Spatial distribution of voter turnout and invalid votes in elections in Poland in 2000-2019- summary

Voter turnout and invalid votes[1] are the most popular indicators describing quality of voter participation. This description is very important for democratic countries because exemplifies a condition of civil society. In Poland voter turnout is very low and invalid votes' rate used to be very high. It is not positive standard for the democratic country that Poland is. Moreover, in Poland spatial distribution of voting behaviour is very diversified. This is why it is important to understand reasons of this situation.

The research aims at comprehensive analysing spatial distribution of voter turnout and invalid votes in every type of Polish elections (parliamentary, presidential, regional, European parliamentary) in 2000-2019. The purpose is not only to describe differences in spatial distribution but also to demonstrate what kind of factors contribute the geography of voter turnout and invalid votes. According to the existing literature, voting behaviour[2] could be explained by three types of factors: socio-economic, culture-historical and institutional. There are many analyses of each group of factors but these are very fragmentary (in regard to time, type of election and type of factor). That is why I have decided to prepare interdisciplinary analyse that combine electoral data with socio-economic data, culture-historical data and data about institutional regulations. Reconcile these three views could better describe voting participation in Poland.

To find answers for above problems I am planning to conduct following analyses. I will compare my authorial electoral cartograms to find spatial patterns of voter turnout and invalid votes. I would like to check if voter turnout patterns described in 1990s are still on. I would also like to describe spatial patterns for invalid votes because it has not been described so far. To describe which set of factors influences the voter turnout/invalid votes the most I am planning to use statistical analyses. I have chosen a multiple regression because it permits using both nominal and quantitative variables. I will check which factors are correlated to voter turnout and which to invalid votes' rate. The final result of the statistical analyses will be model explaining conditioning of spatial distribution of voter turnout/invalid votes. Probably it will be impossible to prepare one general model for voter turnout and one for invalid votes. It could be necessary to prepare individual models for each type of election.

The supplementation of above analysis will be conducting case studies. In this part of the research I would like to analyse five typed municipalities which present the most interesting voting behaviour (for example very voter turnout in every election or very unstable invalid votes' rate). I am planning to conduct unstructured interview with local communities and local government representatives. Moreover I am planning to analyse local media commenting voter behaviour in different elections. Results of case studies will be a supplementation for the prepared model.

Summary of the whole analysing will be a typology of Polish municipalities in the context of theirs voting behaviours. I would like to describe municipalities in the case of the level of voter turnout/invalid votes' rate but also in the case of stability in these indicators in the last nineteen years.

This all-inclusive methodology would foster a better understanding of the entire political-geographic relationship. The result of the research will be models which holistically describe spatial distribution in voting behaviour in Polish elections, and therefore, describe Polish civil society in the regional context. It will be the first so complex description of spatial differences of voter turnout and invalid votes in Poland.

---

[1] Every time I use 'invalid votes' I mean invalid votes' rate
[2] Every time I use 'voting behaviour' I mean voter turnout and invalid votes