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RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AT POLISH SCHOOLS IN THE CONTEXT OF SOCIOLOGICAL STUDIES

The analysis of long-standing sociological studies shows that Religious Education at schools is approved of by the vast majority of the Polish society. This approval, undoubtedly, results from the religious declarations of Poles which demonstrate that about 90% of them belong to the Catholic Church. Both parents and school goers say that catechization at school helps them to organize everyday activities and allows to save time which they would have to devote to go to extra afterschool activities if RE classes took place outside of school. The vast majority of school goers participate in RE classes and think positive of them. Neither parents nor school goers are interested in the ideological or political disputes over the presence of RE in the school curriculum. Therefore, they are not influenced by circles who favor a secular school, which, guided by ideological reasons, contest the introduction of religion teaching to Polish schools. The sociological research shows that the teaching of religion at school enjoys the support of the majority of parents and students, while the smallest approval is seen among politicians with liberal and leftist views. Politicians opposed to catechesis at school do not take into account the opinion of the majority of Polish society supporting religious education, but rather follow their own ideological beliefs or the ideological line of their own party. Hence, tensions and conflicts about teaching religion in Polish public schools most often take place. Sometimes disputes have a sharp emotional impact, especially when the antagonized parties try to draw parents and students into conflict. Misunderstandings regarding the presence of catechesis in school do not affect legal regulations regarding this issue.

Keywords: Religious Education, RE classes, catechesis, school, school goers, young generation, public opinion.

1. INTRODUCTION

The legacy of the communist totalitarian system required major transformations within the scope of the religious policy in Poland due to the fact that, for over 40 year, the communist authorities administratively restricted religious freedom of citizens. The manifestation of this ideological struggle was, i.e., depriving school goers of the possibility to attend RE classes at school².

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² S. Skuza, *Nauczanie religii w Polsce w świetle prawa państwowego po roku 1945*, „Kolekcja Communio” 1993, No. 8, p. 242; S. Bober, *Walka o utrzymanie nauczania religii w szkołach w okresie Polski Ludowej*, „Studia Elckie” 2012, No. 14, p. 196–197; A. Dudek, R. Gryz, *Komuniści i Kościół w Polsce (1945–1989)*, Kraków 2006, p. 159–161.

An important initiative after the fall of communism in Poland in 1989 was ensuring the right to religious freedom to all citizens. The re-establishment of the rule of freedom of conscious and of worship and, therefore, guaranteeing religious freedom to citizens was one of the fundamental democratic standards in the civil society. The political transformations after the fall of communism created favourable conditions for the re-introduction of Religious Education to state schools. In September 1990, the first Polish non-communist government decided to introduce non-mandatory RE classes to state schools³. This reactivation granted school goers unrestricted access to moral and religious formation⁴.

Not all political powers or environments, which represented different beliefs, wanted to accept the governmental decision of the re-introduction of RE to schools. Therefore, it became the reason for the ideological conflict, especially between the representatives of the antagonist parties. In this dispute, the politicians did not listen to the voice of the Polish society, but they expressed their own opinions.

On the basis of the analysis of the sociological studies, the author of this publication presents the opinions of the Polish society on RE teaching at state schools. The author pays particular attention to the scale of the social approval for RE classes at school and to the opinions of school goers on the quality of the classes. He also presents various opinions on the presence of Religious Education in the school curriculum.

2. POLITICAL CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE DISPUTE OVER RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AT SCHOOL

Liberal and left-wing environments treated RE classes at school as a form of moral socialization, based on religious motivation⁵. The legal basis for RE teaching was challenged by them before the Constitutional Tribunal. They were of the opinion that it infringed the secular character of schools, especially the rule of freedom of conscious and of worship⁶. Moreover, they referred to the practices of the Western, highly-developed, countries which,

³ R. Czekalski, *Rys historyczny lekcji religii katolickiej w Polsce*, „Studia Katechetyczne” 2010, No. 7, p. 122–123; Adamczuk L. (2000), *Nauczanie religii w Polsce 1945–1999* [in:] *Kościół i religijność Polaków 1945–1999*, ed. W. Zdaniewicz, T. Zembrzuski, Warszawa 2000, p. 242; J. Szpet, *Vademecum Katechety*, Poznań 2000, p. 7.

⁴ R. Bednarczyk, *Efektywność szkolnej lekcji religii w perspektywie „filarów wiary”* [in:] *Nauczanie religii w szkole w latach 1990–2015 wobec zadań katechezy*, ed. A. Rayzacher-Majewska, Warszawa 2016, p. 13–14; A. Rayzacher-Majewska, *Wychowawcze zadania katechezy w szkolnym nauczaniu religii* [in:] *Nauczanie religii w szkole...*, p. 87–88.

⁵ K. Koseła, *Religia przy tablicy – postawy wobec lekcji religii w szkołach* [in:] *Szkola czy parafia? Nauka religii w szkole w świetle badań socjologicznych*, ed. K. Kiciński, K. Koseła, W. Pawlik, Kraków 1995, p. 100.

⁶ A. Dudek, *Historia polityczna Polski 1989–2005*, wyd. 1, Kraków 2007, p. 157–158; M. Kinal, *Teaching of religion in polish schools after 1989* [in:] *Sociology of Religion. Selected aspects from Central European Region*, ed. W. Jedynak, J. Kinal, D. Luźny, D. Topinka, Rzeszów 2016, p. 122; W. Pawlik, *Nauka religii w szkole jako problem polityczny* [in:] *Szkola czy parafia? Nauka religii w szkole w świetle badań socjologicznych*, ed. K. Kiciński, K. Koseła, W. Pawlik, Kraków 1995, p. 33–35.

for many years, had been walking away from moral socialization and, therefore, undermined the influence of the Church on the upbringing of young generations⁷.

The opinions of some of the politicians who were against RE teaching at school may be regarded as an example of the alienation of policy which reveals the tension between the majority of the society (which approved of school catechesis) and the elites (which were engaged in the ideological dispute).

The sociological studies, carried out in the first few years after the introduction of RE to schools, show that the dispute over Religious Education at school resulted from the rivalry between political powers rather than from different opinions in the society. This conclusion can be drawn from the comparison of the surveys which demonstrate the approval of school catechesis expressed by the general public, youngsters and the delegates participating in the meetings of the major political parties (the Democratic Union, the Liberal and Democratic Congress).

The national studies, carried out by the Public Opinion Research Centre in the first years after the introduction of Religious Education to schools (1990–1992), show that about two third of adult Poles and school goers of the last class of the secondary school supported the idea of RE teaching at schools. One quarter of the respondents expressed the opposite opinion. The proportions were similar among both the youngsters as well as adult Poles⁸.

In the case of the representatives of the political parties the support for school catechesis was decidedly weaker, which was revealed in the sociological studies carried out among the delegates participating in party congresses between 1991–1992. The weakest support was declared by the representatives of the liberal parties⁹ which had a strong position in the political circles of the ruling party as, after 1989, liberalism turned out to be the most influential political trend in Poland¹⁰. About two third of the delegates of the liberal parties, i.e. the Democratic Union and the Liberal and Democratic Congress, did not approve of the decision to introduce Religious Education to schools and one quarter thought the opposite. The studies did not include the declarations of the members of the left-wing party – the Social Democracy of the Republic of Poland which brought together people of the former nomenclature, i.e. post-communists¹¹.

By controlling mass media, the liberals and the representatives of the former system had a strong influence on the public opinion and presented RE at school as an attempt on the secular character of state schools. They also inspired public debates in which the allegedly unconstitutional character of RE classes at school was discussed.

The presented study results show that the support of adult Poles and youngsters for the introduction of Religious Education to schools was greater than the support of the representatives of the influential liberal parties. The fact that each side had a different opinion proved that the politicians, elected by the society, did not support their voters when it comes to RE teaching at schools. Instead they acted in the interest of their party or according to

⁷ K. Kosęła, *Religia przy tablicy – postawy wobec lekcji religii w szkołach* [in:] *Szkoła czy parafia?...*, p. 100.

⁸ M. Grabowska, *Czy elity polityczne reprezentują poglądy społeczeństwa?* [in:] *Nauka religii w szkole...*, p. 57.

⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 57–58.

¹⁰ Z. Krasnodębski, *Demokracja peryferii*, wyd. 2, Gdańsk 2005, p. 26; J. Szacki, *Liberalizm po komunizmie*, wyd. 1, Kraków 1994, p. 255–258.

¹¹ M. Grabowska, *Czy elity polityczne reprezentują poglądy społeczeństwa...*, p. 57–59.

their own convictions. The elites, busy with the political and ideological struggle, lost contact with their voters who they should represent. The objection to RE teaching at school was the element of the ideological struggle waged against the Catholic Church which, at that time, was accused of attempting to introduce a new kind of totalitarianism¹², of building a religious state¹³ and of ideologising the public space¹⁴. It was also presented as the enemy of democracy and modernity and as a relic of traditional parochialism and backwardness¹⁵. The liberals and post-communists presented the Catholic Church in the same way as communists had been presented in the past, i.e. as a leading power aimed at the totalization of social life¹⁶.

There was a heated public debate in which the supporters and the opponents of RE teaching at school presented many for and against arguments. The opponents were of the opinion that catechesis in state schools infringed the democratic rule of the separation of the Church and the state. School as a secular institution could not become a place of catechization whose aim was to strengthen the religious beliefs of young people and to engage them in the religious life of Church community groups. Religious Education should not be the educational task of schools. State schools were to educate by presenting knowledge to students and by forming humanistic attitudes in them. The formation of religious convictions fell within the remit of the Church which should carry out its mission in its facilities and with its own money. The Church should not burden the school with the responsibility to organize and finance catechization¹⁷.

The opponents of school catechesis were also of the opinion that teaching about the Catholic religion at state schools privileged one religion and, at the same time, discriminated other beliefs. They also presented formal and legal objections claiming that Religious Education was introduced to schools in an inappropriate and undemocratic way as it had not been preceded by social consultations, especially among parents and school goers. The forceful way of the introduction of RE to state schools was a display of the abuse of power by the Catholic Church in the society¹⁸. They believed that Religious Education was a display of clericalization of public life and a form of indoctrination. Moreover, it had a negative influence on school communities as it introduced divisions among school goers, favoured intolerance and generated antagonisms when it comes to their worldview¹⁹.

The supporters of Religious Education at school were of the opinion that it was an important achievement of the European democracy which respected the freedom of conscious and of worship. It enabled parents to exercise their freedom of religion who had the right to

¹² A. Dudek, *Historia polityczna Polski 1989–2005*, wyd. 1, Kraków 2007, p. 156.

¹³ A. Michnik, *Kościół – lewica – dialog*, Warszawa 2009, p. 231.

¹⁴ H. Świda-Ziemba, *Człowiek wewnętrznie zniewolony. Mechanizmy i konsekwencje minionej formacji – analiza psychospołeczna*, Warszawa 1997, p. 414.

¹⁵ J. Gowin, *Kościół w czasach wolności 1989–1999*, Kraków 1999, p. 43.

¹⁶ H. Świda-Ziemba, *Człowiek wewnętrznie zniewolony. Mechanizmy i konsekwencje minionej formacji – analiza psychospołeczna*, Warszawa 1997, p. 416, 421.

¹⁷ J. Baniak, *O nauczaniu religii i etyki w szkole*, <http://www.kulturaswiecka.pl/node/641> (access 30.12.2017).

¹⁸ K. Kiciński (1995), *Religia w szkole: argumenty za i przeciw*, in: *Szkoła czy parafia?...*, p. 80; J. Baniak, *O nauczaniu religii...*

¹⁹ L. Adamczuk, *Nauczanie religii w Polsce 1945–1999* [in:] *Kościół i religijność Polaków 1945–1999...*, p. 246; A. Szwałkajzer, *Młodzież o lekcjach religii w szkole* [in:] *Szkoła czy parafia?...*, p. 149.

bring up their children according to their convictions not only at home but also at school. By approving of the introduction of catechization to state school the state secured the freedom of citizens to express their religious beliefs in private as well as public life²⁰. Moreover, Religious Education cherished a good Polish tradition whose continuation had been interrupted by the atheist system. School catechesis had a social support and met the expectations of the society whose vast majority (about 90%) declared the affiliation to the Catholic Church²¹.

The supporters of RE teaching at school also pointed to the valuable influence of catechesis on the process of socialization. They thought that school catechesis had an educational and didactic value. Religious Education treated about the universal rules and ethical standards and it enriched young people by raising their level of education and by teaching them propriety. School catechesis did not threaten anyone's freedom as it was not compulsory and school goers could choose between RE and ethic classes. Religious Education at school helped parents and their children to plan and organize everyday life. It took off the burden of after school activities and allowed to save time which, otherwise, school goers would have to spend on going to churches or catechization centres which, very often, were located far from schools²².

Despite an emotional dispute between the supporters and opponents of school catechesis, RE teaching is implemented at Polish schools. Its legal status is regulated by the Constitution of the Republic of Poland which says that a church religion or a religious association with a regulated legal situation may be a school subject provided that the freedom of conscious and of worship of other people is respected²³. Moreover, in the Concordat, Poland obliged itself to organize RE teaching at state primary and secondary schools as well as in kindergartens²⁴.

3. OPINIONS OF POLES ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AT SCHOOL

The reintroduction of Religious Education to schools met the general support of school goers as well as their parents. In the first year of RE teaching (1990/91), 95.8% of children and youngsters attended the classes. Primary school goers (98.0%) as well as secondary

²⁰ L. Kasper, A. Wojtas, *Nauczanie religii w szkole – zgodne z konstytucją i europejskimi standardami*, <http://www.katecheza.episkopat.pl/index.php/menu/nauczanie-religii-w-szkole/dokumenty-koscielne/104-nauczanie-religii-w-szkole-zgodne-z-konstytucja-i-europejskimi-standardami-2016> (access 29.12.2017).

²¹ K. Kiciński, *Religia w szkole: argumenty za i przeciw* [in:] *Szkoła czy parafia?...*, p. 79; A. Szwałkajzer, *Młodzież o lekcjach religii w szkole* [in:] *Szkoła czy parafia?...*, p. 148.

²² K. Kiciński, *Religia w szkole: argumenty za i przeciw* [in:] *Szkoła czy parafia?...*, p. 79.

²³ The constitution of the Republic of Poland of 2nd April 1997, art. 53, paragraph 4, Journal of Laws 1997 no 78 item 483; <http://prawo.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/download.xsp/WDU19970780483/U/D19970483Lj.pdf> (access 29.12.2017); M. Pisarek, *Obecność nauczania religii w publicznym systemie oświaty w świetle obowiązującego prawa*, Rzeszów 2013, p. 84.

²⁴ *The concordat between the Holy See and the Republic of Poland, signed in Warsaw on 28th July 1993*, art 12, paragraph 1-4 (Journal of Laws 1998 no 51 item 318); <http://prawo.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=WDU19980510318> (access 29.12.2017); B. Trzeciak, *Relacja państwo – Kościół. O polskim Konkordacie '93*, Warszawa 1998, p. 92; M. Pisarek, *Obecność nauczania religii w publicznym systemie oświaty w świetle obowiązującego prawa*, Rzeszów 2013, p. 101.

school goers (92.2%) attended RE classes most frequently, less frequently – incomplete secondary vocational school goers (89.7%) and secondary vocational school goers (88.5%)²⁵. School catechesis was accepted by almost all parents of primary school goers, as 97.3% of children who lived in the city and 99.3% of those living in villages participated in the classes²⁶. The national sociological studies conducted between 1991 and 2016 on the representative sample of secondary and vocational school goers show that the attendance at RE classes had an increasing tendency until 2010. In 2010, it reached the highest level of 93%. In the following years the trend reversed. In 2016, 75% of the respondents declared their attendance at RE classes. This was the worst result since the introduction of RE classes to state schools. Despite the fact that within six years the frequency decreased by nearly one fifth, still the vast majority of youngsters declared to participate in the classes²⁷.

The place of residence of the respondents is the variable which differentiates the frequency of the attendance at RE classes most. In 2016, youngsters living in villages participated in RE classes most frequently (85%), which meant a decrease by 11 points in comparison to 2013. Even greater decrease happened among youngsters living in cities with the population below 20,000. In 2013, 89% of them declared the attendance at RE classes, whereas in 2016 – 72%. In the same period of time, the most dynamic decrease happened among youngsters living in bigger cities (from 73% to 49%)²⁸.

Church institutions present more optimistic indicators for the attendance at RE classes. According to the statistical data of the Polish Episcopal Commission for Catholic Education, 97% of primary school goers, 95% of middle school goers and 90% of secondary school goers attended the classes in May 2015. The studies show that 94% of the total number of school goers participated in RE classes. With age, the absence from the classes increased, as secondary school goers attended them least often²⁹.

The decreasing attendance at RE classes at school is related to the transformation of religiosity and morality of young generation. Poorer indicators for auto-declaration of faith among young people, poorer participation in religious practices and selective approach towards ecclesial morality³⁰ affect the attitude towards RE teaching at school which is treated by youngsters as a meeting of religious character. Moreover, teenagers living in villages and towns who participate in RE classes most often, look up to their peers living in big

²⁵ L. Adamczuk, *Nauczanie religii w Polsce 1945–1999* [in:] *Kościół i religijność Polaków...*, p. 245.

²⁶ L. Adamczuk, *Zasięg nauczania religii w szkołach polskich w 1991 r. w świetle danych statystycznych* [in:] *Szkola czy parafia?...*, p. 17–21.

²⁷ M. Gwiazda, *Religia w szkole – uczestnictwo i ocena*, in: *Młodzież 2016. Study report*, the Public Opinion Research Centre, the National Bureau for Drug Prevention, Warszawa 2016, p. 141.

²⁸ R. Boguszewski, M. Feliksiak, M. Gwiazda, J. Kalka, *Młodzież o sobie: wartości, obyczajowość, grupy odniesienia*, in: *Młodzież 2013. Opinie i diagnozy nr 28*, ed. M. Grabowska, J. Kalka, Warszawa 2014 p. 119; M. Gwiazda, *Religia w szkole – uczestnictwo i ocena* [in:] *Młodzież 2016...*, p. 143.

²⁹ L. Kasper, A. Wojtas, *Nauczanie religii w szkole...*

³⁰ A. Głowacki, *Religijność młodzieży* [in:] *Młodzież 2016...*, p. 131–133; J. Mariański, *Młodzież między tradycją i ponowoczesnością. Wartości moralne w świadomości maturzystów*, Lublin 1995, p. 337; S.H. Zaręba, *Dynamika świadomości religijno-moralnej młodzieży w warunkach przemian ustrojowych w Polsce (1988–1998)*, Warszawa 2003, p. 274–275.

cities who show lesser interest in religious and moral issues. These changes indicate the tendency towards the secularization of young generation³¹.

High frequency of students' participation in RE classes at Polish schools is related to the social support for school catechesis. The reintroduction of Religious Education to school met positive reactions of the society. In September 1990, 61% of the respondents expressed positive emotions about it (33% – happiness, 28% – content), 21% of them were indifferent and 11% were discontent. Only 2% of the respondents were indignant³².

The national sociological studies carried out between 1991 and 2007 show that the support of Poles for Religious Education at school had an increasing tendency. In 1991, 57% of the respondents supported RE teaching at school and in 2007 – 72% (an increase by 15%). During that time the number of the opponents of school catechesis decreased (from 42% to 32%). The sociological studies carried out in 2007 demonstrate that the supporters of Religious Education at school outnumbered the opponents in all socio-demographic categories in question³³.

Such strong social support for Religious Education at school demonstrates that Poles approve of this form of religious education for children and youngsters. The vast majority of the Polish society is consistent in terms of their faith and religiosity and, therefore, they think that young generation should receive religious and moral formation at school where they are educated and brought up. Parents have the right to decide about the upbringing of their children according to their own worldview and the system of values they chose to accept. Although some Poles think that school does not create the right atmosphere for RE teaching and, therefore, the classes should be held in Church facilities, the supporters of this solution belong to the minority.

The opinions on the quality of RE teaching expressed by school goers are of significant importance when it comes to the evaluation of the process of catechization at school. The national representative sociological studies demonstrate that despite different opinions on the quality of RE teaching, the majority of them are positive.

In 1992, 36% of school goers thought that RE classes were interesting and therefore they attended them eagerly. For 39% of the respondents the classes were nothing special and 25% of youngsters found them boring. After eleven years (2003) not much changed when it comes to these opinions and the analysed indicators had the following values respectively: 41%, 34% and 25%. The most critical about the quality of catechesis were secondary school goers (38%), as they found the classes boring and irrelevant. Less critical were technical college goers (21%). The least attention to the content of catechesis and the way it was taught was paid by vocational secondary school goers (16%) and basic vocational school goers (16%)³⁴.

³¹ J. Mariański, *Przemiany moralności polskich maturzystów w latach 1994–2009. Studium socjologiczne*, Lublin 2011, p. 447–448; S.H. Zaręba, *W kierunku jakiej religijności? Studia nad katolicyzmem polskiej młodzieży*, Warszawa 2008, p. 505–507.

³² K. Koseła, *Religia przy tablicy – postawy wobec lekcji religii w szkołach* [in:] *Szkoła czy paraafia?...*, p. 91.

³³ M. Feliksiak, *Opinie o nauczaniu religii. Komunikat z badań*, BS/119/2007, Warszawa 2007; http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2007/K_119_07.PDF (28.12.2017 r.), p. 3–4.

³⁴ B. Badora, M. Gwiazda, J. Kalka, G. Świątkiewicz, *Młodzież 2003. Opinie i diagnozy nr 2*, Warszawa 2004, file:///C:/Users/Wit/Downloads/M%C5%82odzie%C5%BC_2003.pdf (30.12.2017), p. 51–52.

In 2016, two fifth of the respondents thought RE classes were interesting. Almost the same proportion (38%) thought there was nothing special about catechesis and that it was like any other school subject. Slightly over one fifth of school goers (22%) were unhappy about the classes³⁵. The comparison of the study results conducted between 1992 and 2016 shows that the evaluation of the quality of RE teaching was stable as the changes were minimal, by few percent only.

It seems that stable opinions about the quality of RE teaching at school are the result of the implementation of the same programs and teaching methods by catechists. The fact that, for twenty five years, almost two fifth of school goers thought that RE teaching stood out among other subjects and interested youngsters is an important asset of the classes.

4. SUMMARY

The reintroduction of RE teaching to state schools met the general approval of parents and school goers. High attendance at RE classes is the effect of the attachment of Poles to the Catholic religion. Despite the fact that, in the last few years, the attendance decreased, still the vast majority of young people participate in RE classes. The majority of the respondents evaluate the quality of catechesis in a positive way. The stable opinions on the quality of catechesis suggest that the level of teaching is even.

High social support for Religious Education and good attendance at the classes prove that vast majority of Poles is not interested in the conflict about RE teaching at state schools. RE classes at school help parents and school goers to organize everyday life and take off the burden of extra activities organized outside of school. School goers save time as they do not have to go to extra activities organized in Church facilities. The approval of general and easy access to Religious Education at school seems to be something obvious for school goers and their parents. High social support for RE teaching demonstrates that the dispute over the presence of catechesis at school does not result from social but from political and ideological conditioning.

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³⁵ M. Gwiazda, *Religia w szkole – uczestnictwo i ocena* [in:] *Młodzież 2016. Study report*, Warszawa 2016, p. 145–146.

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NAUCZANIE RELIGII W POLSKICH SZKOŁACH W BADANIACH SOCJOLOGICZNYCH

Analiza wyników wieloletnich badań socjologicznych wskazuje, że nauczanie religii w szkołach popiera zdecydowana większość polskiego społeczeństwa. Aprobata dla lekcji religii w szkole jest niewątpliwie konsekwencją deklaracji religijnych, z których wynika, iż około 90% Polaków jest wyznawcami religii katolickiej. Zarówno rodzice jak i uczniowie przyznają, że katechizacja w szkole ułatwia im organizację codziennych zajęć i pozwala zaoszczędzić czas, który uczniowie musieliby przeznaczyć na dodatkowe zajęcia pozalekcyjne, gdyby nauczanie religii odbywało się poza szkołą. Zdecydowana większość badanych uczniów uczestniczy w lekcjach religii w szkole i pozytywnie je ocenia.

Rodzice i uczniowie nie są zainteresowani sporami ideologicznymi i politycznymi dotyczącymi obecności religii w szkole. Dlatego też nie ulegają wpływom środowisk opowiadających

się za świecką szkołą, które kierując się przesłankami ideologicznymi, kontestują wprowadzenie nauczania religii do polskich szkół. Z badań socjologicznych wynika, iż nauczanie religii w szkole cieszy się poparciem większości rodziców i uczniów, natomiast z najmniejszą aprobatą spotyka się wśród polityków o poglądach liberalnych i lewicowych. Politycy sprzeciwiający się katechizacji w szkole nie uwzględniają opinii większości społeczeństwa polskiego popierającego edukację religijną, ale raczej kierują się własnymi przekonaniem światopoglądowymi lub linią ideologiczną własnej partii. Stąd też najczęściej biorą się napięcia i konflikty o nauczanie religii w polskich szkołach publicznych. Niekiedy spory mają ostry emocjonalny przebieg, zwłaszcza, gdy zantagonizowane strony usiłują wciągnąć w konflikt rodziców i uczniów. Nieporozumienia dotyczące obecności katechezy w szkole nie mają wpływu na regulacje prawne dotyczące tej kwestii.

Słowa kluczowe: nauczanie religii, lekcje religii, katecheza, szkoła, uczniowie, młode pokolenie, opinia społeczna.

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