Participation in Parliamentary Elections as a Markov Process. Factors Influencing Electoral Absence and Participation

The article aims to identify and examine the factors influencing voter participation in parliamentary elections. What sets the analysis in question apart is the proposal whereby electoral participation is regarded as a dynamic social process. Using the Markov model as a reference point, it is demonstrated that the participation reflected in official statistics is an outcome of actions undertaken by four categories of citizens, namely, those who consistently vote in elections, those who consistently do not participate, those who voted in the latest elections, although they did not do so in the previous ones and those who did not take part in the elections, although they did previously participate. The analysis deals with the factors which influence the probability of an individual’s making the decision to participate in the elections although they did not vote previously, and the decision not to participate, despite having done so earlier. A group of instrumental, normative and affective factors was singled out on a theoretical basis as to how the social system operates. Data from the 2011 Polish General Electoral Poll were used to verify hypotheses using the logistic regression analysis method.

Tags: electoral participation, Markov model, dynamic system, operation of a social system