance of homosexuals. The results of our research present a complex and diverse picture of the various dimensions of the links between atheism and feminism in Poland. What absolutely integrates the surveyed atheists is, above all, the rejection of the institution of the Catholic Church, its representatives and basic indicators of religiosity such as participation in church services and individual prayer. However, in terms of morality, spiritual needs and attitudes to family rituals, the results of our study are slightly more varied, indicating a need for further investigation.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bobrowicz Ryszard, Mattias Nowak.** 2021. “Divided by the rainbow: Culture war and diffusion of paleoconservative values in contemporary Poland” *Religions* 12(3): 170. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel12030170>.
- Berger Peter L.** 1967. *The sacred canopy: Elements of a sociological theory of religion*. New York: Doubleday and Company.
- Borowik Irena.** 2008. „O zróżnicowaniu katolików w Polsce”. *Chrześcijaństwo-Świat-Polityka* 2 (6): 23–27.

- Borowik Irena.** 2016. Przemiany religijne w Polsce na tle transformacji w Europie Środkowo-Wschodniej i globalizacji. In: *Globalny i lokalny wymiar religii. Polska w kontekście europejskim*. I. Borowik, A. Górny, W. Świątkiewicz (eds.), 7–16. Kraków: Zakład Wydawniczy NOMOS.
- Brewster Melanie E.** 2013. Atheism, gender and sexuality. In: *The Oxford handbook of atheism*, S. Bullivant, M. Ruse (eds.), 511–524. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Calkin Sydney, Monika Ewa Kaminska.** 2020. “Persistence and change in morality policy: The role of the Catholic Church in the politics of abortion in Ireland and Poland”. *Feminist Review* 124(1): 86–102. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0141778919894451>.
- Chaves Mark.** 1994. “Secularization as declining religious authority”. *Social Forces* 72(3): 749–774.
- Chmielewska Marta, Małgorzata Druciarek, Izabela Przybysz.** 2017. Czarny Protest w stronę nowego kompromisu aborcyjnego? [https://obserwatoriumdemokracji.pl/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Raport-ISP\\_Czarny-protest.pdf](https://obserwatoriumdemokracji.pl/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Raport-ISP_Czarny-protest.pdf) [access: 18.06.2022].
- CBOS.** 2016. Polacy o prawach kobiet, „czarnych protestach” i prawie aborcyjnym, [https://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2016/K\\_165\\_16.PDF](https://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2016/K_165_16.PDF) [access: 18.06.2022].
- CBOS.** 2020. O dopuszczalności przerywania ciąży i protestach po wyroku Trybunału Konstytucyjnego, [https://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2020/K\\_153\\_20.PDF](https://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2020/K_153_20.PDF) [access: 18.06.2022].
- CBOS.** 2021. Religijność młodych na tle ogółu społeczeństwa. [https://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2021/K\\_144\\_21.PDF](https://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2021/K_144_21.PDF) [access: 18.06.2022].
- CBOS.** 2022. Wielki Post i Wielkanoc 2022. [https://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2022/K\\_053\\_22.PDF](https://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2022/K_053_22.PDF) [access: 18.06.2022].
- Curanović Alicja.** 2021. “The international activity of Ordo Iuris. The Central European actor and the global christian right”. *Religions* 12(12): 1038. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel12121038>.
- Dziewuchy Dziewuchom.** 2021. <https://www.facebook.com/dziewuchydziewuchom> [access: 18.06.2022].
- Eberts Mirella.** 1998. “The Roman Catholic Church and democracy in Poland”. *Europe Asia Studies* 50 (5): 817–842. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09668139808412567>.
- Frąckowiak-Sochańska Monika, Marta Zawodna-Stephan.** 2022. “Uwięzione między lękiem a gniewem? Powstanie i rozpad wspólnoty buntu w czasie protestów kobiet po wyroku Trybunału Konstytucyjnego”. *Studia Socjologiczne* 1(244): 9–35. <https://doi.org/10.24425/sts.2022.140594>.
- Głowacki Antoni.** 2019. Religijność młodzieży i uczestnictwo w lekcjach religii w szkołach <https://www.cinn.gov.pl/portal?id=1475772> [access: 18.06.2022].
- Grabowska Mirosława.** 2018. *Bóg a sprawa polska. Poza granicami teorii sekularyzacji*. Warszawa: Scholar.
- Graff Agnieszka.** 2020. Coś w Polsce pękło, coś się wylało. Jak młodzi zerwali Wielki Kompromis z Kościołem. <https://oko.press/jak-mlodzi-zerwali-wielki-kompromis-z-kosciolem-graff/> [access: 18.06.2022].
- Graff Agnieszka, Elżbieta Korolczuk.** 2017. “«Worse than communism and nazism put together»: War on gender in Poland”. In: *Anti-gender campaigns in Europe mobilizing against equality*, K. Roman, D. Paternotte (eds.), 175–194. Londres: Rowman & Littlefield International.
- Gwiazda Anna.** 2021. “Right-wing populism and feminist politics: The case of Law and Justice in Poland”. *International Political Science Review* 42(5): 580–595. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192512120948917>.

- Hall Bogumila.** 2019. "Gendering resistance to right-wing populism: Black Protest and a new wave of feminist activism in Poland?" *American Behavioral Scientist* 63(10): 1497–1515. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764219831731>.
- Heelas Paul.** 2002. The spiritual revolution: From religion to spirituality. In: *Religions in the modern world: Traditions and transformations*. L. Woodhead, P. Fletcher, H. Kawanami, DJ Smith (eds.), 357–377. London: Routledge.
- Herbert David, Josh Bullock.** 2020. "Reaching for a new sense of connection: Soft atheism and «patch and make do» spirituality amongst nonreligious European millennials". *Culture and Religion* 21(2): 157–177. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14755610.2020.1862887>.
- Hervieu-Léger Daniele.** 1997. "What scripture tells me": Spontaneity and regulation within the Catholic charismatic renewal. In: *Lived religion in America: Towards a history of practice* David D. Hall (eds.), 24–40. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Kasia Katarzyna.** 2020. "Another black day for Poland: The attack on women's reproductive rights caused mass protests. Duda's re-election gave it legitimacy". *Index on Censorship* 49(4): 26–28. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0306422020981253>.
- Jong Jonathan, Matthias Bluemke, Jamin Halberstadt.** 2013. "Fear of death and supernatural beliefs: Developing a new supernatural belief scale to test the relationship". *European Journal of Personality* 27(5): 495–506. <https://doi.org/10.1002/per.1898>.
- Koczanowicz Leszek.** 2021. Co zapowiada język rewolucji. [https://www.batory.org.pl/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Jezyk-rewolucji\\_ostateczna.pdf](https://www.batory.org.pl/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Jezyk-rewolucji_ostateczna.pdf) [access: 18.06.2022].
- Korolczuk Elżbieta.** 2016. "Explaining mass protests against abortion ban in Poland: The power of connective action". *Zoon politikon* 7: 91–113.
- Korolczuk Elżbieta, Beata Kowalska, Jennifer Ramme, Claudia Snochowska-Gonzalez.** 2019. *Bunt kobiet. Czarne Protesty i Strajki Kobiet*. Gdańsk: Europejskie Centrum Solidarności.
- Korolczuk Elżbieta.** 2020. "Counteracting challenges to gender equality in the era of anti-gender campaigns: Competing gender knowledges and affective solidarity". *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society* 27 (4): 694–717. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10691-021-09465-3>.
- Kostrzewska Dagmara.** 2020. „Działalność ruchów kobiecych w sieci – cyfrowe oblicze polskiego feminizmu”. *Przegląd Krytyczny* 2(1): 109–120. <https://doi.org/10.14746/pk.2020.2.1.07>.
- Łukasik Marcin.** 2020. Strajk kobiet. Minister odbiera granty. Gdy zakreśli się kurek, łatwo doprowadzić do nieodwracalnych szkód. <https://www.money.pl/gospodarka/strajk-kobiet-kosztowany-szantaz-ministra-uczelnie-moga-obejsc-sie-z-milionami-zlotych-6570249692654272a.html> [access: 18.06.2022].
- Mariański Janusz.** 2017. „Sekularyzacja jako megatrend społeczno-kulturowy”. *Relacje Międzykulturowe* 1(1): 231–257. <https://doi.org/10.12797/RM.01.2017.01.12>.
- Mandes Sławomir.** 2012. Życie religijne. In: *współczesne społeczeństwo Polskie*. A. Giza, M. Sikorska (eds.), 229–270. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.
- Marody Mirosława, Joanna Konieczna-Salamatin, Małgorzata Sawicka, Sławomir Mandes, Grażyna Kacprowicz Krzysztof Bulkowski, Jerzy Bartkowski.** 2019. *Spoleczeństwo na zakręcie. Zmiany postaw i wartości Polaków w latach 1990–2018*. Warszawa: Scholar.
- Molteni Francesco.** 2017. "Religious change among cohorts in religion and society in Central and Eastern Europe: A longitudinal analysis of religious practice and belief in formerly communist countries". *Religion* 10(1): 35–53. <https://rascee.net/index.php/rascee/article/view/90>.

- Motak Dominika, Joanna Krotofil, Dorota Wójciak.** 2021. "The battle for symbolic power: Kraków as a stage of renegotiation of the social position of the Catholic Church in Poland". *Religions* 12(8): 594. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel12080594>.
- Nacher Anna.** 2021. "#BlackProtest from the Web to the streets and back: Feminist digital activism in Poland and Narrative Potential of the Hashtag". *European Journal of Women's Studies* 28(2): 260–273. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1350506820976900>.
- Narkowicz Katarzyna.** 2018. "Before the Czarny Protest: Feminist activism in Poland". *Cultivate. The Feminist Journal of the Centre for Women's Studies* 1. <https://cultivatefeminism.com/protests-before-the-czarny-protest/> [access: 18.06.2022].
- Nawojski Radosław, Magdalena Pluta, Katarzyna Zielińska.** 2018. "The black protests: A struggle for (re)definition of intimate citizenship". *Praktyka Teoretyczna* 4(30): 51–74. <https://doi.org/10.14746/prt.2018.4.2>.
- Nawojski Radosław, Beata Kowalska.** 2022. „Kiedy państwo mnie nie chroni... – oddolne mobilizacje na rzecz praw reprodukcyjnych a doświadczanie obywatelstwa”. *Studia Socjologiczne* 1(244): 81–103. <https://doi.org/10.24425/sts.2022.140597>.
- Norris Pippa, Ronald Inglehart.** 2011. *Sacred and secular: Religion and politics worldwide*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511894862>.
- Nycz Maciej.** 2020. Jarosław Kaczyński do opozycji: Jesteście przestępcami. Możecie sobie wrzeszczeć. [https://www.rmfm24.pl/raporty/raport-strajk-kobiet/news-jaroslaw-kaczynski-do-opozycji-jestescie-przestepcami-mozeci\\_nId,4820783#crp\\_state=1](https://www.rmfm24.pl/raporty/raport-strajk-kobiet/news-jaroslaw-kaczynski-do-opozycji-jestescie-przestepcami-mozeci_nId,4820783#crp_state=1) [access: 18.06.2022].
- Pew Research Center.** 2018. <https://www.pewforum.org/2018/06/13/the-age-gap-in-religion-around-the-world/> [access: 18.06.2022].
- Polynczuk-Alenius Kinga.** 2022. "«This attack is intended to destroy Poland»: Bio-power, conspiratorial knowledge, and the 2020 Women's Strike in Poland". *Popular Communication: the international journal of media and culture* 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15405702.2022.2047972>.
- Rommel Atko, Mikko Sillfors.** 2018. "Crossbreeding atheism with spirituality: Notes on Soviet and Western attempts". *Secularism and Nonreligion* 7(1): 8. <http://doi.org/10.5334/snr.94>.
- Requena Miguel, Mikołaj Stanek.** 2013. "Secularization in Poland and Spain after the democratic transition: A cohort analysis". *International Sociology* 28(1): 84–101. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0268580912466551>.
- Sedlar Aaron E., Nick Stauner, Kenneth I. Pargament, Julie J. Exline, Joshua B. Grubbs, David F. Bradley.** 2018. "Spiritual struggles among atheists: Links to psychological distress and well-being". *Religions* 9(8): 242. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel9080242>.
- Sommer Hubert.** 1996. „Przewartościowanie religijne młodej inteligencji (na przykładzie studentów Rzeszowa)”. *Studia Socjologiczne* 3(142): 91–111.
- Stolz Jörg.** 2020. "Secularization theories in the twenty-first century: Ideas, evidence, and problems. Presidential Address". *Social Compass* 67(2): 282–308. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0037768620917320>.
- Suchomska Joanna, Dominika Urzędowska.** 2021. „Działania protestacyjne Strajku Kobiet w ujęciu teorii nowych ruchów społecznych”. *Dyskurs & Dialog* 7(1): 9–22. [https://www.pzr.org.pl/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/dzialania\\_protestacyjne.pdf](https://www.pzr.org.pl/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/dzialania_protestacyjne.pdf).
- Tomka Miklos.** 2010. "Religiosity in Central and Eastern Europe: Facts and interpretations". *Religion and Society in Central and Eastern Europe* 3(1): 1–15.

- Trzebiatowska Marta.** 2019. "Atheism is not the problem. The problem is being a woman". *Atheist women and reasonable feminism, Journal of Gender Studies* 28(4): 475–487. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09589236.2018.1523053>
- Trzebiatowska Marta.** 2021. "Presuming religious congruence? The nonreligious and Catholicism in Poland". *Social Compass* 68(4): 653–670. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0037768621994746>.
- Tyrała Radosław.** 2013. „Konwersja na niewiarę w polskiej rzeczywistości. Uwarunkowania, przebieg, konsekwencje”. *Przegląd Religioznawczy* 4(250): 175–188.
- Tyrała Radosław.** 2014. *Bez Boga na co dzień. Socjologia ateizmu i niewiary*. Kraków: Nomos.
- Tyrała Radosław.** 2015. „Ateista, agnostyk, niewierzący...? Socjologii niereligii problemy z terminologią”. *Studia Socjologiczne* 1(216): 149–181.
- Tyrała Radosław.** 2018. "Living without God in a religious country: Polish nonbelievers as a cultural minority". *Social Compass* 65(1): 131–44. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0037768617747497>.
- Voas David.** 2009. "The rise and fall of fuzzy fidelity in Europe". *European Sociological Review* 25(2): 155–168. <https://doi.org/10.1093/esr/jcn044>.
- Ziętek Agnieszka.** 2020. „Ruchy protestu jako przykład asertywnej kultury obywatelskiej. Przypadek Ogólnopolskiego Strajku Kobiet”. *Athenaeum. Polskie Studia Politologiczne* 65(1): 156–172. <https://doi.org/10.15804/athena.2020.65.10>.

*Ewa Dąbrowska-Prokopowska*

*Michalina Trochimowicz*

*Piotr Paweł Laskowski*

*Konrad Talmont-Kaminski*

## ATEIZM, ANTYKOŚCIELNOŚĆ I FEMINIZM A STRAJK KOBIEŃ. CASE STUDY GRUPY: DZIEWUCHY DZIEWUCHOM

### Streszczenie

Polska w ostatnich latach wchodzi w okres przyspieszonej sekularyzacji. Wyniki badań CBOS wskazują, że proces ten jest widoczny zwłaszcza w najmłodszych kohortach Polaków. Strajk Kobiet, który miał miejsce w latach 2016–2020, jest opisywany w literaturze naukowej jako jeden z czynników przyspieszających procesy sekularyzacyjne, głównie w populacji młodych kobiet o poglądach feministycznych. W 2021 roku przebadaliśmy członków grupy na Facebooku „Dziewuchy Dziewuchom”, aby opisać zróżnicowane relacje między feminizmem a ateizmem oraz zweryfikować naszą hipotezę, że Strajk Kobiet był wyrazem, a nie przyczyną, postaw ateistycznych respondentów. Ważne dla naszych badań ilościowych było również określenie stosunku badanych członków grupy do takich kwestii, jak działalność polityczna Kościoła katolickiego, funkcjonowanie zasad moralnych katolicyzmu oraz odczuwane potrzeby duchowe.

**Słowa kluczowe:** sekularyzacja, strajk kobiet, feminizm, ateizm