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Polish Women in the mid-1990s*

Christian Democrats in a Country without a Christian Democratic Party

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Abstract: This article discusses Polish attitudes toward gender in the early- to mid-1990s. It shows that during this period, Poles on the average had 'Christian democratic values', although there were no Christian democratic parties in parliament during this period. The majority of Poles supported some type of 'social market economy', while maintaining traditional views toward gender roles and moral issues. Polish women on the average, though, were clearly more in favour of gender equality than their male counterparts. Age and years of education were also important factors in determining attitudes toward gender roles, while the Church was not as influential as expected. Furthermore, the gender gap was largest among those with a middle level education and smallest among those with a low level of education.

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Much literature has claimed that in Western European countries with large Catholic populations the Catholic Church has been able to push social gender policy in a conservative, Christian democratic direction [Esping-Andersen 1990, Bimbi 1993, Borchorst 1994, Ginsburg 1992, Siaroff 1994]. The question remains, however, whether its influence will be as great on the emerging democracies in Central and Eastern Europe. If this hypothesis holds true for the post-communist countries, then since Poland is the most Catholic country in the region, we would expect it to pursue the most Christian democratic policies. A recent survey shows that 85% of all Poles consider themselves Catholic, 11.6% are not related to any religion or did not answer, leaving only a small percentage for members of non-Catholic religions.¹ Will the Catholic Church obtain as much influence as in the Christian democratic Western European countries, such as Italy and Germany, or will 40 years of communist-led regimes damper its influence? For in contrast to Western Europe, democracy has come to a country in which the traditional family has already changed. Almost all Polish women have worked for the majority of their adult life, they have been able to send their children to day-care centres, and they have enjoyed ready access to contraceptives and abortion. Will they be willing to give up their newly gained independence?

It is still too early to know how much the Church will influence social policies toward women, because the post-communist welfare system is still being configurated. So far, no government has ever been re-elected, which further increases uncertainty about future developments. During this past decade, Poland has already experienced several market, liberal governments, as well as one social democratic government (in the form of the reformed Communist Party). Now it has an unusual combination of a liberal-

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¹) The survey data forms the basis of this study and thus will be named in detail below.

conservative coalition in Parliament with a social democratic president. This lack of continuity means that social policies could quickly change during short time spans. There are some signs, though, of a Christian democratic turn, such as the ban on abortion. Yet surprisingly, in contrast to the Czech and Slovak Republics, for much of the decade Poland has not had an official Christian democratic party in Parliament. Until the most recent elections, the Catholic Election Action was the only Christian party to have ever been elected to Parliament, and then only from 1991-1993, with a modest 8.7% of the votes [Michta 1997: 80]. Nevertheless, the recently reconfigured Solidarity Alliance, which won the 1997 elections, has taken on a Christian democratic character, and includes Christian democratic organisations.

Even if Poland is indeed moving in a Christian democratic direction, the relationship between the Church and politics is still not clear. Is the country becoming Christian democratic because the Church has been able to influence politicians, or because it has influenced the populace? In the first case, this would mean that politicians are more religious than the average citizen. In the second case, it means that the Church has been able to influence the political parties by influencing the voters.

So far, most observers writing about women's issues in Poland have claimed that the Church has supported policies that encourage the traditional family model, in which the women's main role is to be a mother and housewife [e.g. Nowakowska 1997, Fuszara 1994, Siemienska 1994, Bystydzienski 1995]. It has successfully lobbied politicians to support conservative policies on such issues as abolishing the right to an abortion. As a symbol of unity against foreign occupation, the Church had been an influential political actor throughout much of Poland's history. During the communist era, it increased its influence over Polish society because of its opposition to the communist-led regime and its role in helping the country maintain its national identity [Siemienska 1994]. Since Poland was basically an agricultural society until the communist era, the Church did not evolve under a full modernising process of industrialisation and urbanisation. Instead, the modernising process took place under communist rule, which put the Church in opposition to much of these events. Consequently, the Church has resisted secularisation more successfully than in Western European countries, such as Belgium and France [Ciupak 1994: 28]. Thus, after the fall of the communist regime, the Polish Church was both more conservative than in Western European countries and it found itself in a stronger position. However, this does not necessarily mean that the Church *still* enjoys as much sway among the public at large. It is certainly possible that during the process of institutionalising democracy the Church began to lose its influence over Polish public opinion. In the post-communist era, the organisation no longer unified the country against the regime; instead, it divided the country into those with conservative and those with secular values. Even some authors, who are generally positive toward the Church, admit that it lost popularity in the early 1990s because of its political activities [cf. Nosowski 1998: 16].

Although this article is concerned with the role of the Catholic Church in shaping public opinion on gender issues, it is obviously not the only source of influence on attitudes in Poland. Social scientists have also emphasised the role of the previous communist-led regime. They have noted that under the previous regime, no independent women's movements existed which could articulate women's issues [Titkow and Duch forthcoming]. Meanwhile, although virtually all women had entered the workforce, by the late 1960s the mass media began to portray women in traditional roles [Siemienska 1994: 211]. Therefore, while these Polish women had the 'modern' role of engaging in a career,

the vast majority still had the 'traditional' role of being responsible for household activities [Gucwa-Leśny 1995: 128, cf. Heinen 1997: 579]. Nevertheless, although women maintained their traditional role in the home and they rarely held posts of any authority in the public sphere, "under communist rule, there was in force in Poland a specific myth about equal rights for men and women" [cf. Fuszara 1994: 82]. Polish feminists have often claimed that although there might have been some advantages in communist policies which increased female participation in the labour market, on the whole, the responsibilities of women increased, but not the number of available social roles which women could choose [Firlit-Fesnak 1998: 51]. Firlit-Fesnak thus argues that increased labour market participation did not allow for 'increased self-actualisation' for Polish women. A common accusation has been that the fact that the previous regime claimed to support women's equality, while merely giving women extra burdens, has discredited the notion of gender equality for much of the population. In the words of Malgorzata Fuszara [1991: 205]: "Under the banner of equal rights for women, the system burdened women with additional duties but failed to grant them any actual rights: this discredited the very slogan used and for some time has deprived the ideology of equality and the struggle for women's rights of its potency." It went so far that there was talk of 'excessive equality between the genders' [Siemienska 1999: 203]. Consequently, most women's organisations are afraid to be associated with the word 'feminism' among the populace [Fuszara 1997: 150].

Most of the above discussion of women in Poland differs little from the general discussions about women in other post-communist countries. However, there are some differences, which could possibly cause differences in opinions in the Polish case. Besides the special status of the Catholic Church, Poland differs from other Central European countries in its dependence on agriculture. In 1994, 26.5% of the population was employed in agriculture and forestry [Kryńska 1998: 64], compared to 9.3% in the Czech Republic in 1991 [calculations based on *Statistická...* 1993: 177]. Another unique fact was the comparatively low percentage of Polish children attending day-care centres during the communist era. In 1989, for example, 48.7% of all children aged between 3 and 6 attended kindergartens, compared to 85.7% in Hungary, 89.8% in the Czech Republic, and 91.5% in Slovakia ["Women..." 1999: 133].² This combination of Poland being a rural country, where several generations of one family lived together or near each other, combined with relatively little access to day-care, probably accounts for the common observation that grandparents often took care of the children [cf. Siemienska 1994: 19]. For demographic reasons, it has become even easier for grandparents to help out with child-raising than in the past. One study shows that in 1900 there were only 19 grandparents per 100 grandchildren, while in 1995 the number grew to 51 grandparents per 100 grandchildren [Dąbrowska-Caban 1997: 23]. It is quite possible that this reliance on the extended family helped preserve traditional views of the family and gender roles in Poland more than in some of the other transition countries.

Nevertheless, despite all these factors which are detrimental to the emergence of a women's movement, it is still not certain that Polish women necessarily have more con-

²) The true difference is even greater, since the Polish statistics are for the 3-6 year olds, while the statistics for the other countries are for 3-5 year olds. Since 6 year olds are more likely to attend kindergartens than younger children, the percentage of 3-5 year olds in Poland attending kindergartens was undoubtedly lower.

servative views towards gender than women in other post-communist countries. First, Havelková [1996] notes, the Church's anti-abortion drive actually helped women's organisations mobilise the populace around the issue of protecting a woman's right to choose. Consequently, the Polish women's movement has succeeded in mobilising its population more than in most transitional societies. Second, since Poland was a relatively open country during the communist era, some researchers, such as Siemienska, were allowed to write about gender issues, although they were not allowed to openly propagate feminist ideals. Third, even if many Polish women activists fear being labelled 'feminist', in contrast to countries such as the Czech Republic, some organisations openly refer to themselves as feminist (such as the Polish Feminist Association; [see *Informator...* 1995: 20 and Walczewska 1999: 175]). Some feminist theorists in Poland even use phrases such as 'emancipation', which have become nearly taboo in the Czech discourse [see e.g. Walczewska 1999], and in contrast to the Czech Republic, one of the Polish journals dealing with gender issues (*pełnym głosem* [full voice]) openly advertises itself as being 'feminist'.

Moreover, the lack of a strong feminist movement does not necessarily mean that there is no support for feminist ideals among the Polish population. For example, Siemienska [1994: 216] remarks that although 85% of Poles in a 1993 survey believed "it is good when the women can take care of the house and family, and the man is the breadwinner", still 51% also believed that "it is not true that the women should be limited to helping the husband pursue his career rather than following her own". Another survey showed that only 13.5% of Polish women believe that for the welfare of the family, they should devote themselves fully to housework [Dąbrowska-Caban 1997: 22]. Thus some of the early surveys showed some ambiguous results. So far, although much has been written about gender in Poland, nobody has done a detailed study about which groups within the population are more likely to have such views. According to the knowledge of this author, Siemienska goes the furthest in posing testable hypotheses by claiming that younger, better educated Poles are more likely to support a family model based on partnership, and that women are more likely than men to do so. However, she does not run any statistical tests to see if these correlations are statistically significant; nor does she pose a hypothesis as to *why* age and educational level are important.

If this study confirms Siemienska's results, I will assume that it is for the following reasons: a) Younger Poles are less influenced by the 'communist legacy' than older Poles, since they have lived a smaller portion of their life under the communist system, and Polish youths are also more likely to have travelled to the West or read Western texts, and thus, more likely to have come into contact with the Western feminist discourse; b) Older Poles are more likely to be influenced by pre-communist society, when female labour market participation was much lower and society was more rural and thus less 'modern'; c) Educational levels are important because women who invest time and effort into obtaining university degrees are more likely to want to have a career and less likely to be satisfied being a housewife than women without any higher education.

In summary, we now have three hypotheses which might be able to explain attitudes toward gender in Poland: the Catholic Church, age, and educational level. Finally, there is the obvious hypothesis that gender influences attitudes toward gender. Since women face gender-based discrimination in the labour market and the political sphere more directly than men, and since women are the ones who bear most of the double-

burden of household work while having gainful employment, it is likely that women feel more deprivation over this situation.

This study will examine attitudes toward gender in Poland based on data collected by Bogdan Cichomski and Zbigniew Sawinski from the Institute for Social Studies at the University of Warsaw carried out a survey of 4905 Poles from 1992 to 1994. They donated their database to the International Consortium for Political Science Research (ICPSR 6155), so their results are now easily accessible to other researchers. Unfortunately, their later surveys have not been made available to the public.

Some might object that the data is too old to be empirically interesting, but the data is still certainly *theoretically* interesting for several reasons. It allows us to test whether the Catholic Church really had the influence on public opinion and gender that its critics claimed. It also allows us to test claims about whether the communist legacy influenced attitudes toward gender during the formative years of the post-communist system. Other authors, such as Henryk Domański [2000: 1] have recently used databases from the early 1990s to create a 'snapshot' of this period, though they have not addressed the gender issue. This snapshot comes from a formative period, in which several important changes were made in family policy in Poland (such as the closing of most kindergartens and nursery schools). These changes influence the position of women in society. At the time of these changes, intensive debates also went on about the proper role for women in society [Balcerzak-Paradowska 1996]. Moreover, this survey data allows us to develop a hypothesis about the existence and causes of gender gaps in public opinion, which we can test with newer data to see whether these hypotheses still hold true for Poland, and whether these hypotheses also hold up for other post-communist countries. For while some researchers have used similar survey data in discussing gender in Poland, so far, according to the author's knowledge, they have only used aggregate summary data, rather than applying rigorous statistical methods, which could allow for hypothesis testing [examples include Firlit-Fesnak 1998 and Siemienska 1994]. Finally, the data is also empirically interesting because it can help explain how it could have been possible for the Poles to elect a socialist government and then a conservative one, without there necessarily being any important changes in their public opinion. This article argues that already in the 1992-1994 period, the majority of Poles had Christian democratic attitudes, which in the absence of a viable Christian democratic party could have encouraged them to favour a social democratic government over a market liberal one.

If the population as a whole turns out to be Christian democratic, it is interesting what this implies for gender relations. Do Poles support traditional gender roles despite four decades of communist rule, in which almost all women had gainful employment? Is a gender gap emerging between women, who have become used to working, and men who are more likely to prefer a return to pre-communist times, in which most women were housewives? Do Polish women see the financial independence which they gained from their husbands as something positive which should be improved, or do they see working as a 'double-burden' which means that they must have two jobs? If Polish women feel they have a double burden, they have two logical alternatives. One is to withdraw from the labour market and confine themselves to the single job of taking care of reproductive labour. The other possibility is to demand greater equality both on the labour market and for caring out productive labour – that is, they could demand a measure that would encourage men to share in the household work. For example, they could be given incentives to take parental leave to spend time raising their children.

Below I address these issues in three steps. First, I define more closely the main characteristics of Christian democratic regimes. Then I discuss Polish attitudes in general to see whether the majority of Poles held Christian democratic opinions. Afterwards, I will investigate whether there is a gender gap and ask whether Polish women are more or less Christian democratic (or social democratic) than Polish men. Finally, I will discuss which groups are more likely to retain traditional, conservative attitudes toward gender roles and which groups are more likely to support gender equality

Characteristics of Christian Democracy

Social scientists have long observed that among the industrialised, democratic societies, those with large Catholic populations usually pursue Christian democratic socio-economic policies. Christian democratic policies have several basic characteristics:

- 1) Support for the Catholic Church's stand on moral questions such as abortion and divorce.
- 2) Support for maintaining traditional gender roles.
- 3) A 'social market' economy, in which social spending is normally much higher than in liberal societies (such as the USA), but lower than in the Scandinavian Social Democracies.

The first point is rather obvious. Christian democratic parties claim to be Christian, and thus are more likely than secular parties to take conservative stances on moral issues. To be sure, Christian democratic parties differ from the pre-war confessional Catholic parties, in that they claim to be open to all Christians and even to non-Christians espousing Christian values. Nevertheless, the most important post-war European Christian democratic parties (in Germany and Italy) have had strong Catholic influences. This is not surprising in Italy, where the vast majority of the population considers itself Catholic. However, even in Germany, where Protestants predominate, the majority of Christian Democratic Union members and voters are Catholic [Pütz 1984: 37]. Thus, for example, German Christian democratic parties (particularly the Bavarian CSU) have used their influence to keep the abortion law "one of the most restrictive in Europe" [Chamberlayne 1993: 184].³ In Italy, abortion and divorce eventually became legal, but these steps were taken against the opposition of the Church and much of the Christian Democratic Party [Bimbi 1993]. In contrast, liberal and social democratic parties tend to be more 'secular', and thus positive toward such issues as legalised abortion and divorces or gay rights.

On gender issues, Christian democratic parties have also traditionally followed the Catholic Church's view that the nuclear family forms the basis for society [for the German case, cf. Pütz 1984: 94]. Thus traditional Christian democratic family policy encourages the male-breadwinner model, in which the mother is mainly responsible for the household and the father is the main money earner. As a result of these policies, female participation in the labour market is normally lower in countries with Christian democratic welfare regimes than in liberal or social democratic ones [Esping-Andersen 1990, Gornick et al. 1997, Lewis 1993, Siaroff 1994]. Countries dominated by market liberal

³) Of course, Ireland has more restrictive abortion laws than Germany, but that is not surprising, since the Catholic Church is much stronger in Ireland. Also, shortly after Chamberlayne wrote her article, Poland introduced more restrictive abortion laws than the German ones, but again, Poland too is a highly Catholic country.

traditions (such as the UK and USA) have pursued some policies that have encouraged increased female participation in the labour market, such as anti-discrimination laws, but they have done little to provide services for working mothers, such as day-care centres, nor have they encouraged a rethinking of gender roles within the household and family [see, e.g. Heitlinger 1993]. In the Scandinavian countries with social democratic welfare regimes, the governments have encouraged women to work, for example, by giving greater support to day-care than liberal and Christian democratic welfare regimes [Siaroff 1994]. In addition, the social democratic parties in Norway and Sweden have officially endorsed the idea of role sharing. Thus they have encouraged men to share in child-raising and household duties, by such measures as reserving one month of parental leave for the father [Bergqvist 1999, Dahlerup 1994, Ellingsæter 1998, Leira 1998].

While Christian democratic parties have traditionally supported rightist policies on moral and gender issues, their stance on socio-economic issues is more ambiguous. Although there was some support for Christian socialist policies during the first post-war years, Christian democratic parties have generally supported the traditional Church belief in the need for private property and economic incentives to encourage personal initiative [cf. Irving 1979]. On the other hand, they also heed the Vatican's call for supporting the needy. Consequently, the German Christian Democratic Union especially has endorsed the notion of a 'social market economy', in which the state takes responsibility for social goods such as healthcare, and schools. In addition, according to social market theorists, the state should redistribute income in a more 'equitable' manner [Thieme 1973]. Thus countries with Christian democratic types of welfare regimes usually have more generous social policies than countries with liberal, free market welfare regimes [Esping-Andersen 1990, cf. Siaroff 1994].

It is easy to contrast social market policies with market liberal social policies, which traditionally rely on means testing. It becomes more difficult, however, to differentiate social market from the social democratic socio-economic policies. Theorists of welfare policy have often claimed that social democratic policies are based on universalist principles of social citizenship [Esping-Andersen 1990, Rothstein 1994]. The main idea is that all members of a community have an inherent right to receive welfare payments and social services regardless of their income. "People receive payments and services to enable them to be full participants in their society..." [Ware and Goodin 1990]. In reality, only a minority of policies in the social democratic countries completely fit this description. Income related social insurances (such as unemployment benefits) comprise the majority of social programme [for the Swedish case, see, e.g. Davidson 1989, Olsson 1990, and Svensson 1994]. Such insurances protect one against the loss of income, but they do not treat everyone equally, because not everyone has the same income. Since the majority of social programmes under Christian democratic welfare regimes are also based on income related insurances, it becomes more difficult in reality to differentiate Christian democratic from social democratic welfare policies.

Still, there are some important differences: a) Social democratic policies are not always universal in the sense of giving everyone the same benefits regardless of income, but they usually *are* universal in giving the same conditions for everyone. In contrast, as Esping-Andersen [1990] notes, Christian democratic welfare regimes (as in Germany) typically offer different types of benefits for different groups of people. The best known example are the *Beamter* (a privileged group of civil servants), who receive much higher pensions than the rest of society [Esping-Andersen 1990]. Esping-Andersen claims that

the desire to favour special groups is in line with the traditional conservative and Catholic values of wanting to maintain social hierarchies. By contrast, under social democratic welfare regimes all members of society have the same basic conditions regardless of their place of employment. For this reason, some authors have used the term 'semi-universalist' to describe these programme [Ferrera 1998: 91]. b) For average citizens, benefits are normally higher under social democratic regimes than under Christian democratic regimes, although the privileged groups (such as the German Beamter) might receive more benefits under Christian democratic regimes. c) Even when Christian democratic policies offer benefits that are as high as social democratic regimes, these benefits often give different incentives. For example, Esping-Andersen [1990] argues that Christian democratic policies often induce people to leave the labour market (by encouraging early retirement and encouraging women to become housewives), while social democratic policies encourage people to enter the labour market.

Unfortunately, survey questions are rarely formed in a manner that allows one to distinguish between the social market and social democratic policies, since the questions are usually too general. Survey questions most often ask the respondents if they think the government should spend less or more money on certain programmes or whether the government should have responsibility for certain areas such as healthcare. Consequently, the only way to differentiate between social democratic and Christian democratic views on socio-economic policy is to follow the general rule that social democratic respondents are *generally* more strongly in favour of generous social policies than Christian democratic respondents, and that Christian democratic respondents are more generous than market liberal respondents. While it is difficult to distinguish Christian democratic survey responses from social democratic ones on social issues, when these answers are combined with gender and moral issues, it becomes much easier to classify the attitudes of survey respondents.

Are Poles More Christian Democratic than Polish Governments?

1) Moral Issues

On moral issues, the survey results indicate that the Catholic Church has a much greater influence on politicians than on citizens. On the controversial question of abortion, for example, the populace is much less 'Catholic' than the politicians, although more Christian democratic than, for example, the secular Swedes. The new government recently passed a law forbidding abortion under any circumstances, and the first post-communist government passed a law forbidding it in all cases except for rape or danger to a woman's health [cf. Robinson 1995: 214-215]. Yet 81.3% of the survey respondents support the right to abortion if there is a "strong chance of serious defect in the baby", and 84.1% are in favour if the woman's own health is in danger, 76.6% in the case of rape, and 55% if the family cannot afford more children. A great number of respondents also support the right to abortion if the woman is married, but does not want any more children (2,369 for, 2,000 against, 521 do not know, and 15 no answer). However, there are limits to their support for abortion: only 37% are in favour of abortion if "the woman wants it for any reason".

Similarly, Poles are less conservative than the Church and their government on the divorce issue: 36.2% think divorces should become easier to obtain, compared to 29.1% who think it should become more difficult, and 18% who think it should remain the same. (The remainder do not know or did not answer the question.)

2) Economic Issues

Although the Polish population is less Christian democratic than its governments have been on the abortion question, it is also less market liberal. A large majority of the population believes that the government should become more active in providing jobs, reducing income inequalities and providing social services: 44% strongly agree and another 41.2% agree that the “government should provide everyone with a guaranteed basic income”; 74.6% strongly agree or agree that it “is the responsibility of the government to reduce the differences in income between people with high incomes and those with low incomes”; 78.6% think that the government is spending too little on welfare. These responses do not necessarily mean that the populace is more Christian democratic than the politicians. Socialists, communists, social democrats and social liberals might all give similar replies.

3) Gender Issues

A clearer Christian democratic profile emerges when we look at the responses to family and gender questions. The survey shows that despite four decades of extensive female participation in the labour force most Poles believe that men should be the main breadwinners, while women should take care of the household. For example, 53% agree that “most men are better suited emotionally for politics than are women”, and 47.5% agree that “women should take care of running their homes and leave running the country to men”. Only 35.4% disagree, while the remainder are not sure or did not answer.

In the 1994 survey (n = 1609), more detailed questions were asked about family relations. Poles still believe that raising children is a task best left to women: 61.2% strongly agree or agree that “it is not good if the man stays at home and cares for the children and the woman goes out to work”. Only 21.3% disagree or strongly disagree. On the other hand, the Poles hardly have a Protestant work ethic for the men who must work if the women stay at home: 61.2% believe that “family life often suffers because men concentrate too much on their work”. These responses do not mean, however, that both men and women should stay at home: 64.8% agree or strongly agree that “a man’s job is to earn money; a woman’s job is to look after the home and family”.

Other questions show that Poles are concerned about working women: 66.1% agree or strongly agree that “a pre-school child is likely to suffer if his or her mother works”; less than half (48.9%) agree or strongly agree that “a working mother can establish just as warm and secure relationship with her children as a mother who does not work”; 51.5% agree or strongly agree that “all in all, family life suffers when the woman has a full-time job”; 57.9% agree or strongly agree that “a job is all right, but what most women really want is a home and children”. At the same time, 62.1% agree or strongly agree that “having a job is the best way for a woman to be an independent person”. Thus, the majority of Poles seem to feel that the independence which women have won from men during the last four decades is not worth the price.

Christian Democracy on the Left-Right Scale

Finally, the question comes of placing Christian democrats on a left-right scale. Traditionally, Christian democrats have considered themselves conservative, which places them fairly far to the right. For example, in Germany both Christian democratic parties, the CDU (Christian Democratic Union) and CSU (Christian Social Union), place themselves to the right of the liberal FDP (Free Democratic Party). Although liberals have

traditionally placed themselves in the centre, between conservatives and socialists, today the situation has become more complicated. In an era dominated by market liberal thinking, it has become more common for people to conceive of 'left' and 'right' in terms of government intervention in the economy. In this case, Christian democrats occupy the political centre-right, between socialists and liberals. The survey results show that this is also where the majority of Poles stand politically. On a scale of 1-10, in which '1' means extreme left and '10' extreme right, the mean score is 5.8, while the median is 6.0 (n = 4367, plus 538 "don't knows" or "no answers").

A factor-analysis of the main questions asked on these topics shows that the degree of left-right political orientation scales together with moral rather than gender or economic issues (see Table 1). In other words, Poles who consider themselves right-wing do not necessarily do so because they are in favour of market-liberal economic policies, but rather because they are conservative on moral issues. Thus those who consider themselves right-wing do so because they are against a woman's right to abortion and against the right to divorce. This factor analysis thus also demonstrates that Poles generally consider abortion and divorce to be moral rather than gender issues. These results can help explain the reasons why Poles could elect a socialist government in 1993 in the absence of a clear Christian democratic alternative, and it also helps explain why it was possible for the Solidarity Electoral Alliance to win the 1997 elections with a Christian democratic profile. Poles tend to be Christian democratic in the sense of being conservative on moral and gender issues, but at the same time they are very positive toward state intervention in the economy to redistribute wealth, create jobs, and provide for welfare services. If this is interpreted as support for a 'social market', it shows that the average Pole has a typical Christian democratic profile. However, their support for state intervention in the economy is so strong that it might be more true to state that Poles are Christian democratic on gender and moral issues, but social democratic on economic issues. It should be emphasised though, as already noted, that Poles are nonetheless less conservative on moral issues than the Catholic Church or the country's political leaders. Thus the conservative turn on issues such as abortion is more the cause of direct Church influence on Polish politicians than it is through the indirect mechanism of Church influence on voters. This conclusion is backed up by the fact that the socialist government did not try to radically change the restrictions on abortion, even though its voters traditionally are not tied to the Catholic Church.

Table 1. Factor Analysis

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
GOVJOB	0.83083	-0.05095	-0.04125
GOVINC	0.81481	0.00500	-0.03441
REDISTR	0.57657	-0.11331	0.05344
WELFARE	0.33374	0.08209	-0.00137
RUNHOME	-0.07127	0.85254	-0.00515
MENPOL	0.05589	0.84822	0.03803
WORKCHLD	0.00643	0.41488	-0.01888
PROABORT	-0.10407	0.07192	-0.70041
DIVORCE	0.03379	-0.07644	-0.64182
RIGHTIST	-0.05321	-0.01452	0.57308

For description of variables see Appendix.

Is There a Gender Gap?

Above I maintained that Poles have a rather Christian democratic political orientation. Now we will investigate whether Polish women are more or less Christian democratic than Polish men. I kept the coding the same as in the original survey: man = 1 and woman = 2. Thus we should expect positive correlations if Polish women are more social democratic than Polish men.

Table 2. Correlation Coefficients

<i>Factor 1: Economic Issues</i>					
	SEX	GOVINC	GOVJOB	REDISTR	WELFARE
SEX	1.0000 (4905)	0.0649 (4760)	0.0971 (4806)	0.0421 (4726)	0.0450 (4472)
		P = 0.000	P = 0.000	P = 0.004	P = 0.003
women for public sector		90.4%*	93%*	66.4%**	87.4%***
men for public sector		86.5%*	87.5%*	62.9%**	84.7%***
<i>Factor 2: Gender Issues</i>					
	SEX	RUNHOME	MENPOL	WORKCHLD	
SEX	1.0000 (4905)	0.1210 (4495)	0.0961 (4338)	0.0804 (4759)	
		P = 0.000	P = 0.000	P = 0.000	
women for sex equality		53.6%*	44.2%*	49.6%**	
men for sex equality		41.2%*	34.8%*	42%**	
<i>Factor 3: Moral Issues</i>					
	SEX	PROABORT	DIVORCE	RIGHTIST	
SEX	1.0000 (4905)	-0.0163 (4308)	-0.0193 (4084)	-0.0010 (4367)	
		P = 0.285	P = 0.218	P = 0.947	
women non-conservative		41.5%*	42.2%*	18.1%**	
men non-conservative		43.1%*	44.9%*	20.3%**	

Note: the number of cases is printed in parentheses. P is calculated for two-tailed significance.

Notes for factor 1:

*) 'positive' = those agreeing or strongly agreeing.

***) a scale of 1-7 was given, the answers were recoded so that 7 always means the most positive and 1 the most negative. Answers of 5-7 are considered positive.

****) percentage of those claiming that 'too little' is spent by the government in this area.

Notes for factor 2:

*) those disagreeing with the statements.

***) those agreeing or strongly agreeing.

Notes for factor 3:

*) percentage believing that women should have the right to an abortion under any circumstances and percentage believing it should be easier to get a divorce.

***) percentage placing themselves between 1-4 on a scale of 1-10 in which '1' means most left-wing and '10' means most right-wing. The reason for the slight negative correlation for women being rightest, even though they are also less leftist, is because they are much more likely than men to be in the middle ('5'): 29.8% compared to 24.7% of men.

For description of variables see Appendix.

The surveys taken from 1992-94 indicate that there is a gender gap (see Table 2). Polish women are more supportive than men for governmental action to solve socio-economic inequalities, and they are also more in favour of gender equality than men. Moreover, all these relationships are statistically significant at under 1%. On the other hand, the survey shows that women are also less supportive of the right to abortion and easier divorces, but these relationships are not statistically significant.

This does not mean, however, that Polish women are social democratic. It only means that they are *more* social democratic than Polish men. On the gender issues, Polish women are divided, but a small majority still appears in favour of maintaining traditional roles. For the MENPOL variable, a clear majority of women (55.8%) agreed that men are more suitable emotionally for politics than women. On the question as to whether "a mother can establish just as warm and secure a relationship with her children as a mother who does not work" (WORKCHLD), only 13% strongly agreed and 36.6% agreed, compared to a majority of 50.5% who either disagreed or strongly disagreed. RUNHOME is the only question in which a majority of women favoured equality. Yet even on this issue, only 53.6% of the women disagreed with the statement that "women should take care of running their homes and leave running the country up to men". Thus quite a large group (46.4%) believe that women should leave the public sphere.

The 1994 survey includes more detailed questions than the first two years. As can be seen from Table 3, the results are basically the same as for the previous years. Women are always more positive than men to changing gender roles, but the only variables that are statistically significant are RELATION, WOMHOME, INDJOB, and WANTHOME. An important result is that women do not seem to feel that men should stay at home. Almost two thirds (64.4%) of female respondents agree or strongly agree that it is not good if the man stays at home and the woman works (MANHOME). There are actually more men than women who disagree or strongly disagree with that statement. Nevertheless, there is a negative correlation between being a women and believing that men should not stay at home. The reason being that more women than men are ambivalent and replied "neither agree nor disagree", while more men than women both agree and disagree that it is not good if the man stays at home with the children. Not surprisingly, given the ambiguity of these results the correlation is nowhere near being statistically significant.

This issue is one of the most important for gender equality. As many feminists have emphasised, as long as the woman is usually the one who stays at home with the family, gender equality will never be possible in the labour market. First, firms will prefer to hire and then promote men over women, since they fear that women will interrupt their careers for long periods of time. Second, even if an enterprise does hire a women, a similarly talented man will continue to advance his career while the woman stays at home with her children. Although the woman is as talented as the man, the man will be more successful in his career.

These survey questions indicate that Polish women are slightly more social democratic and slightly less Christian democratic than Polish men. They are more in favour of social spending and less in favour of maintaining traditional gender roles than Polish men. Nonetheless, they are inclined to want to solve the dilemma of the double work burden by withdrawing from the labour market rather than by encouraging men to share the household chores.

Table 3. The 1994 Survey on the Opinions toward Family Relations (in %)

Question	Sex	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	
MANHOME	M	23.5	44.3	8.4	19.4	4.4	n = 1493
(v4009)	W	20.7	43.6	13.4	19.1	3.2	r = -0.016
CD = +r		CD				SD	p = 0.593
WOMHOME	M	26.3	47.0	11.5	13.2	2.1	n = 1554
(v4008)	W	23.6	38.3	14.3	21.5	2.4	r = -0.104
CD = +r		CD				SD	p = 0.000
FULLTIME	M	13.6	42.4	12.2	29.2	2.6	n = 1509
(v4002)	W	12.0	42.0	12.1	28.7	5.4	r = -0.039
CD = +r		CD				SD	p = 0.167
INDJOB	M	12.5	51.5	15.3	19.4	1.4	n = 1447
(v4005)	W	21.8	51.4	13.0	12.2	1.6	r = 0.128
CD = -r		SD				CD	p = 0.000
RELATION	M	17.3	32.4	6.9	36.0	7.3	n = 1531
(v4000)	W	18.6	34.1	6.7	32.6	8.0	r = 0.025
CD = -r		SD				CD	p = 0.000
SUFFER	M	18.4	52.3	7.0	20.1	2.2	n = 1522
(v4001)	W	17.9	51.0	7.3	19.6	4.2	r = -0.027
CD = +r		CD				SD	p = 0.298
WANTHOME	M	14.4	54.2	16.3	13.9	1.1	n = 1428
(v4003)	W	16.2	46.2	13.8	21.5	2.3	r = -0.071
CD = +r		CD				SD	p = 0.007

Note: In parentheses I include the pre-recoded variable number from the data base. To make it easier to interpret the results, I placed 'CD' for 'Christian democratic' under the answer that is most against gender equality, and 'SD' for 'social democratic' under the reply that is for the greatest amount of gender equality. I also noted with 'CD = +r' or '-r' to indicate whether the correlations between gender and the answers should be positive or negative if women were more Christian democratic than men.

For description of variables see Appendix.

Determinants of Attitudes Toward Gender Roles

So far I have shown that a gender gap does indeed exist. Now I will examine the factors that influence women's attitudes toward gender equality. As the measure of support for gender equality, I use the degree of opposition to the statement that "Women should take care of running their homes and leave running the country to men" (i.e. RUNHOME). A good case could be made on theoretical grounds for choosing MANHOME as the dependent variable. However, since there is so little support for the complete elimination of gender roles in Poland, no regressions (OLS or logistic) could produce robust results for this variable.

The dependent variable RUNHOME is coded as '0', agreeing with the statement that women should take care of running their homes and '1', disagreeing with the statement. As a result, a positive correlation indicates that the variable increases the probability of supporting social democratic notions of gender equality, while a negative

correlation increases the probability of supporting traditional (Christian democratic) views on gender roles. Since RUNHOME is a dichotomous variable, I used a binomial logit regression with STATA and received the following results:

$$\text{RUNHOME} = -2.11 + 0.21 \text{EDU}^{**} + 0.07 \text{STATUS}^* + (-0.01 \text{AGE}^{**}) + (-0.42 \text{CONF CATH}^{**}) \\ + 0.73 \text{SEX}^{**} + (-0.01 \text{CATHOLIC})$$

* = significant at the 0.01 level and ** = significant at the 0.001 level

n = 3984

Prob > χ^2 = 0.0000

Log likelihood = -2397.8094

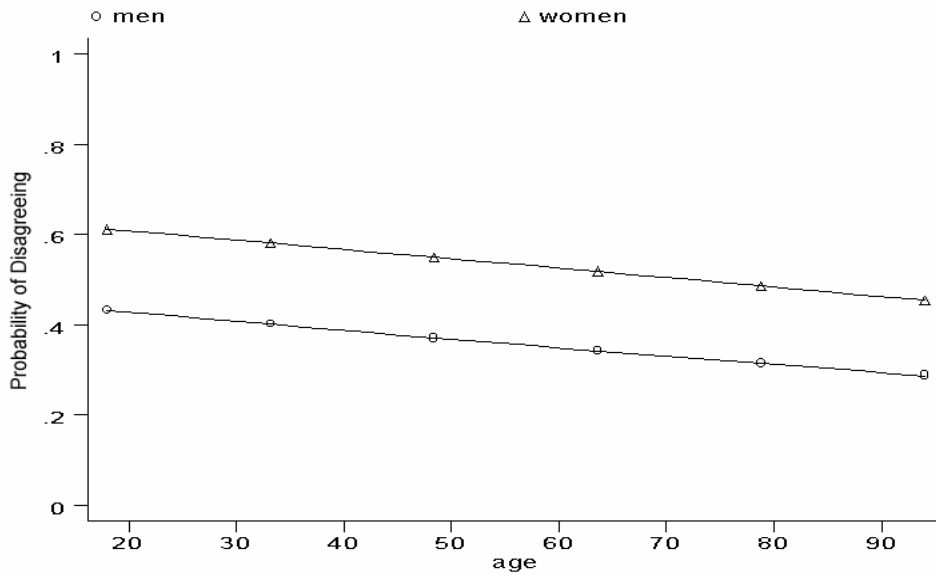
Once again, this regression confirms that a gender gap indeed exists, as SEX is extremely significant. When all other variables are held constant at their means, the average Polish woman has a 0.556 probability of disagreeing with the statement that women should take care of the home and leave running the country to men, while the average Polish man only has a 0.376 probability of disagreeing with that statement. In addition, being Catholic does not affect attitudes toward gender roles, as this variable was only significant at $p = 0.899$. It does turn out that confidence in the Catholic Church (CONF CATH) is statistically significant at the 0.001 level, but this does not necessarily show that religious Catholics are more conservative in their views on gender roles than secular Poles. One can be a practising Catholic and still be critical of some of the actual daily practices of the Church.

The logit regression also confirms Siemienska's findings that age and education influence attitudes toward gender. Younger and better educated Poles are more likely to be against traditional gender roles than the older and less educated. Adding STATUS improves the log likelihood, but it is highly correlated with education, because most people with high status jobs also have high levels of education and visa versa.⁴ Diagrams 1 and 2 show the effects of age and years of education on RUNHOME for men and women when all other variables are held constant at their means, except for CATHOLIC, which has been eliminated from the equation, since it is so insignificant.⁵ These diagrams show also that for all levels of education and age, women are more likely to oppose traditional gender roles than men. An interesting result is also that the gender gap is smallest among those with low levels of education and highest among those with middle levels of education (see Diagram 2). Apparently, at the lowest levels of education, both women and men are extremely likely to accept traditional gender roles, regardless of their sex. *At high levels of education, the gender gap is much greater than at middle levels*, but the gap is smaller than at middle levels, which shows that highly educated men are relatively more willing to criticise traditional gender roles than those with middle levels of education. A possible interpretation is that highly educated, professional men have come into contact with enough highly educated women to become critical of notions that women are incapable of holding high-level positions.

⁴) A bivariate regression showed that the two variables are significantly correlated at the 0.001 level. The correlations for Pearson's r was 0.688.

⁵) CATHOLIC was so insignificant that when it was dropped from the logit regression, most of the remaining variables only changed at the fourth or fifth decimal. The one exception is CONF CATH which changed at the third decimal spot. With this new equation, the marginal effects of gender and confidence in the Catholic Church can be calculated.

Diagram 1. The Influence of Age and Gender on the Probability of Disagreeing that Women Should Take Care of the Home and Leave Running the Country to Men



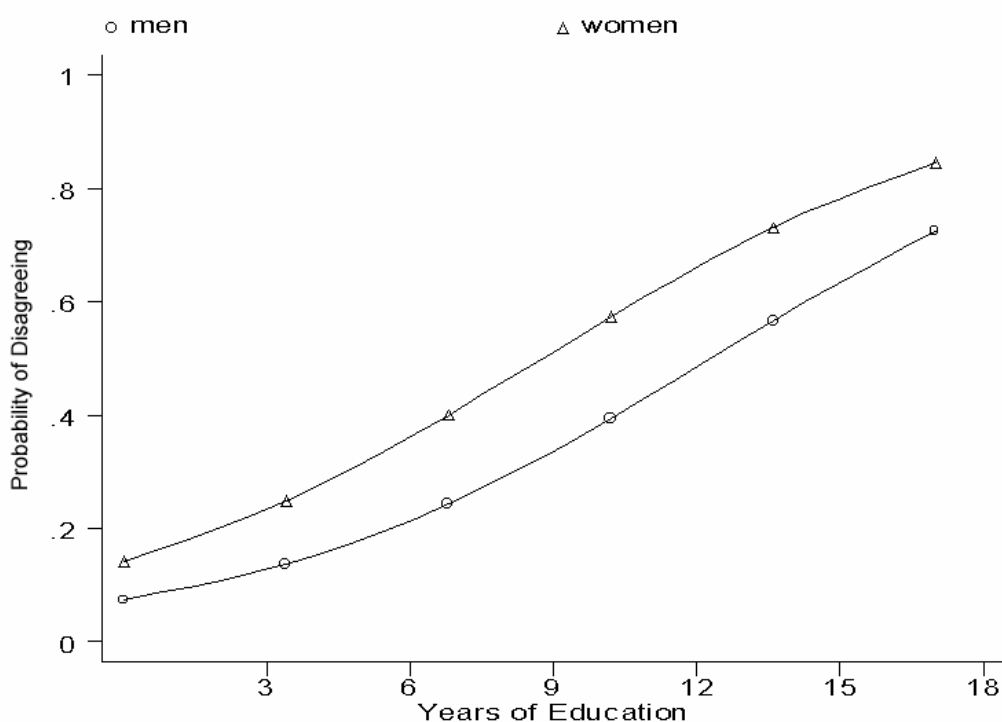
Interestingly, when the same regression is run only for female respondents, the results are basically the same, but AGE loses in significance and becomes only significant at the 10% level. It is not surprising that younger, well educated women, with higher status professions are more likely to support gender equality than older, less educated women with lower status professions. As noted above, women who invest many years in learning a profession are less likely to want to give up their careers to become housewives than women without much professional training. Similarly, younger women have been less influenced by the communist past and the pre-communist traditional values than elder women. In addition, younger women are more likely to have come into contact with Western discourses on feminism.

Conclusion

The results of this study have several implications. First, it shows that the Poles have Christian democratic attitudes, although there is no official Christian democratic party in the country. This helps explain the electoral dynamics in the country. The Solidarity coalition was able to win the first election because the population is anti-Communist. However, the population still supports government intervention in the economy. It believes that the government should intervene to dampen income inequalities, create jobs and provide welfare services. When the first post-communist government embarked upon a market liberal path, it lost the favour of the populace. Since there was no Christian democratic alternative, the populace was willing to give the reformed communists a chance, once they convinced the populace that they really had left behind their totalitarian past and become social democrats. However, when the Solidarity trade union regrouped

its forces and formed a culturally conservative centre-right coalition, the voters flocked over to them. The Solidarity union has a tradition of supporting state intervention in economic policy. In fact, it was the group that brought down the market liberal government and, therefore, made the reformed communist victory possible. At the same time, the Solidarity leadership in its new coalition went to the polls emphasising Christian values. In other words, the new coalition approximates the Christian democratic model.

Diagram 2. The Influence of Gender and Years of Education on the Probability of Disagreeing that Women Should Take Care of the Home and Leave Running the Country to Men



These findings also have implications for studying the transitions to democracy in other post-communist countries. It is possible that in most countries the political development was *not* in line with the wishes of the majority of the population. Instead, voters went for second- or third-best alternatives, in the absence of other viable alternatives. During this consolidation period, the new political elite was often unable to provide party configurations that best represented the values of the voters. Just as Polish voters perhaps had Christian democratic values, but lacked a viable Christian democratic party to vote for, an argument could be made that a large portion of Czech voters harboured social democratic or social-liberal values, but lacked a viable social democratic party until the late 1990s. Thus social scientists such as Orenstein [1996, 1998] have argued that Václav Klaus was able to succeed in the first transformation years precisely because he concentrated on privatisation, monetary and financial issues at the expense of social issues. Once he began to replace universal welfare programmes with market liberal means-tested ones, Klaus started to lose his popularity. Meanwhile, on the centre-left a consolidation process had

begun. Under Zeman's leadership, the social democrats became a more effective opposition, and as the Civic Movement and the Liberal Social Union eventually disappeared from the scene, the social democrats were able to gain many of the former voters of these organisations [Saxonberg 1999]. So although other issues also mattered (such as the ODS financial scandals, fears that the social democrats were too populist, etc.), the 1998 elections can at least be explained in part by arguing that the party system finally became more aligned with the wishes of the voters.

Second, this study shows that 'left' and 'right' do not necessarily mean the same in the post-communist context as in traditional Western European politics. Despite the tendency of political analysts to add other dimensions, such as environmentalism versus growth, or centralisation versus decentralisation, discussions of left and right in the West still hinge most often on socio-economic issues. In the Polish case, this study shows that respondents placed themselves on left-right scales based on their stance on moral issues. Thus right-wing voters might well favour state intervention in the economy and generous welfare policies, but they consider themselves rightist because of their beliefs on such issues as divorce and abortion. Although these particular issues might not be as important in transitional countries with a less influential Catholic Church, it is still possible that voters use such moral issues as the degree of anti-communism when placing themselves on left-right scales. This could also explain why, for example, in the Czech Republic, most social democratic voters place themselves in the centre rather than to the left of the political spectrum.⁶

Third, in Poland there is clearly a gender gap. Although the majority of Polish men and women hold Christian democratic values, generally Polish women are more socially democratically oriented than Polish men, except on moral issues. They are more in favour of increased social spending and government intervention in the economy. They are also more supportive of increasing gender equality. This offers some hope for feminists who might wish to mobilise women around women's issues. So far, little research has been done about the existence of gender gaps in public opinion in post-communist countries, so this would be an issue worth investigating in greater detail. For example, Čermáková [1997: 23, 35, 36] shows that on issues of gender roles, Czech women are less supportive of traditional roles than Czech men. However, she does not run any statistical tests to see if these differences are significant. Nor does she use statistical methods to see which factors make Czechs more or less inclined toward supporting traditional gender roles.

Fourth, the Catholic Church does not appear to have influenced Poles as much as expected. There was absolutely no correlation between being Catholic and views toward gender roles. In addition, although there was a significant correlation between confidence in the Catholic Church and support for traditional gender roles, this is not a clear relationship. Poles, who lack confidence in the everyday behaviour of the Catholic Church *in Poland* might still consider themselves to be religious, practising Catholics. Such people would lack confidence in the Catholic Church in Poland to the extent to which they disagree with the Church's behaviour in certain issues. Thus to some extent, measuring confidence in the Catholic Church amounts to measuring attitudes on issues such as gender roles. Therefore, we would expect a high correlation between CONF CATH and RUN-

⁶) For tables showing left-right placement in the Czech Republic, see Vlachová [1997: 52], IVVM survey presented on 11 May 1998 and shown on the Internet address: <http://www.ceskenoviny.cz/volby/statistika.htm>.

HOM, because to a certain degree they are measuring the same thing. Since the vast majority of Poles consider themselves to be Catholic, and therefore, there is little variation of this variable, a study using cross-national survey data among post-communist respondents could show more clearly whether there is any relationship between being a member of the Catholic Church and attitudes on gender.

Fifth, the survey results back up Siemienska's findings that education and age are important determinants of attitudes. Poles who are better and more highly educated, and have jobs with a higher status, are more likely to support gender equality than less educated women with low status jobs. Čermáková [1997: 23] finds similar results for the Czech Republic, but again she only provides a chart, so it is not certain how statistically significant these relationships are. This is especially true as her diagram shows a rather ambiguous relationship. In addition, since she shows class, rather than status or education, it is not clear in her study which of these three variables is more important. In the Polish case, status and education turned out to be more important than class.

Finally, as already noted, a generational cleft appears. Younger Poles are more likely to support gender equality than older Poles. Although Siemienska does not offer an explanation for this, one hypothesis is that younger Poles are less influenced by the communist legacy, in which women were encouraged to enter the workforce, while no steps were taken to encourage men to help with the housework and child-raising. At the same time, despite high levels of labour market participation, Polish women still generally achieved much lower positions in the economic and political spheres. Since this situation is basically true for all communist regimes, we could expect the communist legacy to play an important role in the development of attitudes toward gender in all post-communist societies. If this is true, then in some countries we might find a similar generational gap to emerge, as women who did not live most of their lives under the old system have different experiences and expectations. On the other hand, since experiences and expectations vary from country to country, we could also expect the significance of age to vary across countries. In addition, if the communist legacy is really the driving force behind the age factor, then we would expect that later surveys of opinion in Poland will show that the youngest group of adult respondents in more recent polls have become more critical of traditional gender roles than the youngest group in the 1992-1994 surveys, since young adults of the new millennium have lived even a smaller portion of their lives under the communist-led regime than did the youth of the survey used in this study.

In conclusion, this survey has shed some light on the dynamics of post-communist opinion. It shows that political configurations in parliament do not necessarily represent the opinions of voters, and that left-right does not necessarily mean the same thing in the post-communist situation as in the West. A rather surprising finding is that despite the obvious influence of the Catholic Church on political decision-making, the Church does not appear to have as much influence on the general public as expected. Finally, the main result of this study is that more such studies are necessary, to see how much these results may be generalised both for Poland over time and for the transitional countries in general.

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Appendix – List of used variables

- DIVORCE = belief that it should be made easier to obtain a divorce (v304);
- FULLTIME = "All in all, family life suffers when the woman has a full-time job" (v4002);
- GOVINC = support for the notion that government should guarantee a minimum income (v2047);
- GOVJOB = support for the notion that government has a duty to provide jobs (v2046);
- INDJOB = "Having a job is the best way for a woman to be an independent person" (v4005);
- MANHOME = "It is not good if the man stays at home and cares for the children and the woman goes to work" (v4009);
- MENPOL = disagreement with the opinion that men are more suited emotionally for politics (v88);
- PROABORT = support for the right to abortion "if the woman wants it for any reason" (v311);
- REDISTR = belief that government should reduce income inequalities (v262);
- RELATION = "A working mother can establish just as warm and secure relationship with her children as a mother who does not work" (v4000);
- RIGHTIST = the degree of right-wing political orientation between 1-10 (v328).
- RUNHOME = disagreement with the opinion that "women should take care of running their homes and leave running the country up to men" (v89);
- SEX = v94;
- SUFFER = "A pre-school child is likely to suffer if his or her mother works" (v4001);
- WANTHOME = "A job is all right, but what most women really want is a home and children" (v4003);
- WELFARE = the opinion that government is spending too little on welfare (v72);
- WOMHOME = "A man's job is to earn money; a woman's job is to look after the home and family" (v4008);
- WORKCHLD = agreement that "a working mother can establish just as warm and secure a relationship with her children as a mother who does not work" (v90);