

## **Radosław Marzęcki**

Pedagogical University of Cracow (Poland)  
ORCID: 0000-0002-2915-8878  
e-mail: [radoslaw.marzecki@up.krakow.pl](mailto:radoslaw.marzecki@up.krakow.pl)

## **Marcin Chmielowski**

Freedom and Entrepreneurship Foundation (Poland)  
ORCID: 0000-0001-6583-2260  
e-mail: [chmielowski@fundacjawip.org](mailto:chmielowski@fundacjawip.org)

## **Kris Kaleta**

Manchester Metropolitan University (United Kingdom)  
ORCID: 0000-0002-3918-560X  
e-mail: [k.kaleta@hotmail.com](mailto:k.kaleta@hotmail.com)

# **Liberals Among Us: Socio-Demographic Determinants of Liberal Attitudes in Poland**

**Abstract:** The authors of this article attempt to describe in detail the determinants and structure of the beliefs and views of Polish society on a liberal to anti-liberal values continuum. The first research objective was to determine the extent of social and economic freedom that respondents expect in their relations with others and in their relations with state institutions. In addition, the authors wanted to identify the socio-demographic characteristics that significantly differentiate these liberal orientations, as well as the factors that independently determine the adoption of liberal views. The detailed hypotheses were verified based on an analysis of data collected in a nationwide telephone survey (CATI) conducted on a representative sample of 1,000 adult Polish citizens. The survey used an original questionnaire consisting of 31 quantitative scales, which were used to construct the Liberalism/Libertarianism Index (LLI) and to categorize respondents into “Polish Liberals” and “Polish Libertarians.” Higher index values indicate stronger and more consistent liberal attitudes in economic as well as axiological (social) terms. More liberal orientations were found to be held by respondents declaring higher incomes, younger, better educated, and less religious, although only age, some party preferences, and religious practices act as independent predictors of LLI.

**Keywords:** *liberalism, libertarianism, ideology, freedom, social liberalism, economic liberalism, political attitude, correlates of liberalism*

## Introduction

Along with equality, freedom is one of the most important values defining political ideologies (such as conservatism and liberalism) and ideological orientations (left and right). Giovanni Sartori (1987) finds freedom a prerequisite for a stable liberal democracy, with a particular emphasis on political freedom, which manifests itself in the relationship between the citizen and the state and with other individuals. He distinguishes different types of freedom (though they all relate to the same individual); however, he regards political freedom as the 'primary liberty' since it acts as a *sine qua non* for all other forms of freedom: psychological, legal, intellectual, social, moral, or economic. We expect political freedom to protect us from oppression and abuse of power, and in this sense, it is the *freedom* that we need as individuals to achieve *freedom to*. States, through their institutions and political elites, often use various arguments to justify limiting the scope of citizens' freedom. Such an argument is, for example, security (internal and external) when trying to convince the public that the expansion of state functions in various areas of social life is in their interest. Interestingly, citizens themselves are also willing to give up various freedoms to gain security. Such a belief may be stronger in the immediate aftermath of events that cause fear (e.g., terrorist attacks). According to Gallup data, after the 11 September 2001 attack, as many as 78% of Americans were willing to restrict civil liberties to stop terrorism (Gallup, 2002). However, this phenomenon may be more universal. Other survey findings indicate that a decade and a half later, in 2017, over half (51%) of US residents were prepared to compromise a portion of their privacy and liberty (Pew Research Center, 2017). In general, the greater the sense of threat, the lower the support for civil liberties. Darren Davis and Brian Silver (2004), however, uncovered a paradox, revealing that the willingness to give up liberties is conditioned by the perception of the government. The less trust citizens have in government, the less willing they are to trade civil liberties for security, regardless of the level of threat. Therefore, we have focused our attention on the views of the Polish public regarding the extent of the freedom they expect in social interactions, particularly in their relationships with state institutions. In this sense, following Sartori's suggestion, we treat freedom in terms of a practical problem to be solved, thus in an empirical rather than a philosophical dimension (Sartori, 1987, p. 299). We will therefore seek answers to the following research questions: To what extent is the acceptance of the value of freedom (both in the economic and social sense) widespread in Polish society? What is the socio-demographic characteristic of people who have a stronger acceptance of liberal (and libertarian) values? What socio-demographic factors determine a stronger acceptance of liberal (and libertarian) values? Our approach relates to various aspects of freedom, different dimensions of social life, and social roles that we inhabit as citizens of a democratic state.

In the remainder of this article, we will explain how we will understand liberal (and libertarian) values, present methodological assumptions, and research tools for the diagnosis of liberal attitudes (orientations) of respondents, formulate detailed hypotheses, and discuss

the most important results of the survey, which was conducted on a representative sample of adult Poles.

## **Liberal and Libertarian Attitudes in Theoretical and Empirical Perspectives**

The scholarly focus on the philosophical foundations and institutional dynamics of liberalism has overshadowed the study of liberal and libertarian attitudes, making it challenging to establish the correlation between the two. Attitudes, seen as foundational convictions that are imbued with a bottom-up orientation, often lack systematic structure. They may reside within the realm of the unconscious, while views and ideological self-identification require conscious recognition by the respondent. This distinction manifests in the contrasting nature of attitudes versus abstract values (Swedlow, 2008, pp. 159–160).

This article aims to define the liberal attitude as a contrasting viewpoint to conservatism, incorporating an aversion to economic statism (Oakeshott, 1999, p. 192), whilst incorporating an aversion to economic statism. We posit libertarianism as an extreme form of liberalism grounded on shared values but pursued with heightened consistency (consequential liberalism). Such a liberal attitude entails the belief that individuals should possess extensive freedom to make decisions in both economic and non-economic spheres of life. It deviates from the American understanding of liberalism, aligning more closely with its European interpretation. We separate liberal and libertarian attitudes from liberal and libertarian self-identifications. Our research findings indicate that individuals who align with liberal or libertarian views may not necessarily be fully aware of their own ideological stance. In other words, holding such views and opinions does not automatically classify someone as a liberal or libertarian in the consequential sense.

We distinguish between these two ideological phenomena by considering libertarianism as a subset, akin to a branch within the broader framework of liberalism, often likened to a root or a tree. Even though liberalism traces its origins back to medieval times, as suggested by some scholars (i.e., Titlestad, 2010, p. 94), in this context, we approach it in a contemporary manner, acknowledging the significance of property rights as an embodiment of individual expression, while continually navigating the delicate balance between the values of recognition and equality of treatment (Gerson, 2017, p. 618). Despite being a relatively newer movement that emerged as a reaction to the New Deal policies, libertarianism has already sparked substantial discussion concerning its conceptual boundaries. This article will delineate two potential approaches for defining libertarianism: a narrower and a broader definition. The narrower perspective, put forth by Dariusz Juruś, conceptualizes libertarianism as a position anchored in the absolute right to property, coupled with the doctrine of natural law, the Austrian school of economics, and the 19<sup>th</sup>-century anarchist individualism exemplified by Lysander Spooner (Juruś, 2012, p. 10). Conversely, one can adopt a broader definition of libertarianism, encompassing a consistent stance that upholds both economic and personal freedoms. David Nolan's perspective represents this broader

understanding, which we accept as valid within the context of this article, as it retains greater inclusivity while remaining narrower in scope than contemporary liberalism (Boaz, 2005, pp. 374–375). It should be noted that the narrower definition of libertarianism hinges on the concept of property whereas the broader definition is predicated on the notion of freedom (Chmielowski, 2015, p. 24). Several studies have exhibited a parallel approach to ours when it comes to the definition of liberalism or libertarianism. In such a way, David Boaz and David Kirby estimated the proportion of the libertarian electorate in the United States, broadly defined as “fiscally conservative, socially liberal”, to be between 9% and nearing 20% (Boaz & Kirby, 2006, pp. 1–9). According to their calculations, the proportion of libertarians within the voting-age population was approximately 13% in 2004 and 12% in 2008 (Boaz & Kirby, 2010, p. 4). This difference was due to different methods of defining libertarians. In the study, they adopted a broader understanding of libertarianism, as opposed to the more stringent and intellectually rigorous definition put forth by Juruś. Therefore, their results may not reflect the real number of libertarians in the US, but rather people with basic inclinations towards libertarian attitudes.

From an empirical standpoint, the libertarian attitude is characterized by a pronounced endorsement of the concept of freedom alongside a comparatively weaker inclination towards other moral principles. It reflects a style of reasoning that is predominantly cerebral rather than emotive, coupled with a reduced emphasis on interdependence and social connections. Under this perspective, libertarianism exhibits a blending of conservative and liberal (in the American sense) sensibilities (Iyer et al., 2012). Naturally, this does not imply that libertarianism lacks ideological self-sufficiency. The empirical perspective primarily examines the motivations of self-identified libertarians rather than the substance of their ideas. The interplay between libertarianism as an ideology and personality transcends the conventional dichotomy of right and left. In Europe, this observation holds true for liberalism as well.

We posit that this assessment is valuable in characterizing not only American-style libertarians but also libertarians and liberals in Europe, where the term liberalism retains a more classical connotation than in the United States. In addition to our research, we draw inspiration from the work of Boaz and Kirby, who have divided the ideological landscape into conservatives, liberals, libertarians, and populists within the American political environment. Our focus is specifically on understanding the attitudes of libertarians and liberals. Boaz and Kirby argue that the historical conditions in the USA have contributed to the development of libertarian ideas. While there may be terminological controversy surrounding the identification of classical liberalism with libertarianism, the authors accurately observe that principles such as freedom of speech, personal freedom, and limited government influence over the individual are integral to the US political culture. These factors may contribute to the relative popularity of libertarianism in the USA. As the authors pointed out, even if the “instinct for freedom” is some human trait, the “commitment to political liberty” may not and be something more specific, culturally driven (Boaz & Kirby, 2006, p. 5).

The American political landscape exhibits a distinct terminology, where the term 'liberals' does not align with the European understanding. Boaz and Kirby emphasize that classical-liberal or libertarian ideas that shaped the early USA are contested by both conservatives and liberals, leading to a unique form of contestation referred to as the 'libertarian attitude'. This distinction in terminology and contestation highlights the differences between the American and European contexts (Boaz & Kirby, 2006, p. 6).

### **The Distinct Features of Polish Liberalism and Libertarianism**

There exist both similarities and distinctions when examining the reception of liberal and libertarian ideas in the United States, Western Europe, and Poland. Polish liberalism, throughout its history, had to address concerns that were not encountered by Western European or American liberalism, including the relatively prolonged existence of serfdom among peasants (when compared to Western countries) and the challenges faced by the urban bourgeois class (Rogaczewska, 2011, p. 14). The latter experienced political underrepresentation and encountered difficulties in achieving what is known as the 'bourgeois dignity' stage (McCloskey, 2018). Additional historical disparities between Polish and Western liberalism include the limited acceptance of the concept of the social contract and the emphasis on the emergence of the state as a natural outcome of human inclinations, as expounded by Aristotle and St. Thomas. Notably, social Darwinism found little resonance within Polish liberalism throughout history (Rogaczewska, 2011, p. 14).

In the twentieth century, Polish liberalism faced challenges stemming from its underrepresentation and its encounters with collectivist ideologies, an experience shared by much of Europe. Despite not being a prominent theoretical center, Poland actively participated in the advancement of economic liberalism. This can be observed through the existence and activities of the Economic Society in Kraków, established in 1921 (Chmielowski, 2020, pp. 103–113). In the 1940s, Poland fell under Soviet influence and remained within its sphere until the first free elections in 1989. This influenced limited information accessibility and a lack of current representation of non-state intellectuals until the 1970s/80s (Kaleta, 2023). By the end of the 1970s, though, three liberal centers had emerged, which were the key to the country's free market thinking emergence. Warsaw group, represented by the likes of Stefan Kisielewski or Janusz Korwin-Mikke, drew inspiration largely from classical liberalism as well as libertarian-associated figures like Ayn Rand and Ludwig von Mises. The Krakow center, gathered around Mirosław Dzielski, was largely concerned with promoting local-level entrepreneurship in the country, representing a fusion of liberalism and Christianity (with influences from thinkers like Michael Novak and Friedrich A. von Hayek). The liberal center in Gdansk, which later exerted significant influence on Polish politics after 1989 – and continues to do so under figures like Donald Tusk – also played a notable role, especially in the dissemination of classic liberal ideas in the underground press (Kaleta, 2016). In the 1990s, these groups largely took different paths. Some formed

political groups, some circles turned to the third sector, while others explicitly shunned association with the liberal post-transition tradition (Kaleta, 2023). The current liberal environment in Poland is largely fragmented, with neither a political representation nor an elected social narrative.

Polish libertarianism, comparatively a more recent phenomenon, emerged only in the 1990s, primarily within the counterculture and anarchist movement. The first Polish proto-libertarians, including i.e., Jacek Sierpiński and Stanisław Górka, were members of the Anarchist Federation from the late 1980s, gathered around underground periodicals, such as “Mać Pariadka” and “An Arche!” (Kaleta, 2023). In contrast to the United States – where informal and formal libertarian institutions were established as early as the 1930s and 1940s, with accelerated growth in the 1970s and 1980s – Poland witnessed the advent of its first fully libertarian institutions only in the 2000s. Its popularity was largely due to the widespread Internet access in Poland (Kaleta, *ibid*). In the late 1990s, the first Polish libertarian emailing discussion groups were established on Yahoo, out of which the website and forum *Libertarianizm.pl* (collectively known as *Libnet*) emerged in the early 2000s (*ibid*). Concurrently, the first libertarian organizations in the country were formed, many of which were focused on the promotion of the Austrian school of economics. It was only in the 2010s that organizations directly referring to the libertarian tradition, and with this concept on their banners, were established. Only since then can one speak of a consolidated libertarian movement in Poland (Kaleta, *ibid*).

The contemporary Polish libertarian movement is developing dynamically in its two main branches. The first deals with the popularisation of ideas, especially in the third sector<sup>1</sup>, while the second focuses on broadening theoretical horizons through academic pursuit. Among the important libertarian and Austrian research centers, one must mention Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń and the University of Wrocław. The main lines of research concern the libertarian philosophy (i.e., Nowakowski, 2017; Dominiak, 2017; Dominiak & Block, 2017; Slenzok, 2022), the relationship between libertarianism and the ASE (i.e., Megger, 2021; Wiśniewski, 2022; Turowski, 2022; Machaj, 2022), the problem of libertarian utopia (Hankus, 2018), and the relation of libertarian philosophy with major contemporary issues (i.e., Slenzok, 2021). The prime illustration of topics discussed within the Polish libertarian blogosphere is a private site of Stanisław Wójtowicz, who is associated with Toruń circle (<https://stanislawwojtowicz.pl>).

---

<sup>1</sup> Those fully focused on the promotion of libertarian thought include the Polish Libertarian Association (Stowarzyszenie Libertariańskie), the Freedom and Entrepreneurship Foundation (Fundacja Wolności i Przedsiębiorczości), and the Capitalism Centre (Centrum Kapitalizmu).

## Survey Design and Research Methodology

This article employs data from a representative survey executed between May 30 and June 14, 2022, by Warsaw's Institute of Public Affairs Research<sup>2</sup>. The survey was conducted via telephone using a standardized Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) method. The sample comprised 1,000 participants aged 18 years and above, and a random quota sampling strategy was used. The sample's structure mirrored the demographic distribution of adult inhabitants of Poland concerning gender, age, and place of residence, consistent with data from the Central Statistical Office of Poland (GUS).

When drafting the study, we aimed to address important constraints arising from the context in which the term 'liberalism' functions in Polish public discourse and presumably also in the public consciousness. During both the 1990s and the 2005 election campaign, as well as in the years following, the term has been strategically utilized as a political tool, predominantly by the leadership of the Law and Justice party (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość). This has provoked negative implications as it became emblematic of the alleged dichotomy between a liberal-minded Polish society (Liberalna Polska – Liberal-Poland) and a community-centric one, rooted in the ethos of the Solidarity movement (Solidarna Polska – Solidarity-Poland). Liberalism was then portrayed as an attitude detached from its more classical meaning. Concurrently, and importantly for the Polish public debate, this 'liberal-community' dichotomy is perfectly embedded in the Polish discourse. In Poland, there are simultaneously two languages of politics: the ethical one, which refers to axiology and the idea of 'true Polishness,' and the pragmatic one, which is less represented and weaker. It is, however, behind the screen of the pragmatic language that the liberal postulates present in Polish politics are found (Kłosińska, 2012, pp. 145–150). Drawing on the structuralist theory of political myth (Barthes, 2009), one could speak of a mythologization of the concept of 'liberalism,' involving a distortion of the term and the concurrent infusion of new meanings. In this sense, it was used as a specific political invective, or rather a label, presupposing that "liberalism is an attitude that harms others; a form of egoism, that only serves the richest, while denying patriotism and Catholicism. The freedom it promotes is an exclusive value that leaves out large sections of the society" (Marzęcki, 2008, p. 94). This appears to carry consequences for modern empirical studies, given that survey participants might understand labels like 'conservatism' or 'liberalism' in line with these mythologized definitions. Such interpretations significantly complicate the process of discerning the true beliefs of respondents from their self-identification. In designing the survey, we primarily wanted to measure the acceptance scale for beliefs and values along the 'liberal-antiliberal' continuum rather than self-defining usage of categories, i.e., "I am a liberal" or "I am not a liberal."

---

<sup>2</sup> Institute of Public Affairs Research (Instytut Badań Spraw Publicznych). See: <https://ogb.pl>.



In the study, we employed an original survey questionnaire to comprehensively diagnose respondents' views, focusing on opinions towards various aspects of freedom (economic, political, worldview, religious, etc.)<sup>3</sup>. Therefore, the research objectives also have a methodological dimension: In the article, we present all the details of the research tool, which can be used by other authors for replication in other temporal or geographical contexts. We assumed that this research tool should enable the measurement of multidimensionally understood political beliefs and values, using an index with a relatively objective character while allowing for comparisons in chronological or international aspects. To that end, we used 31 questions, with responses measured on a 5-point quantitative scale. These included:

1) **12 worldview and economic statements** [the variable identifier is included in square brackets]:

**[Fighting Inequalities]:**

*Inequalities in society (e.g., concerning the economy) must be tackled at all costs.*

**[Family Model]:**

*People should decide for themselves which family model they opt for. The state should not impose or prohibit anything in this regard.*

**[Respect for the Foreign Employee]:**

*I feel more respect for a foreigner who comes to Poland to work than for a Pole who lives mainly from benefits.*

**[Private Over Public Management]:**

*Private companies are always better managed than state-owned enterprises.*

**[Taxes]:**

*High earners should pay a higher rate of income tax.*

**[Church Funding]:**

*Churches and religious associations should be maintained exclusively by practitioners.*

**[Freedom of Speech]:**

*As long as someone does not advocate violence, they can say whatever they think.*

**[Freedom or Security]:**

*I am ready to limit my freedom when the security of the state is at stake.*

**[State Worldview Neutrality]:**

*No lifestyle or worldview should be promoted or prohibited by the state, and the state should be fully neutral in this area.*

---

<sup>3</sup> The exclusion of certain social questions from the questionnaire, like abortion, was based on the premise of estimating the number of respondents with libertarian views amongst the Polish populous. To effectively identify libertarians, filtering questions aligned with libertarian ideology were necessary. As the issue of abortion is divided within the libertarian movement (between 'pro-life' and 'pro-choice'), it was not a suitable question for filtering purposes. Including it would not have accurately identified libertarians.



**[Cannabis Legalisation]:**

*Production, trading, and recreational use of cannabis should be completely legal.*

**[Gun Ownership]:**

*The right to gun ownership by mentally sound and non-criminal citizens should be liberalized.*

**[Private Property]:**

*Private property should never be sacrificed to the general interest (e.g., through expropriation).*

**2) 15 statements on the state's functioning:**

**[State Support for Technology]:**

*Without state support, it is impossible to develop modern technology.*

**[Taxes and Charity]:**

*If some taxes were abolished, I could support those in need, if only via charity regularly.*

**[Energy Sector Privatisation]:**

*We should push for the widest possible privatization of the energy sector, including mining.*

**[Environmental Protection]:**

*It is the citizen and not the state that should have more responsibility for the condition of the environment.*

**[World Without States]:**

*I can imagine a world without states and private companies taking over their key functions.*

**[Open Borders and Development]:**

*Migration and open borders enable a country's economic development.*

**[Power of Bureaucrats]:**

*Bureaucrats make an excessive number of decisions on my behalf that I can decide myself.*

**[Transport Privatisation]:**

*We should strive to reduce the dominant role of state actors in transport (e.g., railways). Transport services should be provided mainly by private entities.*

**[Schools Autonomy]:**

*The state (Ministry of Education) should not top-down determine the core curriculum for schools. We should allow schools to set their programs.*

**[Health Services Financing]:**

*The state should financially support the health service.*

**[Workers' Interests]:**

*State institutions take better care of the worker/employee than they do.*

**[500+ Programme<sup>4</sup> / Benefits]:**

*A better solution than the 500+ Programme would be to cut taxes.*

**[Private Pension System]:**

*I favor abolishing Social Security and switching to a private pension system.*

**[State Ownership of the Industry]:**

*The state should own industrial plants.*

**[State Indebtedness Ban]:**

*There should be a statutory ban on state debt.*

**3) 4 opposing statements were rated by respondents using the Osgood scale – the first statement corresponded to a value of ‘1’ on the scale and the second statement to a value of ‘5’:**

**[Responsibility for Security]:**

**A.** *We should be primarily responsible for our security.*

**B.** *The state should be primarily responsible for our security.*

**[Freedom or a Strong State]:**

**A.** *A strong state is more important than the freedom of citizens.*

**B.** *The freedom of citizens is more important than a strong state.*

**[Public Expenditure]:**

**A.** *State expenditure on various purposes, including social, should systematically decrease.*

**B.** *State expenditure on various purposes, including social, should systematically increase.*

**[Health Insurance]:**

**A.** *Health care would work better if everyone were insured on their own (privately).*

**B.** *Only a universal state insurance system guarantees adequate health care quality.*

At the analysis stage, the data were recoded so that higher scale values always indicated more liberal views. As a result, a special index – taking values from 1.00 to 5.00, based on the arithmetic mean – was constructed. We called it the ‘Liberalism/Libertarianism Index’ (LLI). An analysis of the reliability of the survey instrument was also carried out, which showed a satisfactory Cronbach’s alpha coefficient value (0.75) for the 31 scales used, meaning that they represent a valid (internally consistent) measurement tool for liberal/libertarian attitudes. Finally, we assumed that liberal attitudes would be understood more broadly than libertarian attitudes. We argue that empirically verified libertarians should be characterized by more consistent (higher) scores obtained on the measurement scales.

---

<sup>4</sup> The state social policy program launched in Poland on April 1, 2016, provides families with a monthly child-rearing benefit of PLN 500 for every child in the family.

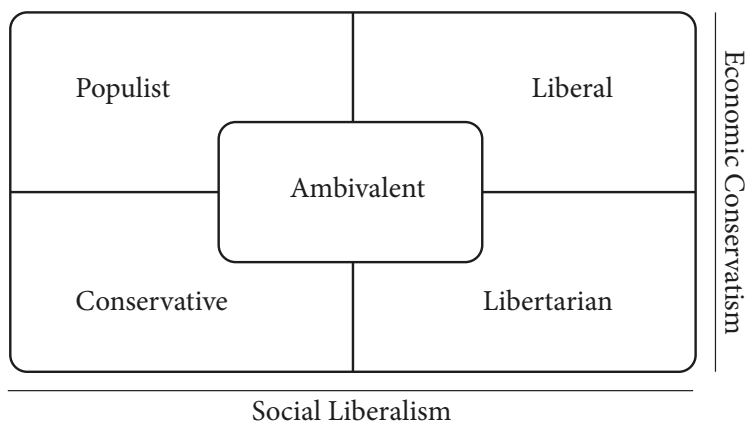
By the above, we have distinguished:

- “**The Polish Liberals**” – respondents who scored an LLI value of at least 3.67.
- “**The Polish Libertarians**” – respondents who scored an LLI value of at least 4.01.

## Research Hypotheses

The proposed research tool primarily measures views and beliefs on a continuum of ‘liberalism’ to ‘anti-liberalism’. In the remainder of this article, we will use the term ‘liberal orientation’. Our intention was not to directly equate ‘anti-liberal’ views with conservatism, socialism, or statism. However, we usually tried to capture a relatively symmetrically opposed view of liberal (or libertarian) values. We were interested in the scale of acceptance of these values and the socio-demographic correlates of this acceptance. Due to the authorial nature of the research tool, we cannot show examples of its use in other studies. However, various attempts at empirical diagnosis of liberal (and libertarian) attitudes and analyses to determine the determinants of these attitudes were a natural inspiration for our research<sup>5</sup>. These were primarily the already cited work of Kirby and Boaz (2006; 2010), who categorize American respondents along the axes of economic conservatism and social liberalism (Figure 1).

**Figure 1:** Categorisation of US Respondents by Ideology



Source: Based on Boaz, Kirby 2006, p. 8.

<sup>5</sup> An interesting proposal for the study of political ideologies is the – already mentioned – psychological approach, based on the view that personality plays a crucial role in shaping ideology (Iyer et al., 2012). The authors attempted to empirically document a libertarian moral psychology, which, in their opinion, differs from liberal and conservative morality (according to the American understanding of these terms). The study of personality (and not only views or values) may be an inspiration for future research on Polish liberals and libertarians.

It also seems interesting to note the earlier work of William Maddox and Stuart Lilie (1984), who conceptualize ideological attitudes along two dimensions: attitudes towards government intervention in economic affairs and expanding personal freedoms. Liberals have a positive attitude on both dimensions, while libertarians declare support for the second dimension and opposition on the first. In this sense, the Liberalism/Libertarianism Index (LLI) measures the beliefs and views consistent with libertarian attitudes in the American sense. Meanwhile, we understand liberalism differently from these researchers as less decisive views on the LLI scale. Therefore, we will use the term ‘liberal orientation,’ bearing in mind that higher values of the LLI are indicative of stronger liberal attitudes (and the highest scores are indicative of consistent and strong libertarian attitudes).

For the study, we have adopted several research hypotheses, two of which relate to this general level of research concern. We, therefore, expect that:

*H1: A strong and consistent liberal (libertarian) orientation is not widespread in Polish society.*

In line with the referenced studies, we differentiate between social liberalism (which we define as axiological) and economic liberalism. We concur with Stanley Feldman and Christopher Johnston’s (2014) postulate that one should focus on two ideological dimensions – economic and social- to comprehend the structure and determinants of political attitudes.

This leads us to the following hypothesis:

*H2: Poles have a stronger liberal orientation in the axiological dimension than in the economic dimension.*

In seeking answers to the subsequent research questions formulated in the introduction, we focus primarily on the correlations between the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents and their liberal orientations. The impetus for further hypotheses came from the results of some studies and our observations and scientific experience. Boaz and Kirby (2006) cite Pew Research Center data from the early 2000s, arguing that American libertarians “are more likely to be male and affluent and to live in the West. They are also less religious than conservatives and populists (though slightly more religious than liberals)” (p. 15). Subsequent research conducted by this institution (Kiley, 2014) suggests that those who claimed the term ‘libertarianism’ accurately describes them were more likely to be men, younger individuals, better educated, and wealthier. Some differences were also observed regarding identification with political parties. An attempt to identify correlates of libertarian attitudes has also been made previously by Roger Gibbins, Rick Ponting, and Gladys Symons (1978). However, their analysis was mainly concerned with one aspect of the social dimension of liberalism – mainly views on the role of women in society. They

found weak or moderate associations of age and education with the liberal worldview. Generally, younger and better-educated respondents tended to take a more liberal view of these issues and social problems. In contrast, the influence of income was ambiguous (see also Chandler, 1972; Schreiber, 1975). The influence of demographic predictors of ideology was also studied by Feldman and Johnston (2014), showing significant differences in the strength of this influence on the economic and social dimensions of ideology. We, therefore, propose another hypothesis:

*H3: A stronger and more consistent liberal orientation is characterized by people who are more financially independent (with higher incomes), are younger, better educated, live in larger cities, are employed in the private sector, and are less religious.*

At the data analysis stage – using the linear regression method – we will also want to see which factors independently determine liberal orientations, as we assume that some of these factors may play a role as indirect predictors. We expect that:

*H4: Gender will not significantly determine liberal orientation.*

*H5: Age, education, and income will be significant independent determinants of liberal orientations.*

In addition, we will also test the impact of variables such as place of residence, political views on the left-right scale, party preference, interest in politics, willingness to participate in elections, religious practices, and employment sector.

## **Results**

This analytical section is structured by the three research questions formulated in the Introduction to this article. We will present the detailed survey results and the conclusions of the statistical analyses, which provide an essential argument for verifying the research hypotheses.

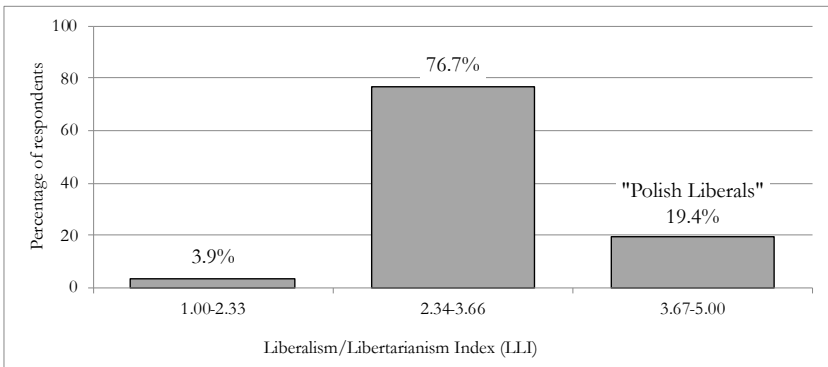
### **LIBERALISM IN POLISH SOCIETY**

The starting point was the most general question of the extent to which acceptance of the value of freedom (both in the economic and social sense) is widespread in Polish society. In other words, how liberal is Polish society? The primary criterion for identifying attitudes will be the values of the Liberalism/Libertarianism Index (LLI), as well as its two sub-indices: economic (ELLI) and axiological (ALLI). They were calculated analogous to the LLI (using the arithmetic mean) but based on scales that refer to the economic or axiological dimension

of liberalism. Information on this can be found in the second column of Table 2: Dimension: Economics (E) / Axiology (A).

“Polish Liberal” is a person who scored between 3.67 and 5.00 in LLI. Its boundaries are derived from dividing the range of possible scores (1.00-5.00) into three equal parts (i.e., 1.00-2.33; 2.34-3.66; 3.67-5.00). We find that 19.4% of respondents in the survey sample met this criterion. It should be noted that there is a predominance of liberal attitudes over anti-liberal attitudes, represented by 3.9% of the respondents.

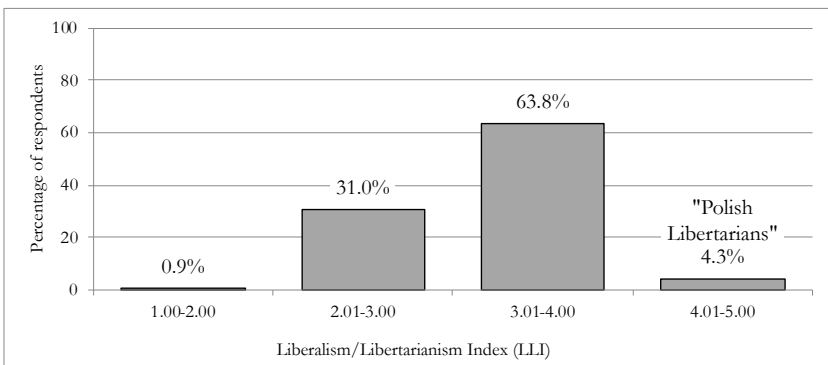
**Figure 2.** Distribution of LLI values (3 intervals)



Source: Authors’ study.

In contrast, a “Polish Libertarian” is a person who scored between 4.01 and 5.00. In this case, the reference point was to divide the range of possible scores into four parts (i.e., 1.00-2.00; 2.01-3.00; 3.01-4.00; 4.01-5.00). Such respondents accounted for 4.3% of the survey sample. On the other hand, the percentage of respondents declaring views from the opposite pole of the scale (anti-Libertarian) was only 0.9%.

**Figure 3.** Distribution of LLI Values (4 Intervals)



Source: Authors’ study.

Detailed descriptive statistics for the LLI can be found in Table 1. The mean value of the index for the entire sample was 3.24, suggesting a slight predominance of liberal declarations, as already noted in the distribution charts. The so-called mixed or moderate attitudes are most strongly represented; hence, the results are closely scattered around the metric midpoint of the scale, i.e., 3.00. The values of the economic (ELLI) and axiological (ALLI) indexes show that Poles are somewhat more liberal in the axiological (worldview) sense while less liberal in the economic sense.

**Table 1.** Descriptive Statistics for the Liberalism/Libertarianism Index (LLI)

|   |      |
|---|------|
| Liberalism/Libertarianism Index (arithmetic mean)   | 3.24 |
| Median  | 3.26 |
| Mode  | 3.58 |
| The lowest value of the LLI in the research sample  | 1.77 |
| The highest value of the LLI in the research sample | 4.78 |
| Economic LLI (ELLI)                                 | 3.15 |
| Axiological LLI (ALLI)                              | 3.39 |

Source: Authors' study.

However, observing respondents' views about particular issues can give a more complete picture of the phenomenon (Table 2). This comparison makes it possible to answer the question: on which issues do Poles declare more liberal and on which less liberal views? The assessed statements were grouped according to the classical dyad: axiological liberalism (worldview) and economic liberalism. The variants were labeled 'A' (axiological) and 'E' (economic). This determination may be debatable, but the choice was made using the method of competent judges to maximize the objectivity of the assessment. The data in the table are presented using the arithmetic mean of all respondents rating a given statement on a 5-point scale, as well as the level of support (in percentages) for options 1 and 2 on the scale (anti-liberal view), option 3 (neutral view) and options 4 and 5 (liberal view). We can see that the most liberal attitudes accompany Poles in terms of three issues categorized as axiological: the choice of family model, worldview neutrality of the state, and funding of churches. In each of these, the percentage of those adopting a liberal view was higher than 70% (the high values of the arithmetic mean also confirm this). In general, there are no clear patterns in evaluating economic and axiological issues. However, it is noteworthy that Poles declare the most anti-liberal stance towards three economic issues. Respondents strongly reject postulates suggesting a positive effect of social inequality, a vision of the world in which nation-states lose influence and subjectivity, and the prospect of the state ceasing to finance health care.



**Table 2.** Respondents' Attitudes to Liberal Ideas

| Proportion of Supporters of The Liberal View | Dimension: Economics (E) / Axiology (A) | Variable Identifier              | Arithmetic Mean of All Respondents | Support For the Liberal View (%) | Support For the Neutral View (%) | Support For the Anti-Liberal View (%) |
|--|---|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| >70%   | A                                       | Family Model                     | 4.38                               | 81                               | 11                               | 9                                     |
|  | A                                       | State Worldview Neutrality       | 4.25                               | 77                               | 15                               | 9                                     |
|  | A                                       | Church Funding                   | 4.06                               | 72                               | 14                               | 14                                    |
| >60%   | E                                       | Open Borders and Development     | 4.01                               | 69                               | 19                               | 12                                    |
|  | A                                       | Freedom of Speech                | 3.96                               | 68                               | 15                               | 17                                    |
|  | E                                       | Respect for the Foreign Employee | 3.89                               | 67                               | 21                               | 12                                    |
| >50%   | E                                       | 500+ Programme / Benefits        | 3.87                               | 66                               | 16                               | 18                                    |
|  | A                                       | Private Property                 | 3.83                               | 60                               | 22                               | 17                                    |
|  | E                                       | Taxes and Charity                | 3.72                               | 59                               | 25                               | 16                                    |
|  | E                                       | Private Over Public Management   | 3.79                               | 58                               | 30                               | 12                                    |
|  | A                                       | Power of Bureaucrats             | 3.70                               | 58                               | 26                               | 17                                    |
|  | E                                       | State Indebtedness Ban           | 3.66                               | 53                               | 31                               | 16                                    |
| >40%   | A                                       | Schools Autonomy                 | 3.63                               | 50                               | 22                               | 28                                    |
|  | A                                       | Environmental Protection         | 3.46                               | 46                               | 33                               | 21                                    |
|  | E                                       | Workers' Interests               | 3.44                               | 46                               | 36                               | 18                                    |
|  | A                                       | Freedom or a Strong State        | 3.37                               | 45                               | 33                               | 22                                    |
|  | E                                       | State Ownership of the Industry  | 3.23                               | 42                               | 29                               | 29                                    |
|  | E                                       | Health Insurance                 | 3.36                               | 42                               | 22                               | 36                                    |
|  | E                                       | Public Expenditure               | 3.13                               | 41                               | 24                               | 35                                    |

| Proportion of Supporters of The Liberal View | Dimension: Economics (E) / Axiology (A) | Variable Identifier          | Arithmetic Mean of All Respondents | Support For the Liberal View (%) | Support For the Neutral View (%) | Support For the Anti-Liberal View (%) |
|--|---|------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| >30%   | E                                       | Private Pension System       | 3.01                               | 37                               | 28                               | 36                                    |
|  | E                                       | Energy Sector Privatisation  | 2.95                               | 34                               | 32                               | 34                                    |
|  | A                                       | Cannabis Legalisation        | 2.70                               | 32                               | 18                               | 50                                    |
| >20%   | A                                       | Gun Ownership                | 2.81                               | 31                               | 17                               | 52                                    |
|  | E                                       | Taxes                        | 2.62                               | 31                               | 21                               | 48                                    |
|  | E                                       | Transport Privatisation      | 3.08                               | 27                               | 37                               | 37                                    |
|  | E                                       | State Support for Technology | 2.59                               | 23                               | 17                               | 60                                    |
|  | A                                       | Freedom or Security          | 2.45                               | 21                               | 26                               | 53                                    |
| <20%   | A                                       | Responsibility for Security  | 2.23                               | 16                               | 25                               | 60                                    |
|  | E                                       | Fighting Inequalities        | 2.22                               | 14                               | 29                               | 57                                    |
|  | E                                       | World Without States         | 1.44                               | 9                                | 18                               | 73                                    |
|  | E                                       | Health Services Financing    | 4.38                               | 4                                | 7                                | 89                                    |

The data was sorted in descending order by the level of support for the liberal view.

Source: Authors' study.

## DIFFERENTIATION OF LIBERAL ORIENTATION BY SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

The second research question examined the variations in LLI values among respondents with different socio-demographic characteristics. The results of this analysis are illustrated in Table 3. Depending on the nature of the variable, different statistical tests (e.g., t-student test or one-way ANOVA) were used to assess the significance of the within-group differences. At this stage, these were one-way analyses, which prevented the identification of the direct effects of individual variables on LLI values. Thus, LLI values were found not to be significantly different for variables such as gender, place of residence, interest in politics, employment sector, and willingness to participate in elections.

Analysis of the relationships between variables revealed statistically significant differences in ILL values for the following characteristics: **age** (younger respondents are more liberal than older respondents, so the older the respondent, the lower the ILL value was; those in the 18-29 and 30-39 age groups have higher ILL than the general respondents; in each age group ALLI is higher than ELLI; the ELLI value in the 70+ age group falls below the metric midpoint of the scale, i.e. economic anti-liberals outnumber liberals in this group); **education** (those with tertiary education are more liberal than others); **declared political views on the left/right scale** (those with left-wing identifications have a higher LLI than those with right-wing views – this may be due to the specific perception of ‘right-wingness’ among Polish voters, as well as the significant representation of Law and Justice party (*Prawo i Sprawiedliwość*) supporters in the sample, who most often declare right-wing views; those declaring their views as centrist have the highest LLI); **religious practices** (the higher the LLI is, the less often someone participates in religious practices); **net monthly earnings** (the value of the LLI increases with earnings; those with the lowest income are also characterised by the lowest ELLI); **political party preferences** (the most liberal are voters of the Confederation party (*Konfederacja*) and the Civic Coalition (*Koalicja Obywatelska*); the most anti-liberal electorate has Law and Justice; this group also has a very low ELLI, suggesting a significant predominance of those with anti-liberal views in this dimension).

**Table 3.** LLI Values According to Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

|  | <b>Variable</b>                        | <b>LLI</b> | <b>ELLI</b> | <b>ALLI</b> |
|--|--|------------|-------------|-------------|
| <b>Gender</b>                                  | Female                                 | 3.23       | 3.15        | 3.37        |
|  | Male                                   | 3.26       | 3.16        | 3.42        |
| <b>Age Group</b>                               | 18-29                                  | 3.44       | 3.35        | 3.59        |
|  | 30-39                                  | 3.40       | 3.32        | 3.52        |
|  | 40-49                                  | 3.23       | 3.14        | 3.39        |
|  | 50-59                                  | 3.13       | 3.07        | 3.26        |
|  | 60-69                                  | 3.12       | 3.02        | 3.27        |
|  | 70 +                                   | 3.05       | 2.92        | 3.24        |
| <b>Place Of Residence</b>                      | Village                                | 3.23       | 3.13        | 3.38        |
|  | A town with up to 20,000 people        | 3.23       | 3.12        | 3.41        |
|  | City between 20,000 and 100,000 people | 3.30       | 3.23        | 3.42        |
|  | City with 100,000 to 500,000 people    | 3.24       | 3.16        | 3.38        |
|  | A city with more than 500,000 people   | 3.24       | 3.14        | 3.38        |
| <b>Education</b>                               | Primary, lower secondary               | 3.19       | 3.07        | 3.36        |
|  | Basic vocational                       | 3.10       | 2.97        | 3.31        |
|  | Secondary                              | 3.25       | 3.13        | 3.44        |
|  | Higher                                 | 3.29       | 3.25        | 3.38        |
| <b>Declared Political Views</b>                | Left-wing                              | 3.36       | 3.26        | 3.51        |
|  | Centrist                               | 3.41       | 3.36        | 3.50        |
|  | Right-wing                             | 3.03       | 2.93        | 3.20        |
| <b>Interest in Politics</b>                    | Definitely not interested              | 3.23       | 3.13        | 3.39        |
|  | Rather not interested                  | 3.21       | 3.13        | 3.36        |
|  | Rather interested                      | 3.27       | 3.18        | 3.42        |
|  | Definitely interested                  | 3.22       | 3.11        | 3.37        |
| <b>Willingness To Participate in Elections</b> | No                                     | 3.24       | 3.13        | 3.41        |
|  | Yes                                    | 3.25       | 3.16        | 3.39        |
| <b>Employment Sector</b>                       | Non-governmental                       | 3.35       | 3.28        | 3.48        |
|  | Private                                | 3.32       | 3.23        | 3.47        |
|  | Public                                 | 3.23       | 3.18        | 3.33        |
| <b>Religious Practices</b>                     | Several times a week                   | 3.01       | 2.97        | 3.08        |
|  | Once a week                            | 3.09       | 3.01        | 3.22        |
|  | 1-2 times a month                      | 3.17       | 3.08        | 3.33        |
|  | Several times a year                   | 3.33       | 3.22        | 3.50        |
|  | I do not participate at all            | 3.41       | 3.31        | 3.57        |

|   | Variable  | LLI  | ELLI | ALLI |
|---|---|------|------|------|
| Net Monthly Earnings                              | Up to PLN 1500  | 3.12 | 2.99 | 3.34 |
|   | Between PLN 1500 and 2500                                   | 3.13 | 3.01 | 3.30 |
|   | Between PLN 2500 and 3500                                   | 3.25 | 3.13 | 3.42 |
|   | Between PLN 3500 and 4500                                   | 3.30 | 3.22 | 3.44 |
|   | Between PLN 4500 and 7000                                   | 3.29 | 3.23 | 3.40 |
|   | Over PLN 7000   | 3.34 | 3.30 | 3.42 |
| Political Preferences*                            | Confederation ( <i>Konfederacja</i> )                       | 3.65 | 3.59 | 3.75 |
|   | Civic Coalition ( <i>Koalicja Obywatelska</i> )             | 3.47 | 3.42 | 3.56 |
|   | Poland 2050 ( <i>Polska 2050</i> )                          | 3.40 | 3.35 | 3.50 |
|   | The Left ( <i>Lewica</i> )                                  | 3.31 | 3.14 | 3.55 |
|   | AGROunion ( <i>AGROunia</i> )                               | 3.28 | 3.26 | 3.34 |
|   | Undecided   | 3.23 | 3.15 | 3.38 |
|   | Polish People's Party ( <i>Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe</i> ) | 3.15 | 3.04 | 3.33 |
| Law and Justice ( <i>Prawo i Sprawiedliwość</i> ) | 2.85  | 2.73 | 3.05 |      |

\* At the time of the survey.

Source: Authors' study.

## INDEPENDENT DETERMINANTS OF LIBERAL ORIENTATION

Bearing in mind that the effect of some variables on the value of the LLI (as well as the ALLI and ELLI) may be direct. In contrast, other variables may be indirect, so we checked which variables act as independent predictors of the LLI. This would answer the third research question: Which socio-demographic factors determine a more substantial acceptance of liberal (and libertarian) values? To this end, we applied a multivariate analysis of the influence of 11 variables on a quantitative variable (LLI) using linear regression. Results are presented as parameter values of the regression model with a 95% confidence interval. A significance level of 0.05 was used in the analysis.

A multivariate linear regression model showed that three variables were significant independent predictors of LLI values:

- age group membership:** the regression coefficient decreases in each group compared to the 18-29 reference group (for example, membership of the 70+ group decreases the LLI by an average of 0.254 compared to the 18-29 age group);
- party preference:** Civic Coalition (regression coefficient is 0.248, preference raises the LLI by 0.248 points on average relative to the 'Other/Unspecified' preference); Confederation (regression coefficient is 0.430, preference raises the LLI by 0.430 points on average relative to the 'Other/Unspecified' preference); Poland 2050 (regression coefficient is 0.157, preference raises the LLI by 0.157 points on average relative to the 'Others/Unspecified' preference); and Law and Justice (regression

- coefficient is -0.236, preference lowers the LLI by 0.236 points on average relative to the 'Others/Unspecified' preference);
- c. **religious practices:** 1-2 times a month (the regression coefficient is -0.136, frequency of religious practices lowers the LLI by 0.136 points, on average, relative to the LLI values of total non-practitioners); once a week (the regression coefficient is -0.127, frequency of religious practices lowers the LLI by 0.127 points relative to the LLI of completely non-practitioners); several times a week (the regression coefficient is -0.163, frequency of religious practice lowers the LLI by an average of 0.163 points relative to the LLI of completely non-practitioners).

**Table 4.** The results of regression analysis

|                                 | Variable                               | Regression coefficient (B) | CI     |        | p        |
|---------------------------------|--|----------------------------|--------|--------|----------|
| <b>Gender</b>                   | Female                                 | ref.                       |        |        |          |
|                                 | Male                                   | -0.045                     | -0.102 | 0.012  | 0.124    |
| <b>Age Group</b>                | 18 – 29                                | ref.                       |        |        |          |
|                                 | 30 – 39                                | -0.003                     | -0.098 | 0.093  | 0.955    |
|                                 | 40 – 49                                | -0.134                     | -0.231 | -0.036 | 0.007 *  |
|                                 | 50 – 59                                | -0.199                     | -0.297 | -0.102 | <0.001 * |
|                                 | 60 – 69                                | -0.149                     | -0.251 | -0.047 | 0.004 *  |
|                                 | 70 +                                   | -0.254                     | -0.369 | -0.139 | <0.001 * |
| <b>Place Of Residence</b>       | Village                                | ref.                       |        |        |          |
|                                 | A town with up to 20,000 people        | -0.001                     | -0.08  | 0.078  | 0.988    |
|                                 | City between 20,000 and 100,000 people | 0.040                      | -0.032 | 0.111  | 0.275    |
|                                 | City with 100,000 to 500,000 people    | -0.032                     | -0.109 | 0.045  | 0.417    |
|                                 | A city with more than 500,000 people   | -0.061                     | -0.148 | 0.026  | 0.169    |
| <b>Education</b>                | Primary, lower secondary               | ref.                       |        |        |          |
|                                 | Basic vocational                       | -0.057                     | -0.215 | 0.100  | 0.474    |
|                                 | Secondary                              | -0.064                     | -0.215 | 0.086  | 0.402    |
|                                 | Higher                                 | -0.105                     | -0.262 | 0.052  | 0.189    |
| <b>Declared Political Views</b> | Undecided                              | ref.                       |        |        |          |
|                                 | Left-wing                              | -0.008                     | -0.099 | 0.083  | 0.870    |
|                                 | Centrist                               | 0.057                      | -0.028 | 0.141  | 0.188    |
|                                 | Right-wing                             | -0.077                     | -0.163 | 0.009  | 0.079    |
| <b>Interest in Politics</b>     | Definitely not interested              | ref.                       |        |        |          |
|                                 | Rather not interested                  | -0.045                     | -0.160 | 0.069  | 0.438    |
|                                 | Rather interested                      | -0.007                     | -0.121 | 0.108  | 0.909    |
|                                 | Definitely interested                  | -0.025                     | -0.150 | 0.101  | 0.702    |

|  | Variable                     | Regression coefficient (B) | CI     |        | p        |
|--|------------------------------|----------------------------|--------|--------|----------|
| <b>Willingness To Participate in Elections</b> | No                           | ref.                       |        |        |          |
|  | Yes                          | 0.028                      | -0.074 | 0.131  | 0.590    |
| <b>Employment Sector</b>                       | Not Specified/Not Applicable | ref.                       |        |        |          |
|  | Non-governmental             | 0.025                      | -0.146 | 0.196  | 0.776    |
|  | Private                      | 0.028                      | -0.047 | 0.104  | 0.463    |
|  | Public                       | -0.034                     | -0.122 | 0.054  | 0.453    |
| <b>Religious Practices</b>                     | I do not participate at all  | ref.                       |        |        |          |
|  | Several times a year         | -0.01                      | -0.083 | 0.062  | 0.779    |
|  | 1–2 times a month            | -0.136                     | -0.225 | -0.047 | 0.003 *  |
|  | Once a week                  | -0.127                     | -0.205 | -0.049 | 0.001 *  |
|  | Several times a week         | -0.163                     | -0.286 | -0.04  | 0.010 *  |
| <b>Net Monthly Earnings</b>                    | Unspecified                  | ref.                       |        |        |          |
|  | Up to 1500                   | -0.080                     | -0.199 | 0.038  | 0.185    |
|  | Between PLN 1500 and 2500    | -0.030                     | -0.134 | 0.074  | 0.575    |
|  | Between PLN 2500 and 3500    | -0.014                     | -0.112 | 0.084  | 0.783    |
|  | Between PLN 3500 and 4500    | 0.055                      | -0.049 | 0.159  | 0.303    |
|  | Between PLN 4500 and 7000    | 0.027                      | -0.078 | 0.132  | 0.617    |
|  | Over PLN 7000                | 0.011                      | -0.114 | 0.137  | 0.860    |
| <b>Political Preferences</b>                   | Other/Unspecified            | ref.                       |        |        |          |
|  | Civic Coalition              | 0.248                      | 0.153  | 0.342  | <0.001 * |
|  | Confederation                | 0.430                      | 0.295  | 0.565  | <0.001 * |
|  | The Left                     | 0.062                      | -0.073 | 0.197  | 0.371    |
|  | Poland 2050                  | 0.157                      | 0.056  | 0.258  | 0.002 *  |
|  | Polish People's Party        | -0.018                     | -0.195 | 0.159  | 0.843    |
|  | Law and Justice              | -0.236                     | -0.336 | -0.135 | <0.001 * |

Source: Authors' study.

## Summary

In this article, we have attempted to describe as accurately as possible the structure of Polish society's views along the 'liberal' vs. 'anti-liberal' dimension. We have done so based on the results of a survey carried out on a representative sample of adult Poles. Consequently, the survey results and the derived conclusions can significantly contribute to the discussion on political attitudes and even the political culture of Polish society. By posing the first research question, we aimed to establish the extent of acceptance of liberal (libertarian) ideas in the sense we adopted in the article's previous sections. Based on the results, we can confirm the validity of hypotheses H1 and H2, formulated as propositions to address this question.



Indeed, a consistent and strong liberal (libertarian) orientation is not widespread in Polish society. In Poland, people with near libertarian views represent a relatively small number. The selected – quantitative – method of measurement means that the higher the LLI, the stronger and more consistent the liberal (libertarian) orientation of the respondent. Consequently, the orientations of “Polish Libertarians” (4.3% across the research sample) are stronger and more consistent than those of “Polish Liberals” (19.4%). However, this does not mean these liberal (libertarian) orientations are less represented than the ‘anti-liberal’ orientations. The survey results lead to the opposite conclusion, although the so-called mixed or moderate attitudes are the most strongly represented. Poles are also slightly more liberal in the axiological (social) sense while less liberal in the economic sense, as indicated by the differences in the levels of ELLI and ALLI indicators (in total and for each group based on demographic variables in Table 3).

We sought to determine which social groups (distinguished based on socio-demographic characteristics) liberal (libertarian) views are more popular. By hypothesis H3, we assumed that a stronger and more consistent liberal orientation would be characterized by people who are more financially independent (with higher incomes), are younger, better educated, live in larger cities, are employed in the private sector, and are less religious. The results of the data analysis showed statistically significant differences in LLI levels for four of the six variables listed in the hypothesis, which we can only partially accept. Respondents declaring higher income, younger, better educated, and less religious were found to be more liberal. However, it is essential to note that at this stage, we only found the statistical significance of LLI differences between different groups (e.g., age groups or people declaring incomes in different ranges) and not the effect of these variables on the LLI value.

Our third aim was to identify socio-demographic factors that may act as significant independent predictors of LLI. We assumed in hypothesis H4 that gender would not serve such a function and in hypothesis H5 that such an independent determinant would be variables such as age, education, and income. Linear regression analysis allowed us to verify both hypotheses precisely. We found that only age, party preference, and religiosity directly and independently influence LLI values. The influence of the other variable – if it exists – is somewhat indirect. For example, we see that the groups of better-educated respondents (middle level and above) have relatively fewer older people and more younger people (with the relationship between age and education being statistically significant), which means that those with higher education in the sample had a higher LLI. The relationship between age and earnings level is similar. Regression analysis did not confirm the independence of the effect of education and income on LLI. Thus, it can be concluded that more substantial and more consistent liberal (libertarian) orientations are accompanied by younger people who prefer voting for the Confederation, Civic Coalition, and Poland 2050 and less intensely religious people.

## Acknowledgments

The survey was conceived and organized by the Polish Libertarian Association (Stowarzyszenie Libertariańskie), which carried out fundraising efforts through social crowdfunding.

The Economic Freedom Foundation (Fundacja Wolności Gospodarczej) played a significant role in supporting the execution of the study.

## References:

- Barthes, R. (2009). *Mythologies* (A. Lavers, Trans.; Vintage Classics; Revised edition). Vintage Classics.
- Boaz, D. (1998). *Libertarianism: A primer*. Free Press.
- Boaz, D., & Kirby, D. (2006). The Libertarian Vote. *Policy Analysis*, 580, 1–28. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.975672>
- Boaz, D., & Kirby, D. (2010). The Libertarian Vote in the Age of Obama. *Policy Analysis*, 658, 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1543989>
- Chandler, R. (1972). *Public Opinion: Changing Attitudes on Contemporary Political and Social Issues*. R. R. Bowker Co.
- Chmielowski, M. (2015). *Agoryzm: Teoria i praktyka*. Fundacja Wolności i Przedsiębiorczości.
- Chmielowski, M. (2020). Economic Society in Kraków as Polish Pre-war Pro-Liberty Think Tank. In F. N. Fernández, B. Kolm, & V. Schmid (Eds.), *The Indispensability of Freedom: 8<sup>th</sup> International Conference the Austrian School of Economics in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Papers presented on November 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>, 2019* (pp. 103–113). Austrian Economics Center and Fundación International Bases.
- Davis, D. W., & Silver, B. D. (2004). Civil Liberties vs. Security: Public Opinion in the Context of the Terrorist Attacks on America. *American Journal of Political Science*, 48(1), 28–46. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0092-5853.2004.00054.x>
- Dominiak, Ł. (2017). Libertarianism and Original Appropriation. *Historia i polityka*, 22(29), 43–56. <https://doi.org/10.12775/HiP.2017.026>
- Dominiak, Ł., & Block, W. E. (2017). Libertarian Theory of Bribery and Incitement: A Reformulation. *MEST Journal*, 5(2), 95–101.
- Feldman, S., & Johnston, C. (2014). Understanding the Determinants of Political Ideology: Implications of Structural Complexity. *Political Psychology*, 35(3), 337–358. <https://doi.org/10.1111/pops.12055>
- Gallup (2002). *Which Freedoms Will Americans Trade for Security?* <https://news.gallup.com/poll/6196/Which-Freedoms-Will-Americans-Trade-Security.aspx>
- Gerson, G. (2017). Liberalism: The Life of an Idea. *The European Legacy*, 22(5), 618–620. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10848770.2017.1304052>
- Gibbins, R., Ponting, J. R., & Symons, G. L. (1978). Attitudes and Ideology: Correlates of Liberal Attitudes Towards the Role of Women. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 9(1), 19–40.
- Hankus, P. (2018). Libertarianizm nie jest utopizmem. Dlaczego twierdzenia o utopijności libertarianizmu są fałszywe? *Dialogi polityczne*, 22, 11–22. <https://doi.org/10.12775/DP.2017.001>
- Iyer, R., Koleva, S., Graham, J., Ditto, P., & Haidt, J. (2012). Understanding Libertarian Morality: The Psychological Dispositions of Self-Identified Libertarians. *PLoS ONE*, 7(8), e42366. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0042366>
- Juruś, D. (2012). *W poszukiwaniu podstaw libertarianizmu: W perspektywie Rothbardowskiej koncepcji własności*. Księgarnia Akademicka.

- Kaleta, K. (2016). *Libertarian Movement in Poland 1976-1991 in Its International Context*. <https://kaletakris.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/libertarianism-poland.pdf>
- Kaleta, K. (2023). *Beyond The Freedom Line: Analysing Libertarian Digital Community in Poland*. Manchester Metropolitan University (Unpublished thesis, planned defence Autumn 2023).
- Kiley, J. (2014). *In Search of Libertarians*. Pew Research Center. <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2014/08/25/in-search-of-libertarians/>
- Kłosińska, K. (2012). *Etyczny i pragmatyczny: Polskie dyskursy polityczne po 1989 roku*. Narodowe Centrum Kultury.
- Maddox, W. S., & Lilie, S. A. (1984). *Beyond Liberal and Conservative: Reassessing the Political Spectrum*. Cato Institute.
- McCloskey, D. N. (2011). *Bourgeois Dignity: Why Economics Can't Explain the Modern World*. University of Chicago Press.
- Marzęcki, R. (2008). IV RP i mit liberalizmu – analiza mitów polskiej polityki w świetle koncepcji G. Sorela, R. Girardeta, E. Cassirera i R. Barthesa. In B. Szklarski (Ed.), *Mity, symbole i rytuały we współczesnej polityce: Szkice z antropologii polityki* (pp. 84–95). Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar.
- Megger, D. (2021). Determinism, Free Will, and the Austrian School of Economics. *Journal of Economic Methodology*, 28(4), 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1350178X.2021.1926528>
- Nowakowski, P. (2017). Anarchokapitalizm – ideologia polityczna, doktryna polityczno-prawna czy nurt filozoficzno-polityczny? *Societas et Ius*, 5, 31–46. <https://doi.org/10.12775/SEI.2016.003>
- Oakeshott, M. (1999). *On History and Other Essays*. Liberty Fund.
- Pew Research Center (2017). *The Partisan Divide on Political Values Grows Even Wider*. <https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2017/10/05/the-partisan-divide-on-political-values-grows-even-wider/>
- Rogaczewska, K. (2011). *Ekonomiczny wymiar polskiego liberalizmu: Od fizjokratyzmu do Szkoły Krakowskiej*. Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego.
- Sartori, G. (1987). *The Theory of Democracy Revisited. Part Two: The Classical Issues*. Chatham House Publishers.
- Schreiber, E. M. (1975). The Social Bases of Opinions on Woman's Role in Canada. *Canadian Journal of Sociology / Cahiers Canadiens de Sociologie*, 1(1), 61–74. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3340011>
- Slenzok, N. (2021). Libertarianism, Property Rights, and the COVID-19 Pandemic Policies. *Journal of Libertarian Studies*, 25(1), 272–299.
- Slenzok, N. (2022). The Libertarian Argumentation Ethics, the Transcendental Pragmatics of Language, and the Conflict-Freedom Principle. *Analiza i Egzystencja*, 58(2), 35–64. <https://doi.org/10.18276/aie.2022.58-03>
- Swedlow, B. (2008). Beyond Liberal and Conservative: Two-Dimensional Conceptions of Ideology and the Structure of Political Attitudes and Values. *Journal of Political Ideologies*, 13(2), 157–180. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13569310802075969>
- Titlestad, P. J. H. (2010). Liberalism. *English Academy Review*, 27(2), 94–100. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10131752.2010.514989>
- Turowski, K., Machaj, M. (2022). The Present State of Austrian School of Economics in Europe. Contributions to Economics. In A. Godart-van der Kroon & J. Salerno (Eds.), *The Austrian School of Economics in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (pp. 85–115). Springer.
- Wiśniewski, J. B. (2022). The Capital Structure of Libertarian Production. *Studia Humana*, 11(2), 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.2478/sh-2022-0005>