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IDEOLOGICAL IDENTIFYING AS A DETERMINER OF THE POLISH PEOPLE POLITICAL COLLECTIVE IDENTITY

ABSTRACT

The aim of the article is to examine whether and to what extent a socio-political division into left- and right-wing is a factor that significantly influences the formation of the Polish political collective identity. The author of the article attempted to present the leftist and rightist identities in relation to defining characteristics of collective identity. Then, a theoretical model was empirically verified based on the findings of the author's own research conducted in 2019.

Keywords: ideological identifications, left-wing, right-wing, political awareness, political collective identity

INTRODUCTION

The systemic transformation in Poland, whose symbolic beginning was in 1989, caused not only significant changes in the economic and political spheres, but also led to far-reaching changes in social relations. It became the beginning of a slow and ongoing process of building civic awareness or, more broadly, civil society. Against this background, a particularly interesting issue is to examine whether and to what extent the sociopolitical division of the left-right wing is able to mobilize significant segments of society, and thus is a factor that has an impact on the formation of the political collective identity of Poles. The work consists of several parts. The first one will attempt to answer a number of questions related to, inter alia, establishing the meaning of the concepts of individual and social identity, and the distinctive features of the concept of collective group identity in the field of sociology, psychology and political science. Later in the article, a systematic review of theoretical and empirical positions that try to establish the status and topicality in the political space of the left-right dichotomy will be made. Finally, based on the collected empirical material based on the author's model of ideological identifications, the thesis will be verified, and the impact of left and right-wing identifications on the formation of collective political identities of Polish society will be examined.

THE AMBIGUITY OF THE TERM 'IDENTITY' IN A CLASSIFYING SENSE

The term *identity* has been the subject of interest for representatives of various disciplines for over 70 years. It is, indeed, an interdisciplinary phenomenon. Theoretical reflections over this topic can be found in works of scholars connected with psychology, sociology, political science or philosophy. The identity notion was first introduced to the language of science by Erik Erikson in the 1950s.¹ Nevertheless, the Polish translation of this term is problematic mainly due to its ambiguous senses in which the word can be used both to describe individuals and the collective. As far as the individuals' description is concerned, 'identity' bears as many as three different meanings.

First, it can be defined as relating to being identical (the same). Second, it can be treated as a process in which a person is identified, emphasizing their unique attributes such as special features, facts or personal data. Last but not least, the word can be related to one's psychological sphere, that is, their self-awareness and the feeling of individuality.

Identity can also refer to the collective – in which sense, the whole group of people is aware of the characteristics they share with each other, which evokes the sense of unity in them.² At this point, it is worth to point that the term has a lot of meanings and can

¹ E. Erikson, "Identity and the Life Cycles", *Psychological Issues*, vol. 1, p. 1.

² *Słownik Języka Polskiego PWN*, at <<https://sjp.pwn.pl/szukaj/to%C5%BCsamo%C5%9B%C4%87.html>>, 30 November 2020.

be treated in a number of ways. This ambiguity problem was well described by Anthony Giddens in such words: (...) *identity is about how people understand themselves and what is meaningful for them. Such understanding is created in relation to particular characteristics which are superficial to other sources of sense.*³ Taking into account the above-mentioned views, it is vital to reflect on how identity, while being such an ambiguous, complex, changeable and contextual term, is defined. One of the ways in which this can be done is to isolate a particular aspect out of the identity phenomenon, which then becomes the classifying criterion for a further undergoing of a scientific analysis.

Due to the first criterion, called *influence extent*, identity can be known as: 1) individual identity (known as personal identity), and 2) community identity. The individual identity focuses on the distinctiveness of individuals as autonomous beings in comparison to other members of the society. It is a person's ability to tell who they are and what is their place in the social setting which is surrounding them. What is more, individual identity constitutes also the ability to differentiate oneself from the others.⁴

The term 'individual identity' is mostly rooted in symbolic interactionism which treats an individual as one who achieves the feeling of being himself, or herself, by leading a constant dialogue with the outside world. That's where 'myself' and the society interact, so that individuals can connect their personal worlds with the social world. In this sense, individuals are in constant relation with their social surrounding which, in turn, constitutes a natural benchmark for one's actions and their consequences. In contrast, the community identity is connected with characteristics assigned to a person by other people – it appeals to determining the affiliation to a certain social group. This is the element of a symbolic model of the world in which each person and each group has its own place in relation to other people and groups, within the frames of ordered and cultural universe.⁵ Therefore, community identity is characterized by a collective dimension and due to being set on common goals, values, and experiences, it can form the fundamentals of social movements.

One of the building elements of community identity, which is particularly important when it comes to the purpose of this article, is a collective group identity. In general, this term is defined as a sum of individual identities which are parts of a given group. As Antonina Kłoskowska underlines, in the process of a group identity being created, the most important factors are: 1) the sense of being connected with a particular group aided by the shared knowledge about the group's roots, 2) the historical consistency of the group, and 3) awareness of being distinct from other groups.⁶ Zbigniew Boksański, in turn, describes the collective group identity as follows: (...) *it is understood as a collection of content that makes up the ways in which it [the group] is perceived by its own*

³ A. Giddens, *Socjologia*, Warszawa 2004, p. 52.

⁴ K. Waszczewska, "Wokół problematyki tożsamości", *Rocznik Towarzystwa Naukowego Płockiego*, no. 6 (2014), p. 54.

⁵ Z. Mach, "Procesy rekonstrukcji tożsamości społecznej w krajach Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej", *Nomos*, no. 7-8 (1994), p. 10.

⁶ A. Kłoskowska, *Kultury narodowe u korzeni*, Warszawa 1996, pp. 92-93.

*members. What is worth adding is that this definition of the group also includes the reasons and arguments invoked to justify some specific ways of perceiving the group as a whole by its members.*⁷

Z. Bokszański also notes that the key factor of the collective group identity formation is establishing boundaries and dividing itself. Divisions are demarcation lines between 'the inside' and 'the outside', that is, 'us' and 'them', and depict both groups. Constructing demarcation lines, boundaries or divisions, implicates that there are some symbolic codes which control this process of making a distinction. According to the author, those codes are the essence of collective identities formation, as such identities are created, maintained, and transformed as an integral part of fixing the basic boundaries and demarcations between groups.⁸

LEFT WING-RIGHT WING DIVISION AS A SHAPING FACTOR OF THE POLITICAL COLLECTIVE IDENTITY OF POLISH PEOPLE

Within the process of analyzing the formation of political ideological identity of the Polish society, the crucial problem is to identify its determinants. Most of the time, scholars take into account the diversity of attitudes depending on social affiliation features such as gender, age, place of residence, education, income, or social and professional status. Here, an interesting perspective is to look through the prism of ideological identifications placed on a traditional continuum of left wing-right wing division.

The left wing and the right wing are two antonyms contingent on each other, used for over two hundred years in order to describe the conflict between social forces ruling on the political scene. The conventional moment of the opposition appearance is the French revolution. For most of the scholars, the emergence of 'the left wing' term understood as ideas and activities undertaken in the interests of the poor majority against the rich minority caused the appearance of 'the right wing' term as a contradiction. Those notions eliminate each other, but at the same time they fulfil a universe of opinions and political behaviours. None of the doctrines or social movements can be left-wing and right-wing at the same time. The comprehensive character of those terms indicates that left wing-right wing dichotomy describes the political scene to the fullest. In process of time, as well as evolution of doctrines and political thought, this dichotomy increases its semantic potential, describing different fields and changing its original meaning.

The dichotomy of left wing and right wing is an important factor which puts the whole political scene in order. Political doctrines created in XIX and XX century referred to this dichotomy to a vast amount. Moreover, the left and right currents became

⁷ Z. Bokszański, "Tożsamość kolektywna a stereotypy", *Acta Universitatis Lodziensis. Folia Sociologica*, no. 28 (1999), p. 27.

⁸ Z. Bokszański, "Tożsamość aktora społecznego a zmiana społeczna", *Studia Socjologiczne*, no. 3-4 (1995), p. 120.

the principal criterion for the division of political doctrines in the last two hundred years. Since the time of the French Revolution, the left wing has been identified with the proponents of social reforms and egalitarianism, whereas the right wing has been connected with aristocracy and conservatism. In fact, these connotations constitute the lineage of political parties that represent certain interests and ideas which come out of them. It was the French Revolution that designed the division into left and right wing in the system of parliamentary democracy. With time, such a gathered entirety started to be called a political gamut which represents all ideological attitudes of a given society. The 'left wing' and 'right wing' terms have been evolving, becoming a part of European and, later, world political thought, influencing the creation and change of socio-political collective identity in a significant way. Throughout time and in the course of political thought development, both wings have been expanding their ideological resources, entering new spheres of socio-political and economic life. Both notions have been also changing their meanings. As Anthony Giddens noted, the same ideas were treated either as left-wing or right-wing, depending on historical periods and contexts.⁹ Within the field of political studies, there is an ongoing dispute concerning the meaning and the legitimacy of this classical division of the political scene. The dichotomy timeliness thesis gains as many proponents as opponents.

Based on this, a justified question arises: What is today's status of 'left-wing' and 'right-wing' terms? Is this division, as some authors say, already obsolete and without any sense? Or do these notions still order the political scene, influencing the creation of political collective identities of left-wing and right-wing proponents? If so, then in what way, and what sense does it have when it comes to the political life of modern societies?

In the broadest sense, the left wing-right wing division criticism stems from some scholars' conviction that the division today no longer has heuristic, classifying, nor evaluative value. Most of the critical voices regarding this issue draw attention to the fact that in contemporary political reality these notions lost their descriptiveness, and therefore there is no point in trying to use them in political discourse and social studies research. Some of the proponents of such division abolition, as underlined by Norberto Bobbio, treat the fall of the Berlin Wall as the date of final obsolescence of the dichotomy description.¹⁰ Important doubts and reservations concerning the topicality of left wing-right wing division in the modern society is also raised by Lucio Colletti.¹¹ Although he does not negate the fact that differentiating left and right wings was reasonable in other times, in his opinion in a contemporary and more complicated society, in which numerous reasons for conflicts do not allow for taking a stand with one of the two sides, it is a significant simplification to oppose left and right wing separation and such, this approach can become artificial.

⁹ A. Giddens, *Trzecia droga – odnowa socjaldemokracji*, Warszawa 1999, p. 38.

¹⁰ N. Bobbio, *Prawica i lewica*, Kraków 1996, p. 6.

¹¹ L. Colletti, "Quale sinistra dopo il Muro", *Corriere della Sera*, 20 March 1994, cit. per: N. Bobbio, *Prawica i lewica...*, p. 7.

Another strand of critical thought is leading towards expanding the axis scheme of the left and right wing. The representatives of this approach assume that in modern democratic systems characterized by a vast amount of pluralism and covariance, describing political divisions by notions of left and right forces the expansion of terms, and thus the creation of a new mid-term called 'the centre'. However, the stronger this fragmentation and detail-oriented naming becomes, the more dichotomy is being blurred and the more interpretative problems arise. This confirms that the division to the left and right wing is no longer actual and loses its descriptive value. This phenomenon can be depicted, among others, by pro-ecological parties which can hardly be explicitly placed on the left-right wing axis.¹²

Similar doubts are raised by the researchers of the Polish political scene. Stanisław Gebethner is against describing it in the one-dimensional scheme of the left and right wing. As he writes, leftism and rightism are characteristics credited by parties themselves or they are given to the parties as epithets by their political opponents. Assuming this point of analysis, it is necessary to say that the notions of leftism and rightism are not objective. In contemporary Poland we observe interweaving of left-wing and right-wing ideological issues. Parties known as left-wing construct socioeconomic programmes which include ideas characteristic for right-wing parties. Similarly, in the programmes of right-wing parties there are ideas taken straight out of classical left-wing approaches such as a state intervention or social protection.¹³

Another scholar who claims that the dichotomic scheme is ineffective is Konstanty A. Wojtaszczyk. According to him, the reason for dichotomy obsolescence is the process of political transformation. Poland, he states, undergoes rapid changes and basic division lines do not result from ideological sources but from current political problems and their historical roots.¹⁴

However, the opposite thesis claiming that the separation of left-wing and right-wing is sustainable has many staunch followers. Such authors explain their approach by relating to both theoretical and empirical arguments. In his work dedicated to left-wing and right-wing division, Tadeusz Szawiel systematically analyzes arguments indicated in the literature which show the cognitive values of such separation in the context of research led over the political scene in Poland.¹⁵

The first argument is theoretical and structural in nature, explaining the sustainability of left-right opposition on a ground of traditional values of French Revolution which are still in the working in political life: liberty, equality, and fraternity. Szawiel alleges the views of Herbert Kitschelt and claims that these three values still influence

¹² M. Gauchet, *Storia di una dicotomia. La destra e la sinistra*, Paris 1990, cit. per: N. Bobbio, *Prawica i lewica...*, p. 7.

¹³ S. Gebethner, "Osiemnaście miesięcy rozczłonkowanego parlamentu", in Idem (ed.), *Polska scena polityczna a wybory*, Warszawa 1993, p. 29.

¹⁴ K.A. Wojtaszczyk, "Partie i ugrupowania polityczne", in R. Chruściak et al., *Polski system polityczny w okresie transformacji*, Warszawa 1995, p. 247.

¹⁵ T. Szawiel, "Podział na lewicę i prawicę w Polsce po 1989 roku – jego sens i trwałość", in R. Markowski (ed.), *System partyjny i zachowania wyborcze*, Warszawa 2002, p. 179.

politics and social practice.¹⁶ Liberty lays foundations for the free market – the flow of tangible and intangible goods between individuals, and equality is identified as the central mechanism of collective redistribution of goods and privileges, or as the only source that is obligatory for all citizens. Liberty and equality form a double scheme covering, on one hand, redistribution of goods (left-wing view) and on the other hand, free market (right-wing view). A separate dimension is created by fraternity which is identified with communities based on direct contacts. In the case of this dimension, there is also no possibility of leaving the right-left scheme. Such a model view allows for indicating structural features indicating that the left-right wing division is sustainable as well as the corresponding ideology and political systems. As long as in public discourse there will be present structural components we are discussing, as well as correlated dilemmas and socio-political problems, this long the ‘left-wing’ and ‘right-wing’ notions will order the political scene.

The second type of argumentation is system-functional. This concept was developed by German political scientists Dieter Fuchs and Hans Dieter Klingemann.¹⁷ Although in their opinion only a small amount of citizens represent shaped, extensive and ideologically cohesive political views understood as ‘clearly’ left-wing or right-wing, the political studies research indicate that on a mass scale a vast majority of a society can define their views on the left-right spectrum. What is more, opinions that people declare are also a good predictor for their future actions and political choices. Such a situation can be explained based on the concept issued by Talcott Parson and Niklas Luhmann, who acknowledged the opposition of left-wing and right-wing as a way of reducing the complexity of contemporary, multidimensional political world, therefore, helping to make sense of political phenomena and allowing individuals to understand this world, as well as alleviating effective communication in this respect. Individuals, by categorizing new political phenomena, try to describe them in categories which they know, such as the concepts of left-wing and right-wing. This opposition allows also for an understandable and clear communication between political parties and their electorates. Thus, as long as the multidimensional political environment that allows for a free political discourse exists, then the opposition of left-wing and right-wing will maintain its descriptive sense.

The third argument is connected with universal tendencies concerning the functioning of a democratic system. As Norberto Bobbio points out, it is the essence of democratization itself that conduces to dualistic divisions due to a majoritarian character of decisions that are made, and a dichotomic, binary model of power struggle present in key political institutions.¹⁸ There is always a government (even if it is formed as a coalition) and the opposition (even if it is combined of many entities) from where all formal belongings of left-wing and right-wing are stemmed. Of course, the strictness of a dualistic division depends on a voting system established and binding in a given society.

¹⁶ H. Kitschelt, *The Transformation of European Social Democracy*, Cambridge 1994, pp. 9-12.

¹⁷ D. Fuchs, H.-D. Klingemann, “The Left-Right Schema”, in M. Kent Jennings et al., *Continuities in Political Action. A Longitudinal Study of Political Orientations in Three Western Democracies*, Berlin 1989.

¹⁸ N. Bobbio, *Prawica i Lewica...*, pp. 61-66.

What conduces to dualisms the most is the majority system, yet even in proportional systems we can distinguish a dual division into a government and the opposition.

The usefulness of using the left-right wing division is also proved by empirical arguments. Such dependences are particularly visible in the analysis of the Polish political scene. After the political change that took place in 1989, the prevailing view was the one which questioned the currency of left-wing and right-wing opposition not only in Poland, but also in other post-communist countries. Nevertheless, as research results show, this opposition not only did not become less present-day, but it is also one of the main criteria for evaluating the Polish political scene. Studies conducted by Mirosława Grabowska and Tadeusz Szawiel indicate significant diverseness concerning outlook among people belonging to the left- and to the right-wing groups. This diverseness can be seen, among others, in the way people treat the past, democracy, and religiousness.¹⁹

Such conclusions are also drawn both from the analysis of empirical studies realized by academic centres (1992-2015) and from the author's own research (2007-2019).²⁰ The results show explicitly that at least 80% of Polish participants of those studies can define their beliefs and views on the left wing-right wing spectrum. There are, thus, theoretical and empirical groundings for claiming that the division into left-wing and right-wing is still sensible. This, in turn, justifies a need for developing theoretical reflections on the topic, conducting empirical research concerning views on the left-wing and the right-wing in the Polish society, as well as studying the impact of such dichotomy on the formation of political collective identity among left-wing and right-wing protagonists.

In this context, it is cognitively crucial to examine the ideological identification profiles of the Polish society, as well as to recreate the degree of correlation between ideological identification in relation to socially significant problems and the left-right self-definition of the respondents. The results of these analyses are intended to determine whether, and to what extent, the sociopolitical division between the right wing and the left wing is able to mobilize significant segments of the society, and what is the factor determining the formation of the political collective identity of the Polish people.

METHODOLOGICAL ASSUMPTIONS FOR MEASURING THE INFLUENCE OF IDEOLOGICAL IDENTIFICATIONS ON THE FORMATION OF THE COLLECTIVE POLITICAL IDENTITY OF THE POLISH SOCIETY

For analytical purposes, a set of index questions were developed and used for the first time in a nationwide quantitative study in 2007. These questions are based on the empirical model of ideological identifications developed and used in the author's own

¹⁹ M. Grabowska, T. Szawiel, *Budowanie demokracji. Podziały społeczne, partie polityczne i społeczeństwo obywatelskie w postkomunistycznej Polsce*, Warszawa 2001.

²⁰ The analysis covered PGSS studies from 1992-2010, PGSW studies from 1997-2011, Social Diagnosis 1992-2015 and studies by the Institute of Sociology of the University of Warsaw from 1995-2001.

research. The model uses a semantic differential method which enables the examination of any number of pairs of opposing views. The semantic differential method assumes that each pair of polarized statements sets a polar pattern for analyzing the left-wing and right-wing opinions of the respondents. Identifications of particular types of views gained this way can be at the same time characterized in terms of their direction and intensity. In order to meet the assumed goals, it was essential to use an interval scale to measure the respondents' views. The implementation of the interval scale requires standardization and repeatability of the used units of measurement. Thanks to this, it is not only possible to recreate the type of views dependent on the self-identification of the respondents but also to measure their direction and degree of their intensity. In the study of ideological self-identification the Likert scale was used.²¹ According to its assumptions, each pair of polarized ideological views is treated as a continuum comprised of five parts. Each degree of the continuum is assigned a numerical value ranging from 1 to 5. Statements relating to left-wing views have been placed at the left pole of each scale of opposing pairs of views, whereas statements of the right-wing nature – at the right pole.

Numerical values of each continuum included in the test express the strength and direction of ideological self-identification – whether the left-wing or right-wing one – in the following manner:

- scale value 1 – describes the left-wing identification, for which the verbal determinant is choosing the following sentence: *the statement on the left correctly defines my views and beliefs*
- scale value 2 – describes a moderately leftist identification, for which the verbal determinant chooses the following sentence: *the statement on the left rather correctly defines my views and beliefs*
- scale value 3 – expresses a neutral identification or a lack of any identification with the tested pair of statements. The determinant for this attitude chooses the following sentence: *it is difficult to say*
- scale value 4 – describes a moderately rightist identification, for which the verbal determinant chooses the following statement: *the statement on the right rather correctly defines my views and beliefs*
- scale value 5 – describes the right-wing identification, for which the verbal determinant chooses the following sentence: *the statement on the right correctly determines my views and beliefs*.

The respondents' task was to define the direction and strength of their own identification of the tested pairs of opposing ideological views. For this purpose, they were presented with 7 pairs of opposing views characterizing important socio-political issues that are doctrinally equated with either the left-wing or the right-wing.

Due to editorial restrictions, this article is limited only to the description of selected indicators referring to key socio-political problems, which may have an impact on the formation of the collective political identity of the Polish.

²¹ C. Frankfort-Nachmias, D. Nachmias, *Metody badawcze w naukach społecznych*, Poznań 2001, pp. 479-481.

In the first stage, segments of respondents declaring left-wing and right-wing views were distinguished. The selection was performed on the basis of a question defining the ideological self-identifications of the participants. The respondents self-identified themselves based on a 7-point scale of political views, where 1 meant the most left-wing views and 7 – the most right-wing views. Then, for the purpose of determining the impact of self-identification on the shaping of the identity of collective segments, extreme left-wing and left-wing views were aggregated into the *left-wing* category; center-left, center, and center-right views into the *center* category; and right-wing and extreme-right views into the *right-wing* category. In the next part of the article two opposing options of the spectrum of political behaviors were analyzed. Due to editorial restrictions, the center identification analysis was omitted.

As a result of the methodological procedure, two homogeneous groups of voters were created – left and right. Such action is a necessary requirement for the correct definition of the influence of ideological self-identification on the shaping of collective political identities in the analyzed segments of voters. Clearly outlined separateness border, common goal, and group values are their constitutive defining features.

At the same time, one can notice changes in the numbers that have taken place in recent years. While the segment of people with left-wing self-identifications has not changed significantly (with the increase in people choosing the center-left option), there is a clear outflow of people with right-wing views (table 1).

Table 1. The dynamics of changes in right-wing and left-wing self-identification (%).

Year of the study	Extreme left-wing	Left-wing	Centre-left	Centre	Centre-right	Right-wing	Extreme right-wing	I don't know
2019	1.4	10.8	11.6	18.8	10.6	20.3	2.5	24.2
	12.2		41.0			22.8		
2017/18	1.8	12.0	5.0	17.0	7.0	34.7	2.5	20.0
	13.8		29.0			37.2		
2015	1.2	9.6	8.9	17.6	10.5	22.7	3.2	26.2
	10.8		37.0			25.9		

The empirical analysis proceeded in three dimensions. The ideological-doctrinal dimension was described by two pairs of statements relating to (1) attitude to social progress, (2) worldview issues. The economic dimension was characterized by two pairs of opposing ideological views relating to (1) the preferred type of ownership, (2) the issue of tax policy. The social dimension was described in the semantic differential

by means of two pairs of polarized views on the issues of (1) the involvement of the state in the social and social sphere and (2) the attitude of the studied ideologies to minorities. Then, based on the degree of how closely the statements by the respondents matched with their views and beliefs, a strict measurement of the degree of compliance of the self-identification with the tested statements was made. This allowed for the reconstruction of the model of compliance of political preferences with the self-identifications of the respondents, and thus a partial verification of the thesis about the impact of this division on the shaping of political identities of collective people with left-wing and right-wing views.

IDEOLOGICAL IDENTIFICATIONS AND THE FORMATION OF COLLECTIVE LEFT-WING AND RIGHT-WING IDENTITIES – THE IDEOLOGICAL-DOCTRINAL DIMENSION

The analysis shows that ideological and doctrinal issues have a significant impact on the formation of collective identities, both among people with left-wing and right-wing identities. Doctrinal issues, however, affect the construction of the collective left-wing identity to a greater extent than the right-wing one.

People with leftist views are much more often (75.6%) supporters of change and social progress, and they strongly (83.2%) support the postulate of the separation of state and church. Therefore, they support the classically leftist views, which proves the coherence and strength of their leftist identity.

In the ideological-doctrinal dimension, the supporters of the right are in favor (though not so strongly) of maintaining the traditional social order (66.2%) and a strong relationship between the state and the church (56.0%). Tables 2 and 3.

IDEOLOGICAL IDENTIFICATIONS AND THE FORMATION OF COLLECTIVE LEFT-WING AND RIGHT-WING IDENTITIES – THE ECONOMIC DIMENSION

The analysis of the influence of economic affairs on the attitudes and views of groups of people with left-wing and right-wing self-identifications brings interesting cognitive results. It shows that both the issues concerning the preferred ownership model and the attitude to the tax policy of the state do not exert any significant influence on the formation of collective left-wing and right-wing collective identities. In both analyzed segments, approval prevails for traditionally leftist solutions and views, i.e. economic protectionism and a progressive tax scale. This state of affairs may result from the blurring in the programs of political parties of boundaries between the postulates and doctrinal solutions raised by the left, or the right, and those relating to economic matters. Tables 4 and 5.

Table 2. Distributions of the measurement of ideological identifications obtained by the semantic differential method among all respondents – ideological-doctrinal dimension – people with leftist identity (%).

Ordinal number	Ideological identification on polarized scales of ideological views			Sum		
	Left-wing views	<i>the statement on the left correctly defines my views and beliefs</i>	<i>the statement on the left rather correctly defines my views and beliefs</i>	<i>It is difficult to say</i>	<i>the statement on the right rather correctly defines my views and beliefs</i>	<i>the statement on the right correctly defines my views and beliefs</i>
1	society should revise its views adjusting them to the changing world	1	56.5%		19.1%	9.9%
		2			9.9%	4.6%
2	the state should be guided by the principle of separation between church and state	3			8.4%	7.6%
		4			0.8%	
		5				
		Right-wing views			society should be faithful to traditional values and views	the state should follow Christian values, Catholicism should be the state religion
		No response			0.0	0.0
		Sum			100.0	100.0

N=131

Table 3. Distributions of the measurement of ideological identifications obtained by the method of semantic differential among all respondents – ideological-doctrinal dimension – people with right-wing identity (%).

Ideological identification on polarized scales of ideological views									
Ordinal number	Left-wing views			Right-wing views		No response	Sum		
	<i>the statement on the left correctly defines my views and beliefs</i>	1		<i>the statement on the right rather correctly defines my views and beliefs</i>	4				
	<i>the statement on the left rather correctly defines my views and beliefs</i>	2		It is difficult to say	3				
1	society should revise its views adjusting them to the changing world						society should be faithful to traditional values and views	0.0	100.0
2	the state should be guided by the principle of separation between church and state						the state should follow Christian values, Catholicism should be the state religion	0.0	100.0

N=243

Table 4. Distributions of the measurement of ideological identifications obtained by the semantic differential method among all respondents economic dimension – people with left-wing identity (%).

Ideological identification on polarized scales of ideological views					Sum	100.0	100.0
Ordinal number	Left-wing views				Right-wing views	No response	
	the statement on the left correctly defines my views and beliefs				1	31.3%	the amount of taxes should vary depending on the income of citizens
	the statement on the left rather correctly defines my views and beliefs				2	16.0%	
	It is difficult to say				3	32.8%	the tax system should be unified regardless of the income generated by citizens (flat tax)
	the statement on the right rather correctly defines my views and beliefs				4	14.5%	
	the statement on the right correctly defines my views and beliefs				5	5.3%	
	property should only be private					0.0	
	the most important sectors of the economy should remain state-owned					0.0	
the amount of taxes should vary depending on the income of citizens					0.0		

N=131

Table 5. Distributions of the measurement of ideological identifications obtained by the semantic differential method among all respondents economic dimension – people with right-wing identity (%).

Ordinal number	Ideological identification on polarized scales of ideological views					Sum	
	Left-wing views	<i>the statement on the left correctly defines my views and beliefs</i>	<i>the statement on the left rather correctly defines my views and beliefs</i>	It is difficult to say	<i>the statement on the right rather correctly defines my views and beliefs</i>	<i>the statement on the right correctly defines my views and beliefs</i>	Right-wing views
1	the most important sectors of the economy should remain state-owned	1	2	3	4	5	property should only be private
2	the amount of taxes should vary depending on the income of citizens	35.4%	22.6%	22.2%	10.7%	9.1%	the tax system should be unified regardless of the income generated by citizens (flat tax)
		40.7%	16.0%	18.1%	11.9%	13.2%	
							0,0
							100,0

N=243

IDEOLOGICAL IDENTIFICATIONS AND THE FORMATION OF COLLECTIVE LEFT-WING AND RIGHT-WING IDENTITIES – THE SOCIAL DIMENSION

In the social dimension, the attitude to the rights of sexual minorities is a factor that strongly influences the formation of a collective political identity. In the segment of people with left-wing views, the approval of the liberalization of views and beliefs by LGBT people (72.5%) definitely prevails, while people with right-wing self-identifications out of concern for social welfare are in favor of their limitation (62.2%). However, issues related to the state's social policy do not have a differentiating influence on the shape of the collective political identity. In this regard, supporters of both political options support the active role of the state in the discussed area. Tables 6 and 7.

SUMMARY

Ideological identifications remain an important factor organizing the Polish political scene. Perhaps the most significant of them, despite the passage of time and the evolution of the party systems, remains the classical left-right division. The thesis is confirmed both in the literature on the subject and in the results of empirical research. The aim of the article was to determine whether and to what extent the socio-political division of the left-right wing has the ability to mobilize significant segments of society, and what is the factor in the formation of the political collective identity of Poles. As a result of the analysis, based on the collected empirical material, this thesis was positively verified. The obtained results confirm, though not fully, the ability to mobilize left and right-wing electorates – especially around ideological and social issues. Collective political identities built around these issues remain clear, marking the boundary and influencing the awareness of group separateness and the sense of identification with a group of its members. The lack of influence of economic issues on the sense of group identity was also demonstrated. It may indicate a partial blurring of the meaning and ordering of political space and the function of the left-right division in this dimension. Until, however, as Norberto Bobbio writes, a new great socio-political division emerges, the left-right dichotomy will constitute an important reference point for the activities undertaken by all actors of the political scene, significantly influencing the formation of collective political identities in the Polish society.

Table 6. Distributions of the measurement of ideological identifications obtained by the method of semantic differential among all respondents social dimension – people with leftist identity (%).

Ideological identification on polarized scales of ideological views							Sum				
Ordinal number	Left-wing views		1	2	3	4	5	Right-wing views	No response		
	the statement on the left correctly defines my views and beliefs		24.4%	38.9%	22.1%	9.9%	4.6%	the state should minimize activities in the social and social sphere	0.0	100.0	
	the statement on the left rather correctly defines my views and beliefs										
	It is difficult to say										
	the statement on the right rather correctly defines my views and beliefs										
	the statement on the right correctly defines my views and beliefs										
1	sexual minorities should be free to express their views and beliefs							for the sake of social welfare, sexual minorities should have a limited right to express their views and beliefs	0.0	100.0	
2											

N=131

Table 7. Distributions of the measurement of ideological identifications obtained by the method of semantic differential among all respondents social dimension – people with right-wing identity (%).

Ordinal number	Ideological identification on polarized scales of ideological views					Sum		
	Left-wing views	<i>the statement on the left correctly defines my views and beliefs</i>	<i>the statement on the left rather correctly defines my views and beliefs</i>	It is difficult to say	<i>the statement on the right rather correctly defines my views and beliefs</i>	<i>the statement on the right correctly defines my views and beliefs</i>	Right-wing views	No response
1	the state should operate in the social and social sphere to the greatest possible extent	1	2	3	4	5	the state should minimize activities in the social and social sphere	100.0
2	sexual minorities should be free to express their views and beliefs	25.5%	29.6%	19.3%	13.2%	12.3%	for the sake of social welfare, sexual minorities should have a limited right to express their views and beliefs	0.0
		4.9%	6.6%	26.3%	20.2%	42.0%		100.0

N=243

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