



## **POLISH AND AMERICAN RELIGIOUS RIGHT MOVEMENTS IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF SECULARIZATION, PRIVATIZATION AND DEPRIVATIZATION OF RELIGION THEORIES**

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The aim of my paper is to: analyze the phenomenon of Radio Maryja (Radio Virgin Mary), present arguments for classifying the movement around it as the Polish Religious Right, compare it to the American Religious Right, and examine the processes which led to the creation of both movements. The comparison of activities, agendas, rhetoric, structures, and methods used by the Polish and American Religious Right's leaders indicates that, despite denominational and historical differences, both movements share many characteristics. Therefore, it is interesting to place the analysis of the processes that led to their creation in a broader sociological perspective.

**Keywords:** American religious right, Polish religious right.

### **Introduction**

The American Religious Right movement has been important in American politics at least since the beginning of the 1980s. Surprisingly enough, in the early 1990s a somehow similar movement was created in Poland. The Polish Religious Right has not been strictly defined or researched, but it seems quite apparent that Radio Maryja (Radio Virgin Mary) along with a structure of organizations around it can be classified as a religious (or rather Catholic) right. The phenomenon of Radio Maryja itself has been discussed in Poland quite extensively, especially in relation to the controversial rhetoric used by its charismatic leader, Father Tadeusz Rydzyk. Polish politicians, journalists, and academics usually pay more attention to it during the election periods when its political involvement becomes most intense. The questions that are raised then usually concern the role of the Roman Catholic Church in Poland and the separation of Church and state. However, there has been little attention paid to the fact that the movement around Radio Maryja can actually be analyzed as a religious right movement, as it resembles religious right movements elsewhere in the world. Therefore, in the first part of this paper I will present the history and controversies around Radio Maryja, as well as the arguments which might suggest that it can be classified as the Polish Religious Right. In the second part I will briefly present the American Religious Right, and then in the third section of the text I will compare the Polish and American Religious Right movements, as it seems that despite denominational and historical differences, they share a lot of similar characteristics, especially in terms of their agendas, rhetoric, structures, and methods. Finally, in the fourth part of the article I will present selected theories of secularization, privatization, and deprivatization of religion which might be helpful in understanding the reasons for the emergence of both movements.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This article is partly based on my previous paper concerning Radio Maryja "Defending Religious and National Identities. A Comparative Study between Polish and American Religious Right Movements" published in *Religions*

## 1. Radio Maryja

Due to the turbulent history of Poland, the Roman Catholic Church has almost always been involved in politics. During the partition<sup>2</sup> of Poland it acted as a chief guardian and repository of Polish national values and opposed the oppressors. During the time of communism, it was involved in the struggle for democratic changes. Thanks to the fact that it was never allied with the communist regime, it was possible for it to assume a privileged position in the new democracy. Nevertheless, it soon turned out that Polish society was not entirely satisfied with the role that the Church wanted to play in politics. Not only citizens, but also the Church itself became divided over the question of the degree to which it was desirable for the Church to continue to be involved in politics after Poland's new democracy was created. One of the very conservative groups of Polish Catholics who supported the Church's strong political involvement, advocated constructing Polish law according to Catholic values, and postulated the need to protect the religious and national identity of Poland against the "influence of the secularized European Union" soon gathered around Father Rydzyk and his Radio Maryja. They created a number of institutions which, as it soon turned out, aimed especially at the political mobilization of conservative Catholics.

The history of Radio Maryja began in the early 1990s when Father Rydzyk, a Redemptorist, initiated informal talks concerning opening a radio station. First, he spoke to his Provincial Superior (Cyzdik 2001: 14), and to an Italian diplomat, Ivano Petrobelli. In February 1991, he convinced Petrobelli to financially contribute to the creation of a religious radio station in Poland – a station that would "serve the purpose of evangelization." In March 1991, Father Leszek Gajda, the Provincial Supervisor in Poland, supported Father Rydzyk's efforts (Lebioda 1995: 7). The idea of establishing Radio Maryja in Poland might be partly attributed to the fact that previously Father Rydzyk spent some time in Germany where he was involved with a radio station, Radio Maria International in Balderschwang (later closed by the Catholic Church on charges of propagating intolerance). It is interesting to note that Rydzyk's tenure in Germany was opposed by his superiors, but he remained abroad for five years. During this time not only did he become interested in the influence of the religious media, but also in such ideas as the political and economic "third way," nationalism, and belief in the global government of speculators. Radio Maria International certainly served as a model for his Polish Radio Maryja. However, Father Rydzyk was also fascinated by American preachers who hosted their own television programs and established their own broadcasting networks.

Soon after receiving approval from his Provincial Supervisor, Father Rydzyk started to collect money for his radio from individual donors and from organizations of Poles abroad (from Argentina, Brazil, Canada, the USA). The concession for the radio was given to the Redemptorists in 1991, and the first broadcast took place in December of that year. In the beginning, the idea of a Catholic radio also gained the support of the Polish Episcopate, as its main aim was supposed to be evangelization. The Episcopate agreed for Radio Maryja to broadcast on 117 local radio stations. In 1993, thanks to the satellite EUTELSAT II – F2, Radio Maryja broadcasts were available everywhere in Europe. In 1994, Radio Maryja was granted permission to work as a national social broadcaster (Lebioda 1995: 8). Father Rydzyk, considered a Founder of the Radio, became its Director, and Father Jan Król was nominated as the Vice-director. The station, officially owned by the Warsaw Province of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, was to be financed through donations from its audience - unlike most radio stations in Poland which are either publicly funded or dependent on advertising revenue. Being Church-operated, according to the concordat, the radio is not bound by regular accounting rules, which means it is not required to pay taxes and to disclose the exact source of its financing.

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*and Identities in Transition*, I. Borowik, M. Zawila (eds.). The topic, however, has been extended here, sociological theories have been added, and the data has been updated.

<sup>2</sup> The partitions of Poland took place in the second half of the 18th century and ended the existence of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The partitions were carried out by the Russian Empire, Kingdom of Prussia, and Habsburg Austria dividing up the Commonwealth lands among themselves.

According to Radio Maryja's authorities, evangelization was to be the main aim of the station. And indeed, many programs have served this purpose, including frequent recitals of the Rosary, the Breviary, novenas, the Angelus, the Lauds, the Chaplet of the Divine Mercy, the unction to the Black Madonna of Częstochowa, lectures and discussions on the Catechism of the Catholic Church, a daily transmission of the Mass, coverage of papal trips, and Christian music. Additionally, it soon started to offer broadcasts for children, nuns' culinary advice, or community help-exchange offers. However, the most controversial fact about the radio turned out to be the provision of multiple political programs, including national news broadcasts based on political information from the "selected press," *Rozmowy niedokończone* (*Unfinished Talks*), as well as various political commentaries. The topics of focus initially included: the new Constitution, especially in the context of organizing church-state relations in the new democracy, the anti-abortion bill, the presence of religious symbols in public sphere, and teaching religion at public schools. With time, it also included such topics as: joining the EU, foreign investment, privatization, liberalism, homosexuality, gender, feminism, in-vitro fertilization, sexual education, and even the energy security of Poland. The most controversial aspect of these programs has been a strongly biased way of presenting the news. First of all, a very specific terminology has been used in all Radio Maryja political programs, e.g. "infanticide" instead of "abortion" or "refusal to kill a baby" instead of "refusal to perform an abortion."<sup>3</sup> Second of all, the most politically oriented program (and most widely criticized program), the infamous *Rozmowy niedokończone*, as experts suggest, has been saturated with a xenophobic, nationalistic, and intolerant message. According to Krzysztof Dziomdziora, during political programs Radio Maryja presenters have concentrated only on a few political issues and invited guests ("experts") who would represent only one ideological option. The phone calls of the listeners have been monitored and there has been a deliberate delay in their transmission. All of these techniques, which aim at shaping listeners' perception of reality, as Dziomdziora claims, can be classified as means of propaganda (Dziomdziora 2008).

With time Radio Maryja started to offer more and more programs. Some of them concentrated on social issues, others included psychological comments or advice. However, most of these programs have also conveyed a highly political and ideological message. The commentators hosted on these programs would usually represent only socially conservative or ultraconservative organizations and political parties. Also, a very specific rhetoric can be heard in programs concerning psychological issues. For example, those who advocate the acceptance or tolerance towards homosexuality, transsexualism, feminism, or gender studies have been presented as those who purposely try to destroy a "Polish family" and the Polish nation in general.<sup>4</sup> Even during prayers political message can be heard: people pray, for example, for "God's help to fight liberals and their destructive influence on Poland," or for those who "want to destroy Polish families."

Therefore, although prayers and religious education have always occupied a lot of broadcasting time, Rydzyk's radio station very quickly stopped being considered as a medium whose main aim would be evangelization. Radio Maryja soon started to be seen not only as the main advocate of constructing Polish law according to Catholic values, but also as the most xenophobic, nationalistic, and intolerant medium in Poland.

As it soon turned out, the radio was not the only means through which Father Rydzyk wanted to convey his message. Between 1992 and 2010 he created a network of organizations and media concentrated around Radio Maryja, including newspapers, a TV station, and a number of local clubs of Radio Maryja listeners.

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<sup>3</sup> All these expressions were still being used during the transmissions in July 2014, mostly in connection to the case of Professor Bogdan Chazan, the director of the Holy Family Hospital in Warsaw who refused to perform an abortion on a seriously deformed fetus despite the fact that the deformation of the fetus is one of the very few circumstances in which Polish law allows for abortion. Two other situations when abortion is permitted are when the woman's life or health is endangered or when the pregnancy is a result of a criminal act. Instead of performing an abortion or directing the patient to another doctor within the permitted time (conscience clause), Chazan offered medical advice and hospital care for the mother, and perinatal hospice care for the child.

<sup>4</sup> What is interesting is that while homosexuality is defined as "sickness that should be treated," a regular psychotherapy for alcoholics has been rarely mentioned. In some of the programs, it has been advised simply to pray to the Virgin Mary if there is an alcoholic problem in the family.

Being especially appreciative of the role of modern media, Father Rydzyk put a lot of effort into establishing a TV station. Telewizja Trwam (TV I Persist) started broadcasting in 2003. It offers a variety of programs concerning political and social affairs as well transmissions of religious events and prayers. One of its most important broadcasts is *Rozmowy Niedokończone* also available on Radio Maryja. The TV officially belongs to the Lux Veritatis Foundation, which is a religious organization founded by Father Tadeusz Rydzyk and Father Jan Król in 1998.<sup>5</sup> Just like Radio Maryja, the TV station is owned by the Warsaw Province of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer. It is financed through donations, and according to the concordat it is not bound by normal accounting rules.

Among the magazines connected with Radio Maryja, there are: *W Naszej Rodzinie (In Our Family)*, a magazine which was established in 2010 but had previously been published as *Rodzina Radia Maryja (The Family of Radio Maryja)*, and the most important one, *Nasz Dziennik (Our Daily)*, a newspaper which has been published since 1998. The motto of *Nasz Dziennik* is “Veritatis splendor” (“The Splendor of Truth”). According to the newspaper’s website, *Nasz Dziennik* is an important source of information about Poland, the Church, and the world; it presents “current information and articles concerning politics, culture, economy, faith, religion, history, and the future,” which usually “cause vivid reactions and discussions.”<sup>6</sup> Some of the most known authors and contributors to the newspaper are: Dr Stanisław Krajski, Prof. Jerzy Robert Nowak, and Prof. Andrzej Nowak, all known for their controversial rhetoric as well as for their ultraconservative views.

Apart from the media, a certain structure of organizations has been created in order to integrate the audience of Father Rydzyk’s media. For example, Rodzina Radia Maryja (The Family of Radio Maryja) and Koła Przyjaciół Radia Maryja (Circles of Friends of Radio Maryja) are local structures of listeners. Their aim is “to help people find God and to promote patriotism and national values”; their motto is: “God-Honor-Fatherland.”<sup>7</sup> Their members gather for discussions and prayers. There are also organizations that gather young people, such as Młodzieżowe Koła Przyjaciół Radia Maryja (Radio Maryja Youth Groups) and Podwórkowe Kółka Różańcowe (Rosary Clubs for Children). Radio Maryja Youth Groups are defined by Radio Maryja as “spontaneously created groups of young listeners who are connected by their love of God, the Holy Mother, and the Fatherland as well as by their willingness to act for the New Evangelization through the cooperation with Radio Maryja.” As “witnesses of Christ” they organize prayers and discussion clubs, and are supposed to be active in social media, promoting Catholic literature.<sup>8</sup> The first Rosary Club for Children was established in 1997 by Magdalena “Madzia” Buczek, a 9-year-old, handicapped girl. The motto of the Rosary Clubs movement is: “No day without a prayer, no week without a Holy Eucharist, no month without a confession.” The aim of the clubs is to remind people about the Marian apparition in Fatima and “Mary’s request to pray with a Rosary.”<sup>9</sup> Their prayers which are transmitted on Radio Maryja, however, often include a strictly defined and frequently a political intention. In order to integrate these groups of Rydzyk’s followers, there are pilgrimages to the image of the Black Madonna in Częstochowa organized for them each year. All of these groups (whose members regularly connect religious language with a national rhetoric) also serve purposes of grass root activism.

Additionally, Father Rydzyk has paid attention to the necessity of educating future young leaders of his movement. Not only has he encouraged his listeners to become active on the internet, which had been presented earlier as having a destructive influence on young people, but also established a private secondary school and high school<sup>10</sup> through the initiative of another foundation, Nasza Przyszłość (Our Future). The

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<sup>5</sup> More about the Foundation at: <http://www.luxveritatis.pl/>

<sup>6</sup> More about it at: <http://www.naszdziennik.pl/o-nas-pl>

<sup>7</sup> Olsztyn Circle program at: <http://www.saletyni.olsztyn.pl/wspolnoty/kolo/kolo.html>

<sup>8</sup> More about it at: <http://www.radiomaryja.pl/mlodzi/mlodziejowe-kola-przyjaciol-radia-maryja/>

<sup>9</sup> More about it at: [http://www.pkrd.vel.pl/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=101&Itemid=92](http://www.pkrd.vel.pl/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=101&Itemid=92)

<sup>10</sup> In Polish education system: ‘gimnazjum’ and ‘liceum.’

schools were opened in Szczecinek in 1998.<sup>11</sup> Apart from the two schools, Father Rydzyk also decided to establish a private college. Wyższa Szkoła Kultury Społecznej i Medialnej (The College of Social and Media Culture) was opened in Toruń in 2001. Just like Telewizja Trwam, it belongs to the Lux Veritatis Foundation. Father Rydzyk served there in the function of provost until 2006. He had to resign due to the introduction of a new law that required the provost of any higher education unit to be at least a Ph.D. Students of this college can choose from programs such as: journalism and social communication, culture studies, political science, computer studies, international relations, and diplomacy. Most of the programs are at the B.A. level, some are at the M.A. level, and some are just additional postgraduate non-degree courses (e.g. a course on how to apply for the EU funds). According to the college's website, "the school allows its students for a holistic personal development. Thanks to skillful connection of the Catholic faith (fides), strengthening the mind (ratio), it gives meaning to searching and finding truth (including the Absolute Truth), and aiming at goodness (also the Ultimate Goodness)" (author's translation).<sup>12</sup>

After presenting the whole consortium of Radio Maryja it becomes obvious that Father Rydzyk and his followers have quite a lot of resources that can be used in order to promote their vision of contemporary Poland. Most importantly, they have young leaders educated in the spirit of Radio Maryja, whose vision of Poland and Polishness is very specific.

It is important to remember that Radio Maryja was founded during the period of political transformation when the Roman Catholic Church in Poland was forced to search for its place in a democratic and pluralistic society. When it turned out that there was quite strong social opposition against giving the Church a dominant role in the new reality and against its direct political involvement, Father Rydzyk easily identified people responsible for this kind of attitude. According to him, they were all post-communists and "strangers" who did not want the Church in public because they were trying to gain political and financial dominance in Poland after 1989 for themselves, and at the expense of real Poles (Catholics) "whom the Church was trying to protect." He gained the support of the poorest and least educated people who suffered most from the transformation, and soon convinced them that the same people who had made their lives miserable during communism were the ones responsible for propagating liberal views concerning such issues as morality, abortion, and homosexuality. When liberal media in Poland pointed out that people who have listened to Radio Maryja were not well-educated, and therefore prone to manipulation and eager to accept rhetoric that offers a simplified version of the world, the supporters of Father Rydzyk's media quickly responded. Dariusz Zalewski accused the intelligentsia of contempt and even disgust for the poor. He wrote:

"But now we need to ask the question of the spiritual and intellectual roots of this intelligentsia? Let us remind that Polish elites were extinguished by the fascist and communist executioners. In their place, there was a pseudo-elite created, the one of Marxist or socio-liberal roots with an aversion to Catholicism. We have a paradox here. People with lower education who had to take part in the process of mind-contamination created by the communist education system were under its influence for a much shorter period of time, therefore they are much less prone to propaganda and that is why they accept the views of Radio Maryja" (Zalewski 41) (author's translation).

This opinion might explain why Father Rydzyk wanted to create his own college. He also expressed his aversion to the intelligentsia, including the Catholic intellectual circles around *Tygodnik Powszechny*<sup>13</sup> or

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<sup>11</sup> Nasza Przyszłość Foundation, created in 1995, was also responsible for the publishing of *Rodzina Radia Maryja*, and still publishes *W Naszej Rodzinie* and *Kalendarz Rodziny Radia Maryja*.

<sup>12</sup> It is worth mentioning that students of journalism also take part in the traineeship program at Radio Maryja. More at: <http://www.wksim.edu.pl/index.php?pg=static&id=4>

<sup>13</sup> *Tygodnik Powszechny* is a Polish Roman Catholic weekly magazine, which focuses on social and cultural issues. It was established in 1945 by Cardinal Adam Stefan Sapieha. Among its editors, there were: Jerzy Turowicz and Adam Boniecki. It has tried to reconcile the values of liberalism with the principles of faith and has presented an open ecumenical view of Polish Catholicism. Its goal was a dialog, therefore people with non-Catholic views have been often invited to take part in printed debates.

*Więź*.<sup>14</sup> He said he had noticed that those circles were created by the people who “were actually afraid of the Church.” This intelligentsia, according to him, wanted to correct not only the Church but also Christ Himself. In Rydzyk’s view, they became influenced by the West and its intellectual currents. As a consequence, he stressed, they neglected the cult of the Virgin Mary, the duty of confession, and other dogma elements. For him, it is unacceptable. He said, “Either you are totally and wholly with Christ or you are against Him” (Rydzyk qtd. in Cydzik 2001: 18). However, he considered most of the Church in Poland still uncontaminated by Western ideas and therefore truly Catholic. In one interview, he claimed that he had prayed to God that He would not let the Church in Poland go the way of the West. The West and especially Western secularism were identified by Rydzyk as anti-Polish and anti-Catholic forces.

It is very important to stress that Catholicism according to Father Rydzyk and his followers is practically identical with Polishness. Father Rydzyk’s media have been very active in convincing people not only that being Polish means being a Catholic but also that the well-being of the Catholic Church is identical with the well-being of Poland (Gendźwiłł and Stasik 2008: 37). Father Rydzyk has also frequently suggested that listening to Radio Maryja is the only true declaration of faith and of national belonging (33). I think that the best way to present the Radio Maryja circle’s views concerning the relationship between being Catholic and being Polish is a fragment from the conversation between Stanisław Krajski and Father Rydzyk:

“Stanisław Krajski: If a Pole is an atheist, his atheism must be a result of some personal tragedy. He must have lost his faith because no Pole is born to be an atheist. If he loves Poland, he should also love the Virgin Mary, or at least protect Her from assaults because she is the Queen of Poland. What should we require from an atheist who claims to be Polish?

Father Rydzyk: This is a problem of belief. Perhaps this man has not yet found Her (Virgin Mary). (...) The fact that the Virgin Mary is the Queen of Poland is a great grace, a great chance for Poland and for the world. I meet different theology specialists (...). They say that Poland will save the world because Poles love the Virgin Mary like no other nation. The Virgin Mary is the way to save both the Church and the world. I think she is our Queen and we are her knights (...)

Stanisław Krajski: Father, you mentioned that only under the symbol of the cross Poland can be Poland and a Pole can be a Pole and that Poland is the kingdom of the Virgin Mary. How should we understand that?

Father Rydzyk: The Lord planned this: from the very beginning through entire Polish history, our symbol is Christ’s cross, next to it there is the Virgin Mary. This relation is in our blood. Christian culture, the Word of God, cross – these are symbols that have the meaning thanks to which we live. They create our mentality (...). Only with the cross we can be ourselves” (Krajski 2002: 62) (author’s translation).

For Krajski, who is one of the best-known contributors to *Nasz Dziennik*, the arguments of Father Rydzyk were not new. In his book published in 1998 he wrote about “different faces of the Church” and clearly stated that the only true Church is the one represented by the followers of Radio Maryja. He enlisted several “faces of Catholicism,” including: “frigid Church,” “Catholic Charismatic Renewal Church,” “Catho-leftist Church,” “Catholicism of the New Era,” “European Church,” and “traditional Church” – the last one being presented as the church of the true Catholics and of the true Poles. The first kind of Catholicism listed by Krajski is, according to him, very shallow; it is a “Sunday Catholicism” whose followers strictly divide religious and temporal spheres of life. The second type is, in Krajski’s view, too Protestant, too emotional, too much concentrated on a personal interpretation of the Bible, and neglecting the tradition of the Church. “Catho-left,” according to him, is more of a “socially connected group of people who are often bound by political goals.” Earlier members of this group were members of KIK (Club of Catholic Intellectuals<sup>15</sup>), which as Krajski

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<sup>14</sup> *Więź* is a Catholic magazine which has been published since 1958 (closed between December 1981 and March 1982). It was established by lay Catholic activists whose aim was to intellectually revitalize Polish Catholicism according to Vatican II. Its editors were members of the democratic opposition and later Solidarity.

<sup>15</sup> Polish organization grouping Catholic intellectuals. KIK was founded after Gomułka’s Thaw in 1956, evolving into a mild Catholic-center opposition group in communist Poland.

claims, was “contaminated by communism.” He thinks that they tried to accommodate communism to Catholicism, and nowadays they are still connected to the political left as well as to *Tygodnik Powszechny* and *Gazeta Wyborcza*,<sup>16</sup> which, therefore, cannot be trusted. According to Krajski, for the members of this group Catholicism is just a private matter. On the other hand, he criticizes their efforts to make the Church involved in charity and social justice matters, and presents them as a lobby within the Church that wants to liberalize and secularize the Church. “Catholicism of the New Era,” according to Krajski, is coming from Europe. It is “European and intellectual”; “it is moderate, tolerant, understanding, open, worldly, insecure, and searching for the dialog with pagans.” “In fact, it is bored and doubting.” “It wants to erase words like truth, goodness, and love and put ‘tolerance’ instead” while “there should be no tolerance for moderation and evil in all its shapes.” As Krajski claims, this kind of Catholicism takes too much from philosophy and other religions, and, for example, instead of promoting “true religious music” it promotes guitars and drums used by people from Taize. The “European Church,” on the other hand, is according to Krajski, torn between “Catholicism of the New Era” and the “traditional Catholicism.” It is “too politically-correct and wrongly tries to be more for the people than for Christ.” This Church, as Krajski stresses, “is trying to destroy Radio Maryja because the Radio is not afraid of standing for the Truth even if the Truth is controversial.” Therefore, Radio Maryja and the “traditional Church” are the “only hope for the true Church.” The “traditional Church” is the “Church of Christ, the King of the world, and of the Virgin Mary, the Queen of Poland. This Church stands for Truth and Goodness, regardless of what pagans think.” This is the Church that “loves and fights.” “It loves God, people, truth, and goodness but it fights against Satan, evil, sin, falsehood, and lies. It is the truly Polish Church, saturated with Polishness.” “It is the Church that has always been with Poland and for Poland, which teaches to be faithful both to Christ and to Poland with all its Christian tradition. This is the Church for which Polish martyrs have died. This is the Church represented by Radio Maryja” (Krajski 1998: 97-110) (author’s translations).

This Polish-Catholic identity and heritage protected by Radio Maryja, as both Rydzyk and Krajski claim, has been endangered by the liberal influences from the West. Thus, during the time when Polish access to the European Union was being discussed and negotiated, it was obvious to them that they should fight against joining the European structures. Therefore, the debate about becoming a part of the EU was one of the major issues discussed on Radio Maryja and in *Nasz Dziennik* at that time. When Father Rydzyk talked about the EU, he compared its “internationalism” to the “internationalism” propagated by the USSR. He criticized everybody who favored the idea of joining the EU, especially priests “who forgot their roots.” He blamed the atmosphere of “communist internationalism” in which they grew up for destroying their way of thinking (54). He also underlined at many occasions that Polish people should remember that in Brussels Europe integrates “in the liberal and Mason spirit, not in the Christian spirit.” And according to him, “liberal ideology is worse than communism, Nazism and totalitarian system, while every liberal is a fool.”<sup>17</sup> Professor Ireneusz Krzemiński stresses that it is important to remember that apart from the fact that the religiosity of Radio Maryja listeners is integrally connected with their national feelings, their national identity is defined in the historical context – in opposition to Jews and Germans (Krzemiński 2009: 127). Therefore, the EU with a strong presence of the Germans was unacceptable.

Poland joined the EU in 2004 despite the Radio Maryja campaign. Father Rydzyk had to accept this fact. Nevertheless, the liberal influences from the West, and especially from the EU, are still being strongly criticized in all the media associated with the Redemptorists. The EU laws have been most harshly criticized in the context of the debate on the legality of abortion (including the Alicja Tysiąc case<sup>18</sup>). Other EU laws

<sup>16</sup> *Gazeta Wyborcza* is a newspaper which covers political, international and general news from a liberal perspective. It began publication on 8 May 1989. The paper was to serve as the voice of Solidarity during the run-up to semi-free elections to be held June 4, 1989 (hence its title). As such, it was the first legal newspaper published outside the communist government’s control. The paper’s editor-in-chief, since its founding, has been Adam Michnik.

<sup>17</sup> Extracts from speeches by Father Rydzyk at: <http://rm.radiomaryja.pl.eu.org/wypow.htm>

<sup>18</sup> The woman who was awarded 25 000 euro damages by the European Court of Human Rights in 2007 because she had been refused an abortion in Poland despite the fact that her health (eyesight) was endangered.

criticized on Radio Maryja are not only those concerning moral issues such as gay rights (including gay marriage), euthanasia, or in-vitro fertilization, but also those that regulate foreign investment in Poland or certain agricultural standards. This criticism, however, did not stop Father Rydzyk from applying for, accepting, and using EU funds for some of his own initiatives.

Apart from the liberal West and the Germans, the group seen by Radio Maryja listeners as enemies who threaten Polish-Catholic identity are the Jews. Anti-Semitism has been the most vigorously criticized aspect of Rydzyk's media rhetoric. It has been condemned by the mainstream media, academia, and by numerous Polish intellectuals. In response to this criticism, Father Rydzyk has officially declared that the presenters are not responsible for the views expressed by the listeners. According to Krzeminski's study, in 2007 the presenters did not encourage such opinions anymore. However even in July 2014 it did not seem that they were eager to stop their listeners from expressing anti-Semitic comments either. The most common opinion presented in Father Rydzyk's media is that the Jews "keep the most important mainstream media in Poland in their hands," therefore they should be called "Polish-language-media" not "Polish media." According to Radio Maryja, this is the reason why the general message of the media in Poland is atheistic and liberal. The conclusion that usually follows such statements is that Radio Maryja is the only truly Polish medium in Poland. Listeners of Radio Maryja also often accuse "greedy Jews and Masons" of stealing "Polish money." According to them, Jews cannot be trusted because they betrayed Poland several times in history: during the short period of independence after the First World War when they "were Bolshevik spies," then during the Second World War when they were "on the side of Russians" who invaded Poland, and finally during the early stages of communism when "most of them" joined the Communist Party. Sometimes listeners of Radio Maryja go as far as justifying or negating the Holocaust. On the other hand, they complain that Jews were not grateful enough to the Polish families who hid them during the time of the Holocaust (Maszkowski 2006).

Among other groups considered enemies of the "true Catholic Poles" there are: Masons, communists, atheists, homosexuals, feminists, and "abortionists." According to Father Rydzyk's media, these are the people who denied the real Christian/Catholic heritage of their country and, therefore, started to threaten the true Polish national and religious identity. Additionally, as Radio Maryja followers claim, homosexuals, feminists, and "abortionists" are responsible for the moral degradation of society and therefore should be ostracized. Father Rydzyk suggested, for example, that "abortionists" should have their heads shaved just like those who collaborated with the Nazis during the Second World War.

There is, of course, one more external enemy – Russia. The country responsible for imposing communism in Poland has always been considered a threat but a specific kind of hysteria took place in Father Rydzyk's media after the 2010 Polish Air Force Tu-154 crash. It crashed on April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2010 near the city of Smolensk, Russia, killing all 96 people on board. These included president Lech Kaczyński and his wife Maria, former president Ryszard Kaczorowski, the chief of the Polish General Staff and other senior Polish military officers, Polish government officials, 18 members of the Polish parliament, senior members of the clergy, and relatives of victims of the Katyń massacre. The media coined the crash as "Katyń catastrophe" and conspiracy theories quickly developed. The "Katyń catastrophe" and "Russian plot" have been discussed on Radio Maryja and described in *Nasz Dziennik* ever since.<sup>19</sup> Most Radio Maryja commentators have suggested that it was an assassination conducted by the Russians on Polish elites, although Krajski was more eager to blame the Masons.<sup>20</sup> Apart from this topic, Russia has also been present in the discussions concerning the energy security of Poland. Radio Maryja has been very active in advocating making Poland independent of Russian gas supplies.

It becomes clear that Father Rydzyk's media have been presenting many groups as enemies of Poland and its heritage. Polish scholars have noticed the presence of the so-called "besieged fortress syndrome" in the rhetoric of Radio Maryja. Adam Gendźwiłł and Agata Stasik see Radio Maryja and its listeners as a social movement mobilized by both the mission and the threat of an enemy (Gendźwiłł and Stasik 2008: 29-46).

<sup>19</sup> More at: <http://www.radiomaryja.pl/tag/katastrofa-smolenska/>

<sup>20</sup> More at: [http://www.se.pl/wydarzenia/kraj/ekspert-radia-maryja-o-katastrofie-smolenskiej-wina-masonow\\_275917.html](http://www.se.pl/wydarzenia/kraj/ekspert-radia-maryja-o-katastrofie-smolenskiej-wina-masonow_275917.html)



According to these authors, what unites the listeners of Radio Maryja is not only listening to the same radio station. They also share a common worldview and organize common actions. Therefore, it is justified to talk about a specific social group or social movement that has been created by both the presenters and the listeners engaged in these actions. The listeners share the worldview, but the Radio allows them to create representations of reality through the process of communication, providing a specific filter. The Radio also mobilizes to take actions according to the scheme: information-formation-organization-action (31). The process of mobilization requires a common mission. In case of the Radio Maryja movement, the mission is to proselytize a very specific kind of Catholicism – the one represented only by Radio Maryja. However, mobilization is usually more effective if there are “besieged fortress” motifs. The construction of a common enemy image creates a tension necessary in order to take action. Feeling threatened by evil works much more effectively than only a call to proselytize. Therefore, the images of enemies presented by Father Rydzyk’s media are vivid.

Ewa Bobrowska, who analyzed the discourse of the texts published in *Nasz Dziennik*, also came to the conclusion that they were filled with images of an enemy. More importantly, this enemy was mythical and concealed. According to her, the image of a concealed enemy was chosen because this kind of an enemy can be presented as even more dangerous – because it might be hidden everywhere (Bobrowska 2008: 47). Also characteristic for the *Nasz Dziennik* discourse was to create a worldview based on the conviction that social order is fully dependent on the moral order, and that imposing one system of values in the society would solve all the problems. This would certainly require rejecting pluralism. It is obvious that reality is much more complicated than Radio Maryja suggests. However, if a listener does not know the categories that would help explain the complications of the world, he/she becomes more likely to accept the mythical enemy. According to Bobrowska, it is very dangerous because such a strategy makes listeners even more helpless (55).

Having considered so many aspects of Radio Maryja’s activity, it is interesting to present attempts made by various scholars to classify it. Most of those who are academically interested in Radio Maryja would agree with Gendźwiłł and Stasik that it has created a social movement. Stanisław Burdziej also tries to classify it as a part of civil society where certain social capital is being used. However, according to him, it is only partly true (Burdziej 2008: 20-29). There are certain problems with such a classification because the leaders of Radio Maryja have been involved in politics directly, helping to create government coalitions, and promoting certain politicians over others (24). Olga Wysocka additionally sees Radio Maryja as a populist movement. She stresses that populism as such needs the division “we” (the people) and “they” (the elites). Every populist manipulates the fears of the people (Wysocka 2008: 64). Therefore, the author points out that it would be a simplification to say that Radio Maryja is being used by the populist politicians. It has been very political from the beginning, and it has been very populist from the beginning. Therefore, it has chosen to ally with populist parties itself (68).

Another way of classifying Radio Maryja is to consider it as a fundamentalist movement. According to some scholars, such classification would be reasonable, due to the movement’s negative attitude towards “the reconciliation with the modern world” as well as to the separation of Church and state – both ideas accepted by the Second Vatican Council. However, a possibility of such classification strongly depends on the definition of fundamentalism that we decide to accept. Most of the definitions include several characteristics of fundamentalism. However, some scholars would emphasize certain aspects, while some would emphasize others. The elements present in most of the definitions include: a militant reaction against modernism (e.g. Motak 2002), a tendency to claim the unerring nature of a sacred text (Pace & Stefani 2002, Bruce 2000), and political involvement (Tibi 1997). For Steve Bruce, the crucial characteristic of fundamentalists is their claim that they want to bring back the old tradition when in fact they simply reshape it. He also underlines that fundamentalists usually search for support within marginalized groups and that in spite of their hate for modernity they do not refuse to use modern technology (Bruce 2000). The leaders and followers of Radio Maryja certainly represent some of these characteristics and, therefore, some scholars would call them fundamentalists.<sup>21</sup> However, the movement around Rydzyk’s media does not fulfill all of the conditions

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<sup>21</sup> E.g., D. Motak. See: Motak 2002, p. 141; and Motak 2002 (2).

necessary for other scholars to classify it as a fundamentalist movement. Therefore, many researchers would not mention it when talking about fundamentalist movements within Roman Catholic Church, defining as such only the Society of St. Pius X and sometimes Opus Dei. One of the reasons for not classifying Rydzyk's movement as fundamentalist is the fact that Radio Maryja never officially declared itself against the decision of the Second Vatican Council. It also never officially questioned the Pope's authority to interpret the Bible and to guard orthodoxy. Jose Casanova is reluctant to classify Radio Maryja as a fundamentalist movement. He stresses that there is a conflict between a more traditional and a more liberal option within all religions, which does not necessarily lead to the creation of fundamentalist movements. He would not even agree to define Opus Dei as a fundamentalist movement – for him it is connected with integrism, while Lefebvre, the founder of the Society of St. Pius X, is, in fact, a heretic (Casanova 2008: 75). Gendźwiłł and Stasik additionally stress that in certain aspects Radio Maryja is actually very much in accordance with the Second Vatican Council, mainly in terms of the role assigned to the laity.

Another way of looking at Radio Maryja is simply through the perspective of certain processes happening within the Church. It is important to remember that in Poland some of these processes remained hidden during the time of communism. However, the process of differentiation within the Roman Catholic Church in Poland was in fact quietly taking place.

“During the communist period the internal conflicts within the Church, especially those concerning the interpretation of the reforms of the Second Vatican Council were muted. The Church had to be strong against alien influences from outside so authorities did not want to create divisions for the government to exploit” (Hornsby-Smith, 1997: 136).

As Casanova stresses, the Vatican II proclamation on freedom of religion was received in Poland as a prop in the church's struggle against the atheist regime. “On the other hand, being embattled as ever, Polish Catholicism could not afford sudden changes” (Casanova 1994: 103). Therefore, it maintained the rigidity and conservatism which had helped to preserve Polish identity during the partitions. Cardinal Wyszyński, known for his conservatism, was also a defender of “social Catholicism” and the “church of the masses” rooted in traditionalist paternalism that would keep ordinary people in the fold (103). Next to the “church of the masses” there were also Catholic intellectual circles around *Tygodnik Powszechny* or *Więź* - more eager to accept the changes. The division between those two approaches to Catholicism became visible only after 1989. Hence, the creation of Radio Maryja should not be seen as a sudden outburst of fundamentalism. It was created during a time when the Catholic Church in Poland was searching for its place in a new democratic and pluralistic society. Such transitional periods usually reveal divisions. Radio Maryja simply gathered the Catholics whose religiosity was “traditionalist, narrow-minded and very strongly connected to the idea of national identity”. Those people felt threatened by modernity and the outside world. It was easy to predict that in new circumstances the two different forms of identity would develop in two different directions (Grabowska 2008: 11). It was also easy to predict that they would develop different attitudes toward the model of the Church's political involvement.

Mirosława Grabowska has offered one more perspective through which Radio Maryja can be analyzed. She has suggested that Radio Maryja can be compared with the American Religious Right movement - which is neither a party, nor a church, nor a single social organization (15). According to her, it is an internally diversified movement or movements with the ambition to represent conservative Christians in the public and political sphere (15). Being a researcher of the American Religious Right, I agree with her suggestion. However, knowing the history of evangelical involvement in public affairs (including the methods of Billy Graham who cannot be classified as the Religious Right leader) I would argue to specify the criteria according to which a movement can be classified as a Religious Right. Apart from the fact that it is an internally diversified movement with the ambition to represent conservative Christians in the public and political sphere, the main idea behind it is to create an organization or a network of organizations, whose leaders, in order to promote a religious worldview of a certain religious group, become directly involved in politics, ally with conservative right-wing political parties, and take an active role in the process of political mobilization of conservative voters. What is more, they use secular methods typical of the political game, instead of restraining themselves to evangelization in churches only.

All these criteria have been met by Radio Maryja. The Radio and the network of organizations around it have been trying to mobilize Catholics in support of socially conservative parties, such as The League of Polish Families or Law and Justice since the 1990s. They have been using specific secular as well as religious methods. The parties supported by the Polish Religious Right movement are always those that declare willingness to create Polish law according to Catholic values.

In order to illustrate how similarly both Religious Right movements have been operating I will present a short history of the American Religious Right movement, list its methods, and give examples of its rhetoric.

## 2. American Religious Right Movement

The American Religious Right is a well-researched phenomenon which here serves as a model for the Polish Religious Right. The creation of the American Religious Right is related to the so-called “political awakening of evangelicals.”<sup>22</sup> “Of all the shifts and surprises in contemporary political life, perhaps none was so wholly unexpected as the political resurgence of evangelical Protestantism in the late 1970s” (Wald and Calhoun-Brown 2011: 202). Although according to many researchers fascinated with modernization and secularization theories, traditional religion was a “spent force” in American politics, by the end of the 1970s, an evangelical political awakening led to the creation of the so-called New Christian Right, which was later labeled as the Christian Right or the Religious Right.

The New Christian Right was created when “secular” conservative activists from the Republican Party (including Paul Weyrich) offered assistance to the emerging leaders of the Christian conservative movement (209). The basis for the coalition with the Republican Party was an opposition to the “big government,” which was supposed to be a threat not only to economic free-market values but also to traditional religious values. The New Right Republicans focused mainly on the cooperation with Jerry Falwell, a televangelist and the minister of the nation’s largest independent Baptist church in Lynchburg, Virginia. He became the leader of the most prominent Religious Right organization in the 1980s, the Moral Majority, established in 1979. Among other early Christian Right groups, there were also: the Religious Roundtable, Christian Voice, and National Christian Action Coalition.

Since the 1980s Christian Right groups have been trying to convince politicians, as well as the general public, to apply the teachings of conservative Christianity to politics and public policy. All the organizations shared a common agenda. They strongly protested against the Supreme Court’s tendency to interpret the First Amendment in terms of “the wall of separation between church and state,” and blamed “secular humanists” for “destroying the Christian heritage of the USA” (208). They supported voluntary prayer and Bible reading in public schools, as well as noninterference by the authorities with Christian schools.<sup>23</sup> They advocated the responsibility of the government to encourage the “traditional family unit,” and strongly opposed abortion,

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<sup>22</sup>The term “evangelicalism” is very broad. Generally, it is an interdenominational revivalist movement within Protestantism, which has its roots in German pietism and Wesleyan Methodism. It became popular in America through the 18th and 19th-century Great Awakenings. Evangelicals emphasize the experience of an intense personal conversion (new-birth) received thanks to faith and God’s grace, literal understanding of the Bible, and missionary work. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in response to new scientific discoveries including Darwin’s theory, the most conservative evangelicals created the American Protestant fundamentalist movement, stressing biblical inerrancy and opposition to modernism. They modified the character of evangelicalism by accepting dispensationalism and a militant approach, and later ‘separation’ from the secular world matters. Jerry Falwell, the founder of the Moral Majority, was a neo-fundamentalist (a fundamentalist who accepted involvement in matters of the secular world). Currently, however, the terms “evangelical” and “fundamentalist” are often used interchangeably. The differences between Christian Fundamentalists, Evangelicals, Neo-evangelicals, and Neo-fundamentalists are explained by G. Marsden in several of his books and articles, e.g. [in:] Marsden G. (1991) “Fundamentalism and American Evangelicalism”, in Dayton D.W., Johnston R. K. (ed.), *The Variety of American Evangelicalism*, Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press.

<sup>23</sup> Some of the fundamentalist schools and universities still practiced racial segregation at that time.

feminism, and homosexuality. They also declared that teaching evolution and sexual education in schools as well as promoting “immoral” behavior on TV were some of the worst social evils (210).

The Religious Right grew as a reaction to the progressive culture of the 1960s and a fear of social disintegration. Jerry Falwell and his followers considered the changes of the 1960s (including women’s emancipation, sexual education and the changes in interpretation of the First Amendment) as results of the destructive influence of “secular humanism.” “Secular humanists,” according to the Religious Right leaders, were responsible for a number of political decisions, such as: decisions from 1962-63 banning school prayers, the *Roe v. Wade* decision which liberalized abortion law on grounds of the “right to privacy,” the Equal Rights Amendment. Apart from the fact that Religious Right leaders wanted to mobilize conservative evangelicals around the “pro-family” agenda, the movement was also strongly anti-communist and identified communism with the forces of the Antichrist (Wald 2003: 210). Moreover, the followers of Jerry Falwell strongly favored the Protestant concept of individualism which was, according to them, endangered by social activities of the government. Social help and high taxes were considered as a socialist-communist threat to individualism. Social liberalism was associated with the Democratic Party, therefore evangelical conservatives decided to join forces with the Republican Party, which at that time needed a new voter base. The most important issue for the Religious Right movement in the 1980s was to mobilize conservative Christians to register and vote for Ronald Reagan in the presidential elections.<sup>24</sup>

Although the Moral Majority was the most influential organization within the movement, its existence turned out to be quite short. In 1989, due to tensions between Falwell and Reagan (e.g. over the issue of nominating Sandra Day O’Connor to be the Supreme Court Justice), it ceased to exist. But the end of the Moral Majority did not mean the end of the Religious Right. Falwell’s organization was soon replaced by the Christian Coalition. Its leader, Pat Robertson, was also a televangelist and a former presidential candidate. He employed a young operational director, Ralph Reed, who decided to broaden the social base of the Religious Right movement. He was convinced that the Religious Right would never be strong enough without an alliance with religious conservatives from such religions as Catholicism and Judaism, which traditionally were strongly rejected by Protestant fundamentalists. Therefore, he decided to use the term “Judeo-Christian heritage” instead of “Christian heritage.”<sup>25</sup> Nevertheless, not all evangelical conservatives accepted this rhetoric. Their message was still conveying the idea of restoring “the Evangelical quasi-establishment,” which according to Watson (1999) is “the voluntaristic version of the American theocratic ideal” (Watson 1999: 110).

In the speeches of the Religious Right leaders, the Puritan covenant with God was often mentioned and Americans were presented as a chosen nation. In 1990, for example, Robertson said:

“The power, wealth, and freedom enjoyed by Americans were neither accidental nor a result of intrinsic merit. It happened because the men and women who founded this land made a solemn covenant that they would be the people of God and that this would be a Christian nation” (as cited in Watson 1999:97).

In many of his speeches, Pat Robertson reminded his listeners that America should be a “Christian example to the world.” But, according to him, America’s Christian heritage had been taken away from her (93) by liberals and secular humanists who did not understand that “Jesus Christ is the true Sovereign of the US” (98). If it had not happened, God would still bless America. As Pat Robertson explained in *Christian American* editorial, the forces of liberalism were based on ideas contrary to the truly American values. That is why in his book *The Turning Tide* he encouraged the “true Americans” to fight against these forces:

“But let us not stop short until there is a complete restoration of the time-honored traditions of this nation, the complete fall of liberalism, and God’s blessings are once again upon the land” (95).

He reassured his followers that:

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<sup>24</sup> Later they supported Republicans in Congressional and presidential elections. Their votes were very important in 2000 and 2004 when G.W. Bush Jr. was elected president.

<sup>25</sup> It is also thanks to Ralph Reed that the term “Religious Right” started to be used instead of the term “Christian right.”

“We [the Religious Right] are in [politics] until we see America brought back to its founding principles. Back to Bible, back to the Constitution, back to the greatness that it knew through faith in God, through individual self-reliance, through moral restraint” (95).

In 2001, Jerry Falwell enumerated all the liberal forces which had been destroying America. During one of the broadcasts of *The 700 Club*, he suggested that they were actually responsible for the September 11, 2001 attacks. He said:

“I really believe that the pagans, and the abortionists, and the feminists, and the gays and the lesbians who are actively trying to make that an alternative lifestyle, the ACLU, People for the American Way, all of them who have tried to secularize America. I point the finger in their face and say ‘you helped this happen.’”<sup>26</sup>

According to Robertson, there is one more force that endangers America. It is a worldwide Jewish conspiracy. He propagated this theory in his book, *The New World Order* (1991). And although Ralph Reed tried hard to use rhetoric that would not discourage conservative Jews from supporting the Religious Right, Robertson never gave up anti-Semitic views and comments.

It is important to notice that sometimes the anti-Semitic remarks made by American Religious Right leaders also result from Christian Zionism, common among Protestant fundamentalists. It is a belief that the return of the Jews to the Holy Land, and the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, is in accordance with Biblical Prophecy. However, despite unconditional support for the State of Israel, Christian Zionism does not entail sympathy for the Jews as a nation or for Judaism as a religion.<sup>27</sup> It is important to understand that for the Prophecy to be fulfilled and for the Antichrist to be defeated, a significant number of Jews must convert, accepting Jesus as their Messiah. Some of the fundamentalists, e.g. Jerry Falwell, also believe that the Antichrist himself might be Jewish.

In order to effectively propagate all their views, the American Religious Right leaders created a wide range of institutions and media. The use of modern media turned out to be one of the most important aspects of the Religious Right’s activities. Falwell had previous experience in broadcasting his sermons. He started a radio program called “Old-Time Gospel Hour” in 1956. Six months later the program began appearing on a local television network; eventually it went into national and even international syndication and claimed more than 50 million regular viewers. By the time the Moral Majority was created, TV was Falwell’s main tool for sending his message. Pat Robertson has also concentrated on televangelism. Since 1961 he has been the owner of the television network called Christian Broadcasting Network. He hosts its longest-running program *The 700 Club*. Additionally, Religious Right organizations publish a wide range of periodicals. In the 1990s the Christian Coalition itself used to publish three magazines: *Religious Rights Watch*, *Congressional Scorecard*, and *Christian America*. Evangelical conservatives also quickly learned how to use the internet and now widely publish on internet websites.

Apart from the media, American Religious Right leaders found it crucial to establish schools and universities in which young religiously conservative leaders could learn how to successfully act on the political scene. In 1971 Falwell founded Lynchburg Bible College, later Liberty University, which is a fundamentalist Christian university. Pat Robertson also founded a school: Regent University, an interdenominational private university which was opened in 1978. Additionally, Tim LaHaye established The Institute for Creation Research (ICR) in Dallas that specializes in education, research, and media promotion of “creation science” and Biblical creationism.

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<sup>26</sup> Beliefnet, *You Helped This Happen. Partial transcript of comments from the Thursday, September 13, 2001 edition of the ‘700 Club,’* at: <http://www.beliefnet.com/Faiths/Christianity/2001/09/You-Helped-This-Happen.aspx> [2008].

<sup>27</sup> For example, one of the leading Christian Zionists, Hal Lindsey, several times implied that “slaughter of Jews who do not accept Christ during the last days will be much more than Holocaust.” More in: De Mar G., *When All Else Fails, Use the “A” Word – Anti-Semitism!*, at: <http://www.americanvision.org/articlearchive/05-31-05.asp> [2008]. Also, Pat Robertson made comments based on his Christian Zionist convictions. He implied, for example, that Ariel Sharon’s stroke was divine “retribution” for pulling Israelis out of the Gaza Strip.

Another, very important, method of propagating the views of the American Religious Right is grassroots activism. Distributing voters' guides (which are simplified comparisons of presidential or congressional candidates) in churches, sending letters and leaflets to church members encouraging them to register for the elections are only some examples of grassroots activities. It is also important to mention conferences and seminars organized by the Religious Right leaders, e.g. a conference entitled: "Think like Jesus. Lead like Moses. Fight like David. Run like Lincoln" (Watson 1999: 57).

### **3. Comparison**

This short presentation shows that apart from some differences, the Polish and American Religious Right movements share many common characteristics. Their leaders created elaborate movements, have been involved in politics directly, and have been trying to mobilize as many conservative Christians as possible, using grassroots activities. They also created quite similar institutional structures and networks of organizations (in the US cooperating but mostly independent from each other, while in Poland all associated with Father Rydzyk and Radio Maryja), they learnt how to take advantage of modern media, including radio, TV, magazines, newspapers, and Internet, and decided to found their own schools in order to "properly" educate their followers and future leaders of the movements. The most important observation, however, concerns the similarities in the rhetoric used by the leaders of both movements.

The main element of this rhetoric is the idea that religious and national identities are inseparable and almost identical. While analyzing the speeches of American Religious Right leaders we can observe that, for them, Protestant Christianity was the core of American identity. When we look at the speeches of Polish Religious Right leaders, it becomes obvious that, for them, Catholicism is almost identical with Polishness. Another element of the rhetoric (a consequence of the first one) is the way of presenting both movements' opponents. They are shown as "enemies" of both the national and religious identities of their countries, mostly because they do not share both movements' views concerning the public role of religion. In both cases, Religious Right leaders identify "the enemies" as those responsible for all the social ills of their countries. Additionally, in both cases, groups of "enemies" include similar categories of people: liberals, secularists, communists, homosexuals, feminists, and "abortionists." According to the rhetoric used in both movements, these are the people who denied the real Christian/Catholic heritage of their countries and, therefore, started to threaten their national and religious identities. Both the Polish and the American Religious Right are also anti-Semitic. However, while American fundamentalists' remarks often convey the message of Christian Zionism, members of the Polish Religious Right concentrate mostly on "Jewish-Mason conspiracy." Apart from that, the followers of Father Rydzyk also present Jews as "traitors," "communists," "liberals," and "strangers" who threaten Polish national identity.

There are also some important differences between the two movements. Firstly, while the American Religious Right regards social liberalism and secularism as an outcome of the social revolution of the 1960s, the Polish Religious Right closely relates them to the influence of the EU and the West. Secondly, while communism is still considered a threat by both movements, for American religious conservatives it is almost identical with socialism. They oppose ideas of social help, welfare, and higher taxes, because socialism in this form is, according to them, a threat to the Protestant spirit of individualism and self-reliance. In Poland, on the other hand, social welfare is not considered as a threat. According to Radio Maryja, economic liberalism is much more dangerous because liberals "who believe in money instead of God" want to deprive poor people of all their social benefits. Communism in Poland is seen as a threat for other reasons. Polish communists (or rather post-communists) are presented not only as the only atheists in the country, but also as thieves and traitors. Radio Maryja additionally connects them with other groups of "Poland's enemies": the Masons and the Jews. Thirdly, there is one category of "enemies" pointed to by the Polish Religious Right leaders, which does not exist in the US – the former anti-communism opposition. Its members, according to Father Rydzyk, are also traitors because they took part in the Round Table Talks and betrayed the simple people who never gained anything from the transformation.

When we look closely at the most important element of both movements' rhetoric, we can easily observe that although in both cases the connection between national and religious identity is very strong, it is more

explicitly expressed in the case of Polish Religious Right. The reason for that is a lack of religious diversity. In Poland over 90 percent of citizens identify themselves as Catholic. Therefore, Polish Religious Right leaders feel safe to openly identify Polishness with Catholicism and openly advocate the idea of using Catholic morality standards in Polish law and politics. Unlike the American Religious Right, they never had to search for support from other religious groups. In the US, on the other hand, because of religious diversity, the rhetoric of the religious right always had to be somehow non-denominational. It does not change the fact that for most of the Religious Right leaders it is the evangelical kind of Protestantism that is considered the true core of American identity. Political calculations, however, do not allow for claiming it explicitly.<sup>28</sup>

#### 4. In the Perspective of Secularization, Privatization, Deprivatization of religion and other theories

It is interesting to reflect for a moment on the reasons for creating such movements in these two countries. There are several possible ways of answering this question.

The paradigm of secularization has been the main theoretical and analytical framework through which the social sciences have viewed the relationship of religion and modernity. Most of the great social thinkers of the nineteenth century believed that religion would gradually fade in importance and lose its significance with the advent of industrial society.<sup>29</sup> This view was accepted and further developed by Peter Berger in the 1960s, as well as by David Martin and Brian Wilson in the 1960s and 1970s. Then it was modified by Thomas Luckman who in his *Invisible Religion* introduced the concept of the privatization of religion. However, due to political and religious events at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which indicated the resurgence of religion in many parts of the world, both theories have been questioned.<sup>30</sup> The creation of such movements as the ones discussed above, as well as many fundamentalisms around the world, caused sociologists to start searching for new answers.

One of the solutions was offered by Jose Casanova (1994). According to him, academics usually try to present a single theory of secularization, while these theories are actually all made up of three unintegrated propositions. The first proposition sees secularization as the differentiation of secular spheres from religious institutions and norms. The second presents secularization as the decline of religious beliefs and practices and the third one views secularization as the marginalization of religion to a privatized sphere. Casanova argues that the fruitless secularization debate can end only when sociologists of religion begin to examine and test the validity of each of the three propositions independently of each other (Casanova 1994: 211). According to him: "It is simply fallacious to argue, for instance, that the permanence or increase in religious beliefs and practices, and the continuous emergence of new religions and the revival of old ones in the United States or anywhere else, serves as empirical confirmation that the theory of secularization is a myth. It only confirms the need to redefine the theory by distinguishing between the general historical structural trend of secular differentiation and the different ways in which different religions in different places respond to and are affected by the modern structural trend of differentiation"(212).

Casanova stresses that, apart from a decline in religious beliefs and marginalization of religion to a private sphere, there is another possible answer to the process of differentiation. It is a trend that he terms "deprivatization" and views as "the process whereby religion abandons its assigned place in the private sphere and enters the undifferentiated public sphere of civil society to take part in the ongoing process of contestation, discursive legitimation, and redrawing of the boundaries" (65-66). He underlines that privatization and deprivatization are simply different historical options for religions in the modern world.

"Some religions will be induced by tradition, principle, and historical circumstances to remain basically private religions of individual salvation. Certain cultural traditions, religious doctrinal

<sup>28</sup> Casanova claims that considering the circumstances, the least American Religious Right wants to achieve is the reestablishment of the Protestant ethics (Casanova 2005: 274).

<sup>29</sup> Including: A. Comte, H. Spencer, E. Durkheim, M. Weber, K. Marx, S. Freud. More in: Norris and Inglehart 2005.

<sup>30</sup> E.g., Peter Berger recanted his earlier claims while Rodney Stark and Roger Finke suggested it was time to bury the secularization thesis (ibid.)

principles, and historical circumstances, by contrast, will induce other religions to enter, at least occasionally, the public sphere” (221).

Despite the fact that there has never been a serious decline in religious beliefs in the US, both of these responses to differentiation were adopted by American religions at different times in history depending on different stages of the institutional differentiation of church and state in the USA. Therefore, according to Casanova, the creation of the American Religious Right can be viewed as deprivatization of religion, a reaction to the process of secularization (understood as institutional differentiation), which was chosen by Evangelicals at this particular stage. Evangelicals who used to have a dominant position in American society simply opposed the process connected with further differentiation, as well as such responses to this process as marginalization and privatization of religion.

In the case of Poland, Casanova suggests that the Church’s involvement in the Solidarity movement was an example of a public religion, a deprivatized religion which was involved not only in the struggle against the oppressive communist regime which violated human rights but also in advocating freedom of religion understood as the right of the nation to openly practice their Catholic religion. It was not clear what role the Roman Catholic Church would choose after the democratic changes. Theoretically, it could have withdrawn from the public sphere in the new reality when all democratic rights, including freedom of religion, were granted to the citizens. If it chose to stay engaged it would be difficult to talk about deprivatization because the process of privatization had not taken place during the communist period. However, there are different understandings of the term “privatization.” The processes of privatization of certain beliefs within Catholicism, for example, have been present in Poland for a long time (Borowik 1997). Nevertheless, the Church in Poland had two options. As it turned out, instead of choosing one of them, it became divided, and the Religious Right movement was created. We could probably consider the creation of this kind of movement in Poland as an attempt to prevent any further privatization of beliefs but also as an opposition to the church and state separation model chosen in the new Republic. On one hand, the Episcopate officially agreed to the Polish “friendly separation model,” trying, as Casanova suggested, to accept relatively autonomous differentiation of the secular spheres, without necessarily agreeing to the decline or privatization of Catholicism nor to its withdrawal from civil society (in the creation of which it took active part). On the other hand, the circles around Radio Maryja were not satisfied with such solutions. Their attempts to impose Catholic solutions on societal problems opened up religious-secular cleavages (predicted by Casanova) and led to internal conflicts and divisions within the Catholic community and the church itself (113). Those attached to the hierarchic, centralized, and clericalist nature of the Catholic church in Poland, and to traditional elements of Catholic culture, have continued to press in the direction of Catholic hegemony, often using a logic that can be paraphrased: “In the name of my religious freedom, I can deny you your religious freedom.”

It is important to remember that after the 1989 the globalization processes became more rapid and obvious in Poland. In his book *Globalization and Religion* (1994), Peter Beyer states that “the globalization of society, while structurally favoring privatization in religion, also provides fertile ground for renewed public influence of religion” (Beyer 1994: 71). Religion for him can be understood as a “mode of communication,” and globalization – as “a situation in which the revitalization of religion is a way of asserting a particular (group) identity (...)” (4). Beyer, who based his theory on Niklas Luhmann’s systemic conception, claims that religions try to maintain their influence in the public sphere in various ways. Some of them choose the liberal option and some the conservative one. The conservative option means “a reassertion of the traditional view of transcendence, often explicitly as a normative response to a society (“the world”) that is seemingly heading in a different and evil direction” (90). Such conservative religious movements often try to gain control over a limited territory dominated by the particular culture and then control pluralism within it (92). As examples of conservative options, Beyer gives such fundamentalist or neo-fundamentalist movements as the New Christian Right in the USA, Sikh extremists in Punjab, the politicized neo-orthodox camp in Israel, and Islamic fundamentalists in Middle East. Although there might be some definitional problems with calling Radio Maryja a fundamentalist movement as such, it certainly implements the characteristics of the conservative option that religions choose in order to maintain their influence in the public sphere in the globalization era.



Apart from these two new solutions, Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart revive the secularization theory, stressing that it needs to be updated but not simply rejected.<sup>31</sup> Therefore, they construct the thesis of secularization based on existential security. In the view of their updated version of secularization theory, it is possible to actually consider the creation of Radio Maryja as an element characteristic for one of the stages of secularization process. According to the new theory, secularization takes place in regions/countries where the existential risk is lowest. If such risk is high, people become more religious. It is characteristic even for such forms of religion as the one offered by Radio Maryja to emerge in places where existential risk is high. And we must remember that most of the followers of Radio Maryja are poor and less educated. However, according to this theory, when the existential risk disappears, the process of secularization is likely to continue.

If we talk about reviving of some of the older concepts, it would probably also be interesting to remember Rodney Stark's theory. While criticizing so-called demand-side accounts of secularization initiated by the work of Weber and Durkheim, he joins Roger Finke, Lawrence R. Iannaccone, William Sims Bainbridge, and R. Stephen Warner focus on the "supply-side." According to the theory of religious markets, if there is a separation of Church and state and the country does not discriminate against any religion, a free market of religions is usually created. The work of competing religious institutions actively generates its "supply." Religions compete with each other in order to attract new members and religious participation will grow. However, if the "religious economy" is monopolized, the level of religious participation will be low. Critics of this approach have argued that some comparative evidence is inconsistent with this theory as, for example, some congregations in Europe remained strong despite the monopolistic role of the Church. However, Stark and Iannaccone tried to explain the exceptions from the general rule of the theory of religious markets, using the Irish case (Stark and Iannaccone 1994: 243). As they claimed, the only exception from the rule would take place if a religion was involved in a conflict, e.g. resisting external domination. Then the social conflict would be the substitute for the religious competition. Such cases could be found not only in Ireland, but also in Poland, Malta, and Quebec. In these countries despite a religious monopoly, church participation was high. This explanation is not sufficient for some scholars, e.g. Mark Chaves and Philip S. Gorski, however, it seems to be helpful in explaining the situation in contemporary Poland. Another element of the market paradigm says that the profit and loss account for joining a religious group with strict rules is the most profitable for the people who have a lower social position. This might explain why poorer people join such movements as the Polish and American Religious Right.

Another aspect which is important in the case of both the Polish and American Religious Right movements is the fact that they were created during a time of some kind of transition or change. In Poland it was a political transition, in the US it was the cultural change and social instability of the 1960s. Very often, a lack of stability and a feeling of being lost in a new reality result in an intensive search for something stable, some kind of identity. In both countries' Religious Right movements, connecting the ideas of national and religious identity offered people something which seemed very secure. Both of those movements also concentrated on the groups within their societies which suffered most from the changes: the less educated people, mostly from rural areas (Grabowska 2008: 15). Leaders of both movements easily identified the ones who were supposedly responsible for the deteriorating social or economic situation of these groups. Additionally, they convinced them that the same people were also the "enemies" of their faith and identity. In fact, their rhetoric was full of populism and never offered any reasonable solutions to any problems. Their oversimplified answers never corresponded with complicated reality. Nevertheless, the method of keeping people in fear and convincing them that those responsible for their misery are the same ones as those who threaten the religion of their forefathers worked out. Both movements still have strongly dedicated and loyal social bases.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> They claim that the critique of the secularization theory relies too heavily on selected anomalies and focuses too heavily on the United States rather than comparing systematic evidence across broad range of rich and poor societies. More about it in: Norris and Inglehart 2005.

<sup>32</sup> In Poland it is around 2-4% of the society, although some statistics give numbers as high as 16%. The differences result from different way of asking questions (Grabowska M. 2008: 12-13).

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