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Public Religion in the 21st Century: a Comparative Study on the Catholic Church in Poland and Brazil

Introduction

Poland and Brazil seem to have very little in common – divided by the Atlantic, incomparable in terms of the size of the territory, population, economy, history and culture. It seems, however, that both countries and their societies have much more in common than is often realized. Starting with masses of Polish peasants, who emigrated to Brazil back in the 19th century (during the so called “Brazilian fever”) and influenced the culture and socio-economic development of the Brazilian southern states of Paraná, Santa Catarina and Rio Grande do Sul¹; through the, still majoritarian, religious affiliation in both societies (Catholic); up to the striking similarities in the history of the two nations since the second half of the 20th century, with the respective non-democratic regimes (in Brazil – rightist, military; in Poland – leftist, communist), a painful transition to democracy (in Poland – 1989, in Brazil – 1985), and the crucial role of the Catholic Church in supporting, for decades, political opposition.

¹ For more information on Polish immigration in Brazil, see, for example: M. Malinowski, *Ruch polonijny w Argentynie i Brazylii w latach 1989-2000*, Warszawa 2005; R. Siuda-Ambroziak, *Entre ideales, estereotipos y realidad: Polonia, la identidad nacional y comunidades de ascendencia polaca en el Brasil contemporáneo*, in: *Ameryka Łacińska: historia – polityka – gospodarka – kultura*, M. Drgas, J. Knopek, A. Ratke-Majewska (eds), Toruń 2014, p. 255-269; E. Budakowska, *Etnicidade polonesa no Brasil a luz das pesquisas sociológicas*, Warsaw 2014.

In this article, the intention of the authors is to concentrate precisely on the Catholic Church of the two countries in order to check, if, decades after the beginning of political transformations, it still plays the role of the Casanovian “public religion”². According to Casanova, such situations happen when religion (understood in his theoretical approach as religious movement/organization/institution) does not resist the process of differentiation (seen as emancipation of the secular from the influence of religious institutions and norms), letting the State develop its full autonomy and following the same path with its own organizations, showing thus that the fusion of the religious and the political is neither necessary for its survival nor compatible with the principle of freedom of conscience or the logic behind the activity of civil society. Through “disestablishing” itself, and, therefore, losing its obligatory and compulsory character, religion actually becomes stronger, voluntary and free, and stops uniting itself with the State or hiding under its protective wings. Casanova’s perspective broadly indicates that religious institutions opposing social, cultural and political changes by siding with the State and resisting them from a position of an establishment always suffer a strong decline in their popularity.

However, as we assume, this trend does not seem to be confirmed with regard to undertaken actions and consequently, the position held by the Catholic Church in Poland and in Brazil, which, in the respective countries, did support the changes against local political establishment, while the gradual reduction of its influence was caused, paradoxically, precisely by the implementation of these changes. The depiction of these specific transformations will be made in the following way: firstly, the main assumptions of José Casanova’s concept will be briefly outlined with respect to Poland and Brazil; then we will concentrate on providing a historical outline of the most important characteristics of the two Churches in order to confront them with the transformations presented in the next part on their activities in the times of undemocratic regimes; finally, the situation of the religious institutions will be analyzed and compared from the “post-transformation” perspective.

Our objective is to show that, for the Church in both countries, the conditions of political restrictions on their activity in the period before the transformation indeed, according to Casanova’s theory, contributed to strengthening its role and position, as well as increasing its “visibility” in public life. At the same time, the increased importance of this religious institution was also noticeable in the initial phase of the system transformation, where the Catholic Church became not only the power supporting and legitimizing changes, but also a partner in the debate concerning the future shape of the socio-economic and political order. However, the institutional changes occurring in the socio-cultural, political and economic dimensions, disseminating democratic and capitalist (neo-liberal) standards, initiated

² José Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago – London 1994 [The Polish translation: *Religie publiczne w nowoczesnym świecie*, Kraków 2005].

a number of further, unpredicted transformations, resulting finally in the weakening of both position and influence of the Catholic Church in the public sphere, as well as causing the reduction of its ability to continue “evangelizing expansion” and its impact on the members of the two societies and cultures.

These changes will be presented by means of comparative analysis, referring to chosen statistics concerning the religious sphere available in both countries, and by showing the scope of effectiveness of the social and political impact of the Catholic Church in Poland and in Brazil since the beginning of the transformation period, indicating that its institutional influence has significantly weakened in democratic conditions.

The main assumptions of the Casanovian concept of “public religions”

José Casanova, in his publication *Public Religions in the Modern World*, states that in the second half of the 20th century, quite unexpectedly, religion in many parts of the world “went public”, which means that it appeared in the public discourse, where contents, ideas, assumptions of religious or doctrinal provenance became the subject of public debates encouraged by various environments, including journalistic, political and scientific circles³. In the case of Poland and Brazil, which are two of the five case studies included by Casanova, the period of the 1970s and 1980s seems to be the time when it became hardly possible to find any serious political or social conflict that did not bear a strong relation to the institutionalized religion – the Catholic Church. In the aforementioned period not only religious activists, but also clergy (including representatives of the hierarchy) became deeply involved in the struggle for social, political and economic changes. It led, according to Casanova, to the “deprivatization” of Catholicism in Poland and Brazil, which manifested itself, *inter alia*, in the refusal on the part of both Churches to accept the marginal role ascribed to them by the theories of secularization and privatization⁴. Numerous

³ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 21

⁴ According to José Casanova (*Public Religions in the Modern World*, *op.cit.*), there is nothing like a single theory of secularization. Pointing at the perils of both the concept and the theory of secularization, Casanova stresses that it is so multidimensional, so reversible and sometimes even contradictory that perhaps it should be altogether abandoned. It is actually made of at least three different aspects, including: secularization as religious decline, secularization as differentiation, and secularization as privatization. According to him, the first and third dimensions seem to be no longer defensible. The change in the position of religion in contemporary societies in the secularization contexts is also noticeable from the perspective of R. Stark and W. S. Bainbridge, who indicate that this process is not connected with the potential decline of religion, but its transformation. R. Stark, W.S. Bainbridge, *Teoria religii*, Kraków, 2000, p. 339. On the subject of a critical viewpoint on secularization cf. R. Stark, R. Finke, *Acts of faith*.

social and political movements appeared in these countries, which had religious provenance or gained religious legitimization, thus becoming a specific socio-political power articulating demands referring to Christian axiology and the social teachings of the Church. At the same time, the Catholic Church showed no interest or reluctance to restrict its activity only to the pastoral care and to belong solely to the “private sphere”, where, according to some interpretative perspectives, it could find some refuge after having been marginalized in modern societies⁵.

The resistance of the discussed local Churches opposing the State without social legitimacy strengthened them, since Catholicism entered the arena of political contestation (or even political struggle), managing to assume prominent public roles and form some symbiotic relations with important dissident political and social movements in order to re-establish forgotten norms and moral codes for the whole of the society. By taking risks, raising difficult questions, commenting openly on public issues, and opposing dictatorial governments, the Catholic Church started to mobilize people in both countries. Such actions were undertaken first of all – but not only – with their own affiliates in mind, thus trying to transform the world for them for the better, but, in this way, becoming entangled in profane, “worldly affairs” instead of opting for detachment and separation from them (privatization of religion).

Such a situation showed clearly that the relation between religion and politics could not be reduced to the issue of constitutional separation of Church and State, which guarantees dissociation between the sacred and the profane (the freedom of religion from the State, the freedom of the State from religion and the freedom of the individual conscience from both of them), implying that religion doesn't need to be privatized in order to guarantee these freedoms. It was precisely what was advocated by the resolutions of the Vaticanum II through the adoption of the principle of “religious freedom” without the necessity of the privatization of the religion, its norms and morality, caused by the process of official *aggiornamento*, bringing many radical changes to the local interpretations of the social and political role of the Church in modern societies. The II Vatican Council redefined, by means of its resolutions, the identity of the Church from a State-centered to a society-centered institution, recognizing the inalienable right of every individual to freedom of conscience, based on the sacred dignity of the human person, which was clearly visible in the pastoral letters of both Polish and Brazilian episcopates, written from the 70s till the end of the respective regimes, proving that the Catholic church was viewed by its top officials in both countries as a source of universal democratic and

Explaining the Human Side of Religion, University of California Press, Berkeley – Los Angeles – London, 2000, pp. 57-79.

⁵ T. Luckmann (*Niewidzialna religia*, Kraków 2006) argued that traditional religious institutions became irrelevant to the modern world and that religion had escaped out of the churches, withdrawing to the private sphere of the self.

human values with a huge anti-totalitarian potential for initiating changes. Both the Polish and the Brazilian Church, not being in the 20th century established State Churches, found it easy to free themselves from any ties to the respective governments, soon gathering not only teams of active Catholic intelligentsia, organized in clubs and around Catholic publishing houses, but also representatives of practically all social strata. Then, religion became viewed in both countries as transcending particular cult and thus serving to integrate individual persons into social and political (“public”) reality characterized by its public interventions with the view of recovering the limited or non-existing freedoms. The Catholic Church was able, in both cases, to justify its intensive public activity with the necessity of protecting societies against the authoritarian state, playing a major role in the process of democratization.

In order to better accentuate these changes, below we will draw a brief outline of the historical evolution of the Catholic Church in Brazil and in Poland. This is, by no means, an attempt at an encyclopedic draft of the evolution of the Catholic Church in both countries, but just a brief presentation of the phenomena, events and processes that are crucial for the topics tackled in this article.

Brief outline of Brazilian Catholic Church’s characteristics till 1964

In the case of Brazil it seems important to stress a historical specificity of the State-owned and State-oriented Church (due to the law of patronage)⁶ – an oligarchic, conservative and elitist institution, for a long time acting mainly as a caesaropapist administrative arm of the royal/imperial government, which did not show any missionary zeal for establishing the solid fundamentals of the Church⁷. The Brazilian Church, for a long time, did not have any independence from the State and its links with the Vatican were very weak. Even the papal bulls’ distribution in Brazil depended on the *placet* from its rulers and the history of the Church in Brazil is loaded with conflicts between kings/emperors and popes, sometimes even threatening with a schism⁸.

⁶ The law of patronage, granted by the papacy to the Iberian kings, provided them with the caesaropapist supremacy over the discovered territories. The kings had an obligation to establish and maintain the fundamentals of the Church (dioceses, parishes) in the New World and to spread the faith, but they were entitled to the tithe, which was supposed to cover such expenses. For more information, see, for instance: H.C.J. Matos, *Nossa história. 500 anos de presença da Igreja Católica no Brasil*, São Paulo 2003 (v.1-3).

⁷ R. Azzì, *A cristandade colonial: um projeto autoritário*, São Paulo 1987, p. 33.

⁸ One such conflict took place over Freemasonry, fully accepted in Brazil (with the emperor being the Grand Master of the Order), in the view of the papal bull (1864) condemning it and prohibiting the Catholic clergy to participate in the Masonic activity. The emperor decided to disobey the papal decision

The tasks of evangelization, due to the clear disinterest of the Portuguese crown⁹, were laid mostly in the hands of religious orders and brotherhoods promoting popular, syncretic religiosity with local, unofficial saints and the constant, grass roots development of “heretic doctrines”¹⁰, in which the faith in the existence of Indian and African¹¹ deities peacefully coexisted with the faith in Jesus the Savior. This did not change after the introduction of the independent Empire (1822), leading to a visible religious parallelization, consisting in concurrent adherence to the Catholic Church and traditional Indigenous or African cults, with no need to choose between one of the apparently contradictory options.

The process of reasserting the authority of the Vatican over the Brazilian Church (“Romanization”) was slow and painful and it started only with the first republican constitution (1891) formally separating the Church and the State and showing the weakness of the former against the latter, which forced the Brazilian hierarchy to look again for the cooperation with the Republic. It resulted in the period of interdependence between the government and the Church, in which the Church supported the State during the long, authoritarian rule of Getúlio Vargas, but it also invested, due to the governmental support, in the process of re-Christianization of Brazilian elites by means of the Catholic Action educational and political activity¹². The Church

and he imprisoned the bishops who wanted to follow the Vatican’s instruction. See, for instance: R. Azzi, *O Estado leigo e o projeto ultramontano*, São Paulo 1994; O.F. Lustosa, *A Igreja Católica no Brasil-República: cem anos de compromisso (1889-1989)*, São Paulo 1991.

⁹ It is proven, for example, by the aversion of the Crown to establish new dioceses and parishes financially dependent on it, notorious problems with supporting the clergy. See: D. Ribeira, C.A. Moreira Neto, *A fundação do Brasil: testemunhos 1500-1700*, Petrópolis 1993; A.C. Villaça, *O pensamento católico no Brasil*, Rio de Janeiro 1975; G. Freyre, *Panowie i niewolnicy*, Warsaw 1985.

¹⁰ To fight these heresies, the Church appointed the Holy Inquisition (in Portugal, in 1536), which, however, enjoyed an opinion of forbearing and being liberal. The Portuguese inquisitors appeared in the colonies only during official visits, often not starting the investigation because of the suspects’ meagre possessions, and very weak population of the colony. See: B. Feitler, *Poder episcopal e ação inquisitorial no Brasil*, in: *A inquisição em cheque: temas, controversias, estudos de caso*, R. Vainfas, B. Feitler, L. Lage (ed.), Rio de Janeiro 2006, pp. 33-45; L. Gorenstein, *A terceira visitação do Santo Ofício às partes do Brasil*, in: *A inquisição em cheque: temas, controversias, estudos de caso*, R. Vainfas, B. Feitler, L. Lage (ed.), Rio de Janeiro 2006, pp. 25-31.

¹¹ The number of Indians, rapidly declining due to their high mortality rates, was soon balanced with African slaves, whose beliefs caused the colonial Catholicism to be open to influences and familial, based on a particular fraternization with God and the saints who, at the likeness of African deities, lived among people as little statues in the homely altar, had their weaknesses and flaws (often acting impurely, to say the least, or even immorally from the Christian point of view), requested particular sacrifices and were subject to different types of punishment in case they did not provide the requested “grace”. These characteristics enabled unconstrained development of cult belief, devoid of orthodoxy, rigours or the need for dogmatic faith (G. Freyre, *Panowie i niewolnicy*, op. cit).

¹² The government of Vargas made religion a mandatory school subject, subsidized the creation of Catholic universities, decided on the construction of the statue of Christ the Redeemer (1931) in Rio de Janeiro and got directly involved in celebrations of the announcement of Our Lady of Aparecida as the patroness of Brazil (1930). The Catholic Electoral League lobbied for the interest of the Church on the political scene, influencing governmental decisions and the government – to use the religious confirmation

leaned towards the ruling classes and Brazilian intelligentsia, aware of a need for lobbying the government to reinstate its lost privileges. It was also when the trend to import missionaries from Europe was strengthened and some renowned, private Catholic schools, focused on educating youths from the middle and upper class were established¹³.

The foreign missionaries who were filling the chronic vacancies in the Brazilian clergy, also brought with them new ideas¹⁴. When in 1952 the National Conference of Brazilian Bishops (CNBB) was founded, it started influencing in a visible way the socio-political reform programs, for example promoting literacy and concentrating on major “perils” to Catholicism: Spiritism, secularization, Marxism and Pentecostalization. The Church underwent another series of significant changes in structure and functioning in the course of preparations for the historic Second Vatican Council, which resulted in the creation of Latin American liberation theology¹⁵.

Brazilian Church under the military regime

When in 1964 there took place a rightist military coup, the Brazilian Church was by no means a monolithic structure – the right-wing protests were co-organized by representatives of the conservative Catholic hierarchy, while the left-wing ones, demanding radical reforms, were organized by leftist, often foreign priests preaching liberation theology. That’s why conservative and moderate bishops first officially welcomed the army as a guarantee of social peace and the best prevention against a possible communist revolution. By the end of the 60s, however, the majority of bishops had become involved in counteracting the activities of the National Security State, calling their new approach the “option for the poor”, which assumed protection of human rights, especially of the most marginalized population. Moreover, the appearance of politically and socially engaged bishops, as a consequence of the Latin American interpretations regarding the papal encyclicals: *Mater et Magistra* (1961), *Pacem in Terris* (1963), *Populorum Progressio* (1967) and the Council’s resolutions, had an impact on the Brazilian Church and the way it was perceived. The progressive and

of its power. The peculiar moral pact between the secular and the ecclesiastical acknowledged the privileged status of Catholicism (see, for instance: J.O. Beozzo, *História da Igreja Católica no Brasil*, São Paulo 1989; O. F. Lustosa, *A Igreja Católica no Brasil-República: cem anos de compromisso (1889-1989)*, São Paulo 1991).

¹³ R. Azzi, *O Estado leigo e o projeto ultramontano*, São Paulo 1994, p. 67, 71.

¹⁴ P. Beyer, *Religia i globalizacja*, Nomos, Kraków 2005, p. 228.

¹⁵ Latin American liberation theology emerged after the Cuban Revolution, together with strongly anti-imperialist discourse of the leftist bishops and radical representatives of the clergy. H. Assman, *Theology for a Nomad Church*, Maryknoll, New York 1976; L. Boff, *Jesus Christ Liberator: a Critical Christology for Our Time*, Maryknoll, New York 1978; L. Boff, *EcclesioGenesis: The Base Communities Reinvent the Church*, Maryknoll, New York, 1986; G. Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, Maryknoll, New York 1973.

charismatic Church leaders, such as Hélder Câmara, Leonardo Boff, Paulo Evaristo Arns, or Pedro de Casaldáliga, proclaimed the need for radical social and political changes, and held the unjust social structures accountable for the situation of the poorest Brazilians' "state of oppression". The new policy of the Brazilian Church quickly turned into institutional resistance against the military regime with a huge support given to the bottom-up political opposition movements, Basic Ecclesial Communities (CEBs) and independent trade unions, providing legal and organizational aid to the political opposition. The Brazilian Church started being viewed as the most bottom-up and open to the laity in the world. During the most vehement years for liberation theology (1967-1977), however, it lost about 20% of its clergy often due to the excessive radicalization of its representatives, who ended up in prison or were expelled from the country¹⁶.

After the death of Paul VI, who was a supporter of Latin American progressivism, and the conclave that ended in electing the conservative and anti-communist John Paul II, conflicts between Vatican and radical leftist Brazilian Church leaders became unavoidable – the pope condemned Marxist interpretations of Latin American social and economic situation, indicating at the risk of doctrinal deviation. Even though in 1986 Vatican issued quite a moderate document (*Instruction on Christian Freedom and Liberation*), John Paul II promoted neutrality and "de-leftization" of the Brazilian Church, expressed in appointments of conservative bishops (supposed to bring under control the Latin American process of *aggiornamento*) and suspension of prominent representatives of the liberation theology. In the middle of 1980s, together with the fall of the military regime, the Brazilian Church adopted the strategy of escape from politics and privatization of Catholicism, which signified abandoning liberation theology as its "trademark".

Changes in Brazilian Church public standing after re-democratization (1985)

Already before 1985, the Brazilian Church began to slowly withdraw from public life due to the Vatican's policy and the ideological changes coerced by the end of the Cold War. Such a process was happening despite the rising social costs of the declining military regime and the very difficult beginnings of the transformation period.

Undoubtedly, the most important factor that changed the attitude of the Brazilian Church towards social and political involvement was the cooling influence of John Paul II, who warned against any ideological compromise with Marxism.

¹⁶ D. Martin, *Tongues of Fire: The Explosion of Protestantism in Latin America*. Oxford 1993, p. 290; J. Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World*, op. cit., p. 221.

The pressure in the Brazilian Church related to the need of “privatization”, however, resulted from many other interconnected factors. Beside growing prevalence of conservatives inside the Brazilian Church structures, equally important were the phenomena of social demobilization caused by the natural political thaw, the impending fall of the regime and the necessity of adjusting to the democratic pluralism in the view of the fall of the Soviet Union, which was an inspiration for the liberation theology. Thus, the Brazilian Church began to withdraw from public life, despite highly unfavorable effects of the approaching neoliberal changes. The Church organizations decelerated their pace of development, and after formal democratic institutions were restituted, started to experience a substantial decline in the numbers of members joining secular democratic organizations¹⁷. Although Catholic Church remained the major religious affiliation among Brazilians, since 1980s it gradually started to lose its statistical prevalence (according to IBGE data: 1970 – 91.8%; 1980 – 88.9%, 1991 – 83%)¹⁸. An adequate response to such a decrease was difficult in the face of one of the biggest challenges, which certainly was the scarcity of priestly vocations and insufficient numbers of clergy (caused, among others, by leaving the priesthood, especially in the light of: theological conflicts of 1970s and 1980s, including “silencing” decisions of Vatican and leaving seminaries before ordination), visible especially in the view of growing Pentecostal expansion and declining Basic Communities.

Both strong competition of proselytizing and numerous (Neo)Pentecostals and the influence of the new free-market conditions on the religious sphere made the Church face a completely new need for actively seeking of new members and stopping the old ones from leaving. The Church had to start learning from its competitors: it focused on organising small, tight, self-governing communities of charismatic character, which were supposed to replace the waning influence of the Basic Communities and counteract the impact of Pentecostal churches.

The bishops invested in the Catholic mass media used for religious (missionary) purposes, which gave a new stimulus to the Catholic Church’s public visibility, just as Stark and Bainbridge presumed in their religious market theories¹⁹. In spite of applying these modern “advertising” policies, however, the strong position of the institutional Church in Brazilian public life and its popularity from the times of the military regime was becoming visibly less and less perceivable. It was the Church itself, however, that was retreating from the realm of politics, leaving it to professionals and, at the same time, losing many of its adherent leaving not only for

¹⁷ J. Beyer, *Religia i globalizacja*, op.cit., pp. 254-255.

¹⁸ Data from www.ibge.gov.br analyzed in: R. Siuda-Ambroziak, *Brazylijski rynek religijny na początku XXI wieku (na podstawie danych ze spisu powszechnego IBGE z roku 2010)*, „Ameryka Łacińska”, XIX, no 1 (79), 2013, pp. 99-106.

¹⁹ R.Stark, W.S. Bainbridge, *Teoria religii*, op. cit.

the Pentecostal religious sector, but also for a growing group of “non-participants” or “non-affiliates” (from 7.4% in 2000 to 8% in 2010)²⁰.

A good example of such a declining influence is, for instance, a case of abortion and political support in elections. In the context of democratic Brazilian Constitution from 1988, as a result of the massive feminist movement mobilization, the National Conference of Brazilian Bishops (CNBB) did not manage to introduce, in spite of its strong institutional involvement, any of the proposed items related with the protection of the human life since the moment of conception²¹. In 2002 (later actualized in 2004), by means of a decree of the Minister of Health, a possibility of abortion in case of a pregnancy resulting from rape (based on the woman’s testimony) was introduced in spite of the Catholic hierarchy visible protests. When after 2010 there appeared a problem with microcephalic pregnancies due to the Zika virus epidemic, the Federal Tribunal of Brazil granted *habeas corpus* to people accused of having performed illegal abortions²², with the positioning of the Catholic church and Catholic pro-life movements practically ignored²³.

The weakening influence of the institutional Church on public life was visible in 2005 during public discussions on the Law of Bio Security in which, again in spite of the hierarchy’s opposition and a very informative campaign run by the Catholic media, an item was introduced (limited by a few provisions) opening a possibility of using human *in vitro* embryos for scientific research purposes²⁴. None of the Catholic church’s proposals regarding stricter controlling of the abortion procedures or initiatives driving at creating a special abortion denunciation call center was approved by the Congress and supported by public opinion²⁵.

The waning political influence of the institutional Church became also visible in the case of some presidential and parliamentary elections, especially in the year of 2010, when the candidate openly rejected by the bishops, Dilma Rousseff, became president in spite of a very strong Catholic hierarchy opposition, expressed in public letters during dominical sermons²⁶, the action which was criticized even by the Catholic groups and associations²⁷. In such a situation, the Vatican itself was forced

²⁰ R. Siuda-Ambroziak, *Brazylijski rynek religijny na początku XXI wieku...*, op. cit.

²¹ L. de Andrade, Barsted, *Legalização e descriminalização: 10 anos de luta feminista*, “Estudos Feministas”, n. 0/92, Seminário Nacional Realidade do Aborto no Brasil, São Paulo, 1992.

²² L.R. Barroso, *Supremo Tribunal Federal*, Pedido de habeas corpus n. 120.360., Brasília, 2016.

²³ See: <http://www.stf.jus.br/portal/cms/verNoticiaDetalhe.asp?idConteudo=330769> [access: 02 I 2016].

²⁴ Lei no. 11.105/2005, <http://www.camara.gov.br/sileg/integras/345638.pdf>; <http://www.wipo.int/wipolex/en/details.jsp?id=8300> [access: 20 II 2018].

²⁵ Legislative Projects presented to the Congress and voted adversely or not at all: PL 478/2007; PL 489/2007; PL 2154/2007; PL 1820/2007; PL 2504/2007.

²⁶ Barra, M., *Carta de aborto é documento oficial, diz diocese de Guarulhos*, “O Globo, Eleições 2010”, 23.10.2010: <http://g1.globo.com/especiais/eleicoes-2010/noticia/2010/10/bispo-de-guarulhos-afirma-que-carta-sobre-aborto-e-verdadeira.html> [access: 30 I 2016].

²⁷ <http://catolicas.org.br/novidades/releases/maioria-acredita-que-as-mulheres-devem-decidir-sobre-o-aborto/> [access: 30 I 2016].

to speak in order to defend the bishops and attenuate a conflict between the Catholic hierarchy and numerous representatives of the Brazilian Catholic laity opposing the institutional church's direct political involvement and its presence in the public sphere, demanding in such a way its further "privatization"²⁸.

A brief outline of Polish Catholic Church history till 1945

The place and role of the Church in the history of Poland begin with the moment of accepting Christianity by Poland in 966, which formed a specific alliance between the throne and the altar, whereas with time it contributed to the participation of the Church hierarchy in shaping the statehood²⁹. At the same time, it was connected with a gradual development of Church structure, as well as subordinating separate spheres of life to the religious requirements and regulations, thus contributing to Christianization³⁰. The way the Church influence penetrated the power structures constantly evolved, which might be exemplified by the period of regional disintegration (from the 12th to the 14th centuries), when the position of the Church slowly strengthened, together with gaining autonomy in its activity parallel to further expansion of organizational structures, including the founding and development of monasteries and orders³¹. The unification of the ecclesiastical law which took place at the time, however, favoured social integration in a divided country, after all the division of dioceses was not coherent with the borders of the duchies³². The strengthening position of the Church is also noticeable from the viewpoint of relations towards other denominations, which might be illustrated for instance by the situation in the 14th and 15th centuries, when the restrictions on the right to worship were introduced in the case of other religions than the dominating one³³. With reference to Poland, where the social space was diverse in terms of ethnicity and denomination, this status belonged to the Church, but also regulations based on

²⁸ *Papa condena o aborto e pede para bispos brasileiros orientarem politicamente os fieis*, "Folha de São Paulo", 28 X 2010, <http://www1.folha.uol.com.br/poder/821609-papa-condena-aborto-e-pede-para-bispos-brasileiros-orientarem-politicamente-fieis.shtml> [access: 18 I 2016].

²⁹ P. Janowski, *Kościół a państwo w Polsce (entry)*, in: *Encyklopedia katolicka*, vol. 9, KUL, Lublin 2002, p. 1047. On the subject of the origins of Christianity in the territory of Poland cf. Z. Sułowski, *Pierwszy Kościół Polski*, in: *Chrześcijaństwo w Polsce*, J. Kłoczkowski (ed.), Towarzystwo Naukowe Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, Lublin 1992, pp. 28-49.

³⁰ On the origins of Christianity in Poland cf. Z. Sułowski, *Pierwszy Kościół Polski*, in: *Chrześcijaństwo w Polsce*, J. Kłoczkowski (ed.), Towarzystwo Naukowe Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, Lublin 1992, pp. 28-49; U. Borkowska, *Odbudowa i rozwój (2. poł. XI i XII w.)*, [in:] *ibidem*, pp. 53-76

³¹ J. Krukowski, *Kościół a państwo (entry)*, *op. cit.*, p. 1047; U. Borkowska, *Odbudowa i rozwój (2. poł. XI i XII w.)*, *op. cit.*; cf. also: A. Witkowska, *Przemiany XIII w. (1198-1320)*, in: *Chrześcijaństwo w Polsce*, *op. cit.*, pp. 104-112.

³² *Ibidem*, p. 96.

³³ J. Kłoczkowski, *W dobie wielkiego rozwoju (1320-1450)*, in: *Chrześcijaństwo w Polsce*, *op. cit.*, p. 122.

tradition functioned in this field, which provided a certain dose of freedom, concerning *inter alia* Jews and Muslims³⁴. In the period of the partitions regardless of the number of cases of clergy-men cooperating with the invaders, the Church guarded the Polish trait, language, culture and national identity.

The mentioned spheres only indicate the expansion of the influence and significance of the Church in Poland. These trends are also visible later. The interwar period, which appears to have been favourable to the Catholic Church in the light of the legal regulations at the time, might highlight this tendency as they established quite privileged conditions for its activity³⁵. The status of the Catholic Church at the time was regulated by: The March Constitution of 1921, the Concordat of 1925 as well as the April Constitution of Poland of 1935³⁶. The first from these documents guaranteed *inter alia* the equality of citizens regardless of their denomination; the freedom of religion and conscience, the possibility to worship their religion, when it is not contrary to public order³⁷. At the same time, it was indicated in this document that "the Roman Catholic religion (...) occupies in the state the chief position among enfranchised religions"³⁸. The scope of entitlements together with the specification of the rules of the activity of the Catholic Church was based on a separate agreement concluded with the Holy See. In the Concordat the Church was guaranteed "full freedom", including the liberty to exercise spiritual authority, jurisdiction, administration and management of its own property³⁹. It also included the legal protection for clergymen⁴⁰, "inviolability of churches, chapels and cemeteries"⁴¹, as well as the shape of the organizational structure with the possibility of introducing amendments⁴². At the same time, it was reserved by law that "neither part of the Republic of Poland will belong to a bishop, whose seat would be beyond the borders of the Polish State"⁴³. The last from the mentioned documents, i.e. the Constitution of 1935 did not introduce changes to the religious issues or regulations connected with the position of the Church⁴⁴.

³⁴ Ibidem, pp. 122-123.

³⁵ Cf. J. Mariański, *Katolicy w strukturze wyznaniowej Polski*, in: *Kościół katolicki w Polsce 1918-1990*, GUS – ISSK, Warszawa 1991, p. 38; I. Borowik, *Procesy instytucjonalizacji i prywatyzacji religii w powojennej Polsce*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, Kraków 1997, p. 66; T. Włodarczyk, *Konkordaty*, PWN, 1986, s. Majka, 1983, p. 253.

³⁶ J.M. Majchrowski, S. Nawrot, *Wprowadzenie do polityki wyznaniowej*, Uniwersytet Jagielloński, Kraków 1984, p. 86.

³⁷ Dz. U. [Journal of Laws] of 1921, No. 44, item 267, articles 110-111; the English version available from: <http://libr.sejm.gov.pl/tek01/txt/kpol/e1921.html>, retrieved on 27th August 2019.

³⁸ Ibidem, article 114.

³⁹ Dz.U. [Journal of Laws] of 1925, No. 72, item 501, article 1.

⁴⁰ Ibidem, article 5.

⁴¹ Ibidem, article 6.

⁴² Ibidem, article 9.

⁴³ Ibidem.

⁴⁴ J.M. Majchrowski, S. Nawrot, *Wprowadzenie do polityki wyznaniowej*, op. cit., p. 108.

The status and privileges for the Church specified in the Concordat ceased to apply pursuant to the resolution passed by the Provisional Government of National Unity on 12th September 1945, wherein the Concordat was renounced. The resolution indicated a violation of Article 9 of the Concordat by the Holy See, namely it was connected with appointing a German Hilarius Breitingger as apostolic administrator in the Gniezno and Poznan diocese – according to this document – “with jurisdiction for Germans inhabiting the area” of the diocese⁴⁵. This act was treated as breaking the concordat by the Holy See⁴⁶. In this resolution it was also emphasized that the Holy See did not recognize the Provisional Government of National Unity, which caused the rejection of accepting the “nomination of apostolic administrators” on 15th August 1945 by the Polish side⁴⁷. Despite this diplomatic “friction”, the resolution highlighted that the Church has a “full freedom of acting in accordance with the laws in force”⁴⁸.

The indicated legal regulations outline the privileged position of the Catholic Church in Poland in the given period. The data concerning the denominational structure at the time might be the element which complements this picture, as it was diverse with a clearly dominating position of the Catholic Church. It might be exemplified by the data from 1921 and 1931. In 1921 as many as 63.9% of the population of Poland was connected with the Roman Catholic denomination (the percentage of the major remaining religious affiliation was the following: Greek Catholic – 11.2%; the Orthodox faith – 10.5%; the Jewish faith – 10.5%)⁴⁹. A decade later the data concerning individual denominations was similar⁵⁰ with an increasing number of diocesan clergies⁵¹. These comparisons show the strengthening potential of the Church in Poland, which was nevertheless significantly disturbed during the Second World War. The losses involved not only church infrastructure, churches and places of worship in the occupied Poland, but first of all they were connected with enormous casualties among the clergy⁵²: 1,931 clergymen were killed, including: 6 bishops, 1,863 priests and 63 seminarists⁵³. Simplified data only indicate the scale

⁴⁵ *Państwowe prawo wyznaniowe Polskiej Rzeczypospolitej Ludowej. Wybór tekstów źródłowych*, ATK, Warszawa 1978, p. 26.

⁴⁶ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 27.

⁴⁸ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁹ J. Mariański, *Katolicy w strukturze wyznaniowej Polski*, in: *Kościół katolicki w Polsce 1918-1990*, op. cit., p. 38.

⁵⁰ *Drugi powszechny spis ludności z dn. 9 XII 1931 r. Mieszkania i gospodarstwa domowe, ludność*, GUS, Warszawa 1938, p. 15, retrieved from: http://statlibr.stat.gov.pl/exlibris/aleph/a22_1/apache_media/VUNVGMLANSCQQFGYHCN3VDLK12A9U5.pdf

⁵¹ E. Jamroch, W. Zdaniewicz, *Duchowieństwo okresu dwudziestolecia międzywojennego*, in: *Kościół katolicki w Polsce 1918-1990*, GUS – ISSK, Warszawa 1991, p. 129.

⁵² Cf. J. Becker, *Watykan a sytuacja Kościoła w okupowanej Polsce*, in: *Życie religijne w Polsce pod okupacją hitlerowską 1939-1945*, Z. Zieliński (ed.), Ośrodek Dokumentacji i Studiów Społecznych, Warszawa 1982, p. 41.

⁵³ E. Jamroch, W. Zdaniewicz, *Księża diecezjalni*, op. cit., p. 132.

of losses that the Catholic Church suffered during the occupation, which did not hold it back, however, from conducting pastoral activities in this period.

Catholic Church in Poland under Communism

In the case of Poland, the attempts by the political apparatus (viewed as foreign, since Moscow-dependent) to break the links between the Church and the nation ideologically as well as under duress, as a result of manipulation and, on several occasions, by force, had generally little effect and were rather fruitless, and in fact ended up in failure. The prestige of the Polish 'militant' Catholicism was so high that it was not only determined not to hand over and let the party officials control or do away with the religious sphere (the intention of introducing the Soviet model of the "Communist caesaropapism"), but it also avoided any serious splits or divisions intended by the authorities, which supported "patriotic priests" collaborating with the political apparatus as well as backed "progressive Catholic movements". The selective repression of bishops, priests and nuns only strengthened the position of the Church, on several occasions turning them into heroes or martyrs⁵⁴. The attempts by the authorities at the time aiming at ideologically introducing secularization, concurrently establishing a new "civil religion", operating a secular symbolic and ideological arsenal were also a total failure⁵⁵, since the Church managed to defend even the right to offer religious education in the Church facilities⁵⁶.

The official State propaganda quickly began to lose its credibility and the marginalization of religion backfired, since not only the number of parishes, clergy and seminarians increased successively, which was especially visible after the election of Karol Wojtyła as Pope, but also a growing number of Catholic publications appeared and the interest and participation in religious ceremonies, traditional pilgrimages (especially annual pilgrimages to the famous shrine of the Black Madonna

⁵⁴ The emblematic exemplification of characteristic "icons" of the Church from this period might be Cardinal S. Wyszyński as well as the Rev. J. Popiełuszko, murdered by the Security Service.

⁵⁵ Cf. W. Piwowarski, *Sociologia religii*, Redakcja Wydawnictw Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, Lublin 1996, pp. 81-82.

⁵⁶ Limiting the scope of the presence of the Church in the public sphere was the result of the Constitution from 1952, which introduced separation of Church and State (Constitution from 1952, art. 70, section 2; *Journal of Laws* 1952, no. 33, item 232). The authorities of the Polish People's Republic successively reduced the scope of entitlements of the Church with subsequent documents, introducing secular marriages in 1958 (*Państwowe prawo wyznaniowe Polskiej Rzeczypospolitej Ludowej. Wybór tekstów źródłowych*, M. Fąka (ed.), ATK, Warszawa 1978, p. 194), secular education in 1961 (*Państwowe prawo wyznaniowe...*, op. cit., p. 64). Cf. also: J. Mariański, *Kościół Katolicki w Polsce w przestrzeni życia publicznego. Studium socjologiczne*, Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek, Toruń 2013, pp. 36-37; I. Borowik, *Procesy instytucjonalizacji i prywatyzacji religii w powojennej Polsce*; Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, Kraków 1997, pp. 66-69.

– a symbol of the resistance of the Polish nation against foreign invasions)⁵⁷ as well as processions were on the increase. At the same time, the strengthened position of clergy, their prestige and influence on society were noticeable⁵⁸. The conflict between the Church and the State in Poland in the times of the Polish People's Republic passed through various stages, including periods of mediations and relative betterment, sometimes ending in direct confrontations and even physical abuse of the Church representatives linked to the opposition movement.

Generally speaking, the State usually made some (temporary) concessions in the time of political "friction" in return for the help of the Church in pacifying the militant mood of the population or evident social unrest. The Church, however, systematically expanded its influence and protection into the areas of workers' and civil movements. The culmination of the activity of the Church occurred with the emergence of the Solidarity movement, backed by the Church and supported by secular activists. The element additionally strengthening the already powerful position of the Church was – the aforementioned – election of K. Wojtyła as pope. His activity and commitment in reinforcing Catholicism in Poland was also noticeable in the period preceding his election, since he was involved in academic pastoral work and the development of the Oasis Movement. The first apostolic visitations of John Paul II to his home country (1979, 1983, 1987), which gathered crowds, were groundbreaking moments, demonstrating the clear ideological preferences of the majority of Poles, their aversion to the authorities, as well as allowing for the presentation of the potential of the opposition. The position of the Church became even stronger, with its culmination after the introduction of martial law (in 1981), when the hierarchs needed to mediate with the authorities not only to protect the opposition activists, but also the clergy involved in the opposition activity.

With the change of the head of the Polish episcopate (in 1981 Józef Glemp took over), however, the Church started adopting the strategy of "political realism", demonstrating a certain compliance, and supporting the normalization of the state of emergency. It resulted in, on the one hand, concessions of the State which allowed for building a larger number of churches, while on the other hand, it led to certain misunderstandings between the centralized Church hierarchy and the nation.

Changes in Polish Church public standing after re-democratization (1989)

The political transformation in 1989, initiating democratic changes in Poland, showed the socio-political potential of Solidarity, which gained representatives in the Sejm as a result of parliamentary elections, but at the same time became the emblem

⁵⁷ On the historical role and significance of Jasna Góra, cf. Sz. Z. Jabłoński, *Jasna Góra – ośrodek kultu maryjnego (1864-1914)*, Redakcja Wydawnictw KUL, Lublin 1984.

of changes in the position of the Church. Due to political transformations the Church did not have to and ceased to be regarded as the guardian and defender of the nation. Social and political matters could start to be solved through democratic rules, an open public debate, led with respect for the plurality and heterogeneity of norms, values and interests. The Church, used to its significant public role, however, wanted to maintain its position of a monopolist, which manifested itself in its attempt to interfere in the shape of socio-political order.

At the beginning of the period of political transformations in Poland, the Catholic Church expressed its preference for keeping its privileged position and opted for creating a confessional state. In 1990, under pressure from the Church, the Solidarity government introduced Religious Education into the school curriculum as an obligatory subject⁵⁹. In 1991 the Polish Senate passed a bill de-legalizing abortion⁶⁰. In the same year, the Primate Glemp proposed to do away with the constitutional separation of the Church and the state due to the religious structure of Poland, where the vast majority of citizens are of the Catholic confession. Such initiatives were inspired – as it should be supposed – by the role of the Church so far as well as the acceptance of the Polish society, its activity and significance to the socio-political issues⁶¹. This favorable assessment of the activity of the Church by the Polish society, however, generally referred to a specific historical period, namely to the times of struggle between the Poles and the authorities and politics of the period of the Polish People's Republic as well as their liberation aspirations. The political transformation, and therefore the implementation of the principles of democracy, liberalism and free market solutions contributed to a specific detachment of the Poles from the initiatives and attempts of the Church leading to interference in the emerging new socio-political order. Initially it seemed that the attempts of the Polish

⁵⁹ The introduction of Religious Education into schools occurred pursuant to the *Instrukcja Ministerstwa Edukacji Narodowej z dnia 3 sierpnia 1990 r., dotycząca powrotu nauczania religii do szkoły w roku szkolnym 1990/91*.

⁶⁰ In 1993 the legal regulation still in force was introduced, significantly restricting the permissibility of performing a termination of pregnancy. Cf. *Ustawa z dnia 7 stycznia 1993 r. o planowaniu rodziny, ochronie płodu ludzkiego i warunkach dopuszczalności przerywania ciąży*, "Journal of Laws", 1993, no. 17, item 78.

⁶¹ The approval of the influence and a possible interference of the Church is emphasized by research conducted by the Public Opinion Research Center, according to which in November 1989 the activity of the Church in line with the public interest was recognized by 87.8% of the respondents (*Świat polityki. Instytucje i politycy w świadomości społecznej*, Research Reports, CBOS, BS/134/51/90, Warszawa 1990, p. 5), in January 1990 the Church was perceived analogically by 72% of the respondents, while in November 1991 the proportion was 62% (*Spółeczna ocena działalności kluczowych instytucji, organizacji społeczno-politycznych i osobistości życia publicznego*, Research Reports, CBOS, BS/379/98/91, Warszawa 1991, p. 8). At the end of 1993, 54% of the respondents indicated a favorable assessment of religious institutions, while in November 1994 – 53% (*Instytucje publiczne w opinii społeczeństwa*, Research Reports, CBOS, BS/201/178/94, Warszawa 1994, p. 2). In later years, the level of a positive assessment of the Church underwent minor changes. For example, at the end of 1995 it was 58%, while in 1996 – 51%, in April of 1997 – 58%. *Ocena działalności instytucji publicznych*, Research Reports, CBOS, BS/63/63/97, Warszawa 1997, p. 2.

Church intending to gain the position of an extraconstitutional power would be difficult to limit. The Parliamentary elections of 1991 showed that its influence over the electoral results was, after all, quite limited, in spite of the clear appeal on the part of the episcopate to vote for Catholic candidates, which led to many internal conflicts and division within the Catholic community, showing discrepancy between what the Church thought it could be in the democratic Poland and what was the space that the society was willing to give to it, especially with regards to the issues of private morality.

Later years emphasize the weakening of the former position of the Catholic Church, which, despite gaining a privileged status and a number of specific prerogatives⁶², as well as alliances with political structures, consecutively lost its influence on society, thus undergoing a gradual influence of the secularization tendencies observed in the Western part of Europe. These changes were – and still are – noticeable not only in the dimension of a gradual collapse of the involvement in the sphere of religious practices⁶³, regulating morality referring first of all to the sphere of sexual life and marital cohabitation⁶⁴, but also a decline in the influence

⁶² This privileged position is emphasized by a concordat signed in 1993 with the Holy See. Cf. *Konkordat między Stolicą Apostolską i Rzeczpospolitą Polską, podpisany w Warszawie dnia 28 lipca 1993 r.*, Journal of Laws 1998, no. 51, item 318.

⁶³ The decline in the involvement of the Poles in religious practices is emphasized for instance by the results of research conducted by the Institute for Catholic Church Statistics, according to which in 1990 the proportion of people participating in the Liturgy (*dominicantes*) was 50.3%, five years later, in 1995 it was 46.8%, in 2000 – 47.5%, in 2005 – 45%, in 2010 – 41%, in 2015 – 36.7%, *Dominicantes 2009*, source: http://iskk.pl/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=116:dominicantes-2009&catid=34:kosciol-powszechny&Itemid=68; *Dominicantes 1992-2010 – wykresy*, retrieved from: http://www.iskk.pl/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=75:dominicantes&catid=38:kosciol-w-polsce&Itemid=67 [access: 18 February 2016]. A certain distancing of the Poles towards the position of the Church and its possible influence is noticeable in the light of research conducted by the Public Opinion Research Center in 1997, that is in the period of the Democratic Left Alliance and the Polish People's Party government. According to the survey, 9% of the respondents expected a stronger influence of the Church than so far, a weaker influence – 44%, while 43% of the respondents opted for maintaining its current role (p. 7). Cf. *Postrzegana i postulowana rola Kościoła katolickiego w Polsce*, Research Reports, CBOS, BS/183/181/96, Warszawa 1997, p. 10.

⁶⁴ Reducing the influence of the Church on the sphere of marital life, as well as losing the capability to control procreation might be illustrated by the abortion policy in Poland, which reveals not only the attempt to instrumentalize this issue by political parties, which has led to strengthening their alliance with the Church many times, but also the progressing emancipation of the worshippers and their awareness from the influence of the teachings and guidelines of the Church. The issues in question appear once in a while in the native public discourse, raised by conservative environments and right-wing political parties, which aim at toughening the legal regulations in force within this scope. Since 1993 the legislation binding in Poland by virtue of the *Act On Family Planning, Human Embryo Protection and Conditions of Permissibility of Abortion (O planowaniu rodziny, ochronie płodu i warunkach dopuszczalności przerywania ciąży)*, has allowed for an abortion in the three following cases: when the pregnancy threatens the health or the life of the mother; if it is a result of a prohibited act as well as in a situation when the medical examinations indicate the possibility of severe and irreversible fetal damage [Journal of Laws (Dz. U.) 1993, No. 17, item 78 as amended]. These regulations are – which was indicated – questioned by pro-life

on the socio-political or more generally, public dimension. Tendencies connected with marginalization and restricting the role of the Church incline it to undergo actions aiming at the restitution of its previous and significant role. These under-takings, which can be identified in the context of Casanova's perspective – as de-privatization – in fact appear as not very successful. Democratic principles, pluralism indeed create favorable conditions for the presence of the voice of the Church in socially and politically important issues, which is emphasized for instance by the developing sector of religious media as well as the appearance of religious subject matter in the mainstream media, but the influence of secularization and further distancing of the faithful from the Church seem to be more and more evident in the context of Polish public life.

Conclusions

It seems that the two Churches (Polish and Brazilian) acted in the second half of the 20th century very much alike, both of them boasting officially of almost a monopoly in their respective “religious markets” in the times of the biggest social and political turmoil, in spite of all the historical, cultural and political differences between them that we presented in the first part of the article. In the view of the analysis of their standing and public influence in both transformation and post-transformation period, however, it is visible that the previous unity of the Church and the Nation (the People in Brazil) against a common enemy (the dictatorial State) in the analyzed countries was quickly dissolved with the appearance of deep divisions between new democratic parties, political and social movements and their ideologies. Splits within each of the Churches (for example, between a more conservative hierarchy and more radical lower clergy) started to be more and more visible, activating only a specific segment of the faithful, in-line with the current

environments, conservative and right-wing, which undertake different kinds of initiatives, including also legislative ones, proclaiming full protection of life from the moment of conception, *eo ipso* they call for a total ban on abortion. Such attempts might be exemplified by the legislative project of 2016, which initiated a wave of protests in Poland [Cf. *inter alia* A Bill Initiated by Citizens – to Amend the Act of 7 January 1993 On Family Planning, Human Embryo Protection and Conditions of Permissibility of Abortion as well as the Penal Code Act of 6 June 1997, 19 August 2016, form No. 784 (*Obywatelski projekt ustawy – o zmianie ustawy z dnia 7 stycznia 1993 r. o planowaniu rodziny, ochronie płodu ludzkiego i warunkach dopuszczalności przerywania ciąży oraz ustawy z dnia 6 czerwca 1997 – Kodeks karny, 19 VIII 2016, druk nr 784*)]. The opinions of the Polish people regarding the issue of abortion quite clearly show the approval for the binding legal regulations in this respect and the progressing dissociation from the idea to protect life from the moment of conception. Cf. *inter alia* *Opinie o dopuszczalności aborcji*, M. Herrmann (ed.), Research Reports, CBOS (Public Opinion Research Center Report), No. 51, Warsaw 2016, p. 42; *Opinie o prawnej dopuszczalności i regulacji aborcji*, N. Hipsz (ed.), Research Reports, CBOS (Public Opinion Research Center Report), No. BS/102, Warszawa 2011, p. 3.

institutional church's policy. In this perspective it becomes noticeable that despite the generally weakening influence of the Church on both societies, there are still some segments open for its interaction, as well as ready to participate in propagating and defending traditional values and conservative viewpoint, referring to the Christian axiology.

Although in the case of Brazil, secularizing influences are noticeable to a much lesser extent than in Poland, the effects of a religious market competition are much more clearly visible, influencing the position of the Church, which has to deal simultaneously with the implications of distancing the faithful from the sacred sphere, growing (Neo)Pentecostal competition and loosening of its "grip" on political decisions taken in the public sphere.

The conducted analysis shows that despite the constituted potential and trust enjoyed by both Churches in the period of confrontation with authoritarian systems, the stage of the new socio-political order referring to the democratic principles is a time of dramatic changes faced by the Churches in both countries, including new challenges, sometimes very difficult to meet. Democratic standards allow everybody for the free and unobstructed articulation of different axiological viewpoints and preferences and the demand for an "offer" propagated by the Catholic Church (one of many offers) appears often moderately coherent with the currents needs and expectations of the members of the discussed societies. Paradoxically, undemocratic or openly dictatorial regimes and the acts of persecution against the opposition supported by the Church were very important factors which upheld the authority of the institution and its strong standing in the public sphere both in Poland and in Brazil. At the same time, democratic consolidation paved a path for the "privatization" of the "public religion", withdrawing it from the public sector and imposing many constraints on its activities, making it more and more difficult to maintain its previous political, social and cultural impact.

Renata Siuda-Ambroziak, Ewa Stachowska – PUBLIC RELIGION IN THE 21ST CENTURY: A COMPARATIVE STUDY ON THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN POLAND AND BRAZIL

This article attempts to present the functioning and development of public religion – understood in accordance with J. Casanova's theoretical perspective – in two countries: in Poland and Brazil at the beginning of the 21st century, taking into consideration a broader historical context. J. Casanova's concept indicates from the most general point of view that in contemporary societies, permeated with secularizational trends to a various degree, space for religion is formed, which might return to the public dimension with a new force. The very fact of religion entering the public sphere was illustrated on the basis of both countries, in which the struggle with authoritarian systems created specific conditions for the Catholic Church, performing a highly consolidating role for the individual societies. The post-transformation period, connected *inter alia* with the emergence of a new democratic order on the other hand caused a number of ideological, political and axiological divisions, which appear also in the

sphere of particular Churches, around which the hitherto existing integrational and motivational potential began to be instrumentalized *inter alia* by the specific political forces. Although nowadays the situation of the Catholic Church in both countries in the most general outline seems to be relatively similar first of all due to the historically shaped role of the Church, its dominating position and socio-cultural significance, the scale and scope of the challenges for the leading religious companies in the discussed countries are shaped differently. The analyses conducted in the article concern first and foremost the planes of similarities and differences, thus indicating the forms of the public presence of religion in Poland and Brazil.