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THE FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATION AND LOCAL SOCIAL WELFARE:
Some evidence from Poland

The growing importance of the role played by faith-based organizations (FBOs) as a part of local social welfare system – including related to catholic church both institutional and informal or grassroots organizations and voluntary groups – has only recently (after the collapse of communism) been officially recognized. It raises the question about the relationship between state and civic areas of responsibility for delivering adequate social services to local community's residents. Analysis of nationwide survey data (that is underway) focuses on two competitive (though not exclusive) hypothesis. One stresses the influence of religiosity (indicated by church attendance) on pro-social behavior and civic engagement. Another seeks an explanation for either civic engagement or for both i.e., religiosity and pro-social behavior as well – in terms of compensatory ('filling the gap') mission or crowding out effect of the social public 'safety net' that emerges due to insufficiency or ineffectiveness of the public (state-organized) system of social services provision. Using a measure of 'local deprivation' for characterizing the latter, some evidence on the risk-reduction role of FBOs in local community is discussed.

Key words: *Local community – Local Social Welfare – Faith Based Organizations – Risk and risk-reduction.*