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Do we need homelands?

John Paul II's ideal of the community of nations

Abstract

Since the 1990s, a discussion on the status, significance and role of nation state has been going on in many communities. In Europe, this discussion generated the opinion that the only hope for the divided world is to create a post-national, multi-cultural and cosmopolitically liberal society. Let us, however, ask: Does not the idea of a strong nation state return with practical force in the face of the global COVID-19 pandemic, the price war between the US and China, as well as the world's superpowers outer space and military plans? In our current context John Paul II's teaching is worth reminding. In the time of difficult challenges, the properly conceived patriotism propagated by the Pope should become a model of a national and civil attitude. True European politicalness is connected with the community of fate, the fruit of which should be solidarity of action in the face of real threats. John Paul II was also aware of this responsibility. Today we know that nobody will replace nation states in this process and no central institutions will substitute a civil community formed by the nation in the execution of difficult tasks. Therefore, we may only repeat after John Paul II that the future of man depends on the family and the nation.

Key words: John Paul II, nation, globalization, patriotism, cosmopolitanism, homeland.

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Since the 1990s, a discussion on the status, significance and role of nation state has been going on in many communities – both in lecture halls of renowned universities as well as in the popular press. In Europe, this discussion generated the opinion that the only hope for the divided world is to create a post-national, multi-cultural and cosmopolitically liberal society. These tendencies have been consolidated by European integration that took place in 2004. There have been analyses and opinions that in the atmosphere of freedom of movement and work, traditional and so far strong social and political forces – family, various associations, civilian and religious communities, and ultimately also nations – will be losing their importance.¹ They should be waning in their traditional role of identity formation since the policy of unification strongly accentuates reasons for multiculturalism and European citizenship. Those voices were concordant with the opinions of many media communities which for over a dozen years were warning of nationalism as a real menace of the renaissance of the totalitarian demons of the 20th century. In the eyes of many, the concept of a nation has become a dangerous category which – if not taken under control or virtually eliminated from social life – will undermine liberal ideals. Interpreting national reasons in the spirit of nationalism resulted in the conviction that speaking of national interest and its primacy was tantamount to undermining the spirit of universal Europe and dreams about European unity. That is why for many people any theory proclaiming the real force of the community and language of origin, where a binding social factor is its history and tradition, has become

¹ *Culture and Identity. Selected Aspects and Approaches* (1996); Bauman (2002); Castells (2010); Sassen (2007); Sassen (1996); Jarniewicz (2002); O'Brien (1992).

unacceptable, and all the more so inapplicable in practice. In this perspective, a nation state is perceived as an irrational, romantic and utopian myth which poses the threat of nationalism and collectivism.²

Let us, however, ask: Does not the idea of a strong nation state return with practical force in the face of the global COVID-19 pandemic, the price war between the US and China, as well as the world's superpowers outer space and military plans?³ It has turned out that in order to face the adversities and ensure security the political community needs a nation state. In the situation of the crisis of values, notions associated with nationalism, namely language, tradition and ultimately the nation itself, as the categories striving after good for the ethnic and cultural community of fate, have become a space of mobilization.

Pilgrim of the world and protector of nations

Therefore, although all over the world nationalism has acquired negative connotations, national topics return today in many debates.⁴ Discussions about the role and importance

² Eller (2012), Budyta-Budzyńska (2010); Hall (2000): 29–34.

³ Global and National Environmental Impacts of the US–China Trade War (2020): 16108–16118; Yu Wu, Turvey (2020); Min-hyung Kim (2019): 30–40; Ushanov, Akhmad Reshad (2020): 273–287; Pancea (2019): 283–298; Carvalho, Azevedo, Massuquetti (2019); Adekola (2019): 125–135; Xua, Lien (2020).

⁴ Nationalism – less than 100 years ago this word had a positive sense, whereas today it is unequivocally negatively associated (citing hatred for strangers as a necessary element of nationalism). Let us note that at the beginning of the 20th century the Polish sociologist Florian Znaniecki claimed that nationalists professed the idea of independence of the nation, national unity, development of its goals or historical mission. Similarly, the Polish Thomist and teacher Father Jacek Woroniecki OP

of a nation state, multi-culturalism and civilizational pluralism are now being held both in the media and in parliamentary chambers. Thus, if the issue of nationality, status of homeland and importance of nation state arouses such emotions, John Paul II's reflection on this subject is worth reminding – on the 100th birthday anniversary of the Polish Pope. Whilst a very few leaders (spiritual and political) deserve the name of citizens of the world, it can be said of John Paul II that he became a pilgrim of the world, visiting during his pontificate over one hundred countries on all continents. This extraordinary man crossed the frontiers, as well as linguistic, cultural and national boundaries. In his religious service he became a voice of many nameless and oppressed people; he was their defender regardless of their religion or geographical location. Moreover, the more time has elapsed since the death of John Paul II, the more we realize the importance of his life and work since they provide us with the opportunity to gain self-knowledge. With his whole life – his testimony, teaching, writing, prayer and suffering – he showed the meaning of being a man: free and responsible. He also pointed to social matters – civil involvement, love for the community, concern for common good, charitable activity, political freedom – as spaces for the realisation of humanity.

argued that nationalism was a doctrine about the life of the nation, its origins, duties and role. Znaniecki (1986): 71; Woroniecki (1986): 122; Legutko (2008); Bartyzel, (2010): 21; Grott (1999): 53–118. Understood non-ideologically, that is as a conscious sense of continuity and creative settling in the history of one's own community and its religion, nationalism is assessed very critically, delegitimized and pushed to the side. That is why no decent person wants to be called a nationalist, messianist or national megalomaniac. See more: Eriksen (2002): 117–146; Harris (2009): 46–72; Hurlbert (2012): 129–132; Tamir (2019): 3–18; Gellner (2006): 85–98; Lawrence (2005): 123–190; Calhoun (1997); Jaskulski (2012): 14–20; Lorenz (2009): 215.

Although he undoubtedly was a most outstanding figure on a global scale, the Pope attached special weight to describing and presenting the historical importance of nations and homelands. For him those categories were not a politically dangerous phantasm but natural communities, forms of community life which arose from the existential/relational situation of a person, family, and culture. However, being aware of this one should not refrain from asking: Does not his voice now, over a dozen years after his death, when the discussion about nations and cosmopolitan projects has been renewed, become an anachronistic call of a man mentally trapped in the 20th century, the century of nations and wars, conflicts and atrocities committed in the name of nationalistic ideas? In order to give a sensible answer to this question, let us have a look at how the Pope understood fundamental social notions.

Community of family, people and nation

Taking up national matters in his texts, John Paul II was aware that the word ‘nation’ originated from the Latin word *natio*, which in turn comes from *nascor*, *nascere*, *nasci* – “to be born”, “arise”, “be native”, “to be produced”, “rise”.⁵ Ancient Romans used a similar term to designate the goddess of birth and harvest – Ceres, whose name means a ‘kernel’.⁶ Thus, the concept of nation appears in the languages based on Latin; that is why the primary source of English *nation*, French *nation*, German *nation*, Italian *nazione*, Spanish *nación* is the Latin term *natio*. Also the Polish term *naród* has its source in Latin.

⁵ Oxford Latin Dictionary (1879): 1187–1188.

⁶ Ibidem: 318.

Latin was brought to Central and Eastern Europe by Christian missionaries; the term *nascor* had been unknown earlier, at the initial stages of development of Slavic tribes. In those times it was even difficult to speak about equivalents of such typical terms as *ród* (family, clan), *rodzić*, *porodzić*. In Slavic culture, the name *ród* meant a lucky streak, success, prosperity, growth, but also the god of luck and fortune. It was only at the times of Medieval Latin that the term *ród* started to be identified with giving birth (*rodzić*) and proliferation of the community. Therefore, etymologically *naród* means a concrete community of people connected by the ties of being natural descendants of a single common ancestor. Similar connotations with begetting and giving birth are linked with the Latin word *patria* derived from the word *pater* (father), thus implying the notion of patriotism as devotion to a homeland (fatherland, motherland). Fatherland/motherland is in its content also associated with origin.⁷

And although in the Antiquity and the Middle Ages synonymous to that term were the words *populus*, *gens*, in the Middle Ages Latin *natio* and *patria* explicitly expressed attachment to a nation and homeland more powerfully than their Ancient equivalents.⁸

Despite those linguistic nuances, there is no doubt that *narodzenie* (birth) expressed by *ród* (family) and *naród* (nation) is always connected with language, community of fate, religion, territory, and political activity. That is why John Paul II said:

⁷ Brückner (1927): 459–460; *Etymological Dictionary of Latin* (2008): 400–401.

⁸ Thiesse (1999): 67–75.

A dimension of social love is the homeland: the sons and daughters of one nation persist in the love of the common good that they derive from culture and history, finding therein the support of their social identity and at the same time providing this support to their fellow countrymen. This circle of social love has a special meaning in our Polish historical experience and in our contemporary times. Social love is open to all individuals and to all peoples. If it is deeply and honestly formed in its basic circles, whether man, family or homeland, it also succeeds in its widest circle.⁹

However, the Pope was aware that – as Józef Tischner emphasized – there is an inner specific tension in the characteristics of a nation. In a nation what is universal meets in various ways with what is particular. This encounter is frequently a source of various antagonisms.¹⁰ That is why in one of his major addresses – *From human rights to the rights of nations* – delivered in 1995 at the UN General Assembly, John Paul II remarked:

This tension between the particular and the universal can be considered immanent in human beings. By virtue of sharing in the same human nature, people automatically feel that they are members of one great family, as is in fact the case. But as a result of the concrete historical conditioning of this same nature, they are necessarily bound in a more intense way to particular human groups, beginning with the family and going

⁹ Jan Paweł II (2008): 247.

¹⁰ Tischner (1997): 29.

on to the various groups to which they belong and up to the whole of their ethnic and cultural group, which is called, not by accident, a “nation”, from the Latin word “nasci”: “to be born”. This term, enriched with another one, “patria” (fatherland/motherland), evokes the reality of the family. The human condition thus finds itself between these two poles — universality and particularity — with a vital tension between them; an inevitable tension, but singularly fruitful if they are lived in a calm and balanced way.¹¹

Let us note that in the essential rather than predicamental sense a nation is to be “from the family and for the family”. At the same time, both categories – nation and family – are not mutually equivalent, but at the same time mutually indispensable. Each of those poles is unrepeatable and irreplaceable. A family tie means at the same time being a member of a larger community which plays a formational role just as the family does. It is the community of the people and the nation with which we are bound by the unity of culture, language and history. For the Pope, this heritage constitutes at the same time a challenge in the ethical sense. It is by receiving a language, tradition, religion and inherited values which constitute the entirety of culture of one’s own society, that individuals get to know themselves and their place in the world.¹²

¹¹ *The Fiftieth General Assembly of The United Nations Organization Address of His Holiness John Paul II* (1995).

¹² Beyer (2014): 69–72.

Nation in the service of family

In Latin and in modern languages the very word *patria* suggests, as I have already mentioned, special relations with parents, father and mother. Hence a nation must not be considered an artificially constructed community, set up as a result of an agreement, but has to be perceived as a natural community, just as natural basic human ties and relationships are. That is why neither family nor nation can be constructed and ultimately replaced with anything else.¹³ For John Paul II the term “nation” means the community which finds its homeland in a given place of the world and distinguishes itself from others with its own culture.¹⁴

Therefore, it may be said that John Paul II’s reflection on the meaning of the anthropological identity of a nation is based on the following scheme: human person – family – people – nation. A person is the fundamental criterion of all social relations and community life. John Paul II expressed this conviction in the texts from before his pontificate. In his study *The Acting Person* Karol Wojtyła wrote that it is common humanity shared by persons that lies, after all, at the basis of all the other communities.

¹³ Skreczko (2005): 20. Let us make it clear, however, that in the literature on the subject we find many publications showing that a nation is not something natural and primordial, but created – “it is an accidental and unnecessary entity”, as the perhaps best known constructivist Ernest Gellner says – useful at a certain stage of historical development (Gellner 2006). A nation is perceived here as a construct of consciousness created by intellectual elites around certain specific ideas. It is a community created within certain criteria, such as citizenship or rights. See more: Anderson (2006); Hall (1992): 4–6; *Culture, Globalization and the World-System* (2000): 29–32; Kiliias (2004): 115–225. I have addressed these theses critically in my book on national identity – Grzybowski (2012): 610–620.

¹⁴ Jan Paweł II (2005): 74.

We have concentrated on the common good primarily as the principle of correct participation, which allows the person acting together with other persons to perform authentic actions and to fulfil himself through these actions. Our concern is therefore with the genuinely personalistic structure of human existence in a community, that is, in every community that man belongs to.¹⁵

For the Pope a nation is first of all wealthy because of its people, opulent with men and their concern for the shape of freedom, community, good, truth. Responsibility for those areas of public functioning gives shape to relationships in a nation. In this perspective, a national community is at the service of a family, as it exists through it and thanks to it. Hence, a family is always superior to a nation – it is a community that enjoys a clear and primary right. That is why, conceived substantively as a family of families bonded by culture, a nation should be perceived as a most important broad community of the spiritual history of man.¹⁶

It is right to understand the history of the nation through man, each human being of this nation. At the same time man cannot be understood apart from this community that is constituted by the nation.¹⁷

Let us be clear, however – as a community of people connected by mutual relationships, a nation is not a substantial entity for the Pope. The Polish Pope is in favour of the concept of nation as a real though accidental entity, wherein particular

¹⁵ Wojtyła (1979): 282.

¹⁶ *Jan Paweł II na ziemi polskiej* (1979): 30.

¹⁷ *Homily of His Holiness John Paul II* (1979).

people and relationships create social ties bonded by the commonly understood, accepted and experienced culture. A nation is neither a mythical substance guiding individual people, nor a simple set of people, but a community in which apart from individuals there is also a reality, the real relationship that is common to them. Defining a nation as a relational community based on broadly conceived culture, which demands continuity and protection causes that extreme monism (individuals are insignificant in relation to the nation, they lose themselves therein) as well as extreme pluralism (individuals are more important than the nation as a whole) in social theory are avoided. The real relationship, directed towards people and national culture, constitutes the nation in its existence and standing. Therefore, in the social vision of John Paul II a nation exists in the subject (in people) and for the subject (for people), and thus cannot be perceived as a substantial entity (independent, existing *per se*).¹⁸

In the spirit of the above, during his pilgrimages to Poland, John Paul II said repeatedly:

The nation is truly free when it can shape itself as a community determined by unity of culture, language and history. The state is firmly sovereign when it governs society and also serves the common good of society and allows the nation to realize its own subjectivity, its own identity. Among other things this involves the creation of suitable conditions of development in the fields of culture, economics and other spheres of the life of the social community. The sovereignty of the state

¹⁸ *Religion, Politics and Nation-Building in Post-Communist Countries* (2015): 163–167.

is deeply linked to its capacity to promote the freedom of the nation, that is, to developing conditions that permit the nation to express all of its distinctive historical and cultural identity, being sovereign, that is, through the state.¹⁹

The question of personal, social and national identity was a key issue for the Pope. That is why in his important address at the UNESCO forum he argued:

The Nation is, in fact, the great community of men who are united by various ties, but above all, precisely by culture. The Nation exists “through” culture and “for” culture, and it is therefore the great educator of men in order that they may “be more” in the community. It is this community which possesses a history that goes beyond the history of the individual and the family. It is also in this community, with respect to which every family educates, that the family begins its work of education with what is the most simple thing, language, thus enabling man who is at the very beginning to learn to speak in order to become a member of the community of his family and of his Nation.²⁰

Religion and spiritual sovereignty

It must not be forgotten that one of the major components of the national community described by John Paul II is spirituality and religion. Speaking about the genealogy of a nation

¹⁹ Mass at Jasna Góra (1983).

²⁰ *To the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization* (1980).

the Pope always stressed its spiritual dimension. Let us note that what the Holy Father wrote about the genealogy of a nation harmonized with his lecture on the genealogy of a person in the *Letter to Families*.²¹ Such an approach allows for emphasizing two important ideas: first, that the dignity of a nation arises from the dignity of the persons who constitute it, and, second, that this truth and the depth of the genealogy of both the person and the nation are an internal family secret.²²

Thus, the deeply lived faith does not invalidate national loyalties. On the contrary: the experience shows that Christians and Christian communities live their lives profoundly included in the lives of individual nations, being at the same time a sign of the Gospel also in terms of faithfulness to their homeland and national culture, though always in freedom brought about by Jesus Christ. Christianity is open to universal brotherhood for all the people are children of the same

²¹ “Man is a common good: a common good of the family and of humanity, of individual groups and of different communities. But there are significant distinctions of degree and modality in this regard. Man is a common good, for example, of the Nation to which he belongs and of the State of which he is a citizen; but in a much more concrete, unique and unrepeatable way he is a common good of his family. He is such not only as an individual who is part of the multitude of humanity, but rather as *this individual*. God the Creator calls him into existence *for himself*; and in coming into the world he begins, in the family, his *great adventure*, the adventure of human life. *This man* has, in every instance, the right to fulfil himself on the basis of his human dignity. It is precisely this dignity which establishes a person’s place among others, and above all, in the family. The family is indeed – more than any other human reality – the place where an individual can exist *for himself* through the sincere gift of self. This is why it remains a social institution which neither can nor should be replaced: it is the *sanctuary of life*”. John Paul II (2015).

²² Skreczko (2005): 23.

Father and therefore brethren in Christ. Nationality does not contradict the universality of freedom and dignity of a human person.²³

In many Papal texts we detect a conviction that in a nation there is a continuous process of passing from the sphere of human nature rooted in the world to the substantive inner sphere. Thanks to this process the nation acquires its own consciousness, its own specific spirit, a set of collective sentiments and a community impulse to act.²⁴ That is why each nation should enjoy the right to its own language and culture, with which people express and represent what may be called *fundamental spiritual sovereignty*. The right of a nation to shape its life according to its own traditions also constitutes a prerequisite for the right to build its future by ensuring adequate education to the younger generation.²⁵ That is why peace and rapprochement between nations may be built only on the basis of respect for the rights of a nation, such as the right to existence, to religious freedom, to social and political subjectivity, to creating its own culture.

Different cultures are basically different ways of facing the question of the meaning of personal existence. When this question is eliminated, the culture and moral life of nations are corrupted. For this reason the struggle

²³ “Christians and Christian communities are very much a part of the life of their respective nations and can be a sign of the Gospel in their fidelity to their native land, people and national culture, while always preserving the freedom brought by Christ. Christianity is open to universal brotherhood, for all men and women are sons and daughters of the same Father and brothers and sisters in Christ”. John Paul II (2001b).

²⁴ Kowalczyk (2011): 13–19.

²⁵ Tischner (1997): 45.

to defend work was spontaneously linked to the struggle for culture and for national rights.²⁶

The nation as a subject

While reading social texts of John Paul II we shall find an ethical way of understanding human communities. The Pope sees the nation as a value. Hence its existence and functioning is not based on power (and all the more so is not a way of exercising supremacy of man over man), but arises from the utmost service to the common good – the homeland – wherein everyone ultimately is “from the nation and for the nation”.

The sense of belonging, of having roots in a concrete world, community and culture is offered by the nation as it allows a human person discover and experience their own identity. The Pope wrote about it in the following way in one of his major social encyclicals *Centesimus annus*:

As has been mentioned, this error consists in an understanding of human freedom which detaches it from obedience to the truth, and consequently from the duty to respect the rights of others. The essence of freedom then becomes self-love carried to the point of contempt for God and neighbour, a self-love which leads to an unbridled affirmation of self-interest and which refuses to be limited by any demand of justice. This very error had extreme consequences in the tragic series of wars which ravaged Europe and the world between 1914 and 1945. Some of these resulted from militarism and exaggerated nationalism, and from related forms

²⁶ John Paul II (2001a): 24.

of totalitarianism; some derived from the class struggle; still others were civil wars or wars of an ideological nature. Without the terrible burden of hatred and resentment which had built up as a result of so many injustices both on the international level and within individual States, such cruel wars would not have been possible, in which great nations invested their energies and in which there was no hesitation to violate the most sacred human rights, with the extermination of entire peoples and social groups being planned and carried out. Here we recall the Jewish people in particular, whose terrible fate has become a symbol of the aberration of which man is capable when he turns against God.²⁷

In this meaning, the nation in its constitutive elements the nation appears as a good which which helps a person to be the subject of social life. That is why, in this vision, the foundation of the nation as a community of family, culture, tradition and history is the dignity of a human person. More precisely – its solidary participation in the humanity with respect to realization of the common good.²⁸

The conclusions following from so formulated theses are, however, very serious: the history of a nation deserves an appropriate evaluation according to what it has contributed to the development of man and family, their minds, hearts, conscience. For John Paul II this is primarily the deepest current of culture, its strongest bulwark, core and might. For the Pope, who looks at the world in the profoundly religious

²⁷ Ibidem: 17.

²⁸ Tarasiewicz (2016): 418–420.

perspective, each person, each nation, each culture and civilization have their role to play and their own place in God's mysterious plan of history of redemption.

Risk of absolute loss of identity

A brief presentation of the understanding of nation and nationality by John Paul II should encourage one to ask once more the previously mentioned question about the timeliness and sense of Papal social reflections. Does it still make sense to talk about the key role of nationality today, in the time of dominating liberalism, whose essential component is conscious loosening of bonds so that everyone becomes their own master paying no heed to the objectives of the community? We all see how in the 21st century the process of emancipation has become a feature of our different communities (family, municipality, nation and state) – renunciation of all restriction so as to always act freely and arbitrarily to independently chose and determine their own future.²⁹ To live so as not to bear responsibility for the others, not to think about community or solidarity. In the time of growing consumptionism and countless technical and digital opportunities everyone wants to create themselves. This, undoubtedly, reinforces the desire to live not where the roots, traditions or family (national) bonds are, but where the life is simply better in terms of money and comfort.

Many observers of our public life show how individualism dominating in liberalism rejects important community values. Today, civic attitudes – such as solidarity and collaboration – have neither support nor a resource base to settle

²⁹ Delsol (2016): 45, 90.

in the interpersonal relations. From the viewpoint of liberal economic they are simply “ineffective”.³⁰ Don’t we see the prevailing delusion that each person can live independently, work, make as much money as possible, enjoy life freely, be occupied with one’s own pleasures and not be bothered with the problems of the community or the nation? A totally emancipated individual does not want to be dependent on the community.³¹ Liberal negation of taking roots and settling in homelands and traditions made many people believe in the myth that various social and cultural narrations would bring about a common ground of cosmopolitan cooperation, reconciliation, responsibility, and peace.³²

John Paul II, a witness to both horrible and magnificent events in the 20th century, seems to tell us that negating people’s identity in order to liberate them from any and all determinations (territorial, religious, moral, ethnic, cultural) is in the final reckoning counter effective. It shall lead to the loss of understanding and experiencing one’s own identity and purpose of existence. This is also confirmed by the great 20th century

³⁰ Hoppe (2006); Zakaria (2003); Bovens (2010): 946–967; Pappas (2016): 22–36; Szlachta (2012); Szlachta (2016): 57–67; Dahl (2015); Markowski (2004); Stawrowski (2008); Zielonka (2018): 81–156; Safjan (2018): 57–72; Nowak (2018): 31–49; Armingeon, Guthmann (2014).

³¹ Król (2012): 134; Król (2016): 125–129.

³² Kymlicka (2001): 206–208, 254–256. The social discourse is dominated by globalisation dreams for the world to become a free market and all cultures of the world to create a universal civilisation based on liberal and democratic principles, thus overcoming historical and ideological differences. Their utopianism reminds – as John Grey claims – of the Marxist ideology based on understanding history as a progress of the species driven by knowledge and wealth. People will become better thanks to the increasing comfort, while their faults and crimes may be lastingly corrected by both education as well as more efficient and effective political institutions, a higher standard of living. See: Gray (2004): 63.

researcher of totalitarian ideas Hannah Arendt, who warned that the totalitarian idea would survive totalitarianisms wherever the authorities create people who are *absolutely liberated* – people without a home, homeland, roots and traditions.³³

The lesson John Paul II gives us consists primarily in the understanding that in the difficult times of contemporary challenges the task of character formation continues to be in the hands of determined and non-liberal communities. The communities which are hierarchical and normative, endowed with their own identity, with very explicit ideological and confessional message – family, religious communities, local communities bonded by tradition, nation.

The homeland as a school of citizenship

Over a decade after the death of John Paul II many people and environments do not want to remember that this giant grew from amongst us and still can – already as the Saint of the Catholic Church – help to realize important and beautiful things. His testimony and teaching lift us, the ordinary people, high so that standing on his shoulders we are able to recognize and discern what is most important.³⁴ Many a time the Pope tried to show that love of the homeland, of native culture and tradition did not concern exclusively the past but was closely associated with everyday capability of unsparing and solidary building of common good. Immersed in various communities, we should have a real influence on the shape of our future. True national patriotism does not exclude others – it is a basis for love and openness, though in a natural

³³ Arendt (1976): 267–272.

³⁴ Karłowicz, Cichocki (2005/2006): 5–7; Karłowicz (2020).

existential and cultural order: family, neighbours, community, nation, Europe, world. Love and openness enable one to acquire the attitude which was so beautifully expressed by a Polish writer, winner of the literary Nobel Prize, Henryk Sienkiewicz: “all patriots should follow the motto: through homeland to humanity.” Well comprehended and lived patriotism is deeply inscribed in the universal commandment of love of neighbour. John Paul II knew that intergenerational solidarity, responsibility for the lives of the weakest, everyday civic honesty, readiness to serve and sacrifice oneself for the sake of the community are the realisation of both natural law and the Gospel message. It is the effort of creating a community which solidarily strives to build its present and its future. At the same time, the Pope did not forget that each love has its boundaries. Especially for the disciples of Christ, love of homeland, although it is a great value as a form of love of neighbour, cannot be absolute. Service to the earthly homeland, just like the love of one’s own family, always remains a stage on the road to the realm in which worldly categories will lose their obligatoriness. The love of God, which the faithful try to emulate, embraces all peoples and nations on Earth. Hence, the love of one’s own homeland is a concretisation of the universal commandment of love of God and man. The desire for good for one’s land and one’s compatriots manifests itself primarily through the attitude of service as well as care and responsibility for the needs and lives of concrete people. That is why – as the Council for Social Affairs of the Conference of Polish Episcopate wrote in 2017 in the document entitled *The Christian form of patriotism* – both in the context of human rights as well as the wisdom of the Gospel all attempts at raising one’s nation to the highest status in hierarchy should be considered inadmissible and

idolatrous. The love of one's homeland must never justify disdain, aggression or violence.³⁵ Let us see that for John Paul II wherever true patriotism is realised there is no room for hatred of other nations. A characteristic feature of chauvinism is that it recognizes only the good of one's own nation and this is what it strives at without considering the rights of the others. On the other hand, as the love of one's homeland, patriotism grants the same rights to all other nations as to one's own. It is a road to the orderly and peacefully realized social love.

Therefore, in our current context changed by globalisation and the pandemic John Paul II's teaching is worth reminding. In the time of difficult challenges, the properly conceived patriotism propagated by the Pope should become a model of a national and civil attitude. It is a moral obligation to realise good here and now: in particular places, concrete conditions, among concrete people. The state of the pandemic offers numerous opportunities to do that, and there is the number of social and civic attitudes which exemplify it. Patriotism should manifest itself in the life of our families, which are the first school of love, responsibility and service to a fellow man. The citizenship exam is being passed in places where our everyday life takes place – municipality, parish, school, workplace, neighbourhood. It is there that the concern for building common good in kindness, solidarity and honesty is realised. In this context, the idea of global multiculturalism, intensive contacts between peoples, nations and cultures enriches us when we are rooted in the identity and history which define and strengthen us thus making mature cooperation and development possible.

³⁵ *Chrześcijański kształt patriotyzmu. A document of the Conference of the Polish Episcopate prepared by the Council for Social Affairs (2017).*

John Paul II always emphasized the fact that Europe played a special role in the history of the world. For centuries, it has been a place of reflection on the phenomenon of various human collectives: from the Greek *polis*, ethnic communities, monarchies and empires, to nations and states. The word “Europe” comes from Akkadian “erēbu”, which means “sunset”.³⁶ Therefore, keeping to this beautiful metaphor, it may be said that Europe as a whole are the peripheries west of Babylon, a fantastic end of the earth – *Finis Terrae* – the Peninsula of Twilight. Europe is a place where identities become dense and the sole alternative that remains is either war or cohabitation, self-destruction or a synthesis of the spirit and civilisation, wisdom and love. Europe is an archipelago of cultures and tongues, religions and world worldviews, nations and states with differences interlocked to such a degree that if one is missed the others would disintegrate and fell. It has been for centuries a bulging but effective system capable of accommodate a multitude of peoples, nations and cultures, while never turning them into a homogeneous blend. Let us not succumb to the ideologies which claim that Europe suffers from the “neoplasm of identity” the metastases of which may cover the entire continent. True European politicalness is connected with the community of fate, the fruit of which should be solidarity of action in the face of real threats. John Paul II was also aware of this responsibility. Today we know that nobody will replace nation states in this process and no central institutions will substitute a civil community formed by the nation in the execution of difficult tasks. Therefore, we may only repeat after John Paul II that the future of man depends on the family and the nation.

³⁶ *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary* (1958): 258–259.

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Social media as an alternative platform for social mobilization in the US

Abstract

This study aims to review the effectiveness of social media as a platform for social mobilization and to show how social media influence social movements in the US. It seeks to offer a literature-based comparison between the traditional and the new ones, answering the question why social media is a matter in American politics. It offers practical data about the role of social media in raising awareness, creating movements, influencing policy decisions, and changing Americans' minds. This paper builds on several meta-analysis studies. It reviews and discusses previous results found in literature. It also uses the Pew Research Center which offers critical data relating to the research topic. It finds that social media successfully encourage the Americans to engage in political discussions and increase their participation. Social media are an alternative space to social mobilization, which has positively influenced social movements.

Keywords: movements, mobilization, social media, American society.

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Introduction

Twitter's head of news, government, and elections, Adam Sharp states that 'it was less Twitter coming to politics, and more politics coming to Twitter and finding it as a platform to communicate and to organize effectively without a lot of the costs'.¹ The rise of social media has created a change in American politics as profound as the one which occurred when President Kennedy proved the effectiveness of television in a political campaign in 1960. According to the political scientist, President Kennedy significantly secured the presidency of 1961 due to his successful campaign use of mass media and his appeal to young Americans. Forty-eight years later President Obama followed the example of Kennedy and was the first to use social media, this time as a political platform in 2007.²

According to the 2019 Social Media Fact Sheet of Pew Research Center, about seven-in-ten Americans use social media to engage in the news or activities content, connect with their friends, entertain themselves, and share their opinions or information. The same center also found that 23% of social media users in the US changed their views on issues (including politics) because of something they knew from social media.³ In fact, this mainstream of social media in the US has changed the physics of information diffusion. The growing relevance of using social media implies a remarkable change in old political participation and public communication, which has always been exclusively initiated

¹ Buccoliero et al. (2018): 92.

² Sharafat, "U.S. Politics and the Media International Conference".

³ Perrin (2020).

and controlled by specific actors, e.g. companies, journalists as well as politicians.⁴

This phenomenon has been observed by several disciplines, such as information communication studies, sociology, information systems, linguistics, and political science. Many scholars who examined the phenomenon of social media and political participation have developed their theories. Many of them argue that a society's reliance on social media can positively influence political engagement, increase citizens turnout at the polls and reduce information costs. Those researchers believe that social media help young people to engage in important national and international issues as they are more comfortable with the new technologies. A few examples include the Black Lives Matter movement, Arab Spring, Occupy Wall Street, Iran's Green Movement, and Keystone XL pipeline movement.⁵

However, other scholars highlight also negative effects related to the rapid use of social media in politics. They argue that social media users spend much time communicating remotely with people rather than engage in a face-to-face discussion, a manner that would inhibit people's individual social skills. They also believe that on social media people express more negative views and sometimes attack others because of their sense of anonymity. Moreover, this group of writers indicates that social media encourage users to isolate themselves politically rather than encourage them to participate.⁶

⁴ Sharafat, "The Role of Social Media during Arab Protests 2010–2014".

⁵ Sharafat, "U.S. Politics and the Media International Conference"; Hussain, Howard (2013); Ranney (2014); Moghanizadeh (2013); Hodges, Stocking (2016).

⁶ Zhang et al. (2010); Pandey, Gupta, Chattopadhyay (2020); Bennett, Segerberg (2012).

This study argues that regardless of social media controversial outcomes on individuals' behavior, it is an effective social mobilization tool. Social media are an alternative platform to political movements in the US. Social media present an exciting avenue of opportunity for American people and political activists to not only broadcast their messages but also engage in a dialogue with proponents of competing political ideas and ideologies. This article supposes that social media successfully encourage Americans to engage in political discussions and increase their participation. It seeks to offer a literature-based comparison between traditional media and social media, answering the question why social media is a matter in American politics. It offers practical data about the usage of social media in mobilizing American society.

This paper builds on several meta-analysis studies. It reviews and discussing previous literature results. It also uses the Pew Research Center which offers critical data regarding the research topic. This article is structured as follows. In the next section, it reviews the relevant literature regarding social media and political participation in the US. Then, it offers a comparison between the old and the new media. The following section addresses why social media is a matter in American politics. This paper then discusses the relationship between social movements and social media, along with presenting the available data regarding political motivations of social media users in the US. Finally, it ends with a concluding summary and an outline for future research.

Literature review

A social movement can be defined as an activity initiated by a group of people who unite together to protest against

injustice and challenge the status quo.⁷ It can be local, regional, national or even international, and may address different social issues. The traditional method of social movements is characterized by street demonstrations and massive mobilization.⁸ Inequalities, grievances and injustice are the key driving forces behind most of social movements, which always target the power holders⁹ and defined opponents.¹⁰ Social movement studies initially conceptualized injustice, grievance, panic, harm and other emotional states of human beings as the main reasons of collective behaviour.¹¹ But as the new forms of social movements emerged in the 1960s and 1970s, collective behaviour theories became unsuitable to clarify how they can be managed in the absence of a central leader like Gandhi or Mao. Researchers then suggested that scholars should focus on labour, finance and other resources and recognize people's participation in movements as a rational choice.¹² Although the theory of resource mobilization has been criticized many times for significantly overemphasizing economic aspects,¹³ this theory along with the grievance-centered collective behaviour theories¹⁴ are a good approach to understand the mobilization cycle and the protest process of social movements. Although multiple scholars have examined the issue of the protest process,¹⁵ "four stages of social movements" seems to be the most important study on

⁷ Ranney (2014).

⁸ Giugni (1998).

⁹ Barnartt (2014); Tilly (1999).

¹⁰ Porta, Diani (2006).

¹¹ Blumer (1939); Smelser (2011).

¹² McCarthy, Zald (1997).

¹³ Stieglitz, Dang-Xuan (2012).

¹⁴ Smelser (2011).

¹⁵ Christiansen (2016): 2.

this topic as it takes all previous research into consideration. According to Christiansen, these four stages include: “emergence,” “coalescence,” “bureaucratization,” and “decline.” During the emergence stages, a movement’s main players act as agitators and undertake action to raise awareness. During the second period, coalescence, main players become organized, large numbers of participants join the initiative, leadership emerges, and protests or big demonstrations of strength occur. In the third step, bureaucratization, social movements start to achieve their goals by reaching out to political elites. In the fourth stage, social movements decline either because of failure or success.

Oppositional and alternative discourses to the formal mainstream have always existed, but the world triumph of social media has fundamentally opened the door to the public sphere. This situation is remarkably characterized by lesser governmental control over news flows, paralleled by increased observability and distrust in representative organizations.¹⁶ Consequently, alternative events and news channels are growing, and the ecosystem of alternative media prospers. Therefore, social media are positioned as the correction of the traditional media in a given historical and sociocultural context. Social media stage their alternativeness on several levels: by citing voices not heard in the traditional media, by building alternative information networks, by using diverging epistemologies and by posting alternative issues.¹⁷ Social media shape public opinion according to an agenda that is perceived as “being underrepresented, ostracized or otherwise marginalized in mainstream news media.”¹⁸

¹⁶ Bennett, Livingston (2018).

¹⁷ Holt, Figenschou, Frischlich (2019).

¹⁸ Boberg et al. (2020): 2.

Social media are considered as a microblogging space where people can spread real time messages all over the world. It has become well-known as an information platform that accelerates news,¹⁹ especially during special events and crises such as elections and demonstrations.²⁰ Social media have a wide range of communication tools to create a networked public sphere.²¹ Notably, media organizations, politicians, and journalists have adopted social media as a news source and to be used for outreach.²² Social media allow non-elites to reach and interact with elites and make their demands heard,²³ which opens up the political discussion to a greater number of participants.²⁴

The effects of social media websites such as Facebook and Twitter depend on how they are used. This conclusion has been well established in several meta-analysis investigations²⁵ as well as individual studies.²⁶ The meta-analysis research usually differentiates news or information uses, relationship-building or network uses, and online types of political expression. The scope of news or information draws upon the long-standing previous research which studies political knowledge, participation and media use in political and civic life.²⁷ The premise is that new media sources expose people to information and knowledge about current events and

¹⁹ Kwak et al. (2010).

²⁰ Zheng, Shahin (2020).

²¹ Ellison, Boyd, Dutton (2013).

²² Lasorsa, Lewis, Holton (2012).

²³ Penney (2016).

²⁴ Lawrence, Molyneux, Coddington, Holton (2014).

²⁵ Boulianne (2015); Boulianne (2019).

²⁶ Chan (2016); Wells, Thorson (2017).

²⁷ McLeod, Scheufele, Moy (1999); McCarthy, Zald (1977); Tilly (1999).

political issues, which raises their knowledge and awareness of engaging in political and civic life.²⁸ The scope of relationship-building or networking drawn in literature suggests that a major factor of political participation are informal and formal social ties that increase the chance of agreeing to participate.²⁹ Social media are effective platforms for starting social ties that can encourage participation in political and civic life.³⁰ Finally, the scope of online political expression is dealt with in new studies concerning the comfort of online types of participation.³¹ The theory is that new media offer an easy and comfortable method of discussing political matters, which enhances political participation.³²

Many studies have focused on social media and how they are used by Americans,³³ examines the extent in which social media, particularly Facebook, are used by Congressional candidates during their campaigns. MacWilliams concludes his study with an observation that the number of social media supporters can be counted as a real indicator of electoral success. While Kushin and Kitchener³⁴ investigate the use of social media for a political discussion by citizens. They find that social media are a legitimate platform for a political discussion, and that they have succeeded in overcoming the polarization of discussion in the past. Baumgartner

²⁸ Boulianne (2019); Boulianne (2015); Wolfsfeld, Yarchi, Samuel-Azran (2016); Sharafat, "U.S. Politics and the Media International Conference"; Holt, Figenschou, Frischlich (2019).

²⁹ Musick, Wilson (2007).

³⁰ Zúñiga, Copeland, Bimber (2014); Chan (2016); Skoric, Zhu (2015).

³¹ Lu, Heatherly, Lee (2016).

³² Skoric, Zhu (2015); Boulianne (2019).

³³ MacWilliams (2015).

³⁴ Kushin, Kitchener (2009).

and Morris³⁵ explore how social media are used by young Americans in the context of presidential elections. The results of their studies indicate that social media are considered by young Americans as a source of political information and news. Robertson, Vatrappu, and Medina³⁶ conclude that nowadays social media offer a socio-technical environment that enables public discourse for people who tend to enter online “parlors” of political discussion, while Gainous and Wagner³⁷ show that in the US the nature of politics is changing around us. Although it is not a real revolution, but it is very hard to miss for anyone. Online connections have changed the rules of engagement between power leaders and the people. Zheng and Shahin³⁸ argue that social media differ from traditional media in their interactive potential, which becomes a crucial pillar in any consideration about political communication. The televised or published debates do not set the agenda of online debates. Instead, social media set agendas that are much in advance of the traditional media debates.³⁹

Therefore, on one hand, social media have the potential to reinvigorate public debate, which further contributes to political deliberation. Studies along these lines have focused on the relationship between social media news seeking, political discussion, expression, and offline political activities. Despite the fact that measurements and predictors vary from study to study, generally the support offered by social media has increased citizens’ exposure to political confrontation, which in turn cultivates engagement of the public in political

³⁵ Baumgartner, Morris (2010).

³⁶ Robertson, Vatrappu, Medina (2010).

³⁷ Gainous, Wagner (2014).

³⁸ Buccoliero et al. (2018).

³⁹ Zheng, Shahin (2020).

matters.⁴⁰ On the other hand, studies have also found that social media function as an echo chamber where political motivation gets reinforced.⁴¹ During elections, voters simultaneously use several media platforms, such as radio, TV, and social media, to understand political issues and candidates' positions.⁴² The traditional media focus more on politicians' private life rather than on national issues.⁴³ In order to get more knowledge about the advantages and disadvantages of the old and new media and the differences between the traditional media and social media, the next section compares social media with the traditional ones.

Traditional media vs social media

There is no doubt that the new media represent a remarkable departure from the old media that dominated and existed in the political environment of the United States.⁴⁴ Each of the previous advances from the small press to radio stations to television channels was an improvement in distribution and efficiency. However, the model of one-way communication and distribution controlled by small identifiable groups of people was unchanged. Social media have created a unique news platform alongside, and in many ways replacing, the old model.⁴⁵ They operate in two directions, al-

⁴⁰ Zúñiga, Copeland, Bimber (2014); Zheng, Shahin (2020).

⁴¹ Stroud (2010); Wolfsfeld, Yarchi, Samuel-Azran (2016); Ranney (2014).

⁴² Zúñiga, Garcia-Perdomo, McGregor (2015); Sharafat, "U.S. Politics and the Media International Conference"; Buccoliero et al. (2018).

⁴³ Marshall, Redmond (2015).

⁴⁴ Sharafat, "The Role of Social Media during Arab Protests 2010–2014"; Boberg et al. (2020).

⁴⁵ Holt, Figenschou, Frischlich (2019).

lowing people and policymakers to disseminate information and listen to each other rather than the policymakers speak and citizens listen. Furthermore, the conversation on social media works in a significantly open environment that allows news and activities that are perceived as most appealing to be published nationwide.⁴⁶ Users of social media sites decide not only what to reach and communicate but also what materials are worth redistributing to the widest audiences.⁴⁷

Many believe that broadcasts and newspapers were tools for those with means to send information and ideas to the mass public. That means the debate had one party arguing and another party listening. Governments, political parties, or other corporations controlled the content conveyed with rules or sometimes by owning all or part of the organization of distribution.⁴⁸ The power of the information provider was largely considered to be influential for both radio and television. On the other side, social media websites are user driven. That does not mean users of social media have replaced the operators of the traditional media as the producer of content. Rather, users of social media have greater control of their content in a universe where users have far more options than exist for television, newspapers, or radio. Moreover, as active contributors to the information network, users of social media are more engaged and attentive because it is they who select content that is available to them to read, listen, watch and share. This level of engagement and attention increases the awareness span of the users. People who select their materials, such as posting a link on their social media profiles, are going to spend enough time digesting and

⁴⁶ Lawrence, Molyneux, Coddington, Holton (2014).

⁴⁷ Gainous, Wagner (2014).

⁴⁸ Skoric, Zhu (2015).

reading the materials.⁴⁹ Overall, social media are more effective in transferring information and attracting their audiences.

Moreover, information and news as such are not finite in scope, place, content and time. Physical copies of a newspaper have a limited amount of time and space, and the content cannot be changed after it has been printed. The content of newspapers is finite to what was released at the time and place of printing, and limited by the available pages. Even TV channels, which are not limited in time, are frozen by the model of the medium to broadcast only a single event or idea at a time. If a TV channel is not covering a topic interesting to the viewers, they are unable to alter the scope of the program. Therefore, social media websites are by far a most comprehensive, democratic, interactive and versatile form of communication.⁵⁰ They differ from the old media in not just scope and speed of publishing but largely by the nature of interaction between information and its consumer. In fact, what makes this a revolution in the universe of the media is that the character of the interaction widens as new applications and protocols are expanded and added. Social media websites become ever more accessible and interactive with every day passing. Social media offer a multi-directional conversation. One can respond to a video with a video. One can investigate an issue, explore that issue and respond to it, respond to the responses or even communicate about it. In addition, the content of social media is diverse and can be organized over multiple platforms, engaged in and understood using several applications, restricted only by the knowledge and access of the user.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Gainous, Wagner (2014).

⁵⁰ Arceneaux, Johnson (2013).

⁵¹ Gulati, Williams (2011).

Some studies argue that citizens have a tendency to avoid news or information that challenges their predispositions because people do not like to be confronted with opinions that are in conflict with what they believe in. This conclusion arises from theories focused on cognitive dissonance⁵² and extends to many studies addressing people's inclination to find out congenial news.⁵³ That means the traditional media can create ambivalence in the information consumer through offering multisided information and news flows that may generate conflicting considerations.⁵⁴

Wang et al.⁵⁵ argue that social media users and followers, unlike television, radios, and newspaper consumers, are less involved in long news stories, which need extra motivation and cognitive efforts. Social media users are interested in and become engaged with clear and short messages or stories. Long news messages may not be attractive to social media followers and, as a result, may not shape or change opinions on social media. When other frame-setting elements (e.g. strength of argument, frame repetition, tone of frame) are the same, short messages are considered as a strong influencer changing social media public opinion, whereas long stories and articles in the traditional media are considered as a source of weak responses.

The new media bind people together and connect them with no concern for geography, traditional, political cleavages or distance. Unlike the traditional media, communication and information distribution can be immediate on social media.

⁵² Chen, Risen (2010); Elliot, Devine (1994); Festinger (1957).

⁵³ Arceneaux, Johnson (2013); Agranoff, Tabin (2011); Zúñiga, Garcia-Perdomo, McGregor (2015); Ranney (2014).

⁵⁴ Alvarez, Brehm (1995); Gainous, Wagner (2001).

⁵⁵ Wang et al. (2017).

The discovery of information, news, feedback and updates can be done at speeds that have never been experienced before.⁵⁶ For example, in Egypt, a young blogger, Khaled Said, was killed by the Egyptian police on 6 June 2010. In reaction to his murder, his friend created a Facebook page “We Are All Khaled Said” and posted photos of Said’s corpse. The page rapidly became a space for the discussion of grievances under President Mubarak’s administration and police brutality against civilians. That page and other related pages attracted millions of Egyptians, it was the spark that led to the removal of the Egyptian political system on 11 February 2011.⁵⁷ As the use of social media is growing worldwide, changes of the methods of political participation will accelerate with each day passing. This means that the method of how the society contacts with itself and with the governments is changing around us. Thus, the new media capture all of the advantages and elements of the old media. The new media can publish anything that magazines, television, newspapers and radio do, with an easily accessible, interactive interface on demand, and in an appropriate manner.⁵⁸

Why social media is a matter in the American society

The growth in the use of social media is significant among the Americans. In the political aspect, the importance of this growth in the use of social media is based on the understanding

⁵⁶ Pandey, Gupta, Chattopadhyay (2020); Moghanizadeh (2013); Chan (2016).

⁵⁷ Sharafat, “The Role of Social Media during Arab Protests 2010–2014”.

⁵⁸ Gainous, Wagner (2014).

of US political thought.⁵⁹ The basic notion of American democracy is the idea that citizens exercise sovereignty through the republican form of governance.⁶⁰ Online communication is vital to that sphere, as it structures what the Americans know and how they understand it. New media websites alter the political calculus in the US by shifting who controls news and information, how that information is distributed and who consumes information. Social media change two important elements of the mobilization process. First, by giving consumers the opportunity to pick their own platform of communication; social media allow the Americans to self-select their materials in a way that avoids any interpretation or disagreeable ideas. Second, social media websites themselves exist outside the traditional media machine, allowing young Americans, political actors, parties and candidates to dictate and shape their content. The intensification and expansion of the use of social media for political gain is remarkable even by Internet growth standards.⁶¹ In just a few years, the American political system is awash in social media from interest groups, candidates, parties, politicians and even the voters themselves. Members of Congress and the White House use social media to send short statements to Americans and to their followers almost at all times.⁶² During the current COVID-19 pandemic with its lockdown consequences, social media increasingly affect political information and communication during the pandemic, it has become a source of news concerning indications, vaccines and restrictions. Many countries, including the US, have prohibited large gatherings and

⁵⁹ Sharafat, "U.S. Politics and the Media International Conference".

⁶⁰ Buccoliero et al. (2018).

⁶¹ Gainous, Wagner (2014); Gainous, Wagner (2011).

⁶² MacWilliams (2015).

occasionally even smaller meetings. So, social media have become an alternative tool to communicate and discuss various topics.⁶³

Therefore, the change in the American political machine is an obvious result of increased social media use. As the penetration of this communication model increases, successful activists will harness it, and the late riders will fall behind. Social interaction generally has always been about learning the rules of the system properly, and then using these rules to the society's advantage rather than considering it as a detriment.⁶⁴ Political consultants and experienced politicians always prefer the methods and modes that have worked in the past.⁶⁵ Looking backwards for an idealized society sphere for governing and participation is not only a poor position, but also basically incorrect. As everything is constantly changing and adapting, governing and mobilization have become a process of learning and adjustment where nothing is permanent, and nothing is fixed.⁶⁶

Social media change how information is distributed, and who operates the levers. It has no obvious gatekeeper. Anyone can join and contribute given good resources and knowledge. Search tools catalog resources efficiently so that any user with Internet access can find materials on virtually any subject.⁶⁷ New media are a brilliant aggregator of sortable news and information that is always free for everyone. People in the US and all over the world choose whether to redistribute, read or even add information on social media. Yet, while

⁶³ Boberg et al. (2020).

⁶⁴ Tewksbury (2005); Riker (1968).

⁶⁵ Appleton, Ward (1997).

⁶⁶ Ranney (2014).

⁶⁷ Skoric, Zhu (2015).

they decide what news and information to distribute or read, this is not a random process, nor are the Americans equal in the distribution. Some of them have a big number of followers that regularly follow their posts. Others lack a large network, or have no followers at all. For example, only on Twitter President Obama is followed by more than 125 million people.⁶⁸

Political scientists have found that the use of social media websites has altered the traditional political participation tactics to avoid the old media machine as it mostly interprets and filters political messages. The Americans nowadays use social media to bypass the traditional media and control their own information and news distribution.⁶⁹ Using social media widely in politics has become apparent, and a new form of political participation has started to instruct and aid Americans as to how to maximize their political influence in social media.⁷⁰

Social movements and social media in the US

One of the biggest promises of social media is the possibility for individuals, grassroots organizations and all citizens to overcome government censorship and old media gatekeepers and engage directly with potential specific groups, activists, and the public.⁷¹ The case of the Zapatista National Liberation Army circumventing the Mexican government's censorship to contact directly with foreign journalists and

⁶⁸ Sharafat, "U.S. Politics and the Media International Conference."

⁶⁹ Gainous, Wagner (2011); Gainous, Wagner (2014).

⁷⁰ Agranoff, Tabin (2011).

⁷¹ Sharafat, "The Role of Social Media during Arab Protests 2010–2014."

the use of mailing lists and websites in anti-globalization movements in the 1990s are two well-known early cases of the use of Internet in social movements.⁷²

In the US, social media have been a very effective tool in mobilizing many social movements. Black Lives Matter (BLM) is one of these movement that grew out of a social media post.⁷³ Social media, especially Twitter, have allowed the stories of African Americans and the demands of the movement to be disseminated across the US without relying on the traditional media.⁷⁴ Social media have been critical in publicising the cases of the American police violence against African Americans and the cases of the American police reactions to the BLM activists. Social media have also been the main source of news and information about the BLM movement for most of the public and the behavior, language and emotions associated with the movement in social media applications can be a predictor of participation in street protests.⁷⁵

Therefore, a variety of groups, people and individuals interact, communicate and contribute to the conversation about BLM on social media websites, including people who oppose the movement, deploying and appropriating the BLM movement phraseology for their own purposes.⁷⁶ For instance, the hashtags #AllLivesMatter and #BlueLivesMatter have been distributed by people who have criticized or opposed the BLM movement, used to deny violence against African Americans and argued that there has been lack of attention

⁷² Ranney (2014).

⁷³ Ince, Rojas, Davis (2017).

⁷⁴ Freelon, McIlwain, Clark (2016).

⁷⁵ Cox (2017).

⁷⁶ Ince, Rojas, Davis (2017).

to the American police safety by BLM movement supporters.⁷⁷ During the early stage of the movement in 2014, researchers found that the debate on social media which used the slogans of BLM fell into five groups: discussion of actions and tactics of the movement; affirmations of the goals of the BLM and expressions of solidarity; documentation, reactions, and reports of the American police violence; counter protest expressions blocking the tactics, ideology and goals of the BLM movement; and calls for protests in Missouri following the killing of Michael Brown.⁷⁸

In fact, riots and protests that started following the killing of Brown in 2014 shocked the country. The photos of military-grade weapons being used on civilians, tear gas, shooting of wooden pellets, and arrests of journalists legally reporting those actions sparked discussions about militarization of the American police force and the excessive use of force by the police not just against African Americans but also against people protesting in these actions.⁷⁹ These tactics and demands were repeated in the 2020 riots following the death of George Floyd. However, the ongoing coronavirus pandemic posed a new complication to this issue. If protests continue in American streets, its conditions, the use of tear gas, crowd control and containment tactics employed by the American police would definitely facilitate the spread of the coronavirus.⁸⁰ Activists, supporters and allies of the BLM movement faced an unprecedented situation of balancing the threat of the pandemic against the threat of systemic racism in the US, further complicated by the in-

⁷⁷ Freelon, McIlwain, Clark (2016).

⁷⁸ Ince, Rojas, Davis (2017).

⁷⁹ Cox (2017).

⁸⁰ Bolsover (2020).

tersectionality of these dangers that has left, ethnic groups disproportionately highly affected by the pandemic as well as the national control restrictions that target those regions in which the virus is quickly spreading. Even so, protesters all over the US have intensified their efforts in social media along with their activities on the ground. During only 13 days, from 26 May to 7 June 2020, the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag was used in more than 47.8 million posts or conversations on Twitter – an average of 3.7 million per day.⁸¹

Hence, social media platforms influence political, cultural, economic and social activists in the American society. The majority of Americans believe that these sites are a useful tool for raising awareness, creating sustained movements, make elected officials pay attention to issues, influence policy decisions, and change people's minds about political and social issues (see Figure 1).

Figure 1 shows how people in the US think about social media and their effectiveness in building social movements, as well as their beliefs whether social media help raise awareness, make elected officials pay attention to issues, influence policy decisions, and change people's minds about political and social issues. As the figure illustrates, the Americans tend to have a very positive opinion about the role social media platforms play in the society.

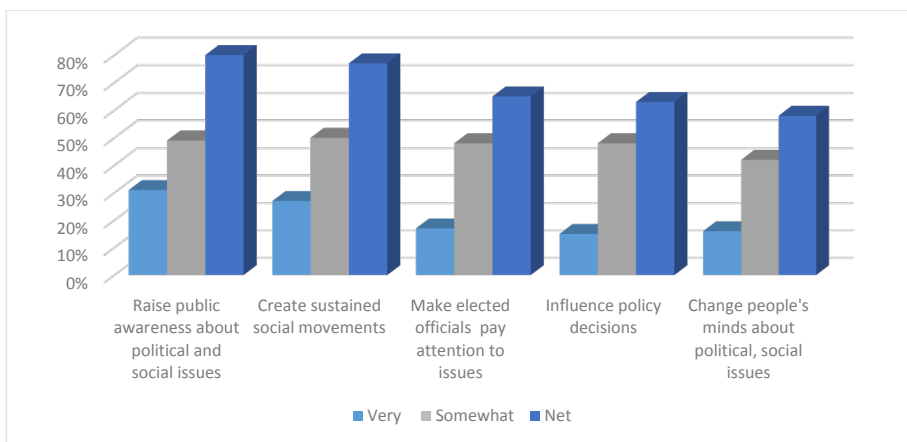
Figure 1 indicates that about eight-in-ten Americans consider social media websites to be an effective tool for raising public awareness about political or social issues. Also, about 77% of them think that social media are an important space for creating sustained social movements. 65% of Americans indicate that social media platforms are an effective tool

⁸¹ Anderson, Barthel, Perrin, Vogels (2020).

in making elected officials pay attention to issues. Furthermore, 63 % of them say that they influence policy decisions. A smaller share (58%) think that social media help in changing people's minds about political or social issues.

Figure 1:

Percentages of Americans who believe that social media are an effective tool with respect to selected social indicators.



Data source: Pew Research Center⁸²

Hence, social media have remarkably shaped the characteristics of social movements in the US by making them more virtual and informal.⁸³ This informal environment has offered a chance for non-elite actors to play a significant role in the process of mobilization anywhere and anytime.⁸⁴ These new media have been most beneficial for the main players who need to coordinate and communicate with each other

⁸² Auxier, McClain (2020).

⁸³ Boulianne (2015).

⁸⁴ Sharafat, "U.S. Politics and the Media International Conference."

more regularly and frequently.⁸⁵ They have enabled non-elite, core and elite actors to participate freely in movements without any government restrictions and regulations.⁸⁶ However, not all social movement activists become really prominent on the new media. Some activists become more influential than others as their contributions become more popular and shared. Another advantage of social media is that they play a mediating role by reaching out to both closely linked and less linked users. Moreover, they have made it much easier for the movements to reach out to other existing movements. For instance, on Facebook and Twitter, users can represent two different hashtags or slogans together in one post and make a connection between two different issues.⁸⁷ This is how online social mobilizations can lead to spillover effects by influencing actors of other social movements. Although the spillover effect is sometimes an unplanned consequence of any movement, it has the ability to strengthen and widen movements.⁸⁸

Twitter, for example, has become remarkably effective in social movements.⁸⁹ Apart from being a platform for collective ideas and actions, it builds “transparency, privacy, security, and interpersonal trust” among its users.⁹⁰ Although some researchers have questioned the effectiveness of Twitter for social movements,⁹¹ others have found that it is a very potent tool for the dissemination of news and information.⁹²

⁸⁵ Holt, Figenschou, Frischlich (2019).

⁸⁶ MacWilliams (2015); Wolfsfeld, Yarchi, Samuel-Azran (2016).

⁸⁷ Lawrence, Molyneux, Coddington, Holton (2014); Chan (2016).

⁸⁸ Gabore, Xiujun (2018).

⁸⁹ Gainous, Wagner (2014); Cox (2017).

⁹⁰ Bennett, Segerberg (2012): 753.

⁹¹ Bennett, Livingston (2018).

⁹² Gainous, Wagner (2014); Penney (2016).

Because Twitter is an open and free platform, news spread rapidly on the application allowing actors to take quick actions that driving prompt mobilization.⁹³

It is worth mentioning that “hashtags” is a key technique to share news, information and movements, which make the content searchable for other users and more visible. Another key technique is the “mention” option which is used by activists to make the content directly reach out to politicians and other elites.⁹⁴ When the elite actors such as bureaucrats, political leaders, human rights activists, writers and other distinguished citizens join the movement themselves by posting a content, sharing a photo, tweeting or retweeting, it sparks a widespread response as they have a large number of followers and friends on social media. Elites can initiate new networks and join the existing networks encouraging other users to join the movement. Therefore, the involvement of activists and elites draws attention of the authorities. Their engagement in the existing movements creates massive mobilization and consequently enhances the chances that the movements reach their goals.⁹⁵

The development of ideologies, sentiments, and beliefs of the Americans about any issue significantly depends on how the media describe it. This process of public opinion formation depends on the media sources because people’s understanding of social, economic, cultural, or political issues is mediated by the presentation and selection of content by the media.⁹⁶ The media contribute to how citizens understand and perceive national and international issues and

⁹³ Sharafat, “U.S. Politics and the Media International Conference”.

⁹⁴ Hodges, Stocking (2016).

⁹⁵ Boulianne (2019).

⁹⁶ Lecheler, De Vreese (2010).

shape public opinion by stressing a specific aspect of a broader subject matter. For example, the Americans' opinion about a Ku Klux Klan issue depends on whether the American media present the issue as a free-speech matter or disruption of public security.⁹⁷

Therefore, opinions are shaped under the influence of specific representations of materials in the national media: either by stressing the existing beliefs on an issue or by highlighting a new belief, which is initiated by the recipient accepting the new interpretation.⁹⁸ In other words, consideration by the media modifies or activates people's existing world-views or, if there is no belief about the issue, media news creates such schemata and public opinion can be formed.⁹⁹

Figure 2 presents the percentage of Americans who have changed their views or position about a national or international issue because of information or contents they read or watched on social media websites. Admittedly, one of the main issues which was distributed by social media was BLM, a large part of the Americans got their knowledge about it from social media. Consequently, many of them offered their support to the movement, or at least their sympathy. According to the above figure, the role of social media in changing Americans' minds about social or political issues increased from 15% of the Americans who said that the content of social media motivated them to change their attitude towards particular issues in 2018 to 23% in 2020.

The biggest leap as compared with 2018 was among Republicans, as Figure 2 shows. While in 2020, 21% of the Republican users of social media stated that social media helped

⁹⁷ Nelson, Oxley, Clawson (1997).

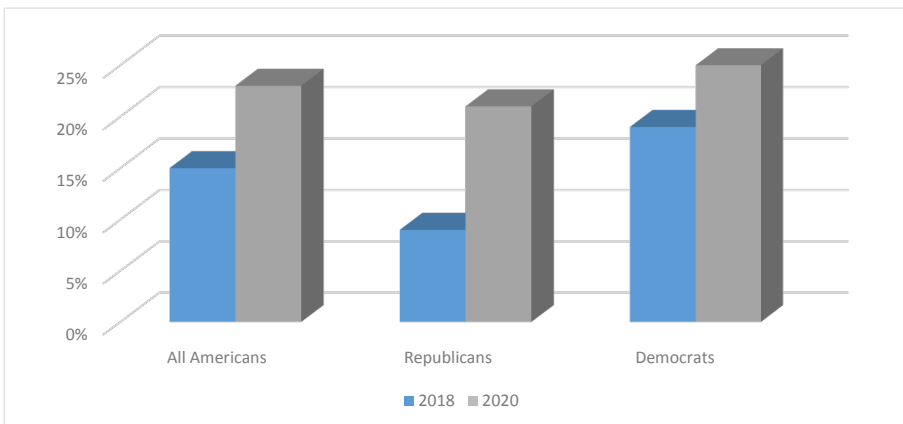
⁹⁸ Gabore, Xiujun (2018).

⁹⁹ Scheufele, Scheufele (2009).

them to change their minds on an issue (including BLM), in 2018 only 9% indicated that social media did so. However, social media still continue to be more active and potent among Democrats than among Republicans. Roughly a quarter of Democrats have changed their views on an issue because of something they saw on social media in 2020; this percentage amounted to 19% in 2018.

Figure 2:

Percentages of social media users in the US (Republicans and Democrats) who said they have changed their attitude toward a political or social issue because of something they saw on social media in 2018 and 2020.



Data source: Pew Research Center¹⁰⁰

The presentation and selection of information and news by journalists and editors in a certain way for the coverage of events significantly influence their followers' ideas avouth those events. This formation, defined as frame-setting

¹⁰⁰ Perrin (2020).

by Scheufele and Scheufele,¹⁰¹ put forward some aspects of an issue to center stage or hide them out of audiences' view and influence people's views and public opinion.¹⁰²

However, changing opinions in social media is influenced by the type of content users receive and the people they interact with. How the users of social media engage in and consume information influences people's opinions.¹⁰³ Public opinion on social media is shaped by how users construe and crystallize the meaning. In the public opinion formation process, social media content influences the formal evaluative direction of interpretations which change people's judgment about issues.¹⁰⁴

Information is not distributed and consumed on social media without effect on people's opinions.¹⁰⁵ Lu, Heatherly, and Lee¹⁰⁶ argue that news coverage of events that is shared and consumed by social media members influences their opinions and how they evaluate the events. Social media become a suitable platform for the Americans to express opinions and ideas formed or influenced by online dissemination of information¹⁰⁷

Overall, the dissemination of news, information, and events on social media exerts a remarkable influence on American public opinion through frame, tone, composition, and repetition.¹⁰⁸ People who use social media in the US reflect those views that are repeatedly ignored by organized media

¹⁰¹ Scheufele, Scheufele (2009).

¹⁰² Gabore, Xiujun (2018).

¹⁰³ Lawrence, Molyneux, Coddington, Holton (2014).

¹⁰⁴ Cox (2017).

¹⁰⁵ Ranney (2014).

¹⁰⁶ Lu, Heatherly, and Lee (2016).

¹⁰⁷ Sharafat, "U.S. Politics and the Media International Conference".

¹⁰⁸ Gabore, Xiujun (2018).

stations; in most cases, the tone of the view is echoed by engagement of other users of social media.¹⁰⁹

Conclusion

As research studies have shown, in the last decades, social media have become a noteworthy political communication channel not only in the US but all over the world. They enable individuals, activists, policymakers, and elites to directly interact with each other. Therefore, political and social activities have gained greater mobilization and transparency, and the Americans might become more involved in public issues.

Broadcasts and newspapers were tools for those with means to send information and ideas to the mass public. This means the debate has one party arguing and another party listening. Governments, political parties, or other corporations controlled the content conveyed with rules or sometimes by owning all or part of the organization of distribution. While social media sites are user driven. That does not mean users of social media have replaced the operators of the traditional media as the producer of content. Rather, users of social media have greater control of their content in a universe where users have many options.

The majority of the Americans believe these websites are a useful tool for raising awareness, creating sustained movements, make elected officials pay attention to issues, influence policy decisions, and change people's minds about political and social issues. In the public opinion formation process, social media content influences the formal evaluative direction of interpretations, which changes people's judgment about

¹⁰⁹ Boulianne (2015).

issues. The BLM movement is an evidence of how Americans have changed their attitude toward an issue because of social media content. Another case of the role of social media in social mobilization is the COVID-19 pandemic, where social media have become an alternative tool to communicate and discuss various topics.

Future research on social media users' behavior is encouraged. The unique data structure of social media allows investigators to document the behavior of social media users and these results could be combined with questionnaires and surveys. For instance, if social media influence the voting behavior or adoption of attitudes in the American society, does it contribute to increasing negativity in democratic politics or not?

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Theological inspiration in building of integral ecology

Abstract

Ecological issues constitute an important and constantly developed subject in the contemporary teaching of the Church as well as theological reflection. What is significant, it is not an exclusivist activity but is characterised by great openness towards the achievements of other sciences engaged in ecological issues. It particularly strongly emphasises the moral and axiological dimension of human activeness and calls for restraining the still prevailing temptation to understand economic and technological development or progress in isolation from other areas that make up human existence. Worth noting is the importance of awakening man's responsibility for the good of the created world that God entrusted to him. Avoiding anthropocentrism on one hand and specific biolatry on the other show that the idea of primacy of the human person is sensible when it is combined with the awareness of man's task to perpetuate and build common good encompassing not only humankind but all creation.

Key words: Ecotheology, Gospel of Creation, Human Ecology, Ecological Conversion, Integral Development

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Paradoxically, notwithstanding extensive popularisation of ecological problems and the consequent growth of ecological consciousness, the very term of “ecology” is becoming ever more incomprehensible. This is due to the constant expansion of the semantic field of this word and its being used in various contexts and semantic connotations. Not without meaning is the emotional and moralising permeation of the ecological discourse, which is subordinated to the interests of certain groups with very different, frequently even contradictory worldviews. In this context, postulates formulated by ecotheology, an intensively developing field of theological science interpreting ecological problems in the perspective of Revelation, seem to be very important.¹ It puts ecological problems in a broader existential and cultural context as well as offers an opportunity for their fuller and unambiguous perception thanks to a language different than that used in natural ecology.

Towards full truth

Owing to their methodological specificity various field of study – although frequently investigating the same subject – formulate a certain knowledge thereon that is specific to them. Although it is undoubtedly valuable and meets the criteria of scientificity, it is never full knowledge. It does concern also ecology. Therefore, it is necessary not only to accumulate knowledge on this subject, but also to seek full truth about the reality. This is unquestionably attainable when scientists representing various narrow and specialised field of knowledge become open to other

¹ Cf. Babiński (2011): 289–298.

ways of cognition and viewpoints with respect to ecological problems.

First, it is necessary to realise the temptation of its ideologization in spite of the generally claimed objectiveness of scientific research. It is always manifested by attempts to substantiate worldview positions by science (frequently within the framework of a given field), which always makes it *ancilla ideologiae*. This is amply described by Pope Francis when he discerns utterly different interpretations of issues in the area of ecology: At one extreme, we find those who doggedly uphold the myth of progress and tell us that ecological problems will solve themselves simply with the application of new technology and without any need for ethical considerations or deep change. At the other extreme are those who view men and women and all their interventions as no more than a threat, jeopardizing the global ecosystem, and consequently the presence of human beings on the planet should be reduced and all forms of intervention prohibited.”²

It is clear that in this ideological entanglement it is hard to dare assume an attitude of openness and acceptance of pluralism of positions, recognition of the fact that truth is “symphonic”.³ “Symphonicity” should by no means be understood as an attempt at cognitive legitimisation of agnosticism or relativism, but the recognition of the need for having a multifaceted look at the reality. Such cognizance is a precondition for discovering the truth. Cognizance which is not reduced to physical or biological knowledge, but taking into account its functioning in a broader cultural context, which

² Francis (2015): 60.

³ Cf. Balthasar (1998): 73.

is made up of, among others, religion, morality or arts, “enriching” empirical knowledge with a broader context of comprehension and perception. The ecological issue has to be considered in exactly such manner. Ecological problems are not a product of sublime production, infrastructural or technological processes functioning in total isolation from other elements of reality, but constitute an integral element of human existence: “The deterioration of nature is in fact closely connected to the culture that shapes human coexistence.”⁴ Its integral element is always the sphere of people’s religiousness, which is undoubtedly a significant determinant of human activeness, choices and actions. Hence, theological reflection on ecological issues and taking it into account in the comprehensive vision of ecology is a condition for understanding ecological problems as well as creating integral solutions aimed at overcoming the ecological crisis.

Hence, although ecology is primarily understood as a natural science – it has a clearly defined subject and methods – it must be an open discipline with reference to other fields and sciences. What is more, its achievements are used as inspirations in other areas of science, especially in broadly conceived humanities and theology. That is why it has become part of so-called supersciences (another term: trans-disciplinary sciences), whose task is to unify efforts of individual disciplines of human knowledge in order to create a picture of the problem which would be as comprehensive and full as possible.⁵

⁴ Benedict XVI (2009): 51.

⁵ Cf. Odum (1982): 3; Poznański (2019): 86–87.

Gospel of creation

The theological perspective broadens the comprehension of reality. It proposes to understand it not only as nature functioning according to the laws of ecosystems, but considers it from a transcendental viewpoint, for which the term “creation” is particularly evocative. This is strongly pointed out by Pope Francis in the encyclical *Ludato si'*: In the Judaeo-Christian tradition, the word «creation» has a broader meaning than «nature», for it has to do with God's loving plan in which every creature has its own value and significance. Nature is usually seen as a system which can be studied, understood and controlled, whereas creation can only be understood as a gift from the outstretched hand of the Father of all, and as a reality illuminated by the love which calls us together into universal communion.”⁶ There are two issues that are worth noting here.

Man is an integral element of the created world. He is not an intruder interfering into the order of nature from the outside but in his existence has been included into the existence and development of the world, with which he shares fate and future. Communion with all creatures calls for making an effort to understand their needs and rights, a kind of empathy towards them and respect since all have been made by the same Creator. If “everything in the world is connected,”⁷ man has to make an effort to ever more fully understand the existing relations and interdependencies as well as take them into account in his activities. What is more, as regards building an integral vision of the struggle for the future of our world

⁶ Francis (2015): 76.

⁷ Ibidem: 16.

this “connection” may be interpreted as the need to solve ecological problems on various levels: the multidimensional vision of scientific ecology, awakening individual ecological sensitivity of each man, consolidating local, regional or nationwide initiatives, to global activities taken up by the international community.⁸

Another question is to understand the world created as a gift of the love of God for man. The awareness of having been given something always generates gratitude. It is to be manifested in the attitude of making the best possible use of the goods received. This involves the effort to understand the intention of the Giver. After all, giving the earth to man involves “making it subdued” (Genesis 1:28), which is to be realised with consideration being given to the values, dignity and rights the Creator conferred on His creation. It requires overcoming the unidimensional, extremely anthropocentric way of thinking about one’s place in the world, which in practice is marked with “a technique of possession, mastery and transformation.”⁹

Of course, man is “the crown of creation”, his existence is marked with purposefulness with respect to the deed of creation. After all, the created world is in God’s intention a space for realisation of the life’s vocation by man. It was given to him by the Creator as a place of creative responding to the gift of His love. That response is to be realised, however, not by the selfish subordination of all creatures and fulfilment of own aspiration at their cost, heedless of negative consequences suffered by other beings. The postulated attitude of gratitude mans the need to succumb to God, observe

⁸ Cf. Benedict XVI (2009): 50; Benedict XVI (2009a).

⁹ Francis (2015): 106.

the laws granted to the world and creatively use the creation, always with the sense of unity with it and harmonisation of the purposes mapped out for the world by the Creator and man who reads His will. Betraying this plan through actions that are contrary to it or ignoring it by man leads to the degradation of the world of nature. We observe “the ravages caused in the world of nature by people who ignore the explicit rules of the order and harmony concealed in that world.”¹⁰ [Nie mogę znaleźć tego cytatu] Hence the need to build integral ecology, an especially important element of which should be properly conceived human ecology.

Human ecology

Human ecology is built on the foundation of natural ecology, which studies numerous acosystemic interdependencies. Obviously, it also takes into account the influence and impact of man as an integral element of the world of nature. However, it also underlines the uniqueness of man as a being that transcends the order of nature through “his activeness which is in a relation to nature but also to other people and to itself, more precisely individual elements of his existence. Any actions taken up within those relations, which are in compliance with the nature of the person contribute to their development. The sense and purpose of their life go beyond the material world and there, on the transcendental level the peak of integral development is reached. From the theological viewpoint it is salvation, in which they enter perfect communion whose image they are and from whom they originate.”¹¹

¹⁰ John Paul II (1996): 15.

¹¹ Wyrostkiewicz (2007).

This involves a broader look at man than only from the viewpoint of biology and nature. This should be understood as assuming a personalistic perspective in looking at the role of man in the world. He is undoubtedly related with the world of nature, but at the same time his existence includes elements that cannot be reduced to animalism, from among which his reason and freedom are in the forefront.¹² This is the source of his enormous impact on the functioning of the world and his clear domination therein. However, this by no means warrants the right to usurp God's prerogatives for oneself. As a creation, he must respect the order of the world designed by the Creator.¹³ The divine law specifies human competences in the world but also adds teleological characteristics to human activeness which although is realised in the world finds its ultimate sense and purpose also beyond earthliness and time.

Therefore, it is necessary to build a holistic concept of man, which takes into account his being rooted in the world (carnality) as well as his moral and spiritual dimension. Carnality decides about man's entering into a spontaneous and direct relationship with the surrounding world: "Man's presence in the world is the presence of his live body."¹⁴ Such ontic "construction" of man by God constitutes – in the opinion of Pope Francis – a hint for understanding human mission in the world and adequate specification of the relationship with the creation. "The acceptance of our bodies as God's gift is vital for welcoming and accepting the entire world as a gift from the Father and our common home, whereas thinking that we enjoy absolute power over our own bodies turns,

¹² Cf. Wyróstkiewicz (2016): 65.

¹³ Cf. Benedict XVI (2011): 41–42.

¹⁴ Krąpiec (2005): 157.

often subtly, into thinking that we enjoy absolute power over creation. Learning to accept our body, to care for it and to respect its fullest meaning, is an essential element of any genuine human ecology.”¹⁵

In turn, the moral dimension underlines the issue of making responsible decisions by man. Those should always be oriented at the good. In the context of ecology, this concerns not only personal, individual good, not only the good of man understood as a species or global community, but as the creation. Therefore, activities in the ecological space should be based on the very broadly conceived principle of common good. Its understanding by the Vatican Council as “the sum of those conditions of social life which allow social groups and their individual members relatively thorough and ready access to their own fulfilment”¹⁶ speaks in the first place about the human persons and the communities they form. In the ecological perspective, it requires that it is extended to all creation, while man is entrusted with special care for its current and future wellbeing. The notion of the common good also embraces the future. Francis introduced in the context the concept of „a logic of receptivity, which is on loan to each generation, which must then hand it on to the next.”¹⁷ The earth and its resources have not been given to a single generation but to entire mankind. Therefore, future generations also have the right to use it, to enjoy the richness and beauty of the creation. This is but another argument for undertaking actions and functioning according to the pro-ecological model.

¹⁵ Francis (2005): 155.

¹⁶ Vatican Council II (2002): 26.

¹⁷ Francis (2005): 159.

The spiritual dimension of human ecology binds faith with reason. The creation – brought to existence by God – should be recognized as a “Gospel”, which reveals its Creator and allows for His contemplation.¹⁸ Its foundation in the biblically revealed truth of the creation of the inanimate world, animate world and human beings, which shows God as loving the creation.¹⁹ However, also contemplation of the existing world uncovers the truth about God’s love.²⁰ The truth about God-Love is emphasised in the mystery of Redemption, which is the beginning of a new stage in the relationship between God and His creation, who through incarnation of Jesus Christ has become connected with all most spiritual as well as most carnal elements of the universe. This constitutes a foundation for building eschatological “new earth and heaven”, for establishing peace among all creatures, and ultimately for full unification with God and fulfilment of one’s vocation. This in the first place is manifested in assuming protection as well as preservation and life of all creatures.²¹

Integral development

The relation to the world of nature has its consequences for the ethical and axiological concept of man, and how it is understood has a fundamental impact on the determination of principles underlying ethical or axiological assessments of human behaviour. Proposals formulated by ecotheology are meant to eliminate unilaterally extreme solutions.

¹⁸ Cf. Tatar (2016): 65.

¹⁹ Cf. Bartnik (2000): 253.

²⁰ Cf. John Paul II (1997): 237.

²¹ Cf. Espíndola García, Lodoño (2016): 159.

The first one is the extreme anthropocentrism of man's relationship with nature. It is characterised by the supreme and dominating attitude of man toward the creation, which always leads to the overthrow of equilibrium between them. Benedict XVI calls it "superdevelopment" in the technological dimension which is accompanied by "moral underdevelopment".²² Overcome with a passionate desire to realise the set goals, man can neither objectively evaluate his behaviour nor build a reasonable genuine hierarchy. What is particularly important here is that considering it the priority to realise fully his visions of development man is unable to perceive fully the consequences as well as objectively appraise their potential costs.²³

On the other hand, the proposal to depreciate man in favour of personalisation, sacralisation or spiritualisation of natural environment is equally destructive. This type of ideas always lead to objectification of the human person or treating it as something much less significant than the world of nature or simply a redundant element to be eliminated: "...it is contrary to authentic development to view nature as something more important than the human person. This position leads to attitudes of neo-paganism or a new pantheism — human salvation cannot come from nature alone, understood in a purely naturalistic sense."²⁴ The temptation to obliterate or actually eliminate the ontic and axiological difference between the human person and other living things lead to questioning the supreme identity and role of man in the world, and in consequence promoting egalitarian vision of the "dignity"

²² Cf. Benedykt XVI (2009): 29.

²³ Cf. *Ibidem*: 21.

²⁴ *Ibidem*: 48. Those tendencies are frequently called ecocentrism or biocentrism. Cf. Grzesica (1993): 61–63.

of all living creatures. Invoking the authority of the biblical revelation, theological reflection stresses that man has been given the role of a steward and administrator with responsibility over creation. It is the role that man must certainly not abuse, but also one which he may not abdicate.²⁵

The attitude negating permissibility of any human interference into the world of nature because of its sanctity, integrity or inviolability leads to rejecting or undermining the idea of progress as such. Denying man the possibility to act through defining him as bad by nature, always brutally and illegitimately interfering into the world of nature, is devoid of any moral or ontological justification owing to pre-conceived exclusively negative consequences. It should be also emphasised that it is in contradiction with the concept of man and his mission in the world based on the biblical foundation. Man who subdues earth is capable of great and good things: “Every day we encounter the genius of human achievement. From advances in medical sciences and the wise application of technology, to the creativity reflected in the arts, the quality and enjoyment of people’s lives in many ways are steadily rising.”²⁶

That is why ecotheology – according to the teachings of the Popes of the 21st century – postulates the concept of integral development. It understands it as man’s presence and activity in the world characterised by equilibrium between activity in the technical-economic and moral-religious aspects.²⁷ Technical progress is sensible and in an appropriate form when it is combined with spiritual and ethical development, the direction of which is mapped out by such values

²⁵ Cf. Benedict XVI (2010): 13.

²⁶ Benedict XVI (2008): 10–12.

²⁷ Benedict XVI (2007): 9.

as love, responsibility, solidarity.²⁸ Of course, when talking about man's integral development it is impossible to ignore reference to God, which is the most important dimension of ecotheology. It is impossible to reflect on the relationship between man and the world in a sensible and exhaustive manner when reducing the horizon of Transcendence: "Without the perspective of eternal life, human progress in this world is denied breathing-space. Enclosed within history, it runs the risk of being reduced to the mere accumulation of wealth; humanity thus loses the courage to be at the service of higher goods, at the service of the great and disinterested initiatives called forth by universal charity."²⁹

Man is capable of respecting "the intrinsic balance of creation"³⁰ and properly realise his vocation when he does not lose his reference to the Creator, which allows him to recognise his mission correctly. What is more, getting to know the world and making use of its goods must be done with the awareness of responsibility for its future, with respect for natural environment and life of every creature. Man must not be a short-sighted egoist: „At the same time we must recognize our grave duty to hand the earth on to future generations in such a condition that they too can worthily inhabit it and continue to cultivate it. (...) Let us hope that the international community and individual governments will succeed in countering harmful ways of treating the environment."³¹

²⁸ Cf. Benedict XVI (2009): 19.

²⁹ Ibidem: 11.

³⁰ Ibidem: 48.

³¹ Ibidem: 50.

Ecological conversion

The task of the Church is to proclaim the Gospel to all people, while the foundation of this mission and its opening to the world through dialogue is the opening of God-Love to entire creation. In this context, the presence of the Church in the world may assume various forms. It may be a dialogue within the Church itself, and more precisely – between various Christian denominations. In this case, we shall deal with an ecumenical dialogue, an integral element of which is also the ecological issue. It may be an inter-religious dialogue, which despite doctrinal differences seeks common areas for cooperation in building common good. It is obvious that also in this context ecology constitutes one of the most important issues. It may also be a religious-social dialogue, i.e. carried out, among other things, by finding potential areas of cooperation between the Church and international, national or local community structures.

A common denominator for all those types of dialogue seems to be the concept of “ecological conversion” worked out by ecotheology. It involves the need to change human attitude to the creation. It means that “man should communicate with nature as an intelligent and noble «master» and «guardian», and not as a heedless «exploiter».”³² However, ecological conversion does not mean only individual inner transformation, but also a change in the mentality of societies or communities. After all, “self-improvement on the part of individuals will not by itself remedy the extremely complex situation facing our world today. Isolated individuals can lose their ability and freedom to escape the utilitarian mindset,

³² John Paul II (2014): 15.

and end up prey to an unethical consumerism bereft of social or ecological awareness. Social problems must be addressed by community networks and not simply by the sum of individual good deeds.”³³

A somewhat logical consequence of waking the need to review the attitude of individuals and societies to the creation is the enumeration of human transgressions in this respect. It is to sharpen human sensitivity to the wrong and injustice committed by man (humanity) against the world of nature and provide greater motivation to eliminate misdeeds. Here, the notion of “ecological sin” worked out by theology appears here as extremely capacious and universal. Obviously, the notion of sin is strictly related to religious evaluation of human conduct. However, it seems sufficiently universal to be without a problem applied in a broadly conceived ecological discourse. In the most general sense, it means the destruction of balance between man and nature designed by the Creator. Man’s behaviour against the will of God and the mission to subdue the earth “making it subdued” received from Him (Genesis 1:28) is manifested in violence vis-à-vis the creation, its instrumental treatment and utilitarian objectification.³⁴ In consequence, it demolishes the order of the created world: harmony between man and the world, unity of human communities, finally also unity within man himself – always brings a destructive ferment into the structure of life and the world.³⁵

John Paul II notes that it always involves “harmful-use of creatures, whose laws and natural order are violated by ignoring or disregarding the finality immanent in the work

³³ Francis (2015): 219.

³⁴ Cf. Carbajo Nuñez (2019): 198.

³⁵ Cf. Conradie (2016): 19; Lértora Mendoza (2015): 202–221.

of creation. This mode of behavior derives from a false interpretation of the autonomy of earthly things. When man uses these things “without reference to the Creator,” to quote once again the words of the Council, he also does incalculable harm to himself. The solution of the problem of the ecological threat is strictly related to the principles of the “legitimate autonomy of earthly things” – in the final analysis, with the truth about creation and about the Creator of the world.”³⁶ Therefore, ecological sin is a fruit of human selfishness and lack of love for the world. It is underlay by the misunderstanding by man of his relation to the creation as well as his tasks in the world. Man is to be by God’s will a user of the world goods. However, when he misuses them out of greed and selfishness, indulging his unrestrained hedonism without heeding the negative consequences of his actions for other creatures, he commits evil, commits an ecological sin.

Making people mindful of the category of ecological sin in the individual and society-wide dimension seems to be a good impulse for wakening ecological consciousness, greater reflection on one’s behaviour, in particular responsibility for the consequences of one’s actions.

There is a need for finding a broader foundation for taking up efforts aimed at preventing degradation of the environment than the knowledge worked out by exact sciences in this respect. The most precise and competently formulated programmes for opposing degradation of the world of nature, “sounding the alarm” fail to bring about expected effects.³⁷ They rather scare so-called ordinary man but do not win him over, do not make him a convinced participant of pro-eco-

³⁶ Jan Paweł II (1986): 4.

³⁷ Cf. Babiński (2020): 29.

logical activities, an ally in the struggle for a common future. What is needed is motivation of a different kind, which would involve man internally.³⁸ A theologically profiled argumentation stands a chance to breed it.

Conclusion

Ecological issues constitute an important and constantly developed subject in the contemporary teaching of the Church as well as theological reflection. What is significant, it is not an exclusivist activity but is characterised by great openness towards the achievements of other sciences engaged in ecological issues. At the same time, it claims that its achievements be recognised as an important contribution to scholarly reflection in this respect. At the same time, it shows the significance of praxeological implications of its studies, which are aimed at awakening ecological consciousness as well and motivations to take up activities in this respect by concrete human individuals as well and communities.

It particularly strongly emphasises the moral and axiological dimension of human activeness and calls for restraining the still prevailing temptation to understand economic and technological development or progress in isolation from other areas that make up human existence. Worth noting is the importance of awakening man's responsibility for the good of the created world that God entrusted to him. Being its depositary, he is to use it being mindful of the value and dignity of creation, the respect that is due to it as it is the work of God.

³⁸ Cf. Scruton (2017): 8.

Ecotheology underlines a strict relationship between ecological and moral issues. The resolution of the latter at the time of the crisis of values cannot be successful without reference to anthropological issues. The theological proposal in this respect seems to be most balanced and creative. Avoiding anthropocentrism on one hand and specific biolatry on the other show that the idea of primacy of the human person is sensible when it is combined with the awareness of man's task to perpetuate and build common good encompassing not only humankind but all creation.

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**Ritual as an inseparable component of political propaganda:
a politological analysis with account being taken of certain
anthropological elements**

Abstract

The study deals with political propaganda considered as a space for the performance of rituals and ritual behaviours. Such an approach allows for investigating that phenomenon from another perspective than so far proposed by classical propaganda research schools. Special categories of the analysis include the symbolic sphere and conventionality, while emphasis is placed on researching propaganda within politically significant structures. The article provides information on how the phenomenon has been analysed with the use of anthropological research categories.

Key words: #ritual #propaganda #political anthropology #symbolism

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Introduction

Propaganda is one of those terms which require a precise explanation before any reflection thereon is undertaken and before it is used in the fight for power. Many a time too many simplifications and compromises have been effected, which have led to drawing hasty conclusions or misunderstanding of the situation. After all, propaganda is merely a manipulation directed by the authorities in order to influence the masses and control their thoughts. Of course, the form of propaganda may look like that, though it is worth to make it clear from the start that it does not have to be so. Promoting any idea is the art of seducing the crowd and making it undertake such behaviours as are intended by the disseminator. The referent, as every other artist, will use various means and methods to achieve the intended purpose without necessarily employing cheap and treacherous tricks. There is a choice of an assortment of techniques referring to the fundamental needs of the audience; the message may be also based on its sense of belonging and identity.

The subject of this work is primarily the ritual which constitutes and inseparable element of realising political propaganda, though an important part of the analysis is the presentation of the sphere of symbols as underrated by most theoreticians of propaganda.¹

The main purpose of the analysis is an attempt to grasp and locate the ritual in the political reality, and then determine

¹ Some representatives of the social and psychological school of propaganda turn attention to the effect of symbols on the masses, though their deliberations concern mostly attitudes, susceptibility or identity and the issue of symbolism in its building. Therefore, the symbol is a means to reach the goal rather than the main element of the analysis.

the function it performs in the propaganda process. An additional assumption is to present the value of the ritual for the structures as a politically significant category.

In light of the proposed thesis we ought to answer the question what novelties have been brought in by the analysis of the presence of ritual in the propaganda process and how important it is for the political processes. In order to look at this research problem more closely one should first analyse the substance of ritual and propaganda, and then grasp their relationship and investigate the connection between anthropology and politology.

The main subject of the analysis of political propaganda, what it is and how propaganda activities influence various political actors. Propaganda – a category that will be more in depth discussed further on in this work – constitutes a special type of communication between the actors of social life. For the purposes of this article, propaganda is conceived as an element of the political theatre, and the term is used in the context of research on political communication. The analysis is underlain by: (1) a specific, ritual method of communicating in the political sphere; (2) the importance of ritual for building a political reality; (3) the importance of ritual for the effectiveness of political propaganda.

The presence of ritual during communication processes is merely one of the components, an element that directly affects the effectiveness of propaganda activities and triggering of a specific response in the audience. Most frequently it incites obedience, though may be a means for agitating the crowd, which will become ready to challenge the reality in order to instil and new social or economic order.

Propaganda

The term propaganda, nowadays associated mainly with political communication, derives from the Italian verb *propagare* and means to propagate, publicise. The word was originally used in the context of breeding plants and gardening.

The notion of propaganda was transferred to the area of social sciences or humanities upon the establishment of a missionary organisation *Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide*. It was set up for educating missionaries and propagating faith throughout the world.²

The start of the operations of this institution has been recognised by researchers as the beginning of the use of the word propaganda with such meaning as we know nowadays. Certain theoreticians indicate that the term denotes not only disseminating but also explaining, so it may be considered that propaganda carries not only information but also explains the functioning of the world.

Such understanding of the word designates the essence of the phenomenon and almost wholly renders the function of propaganda. It is used by social and political actors to disseminate information in such form which allows them for a comprehensive explanation of the reality.

Assuming that propaganda in fact both disseminates and explains one can [easily] adopt a thesis that it is but a form of communication with both elements of information as well as persuasion.³ It seems that such a perspective makes up a core of all directional definition which I shall cite further on in this work.

² Guilday (1921): 478–494.

³ Jowett, O'Donnell (2012): 1.

The informational nature of propaganda is revealed in sharing ideas, publicising a certain current, worldview or simply in transmitting certain data. Much more complicated is the factor of persuasion which is responsible for attaining the intended effect: make behave in a specific way with the use of concealed or open forms of pressure.

When the pressure is open and constitutes merely encouragement of the masses to assume certain attitudes, it may be called pure persuasion. However, when actors tends to operate beyond the consciousness of the audience, deliberately using misleading information and employing deceitful practical tricks, malicious deprecation or tendentious ridicule we may already speak about manipulation.⁴

It would be advisable to expound on the relationship between manipulation and propaganda as it is a frequent practice to use those two terms alternately. First of all, such practice is a result of the fact that propaganda is “demonised”, which means it is negatively valued. B. Dobek-Ostrowska, J. Fras and B. Ociepka suggest that such a perception of this phenomenon has been produced by experience and later the memory of the totalitarian routine.⁵

Many people, when using the term propaganda, still continue to point a finger at Joseph Goebbels, seeing him not only as a master of propagating certain ideas but also manipulation, that is creating successful illusions. However, propaganda is not always like a puppet show produced by a talented schemer behind the political scene. It may be effected by a well-known activist, who is not ashamed of his views and cries them out openly, or corporations, whose message

⁴ Karwat (2014): 76.

⁵ Dobek-Ostrowska, Fras, Ociepka (1999): 5.

is obvious – they want to persuade the audience to buy their products or use their services. Such an example of propaganda clearly shows that it does not have to be always manipulative and frequently uses tested forms of persuasion.

The previous paragraph opened up the gate to a complete definition of the term propaganda, which continues to be potentially misunderstood. The doubts I would like to dispel concern primarily the myth of the political nature of propaganda. It is much easier to meet persons professing different views who mutually accuse themselves of using propaganda than a man who would disclose the same mechanism in the case of a corporation. For instance, the operation of McDonald's restaurants is not based exclusively on marketing, that is making use of public opinion polls and on this basis creating cohesive opinions, but on producing new narrations and building a reality that the customers are to believe in – that is propaganda.⁶ McDonald's is no longer a restaurant network but a specific way of thinking combined with promoting a certain lifestyle. The situation of this restaurant network explicitly shows that not only politics is an area where propaganda is realised: it may be also business or the sphere of ethics and religion.

Before passing to the definition of propaganda and areas of its research, we should present the constituent features of propaganda, that is such elements that invariably characterise it. S. Kuśmierski and A. Frydrychowicz distinguished elements which evidence unrepeatability of the phenomenon of propaganda and allow its recognition.

⁶ The authors explain the concept of marketing as an activity based on what people think, whereas propaganda consists in creating what people are to think without prior examination of their opinions and feelings; Bajomi Lazar, Horvatch (2013): 220–223.

Any definition of propaganda, regardless of the research tradition, contains the following: (1) a teleological element signifying intentionality of propaganda; (2) a reference to the etymology of the word concerning propagation or explanation; (3) a character of the disseminated contents referring to the use of various means of propaganda, e.g. doctrines, views or ideas; (4) a description of human personality and how it is manifested; (5) the means used in order to attain the intended effects, such as symbols, slogans, as well as communication media; (6) the terms indicating in whose interest propaganda activities are undertaken.⁷

Having made the complete specification of the notion of propaganda, I shall now pass to quoting the most popular definition, namely that propaganda is “the activity, or the art, of inducing others to behave in a way in which they would not behave in its absence.”⁸

To present a more clear picture I shall try to distinguish perception of the phenomenon with respect to the research tradition of various schools dealing with the broadly conceived subject of propaganda. Psychologists pay special attention to the attitudes and psychological mechanisms governing the activities of the audience, psychological methods which may facilitate controlling the masses, the laws of psychological processes, surveys of the needs of the recipients, problems of personalising communication, as well as people’s susceptibility to propaganda messages.

Under the impact of propaganda individuals behave as if their responses were a result of their own decisions.

⁷ Frydrychowicz, Kuśmierski (1980): 41–43.

⁸ Fraser (1957): 1.

The masses may be made to behave alike, though each individual seems to believe that they follow their own judgments.⁹

Representatives of political sciences take a totally different approach to the phenomenon of propaganda. First of all, they present it in terms of its impact, pressure or as a tool utilised in the struggle for political power or keeping it.

is the management of collective attitudes by the manipulation of significant symbols.¹⁰

Propaganda is seen as a phenomenon of influencing people's opinion also in matters of public nature in a free from coercion and non-violent manner.¹¹

The classical tradition of propaganda, based on praxeology, presents it in the most universal light, placing emphasis on formulation and systematisation of propaganda recommendations and resolving the criteria of efficient activity and communication.

Propaganda denotes not only ideas, views and theories, but also their dissemination, explaining them with a given system of means, forms and methods. From such viewpoint, propaganda is a process made up of several components playing different functions,

⁹ Biddle (1931): 283–295.

¹⁰ Laswell (1927): 627.

¹¹ Szulczewski (1972): 51.

the subject of propaganda, its addressee, the means, forms and methods.¹²

The last of research schools is the sociological or social one. J. Ellul is considered to be its most important author; he defined propaganda as follows:

“Propaganda is a set of methods employed by an organized group that wants to bring about the active or passive participation in its actions of a mass of individuals, psychologically unified through psychological manipulations and incorporated into an organization.”

Ritual

The term “ritual” is nowadays used in relation to various activities. It is said that people ritually go to church and to shopping malls, that there are daily rituals of beauty. The word is also used to denote celebrated feasts or rites, certain stages that are experienced in life, e.g. initiation at a summer camp as well as any major activities that constitute social reality. Numerous examples of how ritual is understood show a phenomenon that is inhomogeneous and complex in its substance: as a matter of fact it embraces both the sacral and the secular sphere, various types of conventions and non-recurrent behaviours. In order to determine what exactly ritual is one should first outline all configurations ascribed to them by numerous anthropologists, sociologists and politologists. Although there have been very many conceptions concerning ritual, each of them is worth considering: those that (1) present

¹² Pozdniakow (1978): 18.

ritual as an inseparable part of the religious life of a community; (2) constitute a passage from one stage to the next one; and (3) are responsible for the regulation of conventional and symbolic behaviours in the secular sphere. Expanding on those three categories it will be possible to try to grasp ritual as an element that is constantly present on the political scene.

D.I. Kretzer defined ritual as an analytical category which allows to place the world and experience in many consistent structural frameworks.¹³ The representation of ritual presented by that anthropologist is fairly broad, as a consequence of which at the first glance this description seems not to picture much. I think that the second definition formulated by the same researcher will be able to outline the essence of ritual more clearly: it is an activity swathed in a web of symbols, structured and celebrated at the times and in places that are emotionally opulent.¹⁴ I shall follow such an understanding of ritual throughout this chapter, though at the same time I shall make an effort to show that each of the concept of rituals, regardless of school and tradition, contains within the most important traits presented by Kretzer: structure and symbolism.

The word ritual derives from Latin *ritus*, meaning rite, ceremony. Such an approach is visible in the works of the majority of anthropologists conducting research in the 19th and the early 20th century. Such an understanding of ritual was pioneered by Emil Durkheim, who in his renowned work *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* noted that religious practices were characterised by an interesting dichotomy. According to Durkheim, rite was of a “sacred” nature..

¹³ Kertzer (2010): 20–22.

¹⁴ Ibidem: 9.

The sphere of belief is the sphere of *the sacred* and *the profane*, two opposites that divide the world and at the same time are mutually interdependent.¹⁵ What is sacred owes its status to having been endowed by people, while the order of the sacred forms the sphere the profane.

Interdependence between the world of the sacred and the profane was also noticed by R. Firth, who used the word ritual to describe the relationship between faith and action. He presented religious ceremonies as combining people's beliefs and desires through a constantly repeated procedure.¹⁶ Firth also classified ritual ceremonies into those connected with the cult of gods, funeral and totemic ceremonies. The first one consists in addressing deities in the form of an supplicatory prayer combined with a sacrifice. It is worth noting that the sacrifice may be offered in various forms, though it has one purpose, namely to thank for divine blessings and express hope for experiencing more. Funeral ceremonies are held in order to bid farewell to the deceased and thus make one's own further existence easier. Totemic ceremonies, although dedicated to various kinds of deities, differ from those connected with the cult of gods since they are first of all characterised by a much greater extent; they constitute the theory and the practice connected with the classification of phenomena taking place in the natural environment. They regulate the organisational principles of mutual relations taking place between people and indicate how they can be used and combined with human needs.

The above classification of rituals is connected with their perception in terms of the religious value they carry, as well

¹⁵ Durkheim (1995): 34.

¹⁶ Firth (1965): 204.

as in the context of the functions rituals play in primitive communities. The principal similarity which may be noticed when comparing rituals according to Firth and Durkheim consists in having been presented them by both as inseparable elements of culture. It should be remembered that the role of sacred rituals is not only to worship gods but also regulate social relations through the appointment of the sacred and its appropriate celebration, embracing also acts connected with integration taking place in a given group.

Ritual described as a ceremony connected with the sacred sphere explicitly shows that actions within meanings are responsible for community dynamics, at the same time responding to the needs of people in a given structure. Apart from regulating group relations through integration and shared celebration, rituals are also responsible for community experience and development of each of its members. Very important for the functioning of primitive people are so called rites of passage, which help become a fully-fledged member of a structure.

According to Arnold van Gennep, human life consists in passing from one age to another, from a given occupation to a new one. Regardless of the group, the very fact of existence imposes the need to pass from one social situation to another and from one community into a new one. The French ethnologist emphasises that human life may be compared to a series of phases, the beginning and end of which forms a closed whole.

Before I get to the heart of the matter I would like to make a small digression. The series of changes, each of which ends the previous stage of life can be distinguished not only in primitive communities. I have in mind here all types of social revolts, revolutions, counterrevolutions, depositions and

restorations, which lead the community to going through a new experience, which some time later becomes outdated and is ousted by another.

Special ceremonies are explicitly present in each of the past stages. Where the division of changes is clear, those changes are accompanied by the influence of the sacred and the profane.

In his work, Van Gennep offers special attention to rites of the threshold. Their structure consists of the rites of exclusion from the old world, rites celebrated during the transitory stage, and rites of inclusion into a new world. Turner, who in his work was inspired by van Gennep's research, underlines how important for rituals is the stage of passage, which imparts a mystical character on man. In many cultures, it is believed that rites of passage are accompanied by the presence of supernatural beings, and the persons that participate therein are protected by their powers.¹⁷ Also in this place I would see a series of analogies to political events, for example during protests people start to believe in their inviolability as if they were actually protected by a certain power.

The last aspect of religious rituals that I would like to consider is reference to the notion of *Communitas* formulated by Turner, which means a moment in time and beyond. In the duration of this community stage, society becomes a homogeneous whole rejecting alike status and contract.¹⁸

Passing to the discussion of rituals extending totally beyond the religious sphere it is worth noting that ritual does not lose any of its original importance. Quite on the contrary. It finds its reflection in secular situations, where it is responsible for

¹⁷ Turner (2010): 121.

¹⁸ Ibidem: 146.

regulating interactions between individuals. A definite sequence of procedures allows interlocutors freely to take part in the discussion and makes none of them surprised by the behaviour of the other, and at the same time each of them knows how to read them as well as how to act and respond.

When discussion secular rituals we shall operate on two variables of convention and repeatability as well as symbolism, mindful of the fact that a ritual behaviour is not the same as a symbolic act, that is the proper ritual.¹⁹ In the latter, stress is placed on meaning, whereas in the former the discussion concerns behaviour. When we talk about behaviour we have in mind daily rituals such as breakfast, going to school as well as such activities that we repeat and which are more important for our lifestyle.

As regards the sphere of meanings, rituals can be seen during an oath taken by students at school, legitimisation or overthrow of a political authority. Also taking part in elections is a symbolic act, which for a part of the society is of special significance. Citizens growing up in the sense of duty towards the state and the nation believe that it is natural to go to the polls and decide who they would like see in power.

Swarming in commercial temples also constitutes a kind of ritual, not us a ritual behaviour connected with routine but arousing from the symbolic sphere. Visiting numerous shops is connected not only with physiology and the need to buy the basic necessities for dinner, but illustrates the 21st century cult of consumerism, and in the extreme cases also hedonism. Even such trivial examples as shopping around may be considered ritual.

¹⁹ Piwowarski (1893): 7.

The key to understanding ritual is to read its practicing as a duty: both religious and secular meaning of ritual show it as an activity that is right for the functioning and maintaining social structure. In ceremonials, rituals are performed to put the society in order and express the needs of its members, who feel that a given manner of celebrating is necessary for further successful development.

Being secular acts, rituals and ritual activities make use of well-known rules and schemes than man needs in order to properly interpret the reality and respond to it.

Duty is a rule that regulates the society, is capable of understanding it and keep it in reins. Both the rites of primitive tribes and advanced communities, funeral ceremonies are accompanied by sorrow. Actually, it has always been so – fallen soldiers and victims have been mourned, funeral ceremonies have been enveloped by the sea of tears and sorrow. This sentiment has not been killed even by the commercial nature of contemporary funerals.

For the needs of the further part of the article I have assumed that the term ritual may be ascribed to any conscious human activity in the symbolic sphere or in reference thereto. It may have a secular or religious character; it expresses individual or collective desires, needs and emotions on the basis of the professed axiology or hierarchy of priorities.

The significance of ritual in the political sphere

Politics is one of many areas that is expressed through symbolism.²⁰ Therefore, a relationship of politics with ritual is inescapable. The relationship of politics itself with the sphere

²⁰ Kertzer (2010): 11.

of arbitrary meanings is interesting all in itself. People have always manifested their feelings towards the authorities, while the authorities expressed their emotions to the crowd. It concerns not only revolts and uprisings, but also the formation of social relations, for example the struggle of the commoners against the aristocracy. In the times of the early Roman Republic, the commoners left the city and refused to serve in the army in order to force the aristocracy to make political concessions. It happened as many as three times – in 494, 499 and 287 before Christ.²¹ Refraining from military service was of a ritual character as it was a response to the prevailing social relations. Resistance was a symbol of the wish to change the status quo in a given concrete structure.

B. Szklarski states that *homo politicus* gained his alter ego as *homo symbolicus*.²² With this thesis he manifested that a significant value for man are not only acquired material goods but also a quest for his own identity and place in politics, which he expresses by commemorating events of substance for unity. The above example of Roman citizens also shows that people not only want to commemorate but also manifest their feelings on the public arena using available strategies of behaviour, growing attached to symbols and electing whom they are going to serve. It is worth having another look at religious rituals, this time in the context of the political scene. Going to church can tell a lot about political preferences of people, first of all as it shows their attachment to certain specific values, and secondly, because the clergy, who by any means can influence the behaviour of their congregations, may also directly and indirectly make at least some of the church goers

²¹ Flaig (2013): 14.

²² Szklarski (2008): 7.

vote for the candidate enjoying their support and being their acclaimed friend of the Church.

Revolts against the authorities and expressing one's own political opinion through concrete actions only confirm the thesis that rituals lead to specific interpretations of political relations.²³

The relationship of political propaganda with ritual

Ritual is capable of creating a political reality and thus seems to be a convenient tool for enforcing one's will in this area. Just like a symbol constitutes an element of the propaganda process by being included in the contents of a propaganda message. Ritual constitutes an information and persuasive element, namely it informs about a certain desirable behaviour and at the same time persuades that it plays a key role.

Propaganda may be used as an instrument to maintain certain actions and regularities as well as keep social order; therefore, propagandists may employ the rituals available in the set of social behaviours in order to fortify their position. At the beginning of People's Poland the swearing-in of Bolesław Bierut as the President involved employment of the ritual of taking an oath. It was a replication of solemn political ceremonies connected with the initiation of successive terms of office by the Presidents of the Second Polish Republic.

Also the means with which political actors are able to realise propaganda may be ritual: listening to a radio programme or watching TV news we constitute a part of the media ritual, in which the presenter assumes the function of the master

²³ Kertzer (2010): 127.

of ceremonies and the audience forms the structure he leads.²⁴ The contents hidden in the propaganda message is manifested in symbols and references to meaning that are known to a certain group; in the case of primitive tribes it may refer to the entire structure, while in advanced societies to smaller social units, such as e.g. the electorate of a given party or an interest group.

Another aspect binding propaganda and ritual is the formation of political views by both categories. The role of the former is to create a possibility for existence and then realisation of ritual in such a way so that it is accessible for a much greater audience. Television, radio and contemporary social websites broadcast the ritual thus making it accessible for a broader audience.²⁵ A considerable role in preparing the audience to receive information is played by the channels through which it gets to so numerous recipients: it may be a leading comment, information on the news ticker, or facial expressions and tone of voice of the anchor.

Also politicians may present their opinions on a given event or behaviour before it actually takes place. A very rare practice among politicians is to refuse to shake hands with the opponent, though if such situation does happen it may suggest that the interlocutor is not sufficiently important or that there is hostility between the politicians.²⁶

The role of ritual is to provide a narration and explain the political situation faced by the recipient of propaganda. Saluting soldiers, both in totalitarian regimes and in democratic systems, manifest respect for their superiors, the dignity of their service and its ideals. The case of the military

²⁴ Stachyra (2013): 9.

²⁵ See also: Rothenbuhler (2003).

²⁶ Szymczyk (2018): 145.

is very interesting from the viewpoint of this work – on one hand it may concern the delimitation of the political reality in which the army and its behaviour plays a significant role (which happens mostly in totalitarian regimes), and on the other shows the structure of the organisation and its dynamics, and ritual behaviours as a response to the social requirements of respecting a given hierarchy.

Propagandist setting of the reality through rituals

Maintaining a given social order, with simultaneous resilience allowing for adjustment to fast and unexpected changes, determines adaptability of a political system. Working out a response to the forthcoming changes may be guaranteed by the appropriate use of propaganda features in rituals.

The striving at ritualization in political life is manifested in proper celebration of a given event. In the eyes of the recipient, a worthy and interesting political event is the one which makes him believe that he takes part in a memorable historic moment. For instance, in democratic nations such a role is played by elections, which from a purely formal viewpoint are only a set of procedures aimed at achieving a specific purpose. The significance of elections is stressed by both the Constitution and the Electoral Code of the Republic of Poland. Of course, the highly formalised contents of those documents describing the electoral process, is not the only factor determining the prestige of elections. The significance of the ritual of elections is built additionally through its form.

A feast of democracy, as elections are quite universally called, is characterised by several specific features. First of all, the Constitution explicitly provides that democratic power

is subject to the principle of term of office. This cyclical solution seems natural for the correct course of the democratic process as it allows citizens to exercise control over those holding the reins of power. Additionally, it embodied the traits of ritual, the repeatability of the process manifested by a sequence of election dates make people (*homo politicus*) accustomed to the political reality. However, before the time of resolutions on the political scene comes, the election day is preceded by an electoral campaign which prepares the society for the forthcoming event. The beginning of the campaigning game takes place upon the announcement of the election date. Depending on the type of elections, those who hold top offices in the state proclaim the beginning of the period in which candidates may vie for the vote of their electorate. This period most forcefully makes the citizens aware of the power of the democratic ritual of elections. During the heat of the campaign politicians perform a number of acts that are characteristic for this moment. The campaign ceremonial includes electoral rallies, at which postulates of individual candidates are presented. A special book of that time is the electoral programme. This seemingly simple document plays a key role in communicating with the electorate, and also serves as a point of reference for political opponents. The efforts of the candidates cumulate on the day of the elections, which ends the campaign. The end of electoral excitement seemingly heralds peace for electoral committees, but the cycle with go on repeating itself.

At this moment it is worth having a look at the role of both issues discussed in this article. In the definition of propaganda presented above ritual occupies a special place as it represents the practical use of the system of propaganda and political communication. Therefore, before it becomes a carrier

of social and political propaganda information, it has to meet certain standards ensuring effectiveness of the message. The attainment of the goal embodied by elections, which are still perceived as a propaganda ritual, is closely correlated with the functions performed by both propaganda and ritual. The matrix for considering the convergence of the functions of propaganda with the functions of political ritual will be a direct reference to the concept proposed by Bogusława Dobek-Ostrowska,²⁷ in which she enumerates the following functions of propaganda:

- Integration function;
- Adaptation function;
- Information and interpretation function;
- Disinformation function;
- Denunciation function.

Ritual fulfils the first three of the above mentioned functions: ensures the homeostasis of the system integrating public opinion through the use of the political ceremonial to consolidate the existing order.²⁸ Controlling fear and ensuring stability is characterised by repeatability of the rules that are applied. For example, the ritual cyclicity of elections determines the rules of the political game. Additionally, rituality enables adjustment to new socio-political criteria; legitimisation and de-legitimisation of authorities takes place amidst confirmatory ritual or protests negating the *status quo*.²⁹ More-

²⁷ Dobek-Ostrowska (2007): 207–208.

²⁸ In practice, social integration does not have to be the main goal of political ritual; certain social groups may use ritual to increase their power over the rest.

²⁹ Rycan (2009): 73–76.

over, ritual also performs the communication function which fortifies social bonds. It not only informs, but also provides data which make it possible to interpret the surrounding reality in line with the applicable social standards. Potentially, it may also provide information concerning the future, prognostic assumptions for the goals of the group for the forthcoming years.³⁰

The other two functions, that is disinformation and denunciation, are elements of so-called black,³¹ which was used on a broad scale mainly during World War II and the subsequent cold-war period. In the present international situation and also the internal situation of a state it is hard to imagine any authority³² to employ ritual defamation of opponents. Of course, in extreme situation Orwellian séances of hatred may take place to show one's superiority over the arguments of opponents. A common characteristic of propaganda and ritual is that in the case of both a moment of apparent consciousness occurs, as a result of which the thoughts of the propagandist become shared by the masses.

The shaping of political reality with ritual is generally present in political life in Poland, although it should be noted that democratic rituals are universal for each state with the same system of government. Apart from democratic elections, manifestations of propaganda activities may be seen *inter alia* in:

- The legislative process
- Street manifestations
- State celebrations

³⁰ Watson-Jones, Legare (2016): 44–45.

³¹ Dobek-Ostrowska, Frasz, Ociepka (1999): 34.

³² An example may be North Korea.

Summing up, as a matter of fact ritual in the world of politics cannot exist without having features of propaganda. What is more, it becomes a significant element of the propaganda system affecting every person who actively exercises their civil rights. The common features of propaganda and ritual include rational and extra-rational elements of both categories. A common characteristic of propaganda and ritual is the occurrence of apparent consciousness, as a result of which the assumptions of the propagandist become shared by the masses. A paradox in propaganda activities consists in that it is addressed to a group, whereas the its effects are directed at individuals. On the other hand, individuals readily play their roles in rituals, even though they are ware that their participation will not directly contribute to the attainment of the assumed goal. Crowd awareness usually operates according to the will of the propagandist.

Conclusion

The significance of ritual in building political reality as well as in propaganda in a large measure a result of its substance. Rituals are visible wherever individuals wish to express their attachments to the symbols that are meaningful to them. Those are in turn an inseparable part of politics, which is expressed through symbolism. The presented analysis of symbols forms but a small fragment of research on the anthropological conception of propaganda. It should be considered how could the work of constructing a potential propaganda strategy by decision-makers look like. Without doubt, they would think about what values are important for the audience which they plan to reach and how they would respond to a given message.

Discussing all types of protests we may draw a conclusion that ritual is not only a response to propaganda, but additionally is also one of its channels. The response to the meanings manipulated by all types of decision-makers constitutes additionally a means, a way through every idea is disseminated. Aware of the fact that the success of a message depends also on the media which communicate it we can also predict that the response of individual recipient groups will be of key importance for the effectiveness of propaganda.

Seeing that ritual can keep various societies within schemes with which they are familiar the authorities have a chance to utilise the learned behaviours employed the available constructs as well as establishing new ones. All of us will probably agree that it is easier to keep up a system than to take down the old one and establish a completely new one, though the French revolutionists succeeded to dismantle the political order.

The French Revolution is a special example of how a myth sneaked into the people's minds and has been constantly repeated in books and stories. Can we, therefore, speak about the propaganda of the French Revolution? Decidedly yes, since it has been constantly promoted as an example of a civic protest against the bourgeoisie, against the bloody rule of the first and the second estate. Can we say about the French and their protesting successors that they use the opportunity to express their will with the use of political rituals? Absolutely. After all, do the leaders of all great revolts utilise rituals to incite rebellious moods in societies? Once again the answer is yes.

When studying propaganda one can have in mind only one of two available options: to help political actors in carrying out propaganda or to protect societies from yielding to it.

Regardless of the motives followed by researchers, the knowledge about the existing sphere of symbols and how it is used to exert influence is very important. It helps to answer the question how to cope with a human society especially when it is divided into numerous structures. Each of them follows a given axiological order and – what is particularly evident in this century, a media bubble – some people read Newsweek, others read Rzeczpospolita, they watch Fox or CNN, which only favours development of individual mental tendencies which constitute part of a propaganda strategy employed by certain media. It is them and the politicians that are associated with them tell us how we should behave and think, and indirectly what rituals we should celebrate, for instance what flag to hand out and how to behave vis-à-vis another person in the street.³³

³³ For example, when one sees a militant of the anti-fascist movement or a nationalist, even if they behave the same, depending on political option a response of another man would be different.

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Assumptions for the project “Implementation of the educational programme ‘Politics-Religion-Security. Conflict and attempts to resolve it’ basing on international cooperation”

Abstract

The aim of this paper is to present assumptions for the project “Implementation of the educational programme ‘Politics-Religion-Security. Conflict and attempts to resolve it’ basing on international cooperation” (POWR.04.03.00–00–0013/18). The project is carried out jointly by three entities: Saint Nicolas Foundation, Warsaw University and Centro Studi Medi in Genoa, Italy. The second purpose of this paper is to document the fragmented information about the Project with a view to the future use of its potential, both with respect to implementation as well as its scientific and educational aspects. The third aim of this paper is to promote the described Implementation Project and the Educational Programme “Politics-Religion-Security. Conflict and attempts to resolve it”.

Key words: education, identity, politics, religion, security, labour market

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Introduction

The aim of this paper is to present assumptions for the project “Implementation of the educational programme ‘Politics-Religion-Security. Conflict and attempts to resolve it’ basing on international cooperation” (POWR.04.03.00–00–0013/18). The project is carried out jointly by three entities: Saint Nicolas Foundation, Warsaw University and Centro Studi Medi in Genoa, Italy. The second purpose of this paper is to document the fragmented information about the Project with a view to the future use of its potential, both with respect to implementation as well as its scientific and educational aspects. The third aim of this paper is to promote the described Implementation Project and the Educational Programme “Politics-Religion-Security. Conflict and attempts to resolve it”.

Issues

The project entitled “Implementation of the educational programme ‘Politics-Religion-Security. Conflict and attempts to resolve it’ basing on international cooperation” (POWR.04.03.00–00–0013/18)¹ has been carried out since 2018 in international

¹ Cf. *Application for a grant, Operational programme Knowledge Education Development (implementation project)*, POWR.04.03.00–00–0013/18, Own archives of the Centre for European Projects in Warsaw, hereinafter *Application*, POWR.04.03.00–00–0013/18). The Centre For European Projects is a government budgetary unit established by Regulation No. 16 of the Minister for Regional Development of 15 December 2008. The main goal of the Centre is to improve the effectiveness of absorption of European funds. Cf. Ordinance of the Minister for Development and Finance of 10 November 2017 on establishing organisational rules of the Centre for European Projects, Official Journal of the Minister for Development and Finance, 14 November 2017, item 224.

cooperation between three entities – Saint Nicolas Foundation² (Poland), Warsaw University³ (Poland) and Centro Studi Medi⁴ (Italy). The outcome of the project is the programme “Implementation of the educational programme ‘Politics-Religion-Security. Conflict and attempts to resolve it’ (hereinafter: PRB Programme) focused around the following challenges: the effect of religion on norms and security, multiculturalism, identity, the relationship between religion and religious identity and security. In the plan of the project it was assumed that religion is an element of the feeling of a community, eliminates the threats to security through values and norms, whereas its homogeneity results in the uniformity of moral norms, which frequently overlap with religious norms. It was also assumed that the system of statutory law has a core and roots in the historical cultural heritage.⁵ By making the re-

² Saint Nicolas Foundation – a public benefit organisation set up in Poland in 2002. It is involved in publishing, educational, and scholarship activities.

³ Warsaw University – the largest university in Poland. It was founded in Warsaw in 1816.

⁴ Centro Studi Medi – a non-governmental organisation based in Genoa, Italy, established in 2003, involved in broadly conceived issues of migration. It is involved in research, publishing, and educational activities.

⁵ Cf. Kluza (2017): 68–71. Cf. Kluza (2017): 68: “In the basic form moral norms constitute a set of ethical principles which in a given human community are considered to be fundamental, common, universal, and with which the activities taken up by people should comply. With a view to various categories of classification, size of a given group or various types of social determinants, there may be divergent views as to what values can be included in the set of moral norms. The catalogue of moral norms frequently overlaps with religious norms, since the principles of the professed faith usually are reflected in morality, as well as with informal or customary norms, since one of their characteristic is universal acceptability. The relation of moral to legal norms may be in turn defined as a relationship of crossing – not all ethical

ipients aware of the power of their own identity, the PRB programme, which is the product of the project, is meant to build in them the ability to move around in the multicultural society without fear and consolidate the general sense of security.⁶

A starting point for the concept of the project and then the development of the PRB Programme were the observations made by Dariusz Karłowicz and Cezary Smuniewski. For the needs of archiving the project they have been written down and are kept in the project archives at the Saint Nicolas Foundation in Warsaw. The scholars arrived at the following conclusions:

1. "The religious reality is directly linked with the sphere of the worship, religious experience, is a subject of metaphysical and theological reflection, though also is constitutive for individual and collective identity, and thus the basic component of the socio-political reality and all of the broadly conceived culture. Apart from a vision of the deity and salvation, religious convictions usually contain a specific vision of man and community: purpose, prevailing rules, desirable form of communal life as well as what deserves to be condemned. Just like religious experience, religious convictions – both when they are an expression of religious faith and when they arise from negating that faith – constitute one of the major elements of individual and collective identity. It is impossible

standards are reflected in law. In the case of criminal law this convergence is even further restricted. The purpose of penal sanctions, the main task of which is to protect legal interests specified by the lawmaker, is substantially different. However, because the system of codified law has a core and roots in historical cultural heritage, it is indispensable to ensure some links between criminal law and morality."

⁶ Cf. *Application for a grant, Operational programme Knowledge Education Development (implementation project), POWR.04.03.00–00–0013/18.*

to appreciate the great monuments of culture: *the Epic of Gilgamesh, the Iliad, the Aeneid, the Divine Comedy*, Adam Mickiewicz's *Dziady*, without understanding religious convictions and the knowledge of the nature of worship. There is neither any doubt that without having any knowledge on this subject it is impossible to understand the policies of the today's United States of America, contemporary France, Israel, Saudi Arabia, China, Russia, Germany, Sweden or Poland. A politician, a tourist or a businessman who happened to visit those countries without at least a little knowledge about religion and the relationship between religion and social life there, would encounter a wall of misunderstanding, if not aggression. To enter a deeper relationship requires an appropriate more profound knowledge, whereas to enter into a deep relationship – virtuosity. It is similar as regards possible contacts with representatives of other cultures and individuals or communities living in Poland. A Turk who sells kebabs, an owner of a Chinese restaurant, a German selling garden gnomes manufactured in Poland, a construction worker from Ukraine or Bangladesh are not like us in this respect – as regards the relationship between religion and social life.”⁷

2. “Religion determines culture to a degree which enables many thinkers and sociologists speak even about ‘atheist Protestants’, ‘atheist Catholics’, ‘atheists of the Jewish Faith’. The famous phrase spoken out by John Paul II at the Victory Square in Warsaw that “It is impossible to understand the history of Poland without Christ” may be understood also

⁷ *Rzeczywistość współczesna oczami Dariusza Karłowicza i Cezarego Smuniewskiego, Notes from the preparatory work (7 March 2018) for the project “Implementation of the educational programme ‘Politics-Religion-Security. Conflict and attempts to resolve it’ basing on international cooperation”, POWR.04.03.00–00–0013/18.*

as a certain research guideline for someone who is interested in Polish culture, politics, social life. Without religion it is impossible to understand the history of nations, without religion it is impossible to understand the contemporary threat to security, without religion it is impossible to create personal, social and cultural security, but also security of individual states and international security.”⁸

3. “It is impossible to understand politics without analysing the place of religion in the world and its relation to political reality. Every political doctrine has a concept of the religious sphere in the world. Regardless of whether it is a concept of power in the Middle Ages or in ancient Egypt, or in contemporary France, Britain or the US. In order to comprehend the differences between them it is necessary to understand their attitude to religion. Why does a Russian politician think differently about different religions? Every political doctrine has an implied attitude towards religion. In order to understand the world it shall not suffice to know political or global reality, or even that concerning the legal order, but one needs to understand the religious context.”⁹

4. “Graduates of the faculties of political studies, international relations or security studies need to be as fully as possible capable of seeing the reality, which is impossible without their knowledge, skills, competences to master the ability to learn the religious dimension. A major fault of contemporary education is the lack of knowledge about religious reality and inability to combine it with both political theories and political practice.”¹⁰

⁸ Ibidem.

⁹ Ibidem.

¹⁰ Ibidem.

5. "This type of ignorance gives rise to absurd ideas such as forcing Muslim women to wear bikinis. Elimination of ritual slaughter of animals proclaimed by animal protection movements or undermining the conscience clause in what concerns pro-life choice. There are boundaries of religious identities the crossing of which compels the faithful to assume an attitude of fundamental confrontation with codified law even if they would not wish to do so."¹¹

6. "Hence it becomes absolutely obvious that the knowledge of this subject is indispensable not only for politologists, experts in international law and international relations, but also creators of security in its diverse dimensions and at various levels. This knowledge is also indispensable for policemen, journalists, doctors, schoolteachers, employees of cultural institutions, central and local public administration, social workers; it is indispensable for legislators and judges, all professionals whose work makes it necessary to move around in social reality in a manner requiring its understanding. The issue becomes even more urgent when we taken into account contemporary migrations, travelling, job changing."¹²

The above observations made by Dariusz Karłowicz and Cezary Smuniewski turned out to a starting point for the development of the project and the PRB Programme.

Why is there a need for the PRB Programme

The authors of the concept of the programme note that the Polish labour market suffers a shortage of workers in certain sectors of the economy and point out the problem of a low birth

¹¹ Ibidem.

¹² Ibidem.

rate. Citing the results of surveys carried out by the Office for Foreigners (UdSC) and the Central Statistical Office (GUS) they state that by 2050 the population of Poland will drop down to 33.5 million. The gap of 4 million people on the Polish labour market may be filled in by immigrants, especially Ukrainians. Since 2014, the number of foreigners applying for the permit to stay in Poland has been constantly increasing (2017: 202 thou., up by 33% on 2016 and 71% on 2015). The applications have been filed by the citizens of Ukraine (62%), Byelorussians (9.5 thou.), Indians (8 thou.), Vietnamese (6.4 thou.), Chinese (6 thou.), Germans (2.3 thou.), Italians (1.1 thou.).¹³ That data has become a basis for the creators of the PRB Programme to state that the contribution of immigrants to the economy and culture could be significant if the barriers to their proper functioning in Poland are eliminated. They also assume that the effects of the programme will change the attitude of employers as regards hiring foreigners, make it easier for immigrants to find a decently paid job, eliminate prejudices in recruitment, finding a flat with an affordable rent, access to the health service and settle official formalities.¹⁴ The premises for formulating such assumptions arose from the analysis of data published by the Senate of the Republic of Poland. That documents stated that institutions and organisations acting for the integration of foreigners in Poland observed little interest in the integration courses addressed to foreigners coming to Poland. Not all of them are willing to benefit from the integrational offer prepared for them – some of them treat their stay in Poland as tran-

¹³ Cf. Central Statistical Office (2014); Office for Foreigners (2016), Office for Foreigners (2017).

¹⁴ Cf. *Application for a grant, Operational programme Knowledge Education Development (implementation project)*, POWR.04.03.00–00–0013/18.

sitory. They are rather passive, have a demanding attitude as regards satisfaction of their daily needs, are not interested in good integration with the society. At the same time, in their daily life in Poland they encounter several problems, of which the following have been pointed out as typical:

- communication problems due to no or poor knowledge of the Polish language;
- no availability of municipal housing and problems with finding accommodation with an affordable rent;
- homelessness as a result of inability to find appropriate accommodation;
- problems with finding a job paid adequately to the needs (e.g. renting a flat), among other things because of the poor command of the Polish language;
- no documents confirming occupational skills and reluctance of employers to hire foreigners;
- problems with health and health service due, among other things, to not knowing the language and lack of medical records;
- problems with settling official formalities;
- no sufficient information as regards their rights as well as about the institutions and organisations that offer help to refugees.¹⁵

When elaborating the project aimed at developing the PRB Programme the authors assumes that the deliberate management of multiculturalism is a major challenge nowadays faced not only by Poland but also all of Europe. Neither the Polish educational nor training system include a comprehensive syllabus preparing students or workers to operate in a multicultural environment. There are only scarce examples

¹⁵ Dragan (2016): 13.

of programmes addressed to a limited number of people. Courses offered at certain universities to a limited number of students do not cover all issues that have an impact on security.¹⁶ Thus, there are no comprehensive programmes available in this respect.

In February and March 2018, under the preparation of the project “Implementation of the educational programme ‘Politics-Religion-Security. Conflict and attempts to resolve it’ basing on international cooperation” the scientists (Cezary Smuniewski – War Studies University, academic director of the project, Karolina Kochończyk Bonińska – War Studies University, Dariusz Karłowicz – representative of an NGO, Saint Nicolas Foundation) together with a group of assistants (Tomasz Herbich, Konrad Majka, Adam Talarowski) and with the support of scientific consultants (Krzysztof Koseła – Warsaw University, Tomasz Żyro – Warsaw University, Ewa Maria Marciniak – Warsaw University, Maciej Marszałek – War Studies University, Ryszard Szpyra – War Studies University, Cyprian Kozera – War Studies University, Ilona Urych – War Studies University, Andrea Zanini – Genoa University, Agostino Massa – Genoa University, Andrea Tomaso Torre – Centro Studi Medì in Genoa) carried out investigations aimed at validating the thesis concerning the need for implementing the programme. The following surveys were conducted:

- a questionnaire survey of 200 students from Białystok, Siedlce, Poznań, Katowice, Gdańsk, Toruń, Opole, Warszawa, Wrocław, Olsztyn, Rzeszów, Kraków, Kielce (political sciences, international relations, international security, law, administration);

¹⁶ Cf. *Application for a grant, Operational programme Knowledge Education Development (implementation project), POWR.04.03.00–00–0013/18.*

- 30 interviews with NGOs dealing with the issues of creating social security,
- 30 interviews with primary and secondary school teachers (Warszawa, Katowice, Rzeszów, Jelenia Góra, villages from Zachodniopomorskie and Podlaskie voivodships);
- 30 interviews with the clergy of various Christian denominations (22 Catholics, 5 Orthodox, 3 Protestants).

From those surveys it transpired that over 80% of the interviewed members of the clergy and teachers anticipated an improvement of life in a multicultural environment owing to the presence in the local community of persons with competences acquired thanks to taking part to the planned programme. 80% of teachers and NGO representatives anticipate an improvement in the functioning of their work environment (schools, house of culture, employees and volunteers of NGOs). On the average, 80% of respondents (members of the clergy and teachers) anticipate an improvement in the functioning of public institutions as a result of their employees having competences acquired under the planned programme. This investigation confirms that implementation of the PRB Programme, which builds the competences for functioning in the multicultural world, is an effective and needed measure awaited by the labour market and answering its major challenges in the forthcoming years as well as enriching the teaching offer of universities and the training market.¹⁷

When working out the concept of the project the authors decided to use information acquired by the IDI method (Individual In-depth Interview). During the work of the team (Cezary Smuniewski, Karolina Kochańczyk Bonińska, Konrad

¹⁷ Cf. *Application*, POWR.04.03.00–00–0013/18.

Majka) i konsultacji (Krzysztof Koseła, Ewa Maria Marciniak, Maciej Marszałek, Cyprian Kozera, Ilona Urych, Andrea Zanini, Agostino Massa, Andrea Tomaso Torre) the following arguments were articulated in favour of using the IDI method.

- minimization of survey costs;
- the subjects dealt with in the survey are difficult and even intimate (e.g. concerning religion, worldview, political preferences);
- the possibility of gaining a good knowledge of the opinions and views of respondents;
- a fast method to validate the degree of understanding the concept of the project;
- fast effects of the survey;
- getting to respondents' unrealised opinions;
- expected considerable self-presentation;
- building a friendly environment around the project;
- no negative impact from the group which may happen in group interviews (conformism, dominance of certain people in the group);
- anticipated greater openness in a face-to-face conversation of people who might not want to disclose their views in front of a larger group or in writing;
- development of team competences;
- broadening of team experience.

The IDI method was used, which boils down to a face-to-face conversation of a researcher with a single respondent. Thanks to than method it was possible to deepen the knowledge of the studied phenomenon and get to the emotional and motivational patterns of respondents' behaviours. Used were structured interviews (scenario) and semi-structured interviews, where the starting point is a list of questions. The goals that the researcher wanted to attain (to get

responses to the questions) were clearly defined. At the same time, it was assumed that during in-depth interviews it would be possible to introduce elements of a non-standardised questionnaire if it is needed to get information from a respondent (open interviews with only a generally outlined scenario). The authors of the project expected that thanks to in-depth interviews it would be possible to learn individual experience of respondents, the mechanisms and motivations of the decisions they make, as accurately as possible learn the reasons underlying their actions.¹⁸

Interviews with representatives of NGOs involved in the issues of creating social security – na at the local or nationwide level – turned out to be of special significance.¹⁹

The following answers were given to the question: "Would the competences of NGO employees and volunteers in the area corresponding with our project make their work more effective?":

- Definitely yes – 26 people
- Rather yes – 2 people
- Hard to say – 2 people
- Rather not – 0 (none of the respondents)
- Definitely not – 0 (none of the respondents)

¹⁸ Cf. Smuniewski, *Notes from the preparatory work for the project "Implementation of the educational programme 'Politics-Religion-Security. Conflict and attempts to resolve it' basing on international cooperation"* POWR.04.03.00–00–0013/18.

¹⁹ Cf. *In-depth individual interview (IDI) with NGO representatives* (February/March 2018), Archives of the project "Implementation of the educational programme 'Politics-Religion-Security. Conflict and attempts to resolve it' basing on international cooperation", POWR.04.03.00–00–0013/18.

The following answers were given to the question: “Would the competences of employees of public institutions, such as public offices, schools, in the area corresponding with our project contribute to improvement of their functioning in a multicultural environment?”:

- Definitely yes – 26 people
- Rather yes – 2 people
- Hard to say – 2 people
- Rather not – 0 (none of the respondents)
- Definitely not – 0 (none of the respondents)

The following answers were given to the question: “Would the competences of employees of enterprises in the area corresponding with our project contribute to improvement of their functioning in a multicultural environment?”:

- Definitely yes – 22 people
- Rather yes – 3 people
- Hard to say – 2 people
- Rather not – 1
- Definitely not – 2

Below are examples of answers given to the question: “How would the competences of potential NGO employees and volunteers in the area corresponding with our project make their work more effective?”:

1. “Those who wish to do away with alcohol addiction need people who are capable to using not only their professional skills, who have not only knowledge but, what is very important, who are capable of invoking their own religious worldview, but of course also showing respect for different views of their interlocutor.”

2. "Work in such organisation as ours, that is offering help to those who are in need, poor, unemployed, helpless, vulnerable, sick, requires very specific competences. It requires the ability to listen to another man, to understand his situation, empathy, spiritual sensitivity."
3. "In our foundation we are involved, among other things, in promoting attitudes which are to contribute to building the most efficiently possible functioning civil society. For such a society to be able to live as best as possible, it cannot be built basing on a fear of other people, fear of a multicultural world. What is needed is the expertise of people working in houses of culture, teachers, doctors, clergymen, all people employed in public administration. In order to build a civil society it is necessary to know the rules and ways of utilising what is latent in people, it is necessary to wake up what is asleep in them for various reasons. There are great unutilised deposits of energy in the society, which may be used for the good of others. Local communities need both leaders as well as an army of workers who understand how religion influences the way of thinking, everyday choices, decisions not only in personal matters but also concerning the life of the community."
4. "Basing on the observation of what is done by many charitable organisations I can responsibly say that people who can understand the interrelationships between social life and values carried in the message of individual religions are very creative individuals, praised by those who need assistance and also appreciated by co-workers. There is a shortage of such people on the labour market. These are people with training that gives them courage and skills to utilise thinking arising

- from religious identity, from the call of individual religions to cooperate and create a space of care for another man.”
5. “Employees of public administration must have knowledge not only about multiculturalism, but first of all about the potential of religion and religious thinking.”
 6. “It is hard speaking about social security in Poland without the activity of entities associated with Churches and religious associations. Those who know what is going on at the grassroots, in villages and small towns, perhaps understand it better. Those who engage in social activity are people who very frequently do it because it is part of their faith, who also know that it is possible to reconcile faith with social life. This is what we should teach in Poland.”
 7. “The majority of volunteers who engage in the activity of our foundation, who want to work with “difficult” youth, want to spend time with them, help them do their homework, etc. are people who can draw on what they learned in the Church, in Churches. It so happens that in our foundation we have volunteers who identify themselves with the Catholic Church and two Churches based on the heritage of Protestantism. We take care so that all of them use what they are for a common cause. We know that this has to be learnt. The assumptions for a university curriculum that have been presented to me, in which the central idea of which is to look at people integrally, makes us hopeful that other voluntaries will join our foundation. This also makes us hope that there will be ever more such foundations as ours in Poland and in Europe. There are so many young people that need help! Our foundation was established by a few

people who know that it is necessary to understand the great potential that is hidden in the relationships that arise when religion and social life meet.”

Data obtained from 30 interviews with the clergy of various Christian denominations (22 Catholics, 5 Orthodox, 3 Protestants):²⁰

The following answers were given to the question: “Would the presence of people having competences corresponding with the effects of our project contribute to improvement of the quality / comfort of life in a multicultural / multi-religious / denominationally diverse environment?”:

- Definitely yes – 14
- Rather yes – 11
- Hard to say – 5
- Rather not – 0
- Definitely not – 0

The following answers were given to the question: “Would the competences of school teachers, people working in schools and houses of culture corresponding with the effects of our project contribute to improvement of the functioning of schools and houses of culture in a multicultural / multi-religious / denominationally diverse environment?”:

- Definitely yes – 13
- Rather yes – 11
- Hard to say – 5

²⁰ Cf. *In-depth individual interviews (IDI) with the clergy (Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant)* (February/March 2018), Archives of the project “Implementation of the educational programme ‘Politics-Religion-Security. Conflict and attempts to resolve it’ basing on international cooperation”, POWR.04.03.00–00–0013/18.

- Rather not – 1
- Definitely not – 0

The following answers were given to the question: “Would the competences of employees of public institutions (e.g. public offices) corresponding with the effects of our project contribute to improvement of the functioning of those institutions?”:

- Definitely yes – 13
- Rather yes – 10
- Hard to say – 4
- Rather not – 2
- Definitely not – 1

The following answers were given to the question: “Would the competences of employees of enterprises corresponding with the effects of our project contribute to improvement of their functioning?”:

- Definitely yes – 2
- Rather yes – 7
- Hard to say – 16
- Rather not – 2
- Definitely not – 3

The following answers were given to the question: “Would the competences corresponding with the effects of our project contribute to the promotion of the idea of voluntary activity?”:

- Definitely yes – 23
- Rather yes – 4
- Hard to say – 3
- Rather not – 0
- Definitely not – 0

Data obtained from 30 interviews with primary and secondary school teachers.²¹ In-depth interviews were carried out with teachers from Warsaw (5 people), Katowice (5 people), Rzeszów (5 people), Jelenia Góra and the vicinity (5 people), villages from Zachodniopomorskie and Podlaskie voivodships (10 people).

The following answers were given to the question: "Would the competences of employees public institutions, such as public offices, in the area corresponding with our project contribute to improvement of their functioning in a multicultural environment?":

- Definitely yes – 17
- Rather yes – 8
- Hard to say – 2
- Rather not – 1
- Definitely not – 2

The following answers were given to the question: "Would the competences of school teachers and school employees in the area corresponding with our project contribute to improvement of their functioning in a multicultural environment?":

- Definitely yes – 18
- Rather yes – 6
- Hard to say – 5

²¹ Cf. *In-depth individual interview (IDI) with primary and secondary schools* (February/March 2018), Archives of the project "Implementation of the educational programme 'Politics-Religion-Security. Conflict and attempts to resolve it' basing on international cooperation", POWR.04.03.00-00-0013/18.

- Rather not – 0
- Definitely not – 1

When developing the concept of the project, the team (Cezary Smuniewski, Karolina Kocharczyk Bonińska, Konrad Majka) after consultations (Ewa Maria Marciniak, Maciej Marszałek, Ilona Urych, Cyprian Kozera, Andrea Zanini, Agostino Massa, Andrea Tomaso Torre) carried out investigations by the diagnostic method and the questionnaire technique (the research tool was a questionnaire form) among 200 students.²² Students of political studies, international relations, international security, law and administration in major academic centres in Poland (Białystok, Gdańsk, Katowice, Kielce, Kraków, Olsztyn, Opole, Poznań, Rzeszów, Siedlce, Toruń, Warszawa, Wrocław) were interviewed on 2–8 March 2018.

The following answers were given to the question: “Is religion an important element of political life in contemporary states?”:

- Definitely yes – 18%
- Rather yes – 33%
- Yes – 9 %
- No – 8%
- Rather not – 20%
- Definitely not – 12%

To the question “How important is religion in the processes of creating security nowadays?” 64% students ticked off

²² Cf. *Questionnaire of the student survey (2–8 March 2018)*, Archives of the Project “Implementation of the educational programme ‘Politics-Religion-Security. Conflict and attempts to resolve it’ basing on international cooperation” (POWR.04.03.00–00–0013/18), Archives of the Saint Nicholas Foundation, Warsaw.

"Nowadays it is the most important element". Whereas to the question "How important is religion for understanding contemporary threats to security?" 86% ticked off "Without a reflection on religions it is impossible to understand contemporary armed conflicts." The question "How important is religion for understanding contemporary armed conflicts?" 72% of respondents believe that "Religion is the most important factor for understanding contemporary armed conflicts", while 96% are of the opinion "Religion and economy are major factors for understanding contemporary conflicts". To the question "Are you interested in taking part in an educational programme offering knowledge concerning identification of the religious element in contemporary politics?" 74% students selected the answer "Definitely yes". To the question "Are you interested in taking part in an educational programme offering knowledge concerning identification of the religious element in inciting and escalation of contemporary armed conflicts?" 83% answered "Definitely yes". To the question "Are you interested in taking part in an educational programme offering knowledge concerning identification of the religious element in contemporary terrorism?" 78% answered "Definitely yes".

The following answers were given to the question: "Will the acquisition of knowledge and competences in the area corresponding with the project 'Religion, politics, security' make it easier for students to operate in the global labour market, including in the process of seeking a job domestically and abroad, that is facilitate passing from the educational to the employment stage?":

- Definitely yes – 26%
- Rather yes – 32%

- Yes – 9%
- No – 7%
- Rather not – 15%
- Definitely not – 11%

The following answers were given to the question: “Will the acquisition of competences in the area corresponding with the project ‘Religion, politics, security’ make it easier for students to operate in the global labour market, including in a multicultural environment after they complete their studies?”:

- Definitely yes – 28%
- Rather yes – 33%
- Yes – 11%
- No – 5%
- Rather not – 12%
- Definitely not – 9%

The following answers were given to the question: “Are university students interested in acquiring competences in the area corresponding with the project ‘Religion, politics, security’?”:

- Yes – 71%
- I have no opinion on this issue – 17%
- No – 13%

With the use of the IDI method, which has been described above, an expert interview was carried out with the head of Lesznówola commune.²³ The respondent was Maria

²³ *In-depth individual interview (IDI) with the Head of Lesznówola Commune, Ms Maria Jolanta Batycka-Wąsik (6 February 2018), Archives of the project “Implementation of the educational programme*

Jolanta Batycka-Wąsik (b. 1960), in this office since 1998. To the question "What is the specificity of Lesznówola Commune?" Ms Batycka-Wąsik answered: Our commune creates employment opportunities for people with diverse professional skills, experience and education. A relatively new phenomenon is the labour market demand for people trained to work in an ethnically and culturally diversified environment. About 20% of the inhabitants of our commune are not ethnically Polish. We try to create the possible conditions for those who settle or work here. There is a constant demand for educated people who know Western civilisation and Western culture, and will be able to work as effectively as possible with people coming from other parts of the world: China, Vietnam, Turkey, or India. Needed are people who are academically trained to promote attitudes of respect for diversity, for the otherness of people who live next to them. I am convinced that the knowledge of cultural, ethnical, religious differences is one of the preconditions for successful coexistence and the best possible cooperation. Employees of public administration, teachers, doctors and all those who work in the area of culture should be well prepared for working in such a community like ours. Graduates of such faculties as political sciences, national security, administration should be prepared to work in a multicultural, multi-religious and ethnically diversified environment. Educated people have a special mission; the culture of living together, new jobs depend on their behaviours and attitudes."

Maria Jolanta Batycka-Wąsik gave the following answer to the question "Do the university graduates who start working

'Politics-Religion-Security. Conflict and attempts to resolve it' basing on international cooperation", POWR.04.03.00-00-0013/18.

in Lesznówola Commune have competence in the area corresponding with the presented project?": "There is a visible shortage in the labour market of people who are able to combine thinking arising from religious identity with collaborating with people of other than their own traditions. Therefore, what is needed is such preparation of students so that their trump card on the labour market were the understanding of contemporary (and at the same time constantly growing) cultural diversity. The point is that we should be able to take advantage of our differences for the common good. This should be taught at university, but also after graduation, permanently."

The next question was: "Would such competences of potential employees as you have mentioned improve the effectiveness of their work?" The reply was explicit: "Yes. I am sure about it. Firstly, understanding the effect of religious reality on the political one and understanding the weight of religious identity of individuals and communities; secondly, realisation of relationships between thinking and actions motivated by religious beliefs and the secular order of the state and the functioning of local communities; thirdly, utilizing one's own way of thinking arising from religious identity for collaborating with people from other than our own traditions – those are three important abilities sought in those who work in multicultural environments. One should also ask "How?" Well, I am convinced that the well thought out encounter with the "otherness" of people who know who they are, who are aware of themselves and the one whom they meet may be a space for developing ideas, will enhance their creativity. In the space of such encounter new ideas will be born as regards joint actions, which will in turn result in the emergence of new jobs.

Ms Batycka-Wąsik was asked: "Would the appropriate competences of employees of public institutions such a public offices or schools contribute to improvement of their functioning in a multicultural environment?" The answer was as follows: "Definitely yes. This requires training, courses... We have to prepare ourselves for being together, consciously being and creating a good tomorrow in a multicultural environment. Local communities need enlightened people, that is such who know who they are, what is their heritage, what they can bring in to the space of the common good, where they encounter good intentions and desires of people who settle in Poland, who wish to work and raise their children here. Together we can do more, better. Employees of public institution, teachers, all people involved in creating social and personal security, all people involved in creating the culture of living together, who are well prepared and permanently improve their skills are a precondition and foundation for happy life of a local community, especially a multicultural one. I am not afraid of multiculturality, but I know that ignorance can be destructive."

The last question concerned employees and their competences. "Would the appropriate competences of employees of enterprises contribute to improvement of their functioning in a multicultural environment?" Maria Jolanta Batycka-Wąsik replied: "Employees of enterprises functioning in a multicultural community have to be well prepared and need to be willing to understand all those who represent different than their own traditions; there is no cooperation without it. New jobs are created by people who understand the diversities of contemporaneity. Only those who are not afraid of otherness will be willing to work together; also only those who know how to take advantage of "otherness" brought into

work will be able to be creative, enterprising. Saying this I have in mind creation of the culture of work and cooperation in a multicultural environment.”

Project's objective

The objective of the project is to develop and implement in practice by August 2021 by the Saint Nicolai Foundation in collaboration with an Italian partner Centro Studi Medi from Genoa and Warsaw University of an educational programme covering:

1. Twelve subjects out of the list of credited general university subjects as an elements of adjusting the system of education used in universities to the challenges of the labour market arising from contemporary threats related to the co-existence on the labour market of people of different cultures and religions and testing it on participants.²⁴

2. A summer school curriculum as a support to the system of education by providing courses to train competences required on the labour market and testing it on 67 participants.²⁵

3. Developing a new solution with respect to professional activation and life-long education. The project envisages development of a programme as a foresight of challenges on the labour market and a complement to university curricula and training offer. The project allows for supporting implementation of public policies in the area of building securing basing on cooperation with a foreign partner.²⁶

²⁴ Cf. *Application for a grant, Operational programme Knowledge Education Development (implementation project)*, POWR.04.03.00–00–0013/18.

²⁵ Cf. *Ibidem*.

²⁶ Cf. *Ibidem*.

4. Building students' awareness as regards the existence of relationships between religious identity and the legal order of the state leading to improvement of cooperation between people and in effect to building security at the local, regional and global level.²⁷

5. Developing a new solution worked out in cooperation with an Italian partner who is experiences in developing and implementing educational programmes associated with creating security based on conscious management of the migration problem.²⁸

It is possible to realise the project thanks to the fact that cooperation has been joined by the educational sector, namely Warsaw University, which develops an educational offer and supports the process of adapting university graduates to the needs of the labour market, and a non-governmental organisation (Centro Studi Medi), which have been operating for years in the areas of multiculturalism, strengthening the sense of security and making people more sensitive to migration phenomena.

The authors of the project indicated the following effects of the PRB Programme:²⁹

1. The knowledge of the multicultural environment by students who after leaving the university will enter the labour market should allow for creating a climate favourable for various groups and environments so as to ensure effective management of cultural diversity and without trouble adjust to any alien work environment.

²⁷ Cf. *Ibidem*.

²⁸ Cf. *Ibidem*.

²⁹ Cf. *Ibidem*.

2. Participation of students in the project will enrich their knowledge with respect to cultural differences thus making them more valuable employees, e.g. in international teams.

3. The confirmed need for developing personal intercultural competences with respect to specific cultural skills (knowledge of the language, norms, customs, special events in a given country) and general cultural capabilities (empathy, perceiving things from their perspective, emotional resistance, flexibility).

Conclusion

Assumptions for the project “Implementation of the educational programme ‘Politics-Religion-Security. Conflict and attempts to resolve it’ basing on international cooperation” (POWR.04.03.00–00–0013/18) carried out together by the Saint Nicolas Foundation, Warsaw University and are focused around the following concepts: individual and collective identity, security in the state (Poland), creation of jobs in a multicultural environment (religious diversity). The PKB Programme requires further promotion in the academic community and third sector organisations. The above work documents information about a unique implementation project in the academic area.

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