

SPRAWOZDANIA

PATRYCJA RUTKOWSKA ▶

**A report from the National Scientific Conference entitled:
“Election Geography in Poland Interpretations
of Attitudes and Citizens’ Polling Behaviour”**

Rzeszów, 5th–6th December 2016

On 5th December, scientists from all over Poland came to Rzeszow to talk, present their results, discuss electoral politics in Poland, and more specifically to talk about citizens’ polling attitudes and behavior. The Institute of Political Science of the University of Rzeszow and the Electoral Research Section of the Polish Society of Political Science on 5th and 6th December 2017 organized a nationwide scientific conference entitled “Election Geography in Poland. Interpretations of Attitudes and Citizens’ Polling Behavior”. The purpose of the conference was to interpret the results of the elections after 1989, which would make it possible to understand the electoral behavior in the post-1989 elections, and perhaps to predict the distribution of the influence of the individual groups in the coming years. The organizers specifically wanted to focus (as they provided in the conference invitation), among others, on issues related to the electoral nature of voivodships in Poland, the conditions and variations in electoral preferences in voivodships, the influence of law regulations on the preferences, the impact of media on shaping the electoral preferences as well as the election results. The meeting took place at the University of Rzeszow, and was attended by academics representing national academic centers (e.g. Wro-

claw University, Warsaw University, Marie Curie-Skłodowska University) and guests from the Czech Republic.

Nearly forty reports were delivered during the session. The participants focused mainly on the election after 2000 until now. The issues of electoral and electoral behavior in the local and regional dimension were mainly discussed. The speakers often also focused on the use of the media during the election as well as their influence on electoral behavior.

The conference was organized in a single plenary session and six panels. The official opening of the conference took place at 10.00am. The organizers at the opening of the conference underlined the importance of the subject matter, and also emphasized the opportunities offered by combining two disciplines such as geography and research in political science.

The plenary sessions which inaugurated the conference focused on electoral support in concrete elections, preferred values as that were seen as factors geographically differentiating the electoral behavior of Poles, the specificities of electoral behavior in Poland's regions and the role of the media during the election campaign. The session was chaired by a professor at the University of Rzeszow, Dr. hab. Agnieszka Pawłowska, director of the Institute of Politics of the University of Rzeszow. As the first speaker was Prof. University of Wrocław Dr. hab. Robert Alberski, who presented the electoral shift in the elections to the regional councils in the years 2010-2014. Dr. hab. Agnieszka Turska Kawa from the University of Silesia presented the results of research on preferred basic values that were seen as a geographical factor that differentiates electoral behavior. Another speech was delivered by a professor from Warsaw University, Dr. hab. Rafał Chwedoruk, who raised the issue of regional diversity of support in parliamentary elections after 2004, for the Social Democrats in Poland against other Central and Eastern European countries. In their plenary session, their views also presented Prof. Adam Mickiewicz University, Roman Matykowski, Dr. hab., Dominik Siekulicki from the Jagiellonian University, Dr. hab. Waldemar Wojtasik from Silesian University, professor at the University of Rzeszow, Dr. hab. Wojciech Furman, professors of the University of Szczecin, Dr. hab. Łukasz Tomczak and Dr. hab., Maciej Drzonek as well as Dr. hab., Jarosław Flis from the Jagiellonian University.

Subsequently, there were two parallel panels. The first one was chaired by Dr. hab. Agnieszka Turska-Kawa, while the other one was chaired by a professor at the University of Wrocław, Dr. hab. Robert Alberski.

The third panel was led by Dr. hab. Dominik Siekulicki, and it concerned mainly issues related to the legal problems connected with the election and also the electoral law itself. In parallel to the third panel, the fourth panel was chaired by Dr. hab. Waldemar Wojtasik. The speeches concerned the electoral preferences of the inhabitants of the municipalities and cities as well as the LGBT women and LGBT activists on the Polish political scene and the worldview of young Poles and their electoral behavior in the 2015 elections. The first day of the conference concluded with a festive dinner.

Day two of the conference started with a panel discussion conducted by Dr. hab. Jarosław Flis. The panel analyzed the phenomenon of coexistence, passivity and absenteeism. The conference ended with a session led by a professor at the University of Rzeszów, Dr. hab. Krzysztof Żarna. In the last part of the conference the discussions were held about voices that were not valid in parliamentary elections in Poland in the years 2001–2015 and the correlation of the linguistic rights of national and ethnic minorities and the right to representation at local and national level from the perspective of the Śląskie and Opole voivodships. The general conclusions that emerged from the conference, at the time of its conclusion, were about how broad the field of research was, and how much remains to be explored. The effort that was made to analyze this research area was also underlined. The organizers closed the conference expressing their gratitude to the participants.

MGR PATRYCJA RUTKOWSKA

Katedra Systemu Politycznego RP
Wydział Politologii i Studiów Międzynarodowych
Uniwersytet Mikołaja Kopernika w Toruniu
ul. Stefana Batorego 39L, 87-100 Toruń
patinet@op.pl