

From Distance to Contestation: New Dimensions of Women's Attitudes in Poland Towards Religion and the Church

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Abstract : Introductory, Background, and Importance of the Study: For many years, religiosity in Poland remained at a stable level of religious practice. When the symptoms of secularization and privatization processes appeared in Poland, it was not clearly felt but rather related to the decline in compulsory practices carried out in public, the growing distance of respondents to catholic ethic, and the lack of acceptance regarding the intervention of the Church in legislation and policy. The basic indicators observed over the years kept the picture: more religious women - less religious men. By carrying out own research in the field of religious and moral attitudes in 2019-2021, it was noticed that a reversal of the trend preserved over the years could be observed. The data showed that women under 40 are radically different in their responses than women older than them - especially those over 50: in terms of practices or ties with the Church and many more specific aspects. This became the basis for a careful examination of the responses in the under 40 age cohorts among women. This study is significant because it shows completely new perspectives of women's perception of religiosity and allows us to notice clearly the aspects of social changes mapped in the minds of the surveyed women. Research Methodology: The original survey was carried out using the quantitative method among 2,346 respondents in northern Poland, 1,349 of whom were women. The findings from these observations led to deepening the topic of beliefs of women under 40 compared to other age cohorts of women. Hence, studies were carried out on the general population of women in Poland, which constituted a comparative sample. These were panel studies. The selection of the sample among women was random, respecting the age amounts so that the two statistical groups could be compared. The designated research parameters included: declarations of religious faith, declarations of religious practice, bond with the Church, acceptance of Mariological dogmas, attitude towards the image of women in the Church, and acceptance of selected issues in Catholic ethics. Main Research Findings: Among women under 40, the decline in declarations not only concerning compulsory public practices but also private practices and declarations of religious faith is more pronounced. Not only is the range of indifferent religious attitudes increasing, but also attitudes directly declaring religious disbelief, for which there are important justifications. Women under 40 years of age strongly distance themselves from the institutions of the Church and from accepting Mariological dogmas. Moreover, they note that the image of a woman is marked by stereotyping, favoring the intensification of violence against women, as well as disregarding her potential and agency. Concluding Statement: By analyzing the answers of the female respondents and the data obtained in the research, it can be observed a reevaluation of women's beliefs, which opens the perspective of analyzing the role of religion and the Church in Poland as well as religious socialization.

Keywords : religiosity, morality, gender, feminism, social change

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