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**RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND AND VOTING PATTERNS OF THE YOUNG  
PRECARIAT. THE POLISH EXAMPLE**

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**Abstract:** This article refers to the role and importance of religious beliefs in decisions related to the electoral and political involvement of the Polish young precariat. Based on qualitative research conducted using asynchronous interviews, it shows the importance of declared religious values when selecting candidates for parliamentary chambers on the example of Poland. The research results presented in the article refer to the last parliamentary elections in Poland held in 2023. They show the increased interest of the young Polish precariat in political life, as evidenced by the large participation of its representatives in the last elections and voting taking into account a pragmatic approach to the selection of a given candidate to the parliamentary chamber where his competences and effectiveness are more important than his worldview or the religious values of their voters. An interesting conclusion from the conducted research is that the Polish young precariat consciously chooses candidates for the Polish parliament and is aware of their advantages and disadvantages as well as the limitations that exist in politics, which makes it difficult for populists to appear in political life. The article uses a mixed research methodology, combining various methods of solving research problems, including the collection, analysis, interpretation and presentation of quantitative and qualitative data.

**Key words:** generation Z, political preferences, precariat, religiosity, religious values, voting patterns.

## 1. Introduction

The precariat phenomenon largely affects young people, leading to an existential sense of uncertainty. Being part of the precariat means a lack of job stability, low-paid work, no guarantee of receiving a steady income and no social security. It entails an inability to plan one's life in the long term and hinders the possibility to start a family or purchase certain items such as real estate, where having a job for an indefinite period is a condition for obtaining a mortgage. Young Gen Z precariat members tend to share specific values that differ from previous generations: concern for the state of the natural environment, the pursuit of social justice, and the desire to be part of an inclusive society where each of its members has the potential to put their skills and predispositions to use. On the other hand, Gen Z representatives are highly uncertain about their future and the economic circumstances in which they will live. In terms of religion, they are less connected to religious institutions than previous generations, even though spirituality is an important area of life for them. The aim of this article is to discover the influence of religious background on the voting patterns of young precariat workers living in Poland. It attempts to answer the question the following questions. Did the religious authorities motivate young precariat workers from Poland to vote in the last parliamentary elections in 2023? Were they guided exclusively by religious values when choosing candidates for the Polish Sejm and Senate? Did the candidates they chose share a similar worldview to them? How do they imagine the future relations between the Catholic Church in Poland and the current government and the further operation of the Polish state?

## 2. The precariat – the phenomenon in a nutshell

In the literature, the issue of *precariat* members and *precarious* work was popularised by Guy Standing. For this British economist, the concept of *precarity* cannot merely be identified with the problem of the pauperisation of professionally active people (Standing 2014; Standing 2015). One of the fundamentally important factors assigned to the precariat is, admittedly, low pay, which can be measured statistically. However, the conceptual scope of this term is much broader. The literature emphasises the problem of individual uncertainty related to job prospects as well as life prospects, when it comes to starting a family, or the above-average risk of falling into a spiral of debt that is difficult to repay (Góra 2016). G. Standing conceptualised seven types of security related to work (Standing 2014):

1. The job market – a macro-level policy of full employment implemented by the legislator
2. Employment – protection against the arbitrary dismissal of employees, appropriate regulations regarding hiring and firing
3. The workplace – the possibility of social advancement in terms of status and income
4. The work itself – protection against accidents at work through the application of appropriate health and safety regulations, limiting work in dangerous conditions
5. Skill reproduction – the chance to obtain appropriate skills through vocational training, the possibility of using one's competences at work
6. Income – a guaranteed living wage, protected by minimum wage mechanisms, inflation-indexed
7. Representation – employee participation, the possibility of trade union membership, the right to strike

At the same time, it should be emphasised that the dictionaries of some languages – for example, Polish – still do not contain a definition of the term *precariat*, which is an English portmanteau of two words: *precarious* and *proletariat*. Furthermore, the Dictionary of the English Language offers a twofold understanding of the term *precarious*. Firstly, according to the literal wording: 'Something that is precarious is in a dangerous state or position because it is not securely held in place and seems likely to fall down or collapse at any moment'. Secondly: 'If your situation or position is precarious, you are not secure because you are not in complete control of events and might fail in what you are doing' (Collins Cobuild English Language Dictionary 1990). On the one hand, this may apply to something that may fail at any moment or – when referring to people – this term indicates a lack of security, uncertainty, a lack of control over the course of specific events.

Insufficient individual employment protection, according to G. Standing, undoubtedly puts the employee in a precarious situation, with various pernicious outcomes for professionally active people, as well as members of their families (Knapińska 2014).

The concept of a dual labour market splits the market into two parts: the core and the periphery. Therefore, it follows that the precariat – due to worse work and pay conditions – operate on the peripheral labour market (Piore 1969). G. Standing argues that one may be justified in identifying the employment of a precariat employee with work on the peripheral labour market.

However, as the literature suggests, 'Attempts to determine the scale of precarious employment in Poland have so far been sporadic' (Kryńska 2017). Although this topic has been raised in Polish academic discourse, especially concerning its economic dimension, which is the pauperisation of working people (Goleński 2015; Muster 2012; Polkowska 2016; Góra

2016), it should be emphasised that there is still a lack of quantitative and qualitative in-depth analyses that might help identify this phenomenon on the domestic labour market. M. Knapińska points out that the concept of the precariat combines several co-occurring features: 'young age, low income, temporary employment or no employment at all, lack of life prospects and financial plans for the future, lack of housing, often no family and reluctance to start one due to the lack of life stability' (Knapińska 2014).

So, it is clearly underlined that young adults transitioning from the education system to the labour market are the ones who are particularly susceptible to the problem of working on the 'periphery' or having to take worse jobs. A prolonged period spent on the periphery of the labour market presents a number of adverse implications that should be considered not only directly in terms of the individual, but also in a broader, social and economic context (Foti 2017). Precariat workers have far fewer favourable opportunities for professional development – especially in terms of promotion to specialist and managerial positions within organisations. The disadvantageous situation faced by precariat members on the labour market (including lack of security and opportunities for professional development, and low pay) compared with 'core' employees leads to their sense of deprivation and, consequently, their frustration. In turn, the lack of employment stability, which is manifested, inter alia, by temporary work, 'may affect other aspects of life, such as decisions to start a family and have children' (Kamińska et al. 2014). This in turn translates into low fertility rates and is a factor in depopulation.

### 3. Generation Z and their values

In sociological literature, the term *generation* is defined as '(...) all people of more or less the same age who belong to a given cultural circle, who have similar attitudes, motivations, expectations, worldviews and value systems, based on a shared historical and social situation' (Warwas et al., 2016, p. 19). For A. Giddens, a 'generation' means '(...) all individuals born and living at the same time' (Giddens et al. 2012: 1084). This author also emphasises that 'belonging to a particular generation is determined not only by the year of an individual's birth but also by the community of experiences shaped by a specific society' (Giddens et al. 2012: 1064). Another definition suggests that a generation is 'a form of age group consisting of those members of a society born at approximately the same time, and who may see the world in very different ways from their counterparts in earlier generations' (Marshall 2005: 240). In the context of belonging to a specific generation, it is clearly not only a matter of the date on a birth certificate, but also shared experiences that have a significant impact on members of specific generations. Of course,

generations are not homogeneous and they do differ internally. This differentiation applies to young people in particular but it is certainly possible to spot certain distinguishing features of the young generation, which set them apart from older generations.

The literature mentions various cut-off dates for membership of Gen Z. This article defines this generation as those born after 1995 (Messyas 2021; Pope 2016).

Generation Z, typically born within the time frame specified above, is a diverse group that defies categorisation. Its members fly in the face of previous generations. They contradict typical stereotypes of adolescent and young adult attitudes and behaviour. They even contradict themselves as a group. This generation is more independent than its predecessors, negotiating a life without the constraints and norms familiar to previous generations. Through all this, they are changing society, redefining the cultural norms established by their predecessors. Politically speaking, Gen Z is interested in the bigger picture and where they fit into it. Even in their youth, they tend to reflect a broader political outlook than previous generations. While Gen Z takes a wider view of the world and seriously considers their role in making it a better place, they must balance this with their own pragmatic concerns about their ability to do good work and support themselves. While they are often seen as idealists or dreamers, what concerns them most significantly are global issues that relate to their daily lives. When asked what causes them stress, most Zoomers claim to feel 'very' worried about the future, particularly their own – and this includes having enough money (67%), getting a good or better job (64%), and paying for college or university (59%). Gen Zers are also stressed about global concerns, such as war and gun violence (62%) and climate change (61%). However, when global concerns clash with worries about their own future, most Gen Zers pragmatically prioritise their own future (Merriman, 2020). Gen Zers tend to have strong values related to issues such as racial justice and sustainable development. Events like the Global Climate March, led by Gen Z activist Greta Thunberg, thrive on youth activism. Climate change is one of the issues that Gen Zers are most concerned about. They often call for reforms on a personal, public, and global scale to thwart future catastrophe. Many Zoomers identify as environmentally aware and expect commitments to sustainability from companies and organisations. Gen Zers also live in an era marked by soaring inflation and financial distress. Rising student loan debt plagues many members of this generation.

Gen Z has gone through its own set of formative experiences that differ from those of most Millennials. For example, American Gen Zers differ from their generational predecessors in the following ways:

- They tend to be more pragmatic, with complex idealism and worries about the future on equal footing. Zoomers dream of personal careers

but expect economic hardship.

- They have a less positive outlook on life, with weaker emotional and social well-being than older generations.
- They are more interested in belonging to an inclusive, supportive community.
- They are more individualistic, with a stronger sense of personal expression.
- They are more politically and socially engaged, standing up for what they believe in on social media (McKinsey 2024).

Political parties pay close attention to the outlooks, attitudes, and preferences of different generations. Not to do so would risk losing votes. This becomes difficult when the views held by different generations drastically diverge on some issues. Generation Z is significantly more liberal than previous generations. Not surprisingly, this makes them outliers on a number of law and order issues. Gen Zers are significantly more likely than other generations to prioritise individual freedom to protest what they believe is right. They are more likely to support the notion that citizens could engage in acts of civil disobedience when opposing government actions, and significantly less likely to agree that always obeying the law is an important part of being a good citizen. By looking back at the views held by previous generations when they were younger, we can determine whether views change as people age or if they remain the same. It should be noted that the average Generation Z worldviews are very consistent and do not change as much as people age. Gen X and Millennials have more liberal views than their Baby Boomer and Silent Generation grandparents. It seems likely that Generation Z will continue to be more liberal than previous generations as they age.

In religious matters, Generation Z is also starting to differ from its predecessors. Research by the Pew Research Center suggests that institutional religion is losing its meaning among young people –over 50% of teenagers in the United States aged 13 to 17 do not identify with religion or express a lack of religious affiliation with the faith of their parents. This phenomenon occurs to varying degrees within different age groups. It turns out that 24% of teenagers in the US claim that religion is important to them, while 43% of parents say so. Meanwhile, the percentage of people who identify as ‘spiritual but not religious’ continues to grow among the younger age groups, who have their own ethical and political affiliations (Clarke 2021).

Generation Z is specific and in some ways significantly different from Millennials. Zoomers are attributed with such traits as openness, sensitivity, tolerance, self-confidence, as well as a desire to learn and act. Gen Zers are not afraid to take risks, cope well with change and concentrate on achieving work-life balance. Faith may have been very important to their parents and grandparents, but Generation Z has

different priorities. People born after 1995 are not as attached to spirituality. Young people in Poland have turned away from the Church and do not show much interest in other religions. Nor are they interested in fortune telling or horoscopes. So what does the Polish Gen Z believe in? According to research conducted by SWPS University in 2024, above everything else, they believe in themselves. One of the topics of particular interest in this study was the spirituality of Poland's Generation Z. Only 2% of respondents considered religion to be the most important thing in their lives, while 15% declared that faith was the most important for them, without specifying what exactly they meant. Meanwhile, as many as 33% of respondents indicated spiritual development as key to their lives. The majority of Generation Z respondents stated that neither faith, nor religion, nor spiritual development were the most important to them. Increasingly, young people in Poland are moving away from the Catholic Church and do not identify with other religious associations either. Only 11% of respondents admitted that they need support from any religious institution, while 62% claimed to develop their own spirituality by themselves. Despite their skeptical attitude towards religion, young people still cultivate traditions related to religious holidays. Moreover, Generation Z demonstrates a pragmatic approach to life, rejecting fortune telling and horoscopes. Only 14% of respondents admitted that they read horoscopes, and only 3% use the services of fortune tellers (Onet.pl 2024; SWPS & They.pl 2024)

#### 4. Research methodology

During the research conducted on the impact of religious background on the voting patterns of the young Polish precariat, mixed methods research (MMR) was applied. By adopting this approach, the researcher can take various approaches to reveal the truth and/or discover knowledge, with the research goal in mind. Mixed methods research (MMR) is a research methodology that incorporates multiple methods for addressing research questions in an appropriate and principled manner, including the collection, analysis, interpretation, and presentation of quantitative and qualitative data (Bryman 2012; Cresswell 2015; Creswell and Clark 2011).

This approach refers to the triangulation method, which is based on the assumption that no one single method is able to grasp, explain, or facilitate understanding of the human experience and life phenomena in all their multiplicity. This leads to a multi-method approach. The triangulation strategy is an expression of the quest for solutions that provide a holistic picture of the phenomena under study as well as the most insightful and critical understanding of them. This is achieved by combining various methods, empirical materials, perspectives, and observers in one piece of research. Triangulation, as a qualitative research

strategy, involves using multiple methods or data sources to gain a comprehensive grasp of a research problem or to test the validity of assumptions through the convergence of information from different sources (Carter et al. 2014).

Triangulation allows researchers to overcome personal biases and limitations that may arise from adopting a single methodology. By combining different methods in one study, researchers can partially overcome the lack of precision pursuant to using only one method (Furmanek 2016).

Source triangulation, involving the gathering and comparison of data from various members of the Polish precariat, was used for the purposes of this study. Direct research was conducted by the author of this study using asynchronous interviews, and the findings of other studies relevant to the discussed topic, related to political involvement and the influence of religious background on the voting patterns of young precariat members, were taken into consideration and references are presented in the discussion and summary section. Both direct research and desk research were applied here, which is a feature of so-called source triangulation. The methodological questions pertaining to the qualitative research conducted for the purposes of this study are outlined more broadly below. Asynchronous e-mail interviews were conducted – a qualitative research method whereby information is repeatedly exchanged online between the researcher and the participant within a specified time frame (Ratislavová et al. 2014). Invitations to participate in the research were sent via e-mail from the University of Silesia. After clicking on the link in the email to find out more about the study and its topic, the potential participant was redirected to Google Forms to answer some specific questions. The respondents had one week to complete this task. After this period, they were not able to participate in the ongoing research.

The literature indicates that asynchronous interviews are beneficial in qualitative research because they are cheap to run and shorten the research time. Additionally, they provide detailed information useful to the researcher. E-mail interviews are cheaper than their face-to-face counterparts. Furthermore, online interviews overcome geographical distance, which otherwise might require an international telephone call that generates additional costs. E-mail interviews can be easily transcribed, copied and pasted compared to other types. The researcher is not limited by location or even to a single conversation at a given time. By conducting asynchronous interviews via email and an appropriate questionnaire, the researcher can question multiple participants at the same time, thus saving time and money (East et al., 2008; Meho, 2006). From the participant's perspective, email interviews remove the pressure of face-to-face communication, especially when sensitive topics are to be discussed, providing a sense of privacy and anonymity, and offering time-



flexibility in terms of participation (Amri et al. 2021; Dahlin 2021). Participants in asynchronous interviews rate email communication as a more comfortable and safer space for expressing their feelings (compared to face-to-face conversations, online video, and online chats), although they feel less rapport with the interviewer than those who communicated live and synchronously (Guest et al. 2020). For the researcher, challenges may arise during asynchronous interviews due to the inability to directly observe the participant and notice nonverbal cues. However, the lack of eye contact can eliminate any unintended or hidden biases that a researcher may impose based on a participant's appearance (McCoyd et al. 2006).

Existing research suggests that the quality of responses and participant experience may be comparable between email interviews and other methods, such as telephone interviews, in-person interviews, or live video (Keen et al. 2022; Ranieri et al. 2021).

In order to explore the influence of religious background on the voting patterns of young precariat members from Poland, qualitative research was conducted via asynchronous interviews. The target group consisted of precariat members in the 18–30+ age category. The participants in this study were students and graduates of the University of Silesia in Katowice who were not employed on an open-ended work contract at the time of the study. The questionnaires were sent to 2,000 potential respondents via the internal email of the above-mentioned university. Current and former students of the author of this article participated too. The goal was to obtain at least 30 interviews. In the end, this target was exceeded because 42 interviews were collected. The conducted interviews contained a section for personal data as well as questions divided into nine thematic groups. The responses were used to determine the significance of religious background for young precariat members during the last parliamentary elections in Poland.

## 5. Study findings

The study was conducted via asynchronous interviews run from 11–18 January 2024, using an interview questionnaire sent by e-mail, which included an invitation to participate in the study and a link redirecting the potential respondent to a questionnaire in Google Forms. The study involved 42 respondents who were precariat workers, as confirmed by the metrics data regarding their current form of work. The majority of the respondents (86%) were employed on contracts of mandate. Other forms of precarious employment – for example, fixed-term internship work, running a sole proprietorship with the majority of income coming from one source, volunteering or illegal work – were marginal. The majority of the respondents (58%) were women, and 42% were men. A significant proportion of the respondents (49.5%) were living in large cities, followed

by 27.9% who were residents of medium-sized cities or towns. The next group of respondents were residing in small towns and the smallest group of respondents were located in the countryside. The respondents were quite diverse in terms of age. The main group were aged 21–23 (37.2%). The second largest group were aged 18–20 (25.6%), followed by respondents aged 23–25 (16.3%). A fairly significant group of respondents were aged 27–29 (11.6%). People aged 25–27 and 30+ constituted a small percentage of respondents and amounted to 4.7% and 2% respectively.

In terms of religion, most respondents were Catholic (52.4%). Self-declared atheists and agnostics had the same representation among the respondents of 21.4% each. One of the respondents described himself as an Evangelist. This person constitutes 2.3% of the respondents.

The first question the respondents were asked concerned potential action that the new government should take to improve life for the precariat in Poland. The answers given by the respondents express their expectations towards the new government in this regard, which are rational and focus on substantive issues such as state support for young people intending to run their own business, an active labour policy aimed at increasing the number of permanent jobs, housing availability for young people, equalising precariat workers' rights to holiday leave and insurance with the rights granted to people employed on open-ended permanent work contracts. The suggestions made by the respondents are substantive and dispassionate.

The second question referred to reasons for not voting in the last parliamentary elections in Poland. Here, their attention was drawn to the religious context of such a decision. The respondents were asked to describe this in more detail. In the event of a negative response to this question, the respondent was invited to move on to the ninth, and final, question of the interview.

The answers to this question are quite interesting because only one of the respondents admitted not voting in the last elections. His answer can be described as original, or might even indicate that his political views are extremely conservative. In his statement justifying not voting in the elections, he explained: *'I did not vote because I hate democracy and despise this system. Besides, Catholicism forbids me from voting for any evil (no matter how small or large).'* The remaining respondents declared that they had voted, as confirmed by their answers to the third interview question.

The next question the respondents were asked concerned whether they were guided by the principles of their faith or other rationale when voting. To better illustrate the responses to this question, they are analysed in two groups: believers, and atheists or agnostics. All respondents in the first category claimed that they separate their faith from their voting decisions. They offered additional justifications for this approach – for example, they mentioned the good of the country, voting for candidates who they believed were professional, and their distaste

towards the instrumental use of the Catholic religion in Poland by the previous Law and Justice government. To illustrate their views in this respect, we may cite one of the respondents from the believers group, who stated: *'Faith was not the main motivator for me. Above everything else, authenticity and a realistically feasible manifesto grabbed my interest – not empty promises'*. Regarding agnostics or atheists, their voting decisions were justified in a similar manner as by the previous group of respondents. One might say that these decisions were based on more rational justifications and criteria for choosing particular candidates. For instance, one female precariat worker in this group stated: *'When voting in the elections, I wasn't guided by faith, because I'm not a believer. I chose a candidate who presented similar views to mine – that is, where everyone has mutual respect for each other, is equal and can be happy. Her views on modernisation and education also appealed to me, because for anyone to have a higher standard of living, progress is crucial.'*

The next question concerned the importance they attached to the worldview of the candidates for whom they voted during the elections to the Sejm. The vast majority of respondents, regardless of whether they are believers or not, took this aspect into account and considered it to be the most important or quite important. An interesting justification in this respect was given by one male respondents, who spoke positively on this topic and stated: *'Yes, what's the point of voting if we are to vote against our worldview. If we just want to remove a party from power, by choosing a party we don't agree with. This approach doesn't make any sense, because the change will work out bad for us anyway.'*

Subsequently, the respondents were asked whether, during the elections to the Sejm, they were guided by the fact that the candidates they chose had a similar worldview to theirs.

As in the previous question, similar answers were obtained from precariat members who were believers and non-believers. The respondents emphasised the relevance of this relationship in their statements. However, this relationship was stronger for people who declared themselves Catholic. In relation to agnostic or atheist precariat workers, the relationship was significant, but there could be additional circumstances that would sway people from this group towards a candidate with a different worldview than the one represented by the voter. This is evidenced by a statement made by one of the precariat members in the atheist and agnostic category. She stated: *'Not necessarily. I was more guided by the fact that the worldview of the candidates would help achieve the democratic goals that they were supposed to be representing.'*

The next interview question explored whether the young precariat members separated their faith from politics when choosing candidates for the Sejm. Almost all the study participants answered this question in the affirmative. Interestingly, the agnostics and atheists claimed familiarity with the values that were important to Catholics because they had grown

up in families of believers. Their voting decisions, despite their awareness of these issues, were swayed by other factors. The nature of the answers given to this question is aptly illustrated by one male precariat member and study participant, who stated: *'Yes, a Catholic, a non-believer or someone of another faith may have views similar to mine and there is a good chance that he or she was also raised in a Catholic family or just according to the principles of Catholicism, the Ten Commandments, because Polish culture is very much rooted in this faith.'*

The next interview question concerned the influence of religious authorities on the voting patterns of young precariat members during the parliamentary elections. The vast majority of respondents denied any such influence. Some respondents also stated that, from their perspective, this impact was negative.

The penultimate question of the interview concerned the extent to which the parliamentary candidates elected by the young precariat members represent their political views. Most statements on this subject were positive, although there were also some negative responses in this regard, albeit significantly fewer. They are well characterised by a statement given by one of the respondents, who stated: *'In fact, no. There is no important person or party with whom I would agree with on even 3/4 of their manifesto. In these elections, I was pulled more towards the lesser evil, if I can call it that, although I try to avoid such blanket terms.'*

The final question in the interview looked at the need for the new government to reshape the relationship between the state and the Catholic Church. The answers given indicate the size of this problem and propose that two specific courses of action be taken in this regard: a broader secularisation of the Polish state and a separation of the church from political influence in Poland. The former is aptly illustrated by a statement given by one of the male interview participants: *'... I imagine Poland as a more secular state than it is now, but at the same time this issue doesn't bother me that much. I don't care so much about the church itself and its tradition in Poland as long as it doesn't harm others. However, I certainly believe that priests accused of paedophilia should be subject to Polish law, not church law.'* This sentiment is supported by an option offered by another study participant, who stated: *'Definitely yes, for too many years the church has had tremendous influence in the political sphere. Despite my own personal views and despite being a believer, I think that in a civilised country there is no place for any influence of faith on how politics is conducted.'*

## 6. Discussion and summary

Taking into account the statements made by the respondents related to the conducted research, it can be stated that they are based on factual and rational argumentation. Few emotionally charged statements were

given – regarding the issue of re-regulating relations between the new government and the Catholic Church in Poland.

One very interesting point revealed by these statements was the strong engagement of young precariat members in the last parliamentary elections in Poland. One respondent stated that he had not voted in the elections. The rest, despite differences in terms of religion and faith, claimed that they had. This indicates the strong social mobilisation of the young generation during the last parliamentary elections in Poland, a trend confirmed by other quantitative studies conducted in Poland (Dzeciuchowicz 2023; Katkowski 2023).

Regarding the study participants, two groups of more or less equal size emerged. One consisted of people declaring themselves as believers, and Catholic by and large. The second consisted of respondents identifying as atheist or agnostic. Young precariat members are also members of Generation Z, who are less inclined than their predecessors to declare themselves to be believers and practitioners. This trend is also confirmed by other studies conducted in Poland. The study revealed a relatively large group of young Gen Z precariat members who declare themselves non-believers or agnostics.

The impact of this phenomenon was evident in the respondents' answers regarding the need to reshape the relationship between the new government and the Catholic Church. Statements, especially from respondents belonging to the atheist and agnostic group, indicated that Poland should be more of a secular country than had previously been the case. Believers, on the other hand, saw the need to separate the Catholic Church in Poland from political influence – a relationship that had been apparent during the previous Law and Justice government. They believed that the Church should focus on developing the faith of its members, and outreaching.

The study showed that young members of the precariat in Poland, regardless of their approach to faith, had not been swayed by this while voting in the last elections. They treated religion as a separate issue, instead concentrating on the professionalism of the candidates and their ability to deliver on their election promises.

Regarding the choice of candidates with a similar worldview or values to the voters, during the last parliamentary elections the young precariat members tended to choose people who shared similar values. Most respondents agreed with this sentiment. Others declared their awareness that in politics, the effectiveness of candidates is what counts, and their ability to fulfil election promises, which is not necessarily related to the worldview and values of a given candidate for the Sejm. Some of the respondents were prepared to vote for people with values that differed from theirs, if they thought they would be effective members of parliament. To sum up the results of this study, although it is qualitative in nature, it revealed discontinuity when it comes to Gen Z members of

the Polish precariat. In other words, there has been a dramatic increase in people who declare themselves as non-believers or agnostics in comparison to previous generations. This approach towards institutional religion is similar in Western countries, as exemplified by the religious attitudes of young American Gen Zers (Clarke 2021).

In addition, the young Polish precariat characteristically take a rational approach to electoral decisions and have matter-of-fact expectations towards politicians elected to the Polish parliament. This was already apparent during the previous Law and Justice government's period in office, when the precariat had specific expectations that the state would provide support if they wished to set up new companies or help them with appropriate education and training that would facilitate establishing their own companies (Czuba et al. 2024). These expectations have now become more specific and will presumably be revealed when the new government is held accountable by young precariat members for its election promises. Failure to fulfil them may result in changes on the Polish political scene in the next parliamentary elections. The possibility that this scenario might happen is suggested by the results of the current government in Poland after one year in office, which is losing support among young voters who expected different outcomes as well as the fulfilment of promises made during the election campaign (Businessinsider 2024).

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