

POLITICAL PREFERENCES OF UKRAINIAN NATIONAL MINORITY IN POLAND IN 2001-2011 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS ON THE BASIS OF NATIONAL CENSUS

The purpose of this paper is to describe, characterize and explain the election results of major political parties and voting behavior of Ukrainian national minority in Poland in the parliamentary elections to the lower chamber of Polish parliament – Sejm. In the study were taken into consideration four elections – elections to the parliament in 2001, 2005, 2007 and 2011. Selected elections were taken into account due to the temporal proximity to National Census in 2002 and 2011. The hypothesis of the research is that Ukrainian national minority could have distinct voting behavior from their region of permanent living and voted obviously for more liberal, centrist or leftist parties rather than for far-right and right political parties.

Key words: national minorities, voting behaviors, elections, political parties, Poland, Ukrainian national minority

PREFERENCJE POLITYCZNE MNIEJSZOŚCI UKRAIŃSKIEJ W POLSCE W WYBORACH PARLAMENTARNYCH 2001-2011 NA PODSTAWIE NARODOWEGO SPISU Powszechnego

Celem artykułu jest opis, scharakteryzowanie i wyjaśnienie wyników wyborów głównych partii politycznych oraz zachowania ukraińskiej mniejszości narodowej w wyborach parlamentarnych w Polsce do niższej izby parlamentu – Sejmu. W opracowaniu wzięto pod uwagę wyniki czterech wyborów parlamentarnych w latach: 2001, 2005, 2007 i 2011. Takiego wyboru dokonano ze względu na czasową bliskość Narodowego Spisu Powszechnego w latach 2002 i 2011.

Autorzy stawiają hipotezę badawczą, iż zachowania wyborcze mniejszości ukraińskiej mogły przejawiać się w inny sposób niż typowe dla ich stałego miejsca zamieszkania i, co naturalne były raczej znacznie bardziej liberalne, centrystyczne lub lewicowe niż skrajnie prawicowe czy prawicowe.

Słowa kluczowe: mniejszości narodowe, zachowania wyborcze, wybory, partie polityczne, Polska, ukraińska mniejszość narodowa

Метою статті є опис, характеристика та з'ясування результатів виборів головних політичних партій та поведінки української меншини під час парламентських виборів

до Сейму. Проаналізовано результати парламентських виборів 2001, 2005, 2007 та 2011 рр. Результати окреслених виборів опрацьовані з точки зору близькості переписів населення у 2002 та 2011 рр. Українська меншина мала відмінну позицію від середніх показників регіону у якому вони мешкали, голосували переважно за партії ліберального спрямування, центристські або ліві але не за крайні праві або праві політичні партії.

Ключові слова: національна меншина, виборча поведінка, вибори, політичні партії, Польща, українська меншина

Effective participation of national minorities in political life is one of the important components of democratic societies. Thanks to the effective participation in political life and elections of national minorities, it creates opportunities to represent and preserve their identity. Formation and consolidation of democratic systems, processes of dissemination of democratic norms and standards should systematically consider interests of national minorities and include them into the management system, government representations, involving representative offices, legislative bodies. Creating complete conditions, introduction of effective legal mechanisms for national minority to active political participation should not be considered by the states not only as a legal obligation, but also as an integral element of rational management. One of the most considerable national minority in Poland is the Ukrainian national minority.

The purpose of the scientific article is to explore the electoral behaviour of the Ukrainian national minority to the Parliament of Poland and its impact on the election results in areas of its permanent living.

Studies on the issues of national minorities, and especially Ukrainian national minority are undertaken by researchers dealing with various scientific disciplines. Nowadays, also in Poland, despite a relatively low national and ethnic diversity, knowledge on this subject is gradually developed and deepened, especially by sociologists, anthropologists and historians – Adamczuk, Łodziński, Sakson.

This topic was also taken into account by representatives of other scientific disciplines, including geographers – Barwiński and others. Most significant work in this field is paper of Wojtaszczyk M. (2015) considering national minorities in Poland. Nevertheless, there is a huge lack of comprehensive study of political and electoral preferences of only Ukrainian national minority, with exception if history, cultural issues and relation of this particular minority with its motherland – Ukraine. Very important research in the field of investigation whether national, ethnic and regional minorities political attitude in Poland differ from the rest population made Professor of the University of Warsaw Mariusz Kowalski.

Censuses are the only comprehensive source of information about the national and ethnic affiliation of the population in Poland. Although the way they were conducted leaves much to be desired, they still do not have an alternative that would allow for a precise characterization

of the ethnic structure of Polish society. Therefore, when undertaking any research on national and ethnic minorities and regional groups, it is necessary to use census data.

The condition for recognizing the correctness of modern censuses is showing five features: universality (by covering the entire designated population in a given area), simultaneity (by conducting it in a short time), name (each person by name and surname is included in the census), directness (the answer is provided written person) and periodicity (by taking place at regular intervals). Answers to the questions included in the lists about nationality, language used at home or religion depend only on the declaration of the person being written and there is no possibility of their verification, so it is important that the lists cover the whole society. In Poland, after 1989, two National Censuses were held in 2002 and 2011, and only the 2002 census can be considered relatively correct, despite various problems that arise in the case of questions about national and ethnic affiliation. Therefore, this census has been included in this work as a supplement to the 2011 census. The 2002 and 2011 National Censuses were the first Polish censuses after World War II to deal with nationality issues.¹

Ukrainian nationality in the 2002 census was indicated by 30,957 people, including 16,797 women and 14,160 men. Almost exactly the same number of people lived in the city as in the countryside (15.3 thousand and 15.6 thousand, respectively).² Also in this case, the vast majority had Polish citizenship (27.1 thousand) and used the Polish language at home (27.5 thousand, including 10.2 thousand exclusively use Polish). 19.5 thousand people declared the use of the Ukrainian language at home. Also in the case of Ukrainians, a certain group of respondents indicated Russian (more than 780 people), and almost 300 people indicated Lemko as the language used in home. Contrary to other national minorities of Poland, the representatives of the Ukrainian minority were much more territorially dispersed. The largest number of Ukrainians lived in the Warmian-Masurian voivodship (11.8 thousand), followed by the following voivodeships: Lesser Silesia (1.4 thousand), Subcarpathian (3 thousand), Podlaskie (1.3 thousand), Pomeranian (2,8 thousand) and the West Pomeranian (3.7 thousand) voivodship. There were also smaller clusters in Lublin (670 people) and Masovian (580 people) voivodships. In none of the communes did the representatives of the Ukrainian minority exceed 20% of the population. The largest percentage of Ukrainians lived in the municipality of Lełkowo in the Braniewo powiat in the Warmian-Masurian Voivodeship (18.5%).³

According to new Census in 2011⁴, Ukrainians remained a highly dispersed group. Most of them lived in the Warmian-Masurian voivodship (13.4 thousand). The second largest cluster unexpectedly turned out to be Masovian Voivodeship (6.6 thousand). Larger groups were also

¹ Barwiński M., 2014, *Struktura narodowościowa Polski w badaniach geograficznych*, Acta Universitatis Lodzensis, Folia Geographica Socio-Oeconomica, nr 17. pp. 10-11, 63

² Adamczuk L., Łodziński S. (red.), 2006, *Mniejszości narodowe i etniczne w Polsce w świetle Narodowego Spisu Powszechnego z 2002 roku*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar, Warszawa.

³ Data from the Census of 2011. <https://stat.gov.pl/spisy-powszechno/narodowe-spisy-powszechno/narodowy-spis-powszechny-2002/>

⁴ Source: Data from the Census of 2011. <https://stat.gov.pl/spisy-powszechno/nsp-2011/nsp-2011-wyniki/>

noticeable in the following voivodeships: Lublin (2.2 thousand), Lesser Poland (2 thousand), Subcarpathian (4.1 thousand), Podlaskie (2.7 thousand), Pomeranian (4.2 thousand) and the West Pomeranian Voivodeship (almost 5,000).⁵ As in 2002, the Ukrainian population did not exceed 20% of the population in any of the municipalities. In 4 municipalities of the Warmian-Masurian Voivodeship, 1 commune of the municipalities Voivodeship and 1 commune of the West Pomeranian Voivodeship, representatives of Ukrainian national minority exceed the threshold of 10% of the population (Table 1).

Table 1. Municipalities where, according to the National Census 2011, where at least 10% of inhabitants belong to the Ukrainian national minority.

Voivodeship	Municipality	Number of residents of the municipality	Number of Ukrainians	Percentage of Ukrainians
Subcarpathian voivodeship	Komańcza	5 121	538	10,5
Warmian-Masurian voivodeship	Banie Mazurskie	3 967	531	13,4
	Budry	3 003	368	12,3
	Kruklanki	3 139	383	12,2
	Lelkowo	3 086	607	19,7
	Pieniężno	6 746	691	10,2
	Pozezdrze	3 441	368	10,7
West Pomeranian voivodeship	Biały Bór	5 424	592	10,9

Source: Data from the Census of 2011. <https://stat.gov.pl/spisy-powszechno/nsp-2011/nsp-2011-wyniki/>

Within the Ukrainian community in Poland, various degrees of a sense of national identity are currently noticeable, covering the spectrum of attitudes from total Ukrainianness to double Polish-Ukrainian identification. Assimilation processes are most visible among the oldest people born before 1947, who experienced the strongest post-war discrimination and denationalization.⁶ In subsequent generations, the percentage of 156 people who clearly identify with Ukrainianness is higher, but the entire group is still strongly affected by problems related to the progressive assimilation.⁷

The genesis of the presence of the Ukrainian minority in Poland The history of Polish-Ukrainian relations is an example of one of the most complicated and difficult relations in the history of our country. Due to the specific Polish and Ukrainian social structure and political decisions made over the centuries, contacts between the two nations were filled with more or less open conflicts,

⁵ Gudaszewski G., 2015, *Identyfikacje etniczne w Narodowym Spisie Powszechnym Ludności i Mieszkań z 2011 roku*, w: Łodziński S., Warمیńska K., Gudaszewski G. (red.), *Mniejszości narodowe i etniczne w Polsce w świetle Narodowego Spisu Powszechnego Ludności z 2011 roku*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar, Warszawa.

⁶ Halczak B., 2010, *Ukraińcy (po 1989 r.)*, w: Dudra S., Nitschke B. (red.), *Mniejszości narodowe i etniczne w Polsce po II wojnie światowej*, NOMOS, Kraków.

⁷ Sakson A., 2014, *Mniejszość ukraińska na Warmii i Mazurach*, w: Sakson A. (red.), *Mniejszości narodowe i etniczne w Polsce. Aspekty polityczne i społeczne*, Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek, Toruń, pp. 131-132.

which really changed only after the establishment of independent Ukraine in 1991. Additionally, the religious differences between the Ukrainian and Polish population fostered growing antagonisms, especially considering the fact that religion was one of the most important factors in building both Polish and Ukrainian national identity. Therefore, the characterization of Ukrainians as a national minority currently scattered over almost the entire territory of contemporary Poland requires a careful examination of the events taking place in the common Polish-Ukrainian history.

Undoubtedly, according to the results of the 2011 National Census, the number of people declaring belonging to a national, ethnic or regional minority increased significantly compared to 2002. However, this was mainly due to the specific methodology of the research, and in particular to the possibility of indicating double national and ethnic identification. It seems that the issue of increasing the sense of national and ethnic identity was of secondary importance in increasing the number of non-Polish declarations and did not significantly affect the results of the census. Therefore, on the basis of the census data, it is not possible to conclude on the progressive development or the disappearance of the identity of national and ethnic minorities and regional groups in Poland.

Ukrainians are the most territorially dispersed minority among all the national and ethnic groups of Poland. Currently, they live mainly in northern Poland, but their traditional settlement area was the south-eastern part of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Due to such a high concentration, they do not actually form larger clusters. Even in the municipalities that have been analyzed in detail (Table 1), Ukrainians constitute only a 10-20 % of the whole population, which means that, that they have no decisive voice on the final results in parliamentary elections. Undoubtedly, however, even a small percentage of minorities as in this case makes these municipalities different from the rest of Poland in terms of national and ethnic diversity of the population. Therefore, despite the obvious abuse of this term, they will be referred in this paper as “Ukrainian” municipalities.

Table 2. The 2001 elections to the Lower chamber of the Parliament (Sejm) of the Republic of Poland in selected municipalities with higher amount of the people of Ukrainian descend

Voivodeship of Poland	Commune	League of Polish Families	Civic Platform	Polish People's Party	Law and Justice	Self-Defence of Poland	Democratic Left Alliance – Labour United	Turnout
Subcarpathian voivodeship	Komańcza	4,40	6,29	6,29	2,57	12,18	62,38	35,02
Warmian-Masurian voivodeship	Banie Mazurskie	3,66	11,27	11,08	1,16	18,69	43,35	33,50
	Budry	8,70	3,66	9,46	2,90	30,77	34,30	32,48
	Kruklanki	7,04	5,31	9,69	2,66	27,76	32,54	33,88
	Lelkowo	4,74	2,64	17,73	1,87	13,99	40,42	38,98
	Pieniężno	6,41	8,15	16,13	5,57	17,03	32,63	35,85
West Pomeranian voivodeship	Pozezdrze	4,33	10,36	8,20	7,40	20,05	39,86	34,55
West Pomeranian voivodeship	Biały Bór	0,77	4,48	6,67	2,06	18,11	32,51	42,86

(Source: Data obtained from <http://wybory2001.pkw.gov.pl/>).

In 2001, the Democratic Left Alliance – Labour United coalition won in all “Ukrainian”-municipalities, regardless of their location. That is why the Democratic Left Alliance – Labour United coalition was victorious.

In the case of municipalities located in the Warmian-Masurian Voivodeship (Banie Mazurskie, Budry, Kruklanki, Lelkowo, Pieniężno, Pozezdrze) and West Pomeranian voivodeship (Biały Bór), the result of this political party did not differ significantly from other municipalities in these particular regions. On the other hand, such support for the left party in the Komańcza municipality in the Subcarpathian voivodeship it was much higher than in other parts of the voivodeship, especially in its central part. In the parliamentary elections The Democratic Left Alliance – Labour United-UP Committee achieved the highest result in the voivodship, gaining 62.38% of the votes. All other parties – League of Polish Families, Civic Platform, Polish People’s Party, Law and Justice in Komańcza obtained much lower support, or couple of percent in the case of Self-Defence of Poland. In comparison to the whole Subcarpathian Voivodeship, Komańcza gave particularly poor result for the League of Polish Families and Polish People’s Party. In voivodships located in the north of Poland, the results of individual parties in the «Ukrainian» municipalities did not differ from the results in neighboring administrative units. The only exception was the slightly higher results of Self-Defence in some of the Masurian municipalities (Budry, Banie Mazurskie, Kruklanki and Pozezdrze) and slightly lower than those in the surrounding of Biały Bór. In Budry and Kruklanki, Self-Defence of Poland achieved one of the highest results in the voivodship (30.77% and 27.76% respectively).

Table 3. The 2005 elections to the Lower chamber of the Parliament (Sejm) of the Republic of Poland in selected municipalities with higher amount of the people of Ukrainian descend

Voivodeship of Poland	Commune	League of Polish Families	Civic Platform	Polish People's Party	Law and Justice	Self-Defence of the Republic of Poland	Democratic Left Alliance	Turnout
Subcarpathian voivodeship	Komańcza	9,26	22,87	11,23	13,03	19,59	14,67	27,43
Warmian-Masurian voivodeship	Banie Mazurskie	6,51	14,79	16,27	11,69	25,44	16,86	22,19
	Budry	11,39	11,20	10,25	14,80	35,10	9,68	21,64
	Kruklanki	4,76	10,14	7,99	10,14	50,23	8,60	28,57
	Lelkowo	6,61	8,58	15,19	6,75	38,12	7,59	29,96
	Pieniężno	6,91	18,65	13,55	17,71	24,21	7,44	27,62
Pozezdrze	7,26	13,83	8,10	32,82	21,23	11,03	26,71	
West Pomeranian voivodeship	Biały Bór	3,47	23,96	16,51	9,06	24,13	7,96	30,68

(Source: Data obtained from Wybory parlamentarne 2005, <http://wybory2005.pkw.gov.pl/>)

Self-Defence of Poland was successful in the 2005 parliamentary elections in the “Ukrainian” municipalities in Western Pomerania and Warmia and Mazury (Fig. 20). Only in the Pozezdrze municipality in the Warmiano-Masurian voivodship, Law and Justice won 32.82% of votes. However, Self-Defence of Poland obtained second place in above-mentioned municipality with a result of 21.23%. In Subcarpathian Voivodeship, on the other hand, in the Komańcza municipality, the Civic Platform (Platforma Obywatelska) won, but the results were very equalized there. Civic Platform received 22.87% of the support, and Self-Defence of Poland (Samoobrona), second in the ranking, 19.59%. There were researched municipalities located in the Warmian-Masurian voivodship generally did not differ significantly from the voivodship’s electoral map. The exceptions we can observe only in 4 municipalities located in the eastern part of the region – Budry, Banie Mazurskie, Kruklanki and Pozezdrze, where Self-Defence of Poland obtained a slightly higher result than in other districts in the voivodship. The same result was recorded in the Gorzyce municipality in the Tarnobrzeg powiat in the north of the Subcarpathian voivodship. In the Westpomeranian Region, in the commune of Biały Bór, the Civic Platform and Polish People’s Party enjoyed a slightly higher result than in the surrounding “Polish” communes, and support of the Law and Justice was slightly lower. In the case of other political forces in northern voivodships, the results were similar. In the Komańcza municipality, the results of the electoral committees were similar to those obtained in all municipalities located south-east of it, but they differed slightly from the rest of the Subcarpathian voivodship. The results of Law and Justice and League of Polish Families were lower there, while results of Civic was higher and results of Democratic Left Alliance was slightly higher. There was very little support for such political parties as Polish People’s Party and Self-Defence.⁸

Table 4. The 2007 elections to the Lower chamber of the Parliament (Sejm) of the Republic of Poland in selected municipalities with higher amount of the people of Ukrainian descent

Voivodeship of Poland	Commune	Left and Democrats	Civic Platform	Polish People’s Party	Law and Justice	Turnout
Subcarpathian voivodeship	Komańcza	17,38	47,70	10,67	18,54	37,42
Warmian-Masurian voivodeship	Banie Mazurskie	22,77	35,72	18,00	16,53	34,20
	Budry	11,68	28,14	18,47	21,11	33,56
	Kruklanki	12,46	36,67	24,33	20,49	36,05
	Lelkowo	4,31	20,98	60,44	9,29	42,80
	Pieniężno	11,21	35,76	19,46	29,50	36,17
	Pozezdrze	15,24	36,90	16,91	26,02	40,31
West Pomeranian voivodeship	Biały Bór	13,96	42,45	16,60	18,36	40,19

(source: Wybory parlamentarne 2007, <http://wybory2007.pkw.gov.pl/>)

⁸ Wybory parlamentarne 2005, <http://wybory2005.pkw.gov.pl/>

Parliamentary elections in 2007 brought a polarization of the Polish political scene, which was also visible in the context of the results of elections in municipalities inhabited by Ukrainians. Everywhere, except of the municipality of Lelkowo (Warmian-Masurian Voivodeship), the Civic Platform won. This did not distinguish the «Ukrainian» communes in the north of Poland from other communes in this region. On the other hand, against the background of south-eastern Poland, the victory of the Civic Platform in Komańcza definitely distinguished it from the Subcarpathian Voivodeship, as well as the neighboring Lesser Poland voivodship, Świętokrzyskie and Lubush voivodeships. Civic Platform obtained second place in Lelkówo, but the result of 20.98% was not particularly high in comparison to the victorious Polish People's Party, which received as much as 60.44% of support in this particular district.

The results of the remaining parties in communes in Western Pomerania and Warmia and Mazury did not differ significantly from their regions. Only in Biały Bór was slightly lower support for PiS than in neighboring "Polish" communes. The most outstanding result was the result of Law and Justice in the Komańcza commune in Subcarpathian voivodship. The party received only 18.54% of votes there, which was the weakest result in the Subcarpathian Voivodeship, dominated in general by supporters of the Law and Justice party.

Table 5. The 2011 elections to the Lower chamber of the Parliament (Sejm) of the Republic of Poland in selected municipalities with higher amount of the people of Ukrainian descent

Voivodeship of Poland	Commune	Civic Platform	Polish People's Party	Law and Justice	Palikot movement	Democratic Left Alliance	Turnout
Subcarpathian voivodeship	Komańcza	38,14	13,35	19,74	15,77	8,59	30,78
Warmian-Masurian voivodeship	Banie Mazurskie	35,74	26,30	14,43	12,43	8,21	29,78
	Budry	30,41	29,35	21,79	6,66	8,62	29,26
	Krukłanki	43,84	18,59	16,83	10,80	7,16	34,04
	Lelkowo	39,12	23,53	15,32	12,04	7,11	32,51
	Pieniężno	38,36	19,41	24,03	7,08	9,19	33,55
Pozezdrze	31,78	17,77	24,60	11,39	10,25	34,49	
West Pomeranian voivodeship	Biały Bór	41,80	13,86	20,15	10,64	10,41	35,51

(source: Wybory parlamentarne 2011, <http://wybory2011.pkw.gov.pl/>).

In the parliamentary elections in 2011, the results from 2007 were almost completely duplicated. The exception was the victory of the Civic Platform in the Lelkowo commune, thanks to which the party won in all communes inhabited by larger groups of the Ukrainian population. Again, it was not unusual in northern Poland, and at the same time it was a phenomenon in south-eastern Poland. Apart from the result of the Civic Platform, once again the Komańcza municipality was distinguished by very low support for Law and Justice.

Law and Justice won there only 19.74% of votes, which was the second worst result in the voivodship. At the same time, Palikot Movement was unexpectedly popular there. Slightly less, 19.10%, was achieved in the Cisna commune adjacent to Komancza. Palikot Movement obtained 15.77% of the votes there, the best result in the Subcarpathian Voivodeship, where this political force did not exceed the 10% threshold in most municipalities. The result of Democratic Left Alliance and Polish People's Party did not differ from other municipalities in the region. In the Warmian-Mazurian and West Pomeranian voivodships, the election results in all municipalities were very similar.⁹

In the years 2000-2011 an interesting phenomenon could be observed in the area of municipalities inhabited by the Ukrainian population. In the «Ukrainian» municipalities located in the northern part of Poland, where the electorate was rather liberal (Civic Platform, left-wing) or possibly anti-system (Self-Defence of Poland), the election results did not differ from the rest of the regions. This was the case in both the West Pomeranian and Warmian-Mazurian voivodships. On the other hand, in the Komańcza commune located in the Subcarpathian voivodship, in which the conservative electorate has been the greatest strength, the results of voting in the «Ukrainian» municipality were significantly different than in other municipalities of the region. In other words, the results of the elections in Komańcza were much more similar to the results obtained in northern and western Poland than to the results in south-eastern Poland. Considering the described dependencies, it can be concluded with great caution that the presence of representatives of the Ukrainian minority had an impact on the election results.¹⁰ Consequently, it was probably the Ukrainian population that had different voting behavior. Of course, this conclusion is drawn with a certain degree of uncertainty, because with such a small number of clusters it is extremely difficult to spot the voting behavior of the surveyed group among the Polish majority. However, the results of the elections, especially in the Komańcza commune, located in the area where we deal with incumbent people, not exposed to the frequent influence of factors changing the socio-economic profile of the society, confirm this assumption.

It can therefore be said that among Ukrainians living in Poland in the period in question, there were tendencies to support ideologically liberal groups, in particular perceived as tolerant to national-ethnic and religious diversity. Initially, it was the post-communist left, and later the Civic Platform. During the transitional period, before the clear dualism of Civic Platform - Law and Justice was formed, the Ukrainian population turned their support towards the populist slogans proclaimed by Self-Defence of Poland. After its collapse, however, this electorate was only to a small extent managed by the Polish People's Party. Thus, it is evident that the majority of the Ukrainian population support strong political parties with a chance to exercise power.

⁹ source: Wybory parlamentarne 2011, <http://wybory2011.pkw.gov.pl/>

¹⁰ Wójtaszczyk M., 2015, *Zachowania wyborcze wybranych mniejszości narodowych i etnicznych oraz grup regionalnych w Polsce w latach 2000-2011*, <https://depotuw.ceon.pl/bitstream/handle/item/2059/1900-DR-GF-137454.pdf?sequence=1>

However, these political parties had to be perceived as tolerant and open to diversity. National slogans, and the accompanying references to religious issues, were not attractive to the Ukrainian population. This was confirmed by the poor results of Law and Justice, but also the League of Polish Families in the «Ukrainian» municipalities. On the other hand, the groups that do not constitute a significant political force at a given time, it seems, were completely outside the sphere of interest of representatives of the Ukrainian minority. The issue of participation in the elections itself is also worth mentioning. Based on the analysis of statistical data, it can be concluded that the attendance in the «Ukrainian» municipalities was similar or slightly lower than in other parts of the regions discussed.

However, it is difficult to say unequivocally whether the Ukrainian population was less willing to go to the elections due to such a distribution of turnout. The interviews with Ukrainian activists in all three provinces show that the opposite is true. They present the image of Ukrainians as committed citizens, interested in the fate of the country they live in. Without detailed research, it is difficult to say what the actual participation of representatives of the Ukrainian minority in elections looks like.

Taking into account the fact that representatives of the Ukrainian minority, as a national group, most likely differ in terms of their electoral behavior in Polish society, it is necessary to consider what these possible differences may be due to. The Ukrainians are most exposed to the greatest risk like assimilation. It was a conscious and planned policy of the Polish state before 1989.

Resettlement, territorial dispersion and the liquidation of the Greek Catholic Church made it extremely difficult for them to maintain a different national identity. Nevertheless, a certain part of the community maintained its tradition and culture, and thus also developed patterns of behavior, including political ones. In the literature on the issues of electoral behavior of the Ukrainian minority in Poland, there are mainly voices about the left-wing electoral preferences of this community. However, this is a simplification. In fact, it seems that it is not the group's general left-wing attitude that matters, but rather its views on the issues of national-ethnic and religious diversity, and the assessment of Polish-Ukrainian relations, both now and in the past. The phenomenon of high support for the Democratic Left Alliance in the first years of the discussed period among Ukrainians does not mean that they identified themselves with post-communist circles. The issues related to tolerance for Ukrainian circles and the lack of national-Catholic rhetoric in the slogans of this party were much more important. This is confirmed by the results of elections held both earlier and later. In the 1990s, Ukrainian liberal groups enjoyed high support, but not necessarily those of the left, such as the Democratic Union or the Freedom Union.

This was due, *inter alia*, to the fact that a representative of the Ukrainian minority, Mirosław Czech, ran from their election lists to parliament.¹¹ In the areas inhabited by the Ukrainian

¹¹ Barwiński M., 2013, *Geograficzno-polityczne uwarunkowania sytuacji Ukraińców, Łemków, Białorusinów i Litwinów w Polsce po 1944 roku*, Wydawnictwo UE, Łódź, p. 165

population, many votes were also won by minority electoral lists, representing the particular interests of various minorities, but without any final success in winning seats.¹² In turn, after 2005, the support of the Ukrainians was directed towards the Civic Platform, perceived as centrist. In other words, as the Democratic Left Alliance lost its leadership position on the Polish political scene and the emergence of new forces realistically capable of taking power, including a party more suited to the political profile of this group, the Ukrainian electorate also turned away from the Alliance. This is not surprising. It should be remembered that already before 1989, anti-communist views prevailed among the Ukrainian population, which is understandable, taking into account the history of this community in Poland after 1945. After Law and Justice and the Civic Platform (Platforma Obywatelska) dominated the political scene, it became clear that the former group had little chance of gaining trust among Ukrainians. This was mainly due to the national-Catholic character of this party. There is an opinion among representatives of the Ukrainian minority that Law and Justice exceptionally «anti-Ukrainian». It is common regardless of the place of residence, although in northern Poland, where the population is much more mixed, this feature is not as strongly felt as in the case of south-eastern Poland. It results both from the emphasis placed by PiS on the national character of the Polish state and ties with the Church. Roman Catholic (which is difficult for Orthodox and Greek Catholic Ukrainians to accept), as well as statements by activists of this group referring to the history of Polish-Ukrainian relations, especially to situations that antagonize both nations.

The Civic Platform is perceived as a much more moderate party, guaranteeing, in their opinion, representatives of the Ukrainian minority a greater sense of security and comfort of living in the Polish state. An additional factor operating in favor of the Civic Platform, and extremely important from the point of view of the Ukrainian electorate, is the presence of activists of this minority on the electoral lists of this party. Such a person in 2007-2011 was a member of the Union of Ukrainians in Poland, Miron Sycz, whose candidacy undoubtedly additionally attracted Ukrainian votes to the Civic Platform, especially since the Union of Ukrainians in Poland recommended him as a candidate for whom it is worth voting. It seems that personnel issues were of great importance to Ukrainians when supporting individual parties. This was probably also the case of the Polish People's Party. The group's successes in the Warmian-Masurian voivodship could have resulted, among other things, from the fact that Urszula Pasławska ran there from the the Polish People's Party election lists. Although it did not have Ukrainian roots, it was very closely related to the region and was considered by the Ukrainian population as its representative.¹³ It could also be significant that the candidate belonged to the Evangelical-Augsburg Church, thanks to which she was connected with the representatives of the Ukrainian minority by a community of religious differences. In addition to

¹² Kowalski M. (red.), 2003, *Przestrzeń wyborcza Polski*, PTG, IGiPZ PAN, Warszawa pp. 63-64

¹³ Wójtaszczyk M., 2015, *Zachowania wyborcze wybranych mniejszości narodowych i etnicznych oraz grup regionalnych w Polsce w latach 2000-2011*, s.260-262

personal issues, the group's national orientation, emphasizing the ties with the Roman Catholic Church and the assessment of the history of Polish-Ukrainian relations, among other factors that could have influenced the electoral preferences of Ukrainians, activists of this minority also point to the party's attitude to the current situation in Ukraine. From the interviews taken by Polish scholar Wojtaszczyk Malgorzata with activists of the Union of Ukrainians in Poland in districts: Koszalin (near Bialy Bor), Olsztyn and Sanok, in September 2015, particularly important for representatives of the Ukrainian minority in Poland is support for Ukraine's efforts to join the European Union. Also in this respect, the Civic Platform is perceived as a party more favorable to Ukraine, due to its stronger Euro-enthusiasm than in the case of Law and Justice.¹⁴

The last issue that deserves attention is the periodic (in 2004-2005) high support among the Ukrainian population for Samoobrona RP. It is additionally interesting due to the fact that Andrzej Lepper's party has never been one of the strongest groups in the country, such as SLD, PO or PiS, and as shown by the results of other weaker parties, such as PSL in most municipalities, LPR, SDPL, UW, Of the Republic of Poland, as well as of the post-communist left after 2004, Ukrainians directed their votes towards the forces with real chances of taking power. Perhaps such a large support for Samoobrona resulted, on the one hand, from the rural nature of the analyzed «Ukrainian» communes, and on the other hand, from a kind of distrust of the then, in 2004-2005, fighting for the priority of the PO and PiS, whose charter and political profile was just crystallizing. In addition, the slogans of changing the existing socio-economic order could be encouraging for the Ukrainian population that still feels discrimination and lives in areas with great development difficulties (largely former state-owned farms). However, these are only assumptions, not clearly confirmed in the collected materials.

Of course, it is difficult to say whether all of the indicated conditions affect the electoral behavior of the entire Ukrainian community in Poland. Undoubtedly, as in all communities, there are representatives of this group whose voting preferences are very different. However, it cannot be denied that after 1989, and especially in the discussed period of 2000-2011, a certain trend in the above-mentioned behavior was noticeable, which is confirmed by the opinions of activists of the Ukrainian minority. It was particularly visible in south-eastern Poland, in an area that is a traditional area of settlement for the Ukrainian population. In this region, due to the location between the Polish majority with a specific, shaped socioeconomic profile, this minority is somewhat in a more difficult situation than its representatives living in northern provinces, therefore it is more willing to present attitudes that distinguish it. Additionally, the fact that the discussed trend in electoral behavior is consistent with this type of behavior of other national minorities in Poland is convincing about the correctness of the conclusions regarding the political preferences of Ukrainians.

¹⁴ Wojtaszczyk M., 2015, *Zachowania wyborcze wybranych mniejszości narodowych i etnicznych oraz grup regionalnych w Polsce w latach 2000-2011*, s.260-262

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