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Between the temptations of privatizing and globalizing religion

Both the temptations mentioned by the title above have been – and are – present within many religions and beliefs, as well as the religion-driven actions of individual believers. No in-depth research is needed to state that these temptations are of a character pertaining to inner- and outside-religion, but the research makes it possible to show a variety of these conditions, and how they vary along the means of expression of the above mentioned temptations. One of the inspirations for further research has stemmed and still stems from the comparative analyses of religion sociologists. Max Weber is one of the iconic researchers, but it must be noted that his studies were biased within the scope of the field. He was interested mainly in the impact of religious ethics on the economy. Modern Weberists see that this way of thinking had its good features, but that it is also characterized by many significant limitations, hence the need to adjust this approach. They consider that not only is the impact of religious ethics on the economy cognitively important, but also that the impact the economy has on ethics, and other ingredients of religion, should be considered as well. In other words, the contemporary Weberian view is, too, actually in opposition to Max Weber, who prioritized the causal relations, and emphasized the functional relationships.¹ My consideration will analyze

¹ “Weber was interested in the impact the religion related ideas, mainly the various forms of ethics, had on the economy,” but this problem was Eurocentric there, i.e. he considered it through the light of the “emergence of the Western capitalism, rationalism of the Western civilization in the economy.” Cf. Z. Kransodębski, *Max Weber i jego analiza religii światowych (Max Weber and his analysis of world religions)*, in M. Weber, *Socjologia religii. Dzieła zebrane – Etyka gospodarcza religii*

the subject stated in the title, and will base it on the assumptions, research questions and meanings of *privatization and globalization*, in the eyes of the modern Weberian approach.

Assumptions and statements

Functional research first – this approach is pursued *inter alia* by Niklas Luhmann in his work entitled *Function of Religion*, and Peter Beyer, who follows-up Luhmann's directions in his work *Religion and Globalization*. The former, justifying the functional analysis, claims that this approach is better than the causal analysis when it comes to answering the following question: Is religion functioning or not as an *integration* factor within *macro-systems* such as civilizations and societies?² Peter Beyer, on the other hand, sees the advantages of the functional analysis in its possibility of describing the Western culture and the Western religious culture within the scope of relativization, and particularization directly related to relativization.³ Both sociologists make the meaning of the *privatization of religion* and the *globalization of religion* so wide that it is possible to state a question about the secularization, which is so widely discussed nowadays.

According to Luhmann, *secularization* is semantically misunderstood, because it was and often still is related, especially by the persons who are in the position of faith, to ridding the Church (as an institution) of its most prominent social functions or getting rid of its background – the religious beliefs, attitudes and motivations for actions in a variety of social situations. Luhmann understands secularization as a "socio-structural relevance of privatization of the religious choices."⁴ This means that "participation in the religious communication (Church) and demonstrating faith must be based on

światowych (*Sociology of religion, Collected works: The economic ethics of world religions*), Cracow 2006, p. I and further.

² By answering this question, he claims that it is no longer functioning, as "the religious movements (...) weaken or even disintegrate the system"; Such movements were present in the past, and are present nowadays. Cf. N. Luhmann, *Funkcja religii* (*Function of Religion*), Cracow 1998, p. 13 and further pages.

³ "In this view, relativization is a positive phenomenon, and an open stance towards the changes becomes a basic guarantee that the tradition is authentic. This kind of religion is driven by the values of the emerging global culture." Cf. P. Beyer, *Religia i globalizacja* (*Religion and Globalization*), Cracow 2005, p. 36 and further.

⁴ "Neither conceptually nor theoretically we claim that the religion is function- or meaningless overall. (...) This concept is rather to define the evolution structure of the social system, which is historically documented, if it has an impact on the religion's system and its environment. Hence, this concept will not (...) be defined by referencing it to religion as a phenomenon, but rather to the structure of the social system. It is oriented towards a general problem of privatization, which is driven by the structural requirements, and it having sociocultural consequences; additionally, it imposes relevant limits on the form of the social order, which is not yet plausible. It also describes

the decisions of the individuals (...). Back in the days not-believing was private, now believing becomes private. We are resigning from institutionalization of the consent. The situation in which you act in a proper way, once you accept what is normally accepted, is removed or reduced just to ordinary Church membership.”⁵ The author also clarifies that “privatization in a holistic view is not (...) a private matter;” it is not and it has not been a private matter ever since the Churches have been forced to compete against other Churches and other social institutions such as TV or sport clubs, when it came to free time management; losing this competition may mean, and meant, that not only was the church often marginalized, but also the Bible work was marginalized, or, which is equally wrong for the traditionalists, the theologists and theology started to replicate these social and cultural models, the models which were the basis of the success of the competitors – those Churches which started to function in accordance with the marketing rules, or considered the mass media as a sufficient way to contact the believers.

The beginnings of the secularization process in this shape within the Western culture are placed in the late middle ages, namely, the period when “dogmatic theology and organization are reinforcing the internal mutual relationships” (“which, in effect, led the Christian Europe to the period of the schisms”). The first great, and well-organized campaign against the secularization conducted by the Roman Catholic Church is known to have happened in the 16th century and to be related to the Council of Trent (the introduction of the provisions made there meant that the “priest proletariat is to be marginalized, quality of life is to be raised, and hence the priests may achieve an existential reference to the organization”). Luhmann and Weber relate the first counter-offensive to the ascetic protestants of 17th and 18th centuries (including the Pietists, who did not “burden the believers with time-consuming rules of the monastery life”).

In light of the stages above, it seems that when describing and clarifying the changes in the Western culture, the collective character contained within the organizational forms presented temptations of privatizing and globalizing the religious beliefs. One of the forms of this temptation may be seen when one’s own Church is presented as the Common Church. The name of such a Church is obvious, but at the same time it is placed in the background. The members’ beliefs are in the foreground, and they believe that they create the

the consequences of the structural circumstances regarding religion.” Cf. N. Luhmann, *Funkcja religii* (Function of Religion), p. 224 and further.

⁵ “At the same time, the stochastic confidence is offered by the anonymous waiting for devout participation, regardless of the private motives. Solely on this basis, the rituals and dogmatic values could pretend to be ‘true’ and neutralize the ability of their symbols to be negated.” Ibidem, p. 230.

only authentic, unique religious community and that it is just a matter of time to convince the non-members about its status.

These two temptations complement each other and at the same time they contradict themselves. They generate a variety of problems, both for ordinary Church members, as well as for the hierarchy. Luhmann points out some of them in his monograph, e.g.: "if a high number of the evangelical Church members is in favour of the baptism of the adults, then the process of the Churches becoming similar to the religious associations presents itself" (and the members of those Churches would not be in favour of that). If the authorities within these Churches are obliged to consult their decisions with the ordinary members, then the authority value may be questioned, and no consent satisfactory for both of the Parties may be reached. The latter problem is becoming more difficult to solve when the ordinary members of the Church are well educated. According to Luhmann (and probably other scholars), these members are "have stronger reservations about the Church," and the Church hierarchy.⁶ This means that the Church, as a religious system, is going to be decomposed. This decomposition may be looked at, evaluated and presented by the Church authorities as a danger for faith and the Church itself. On the other hand, the ordinary members of the Church may consider it as a sign of the authenticity of their belief, and as a factor which increases the chances for salvation. This, in short, sums up Luhmann's notes on privatization, globalization and secularization.

Peter Beyer, in his studies, starts from the globalization thesis, namely he claims that we live in a "globalizing social reality in which the communication barriers, which existed earlier, are non-existent," which makes the "world more and more 'singular.'" Nico clarifies the issue, stating that "the globalization thesis assumes that the social communication network is worldwide and is constantly getting more tight."⁷ This has a variety of consequences, which have an impact on the "global social system," such as the Western civilization and its societies. It also influences smaller social groups and their individual members. The results include conflicts, which emerge because of the clashes of culture, lifestyle, language and other forms of cultural communication.

Beyer carries out an in-depth analysis of the results, which include "corrosion of the inherited cultural and personal identities," and the "encouragement to create and animate particular identities which are to help to take over the control of the whole system." Both phenomena are present in the functional relationship and in both cases religion plays, or tries to play, a significant part.

⁶ "Reinforcing the social moralizing efforts will rather enlarge this distance, which does not necessarily mean that the person will step out of the Church." Ibidem, p. 286.

⁷ "To be more down-to-earth – this means that the people, cultures, societies and civilizations that so far were separated, nowadays are in constant, unavoidable contact." Cf. P. Beyer, *Religia i globalizacja (Religion and Globalization)*, p. 25 and further.

Particularly it refers to a variety of religions. It does not matter whether you are Christian, Muslim or a Jew – all believers feel endangered by the “globalizing of society” or the marginalization of the religious symbols which, in the eyes of the believers, have a power to help them in communication with the “transcendental partner.”⁸

It is clear that this “globalizing social reality” offers – in accordance with the beliefs of its proponents – its own religious symbols, but it does not offer any space for the main dichotomy of the traditional religions; in other words, it has no clear distinction between *immanence* and *transcendence* (“The main issue here is the holistic nature of the former concept”), and there is no space here for a transcendental partner, whose extraordinary power would make ordinary wishes, thoughts, words and actions meaningful, thus creating a stance for belief in getting transferred into the transcendental world, which, if not perfect, is at least more perfect than the immanent world. Religious symbols of this social reality which is globalizing itself, have lost their purposes, because they are based on an assumption that this – the transcendental world – does not exist, hence the difference between transcendence and immanence has no metaphysical or ontological nature – it is purely semantic, i.e. it is a peculiar combination of meanings of these concepts. The function of this combination is communicative – and solely communicative – crossing the line between the “lack of definition of and definition of the source” or at least “coping with these phenomena and their consequences.” Getting rid of this metaphysical, or even ontological difference between immanence and transcendence may be considered as the “core” of the secular processes present within the culture of the West.

The secularization as understood in the manner mentioned above resulted *inter alia* in the case of Salman Rushdie, the author of *The Satanic Verses*. The fact that it became “the main topic covered by the press and the news services all around the world and inspires many public comments worldwide” has a very deep meaning. It reveals how mighty the ICT, which gets rid of the communication barriers, is. Nevertheless, the deep meaning carried by the issue presented by this British writer of Iranian origin, struck many Muslims. The exposed motif of the “changeability of the human personality in the globalized world” has been interpreted by the Muslim religious leader ayatollah Ruhollah Chomejini as an “insult of the most sacred values, and hence negating their [Muslims] own role as the subjects of the global society. (...) Ultimately, the anger of the Muslims does not stem from the fact that the Rushdie’s book questions their faith – not many Muslims are going to read it anyway. The

⁸ “That transcendental partner may become a fish, a waterfall, an ‘inner’ self, invisible mighty god or a number of saintly symbols. The communication may become a conversation, ritual, myth, a sacred book, mystic insight, wisdom, ecstatic trance or any combination of these forms.” Ibidem, p. 31.

Muslims are rather worried about the need of getting rid of their beliefs – the constant sacredness of the Koran – as a price for full participation in the global world dominated by the non-Muslim community.”⁹

This issue shows just a fragment of a more complex problem which is met by the traditional religions in the modern, globalized world, which is still undergoing the process of globalization. Believers of the other religions which have a “leading role in the world community” (such as Christianity or Judaism) are in a similar position as the Muslims, even though their religious traditions are marginalized in a similar way as the Muslim tradition is. According to Beyer, this is because “globalization means the relativization of some particular identities, along with the relativization of religion as a means of social communication. In this way we have a situation where animating religion is a way of manifesting the (group) identity. This is a perfect way to gain power and influences in the global system.”¹⁰ These aims are not related to the traditional conflict of the believers, the aim of which is to get oneself transferred into the world which is free of any worries.

Case study

A case study is shown in the second part of the monograph written by Beyer, and it regards five cases i.e. the New Christian Right in the USA, the liberation theology movement in Latin America, the Muslim revolution in Iran, the New Religious Zionism in Israel and the Religious Ecology Movement. None of these are going to be described here. I will only refer to the conclusion of Beyer’s analysis of the Religious Ecology Movement. He claims that “despite the internal tensions between the liberal and conservative tendencies, this movement is surely a liberal form of religious expression. The main reason is, without any doubt, the global character of the environmental problems, which leads to cooperation, directly or indirectly, of a variety of representatives of many religious groups interested in ecology, and thus creates a pluralistic tolerance or even adjustment of the religious/cultural pluralism, which contradicts the conservative views.” He also notes that “among the Roman Catholics you may spot many proponents of eco-spirituality, many social Catholic organizations are involved in the environmental issues, and even the Pope John Paul II himself refers to the environmental issues in a way, which is typical for an eco-traditionalist.”¹¹ These are sole issues related to Poland which present themselves in Beyer’s analysis.

⁹ “Chomeini, similarly to other Muslims, claims that the Satanic Verses relativization of Islam is equal to a marginalization of the Muslims in the global community.” Ibidem, p. 27.

¹⁰ Ibidem, p. 28.

¹¹ Ibidem, p. 351 and other pages.

I would like to refer solely to Polonica in my case study, in particular I have two cases in mind. The first case is the vividly discussed issue of Wojciech Lemański, who is the parish-priest from Jasienica. He is an above-average person, not only because of his functioning in the Church, but also because of the way of his social communication about the issue he faced applied in this case. Because of it, his issue became public and known across Poland. The event also features some elements that make it international, hence it may be related to Beyer's globalization. Lemański writes a blog and does not care about the opinions of the Church Authorities and their social position.

In other words, the issue would not have emerged had it not been for the critical blog posted by Lemański which regards the Church authorities and the bio-ethical document issued by the Episcopate, in which the Church leaders express their opinion against *in vitro*, abortion, euthanasia, emergency contraception and contraception in general. The Argument of the Warsaw-Praga Curia that rid the disobedient parish-priest of his Canonical rights, including the rights to evangelize on behalf of the Catholic Church and to conduct masses, includes the fact that he breached the violation according to which priests cannot file in court motions in the secular courts privately (Lemański did it against the headmaster of the local school and two teachers). His "sins" also include involvement in the Jewish community issues – he officially stated that he was against the Jedwabne massacre.

In the case of Lemański the line between globalization and privatization cannot be finely drawn; nevertheless, some points might be indicated. These include: 1) treating the freedom of speech and a right to state opinions publicly as an inalienable right of every citizen, regardless of their affiliation with any Church and regardless of their position in that Church; 2) using the right to reach as many people as possible with the information, using the mass media accessible to each and every citizen; 3) submitting one's own *votum separatum* regarding every issue which seems to endanger the basic human and citizen rights; 4) treating the secular world if not as more important, then at least as if it had the same importance as those issues related to the non-material world.

What allows priest Lemański, and other priests who share his views, to maintain their stance? There is only one answer to this question: their own conscience, independent thinking, life experience and perception of their own position within the social life. Without any doubt, this is definitely a form of privatization, which is sanctioned and regulated by the secular law, but, as the actions of the Church hierarchy present it, is also in conflict with the rights of the Church hierarchy and which questions their rights and position – not only within the Church structures, but also in the places where the Church was and is influential. In this situation, appealing against the Curia's decision to the Vatican and expecting that the latter would be in favour of the person

who filed the appeal might be treated as a sign of naivety. Maybe the priest wanted to show that not only the local Church hierarchy is mistaken, but also that it is possible that (by maintaining the same stance as the Curia does), the Roman hierarchy has also made an error. And this has a global impact. In the past, and even nowadays, this kind of disagreement usually led to the attempts of establishing a new Church or fractions within the older Church, which would become a danger for the Roman authorities.

The second case of a priest who did not comply with the Church's official stance is even more convincing. Priest, Piotr Natanek, PhD habilitated, became – as it was written in *Super Express*, one of the Polish tabloids, in the article entitled *Ks. Natanek: Człowiek, który ma telefon do boga* [Priest Natanek – a man who can call god on the phone] – “a new star of the Internet. But not a star of the Church. His sermons are illegal, since the Curia of Cracow banned him from conducting the masses. It is a penalty for disobedience. The priest confuses the facts: angels, divine encounters, Masonry, Harry Potter...” and so on. This piece of information seems to be sensational mainly because of the context – it was published in the media outlet, which is sensation-driven. The pieces of information published by the Curia in Cracow are no less sensational; the media release from 18 April 2014, published on the official website of the Curia, says that in connection with the “questions coming from the people about the controversial statements of Piotr Natanek, priest, PhD, habilitated, who is a priest of the Cracow Archdiocese,” a theological commission brought to life by the decree issued by the Archbishop of the Cracow diocese made on 3 July 2009, stated “a negative assessment of the Priest's activity, claiming that his activity and public statements were theologically erroneous,” the Archbishop has “suspended, until revoked, the [Natanek's] right to do scientific work within the Catholic universities” and “banned Priest Piotr Natanek from the public appearances, publishing texts and disseminating his own materials (including video and audio recordings) and sharing them for distribution by the third Parties.” The release also reminds the audience that “Piotr Natanek, speaking to the Cardinal, stated that as a faithful son of the Church he will act in compliance with the above decisions.”

Was this statement true? One can check it by entering the website of *Christus Vincit* Online TV, led by *Spółeczny Ruch Zapotrzebowania Wiary z siedzibą w Norwegii Filia Pustelnia Niepokalanów Księdza Piotra Natanka* [Social Movement of Faith Needs with a seat in Norway, the Pustelnia Niepokalanów Branch led by Priest Piotr Natanek]. The name of this medium itself is both global and particular. The former is shown by using the Internet as a means of communication with the believers (according to Natanek, the Internet is a “gift from the Holy Mother”), and presenting the movement as a general social movement acting outside the borders of Poland. Everything is complemented

by Natanek's self-presentation as one of many warriors of the new crusade against non-believers and those who believe in God without any compliance with the standards the warrior has to comply with. Everybody who has joined him is called "King Jesus Christ's Chivalry" by Natanek. He even designed proper clothing for them (purple vestry with elements of a knight's armor, featuring an effigy of the crowned Jesus), a proper ceremony of group admittance (during the masses conducted by Natanek), or even a Sacrament (which is called "a renewal of baptism," and its purpose is to change pagan names to the names of the Christian saints).

When he was asked by the believers about the sources of knowledge and inspiration which drive his activity, he claimed that he had received a phone call from heaven, directly from God himself. God was to tell Natanek that Satan, along with the masonry, who are his Earthly contractors, are either in power all around the world or are close to reaching full control. Natanek claims that this state is confirmed by the provisions of the Second Vatican Council (in his opinion they are a success of the Masons), the government, the European Parliament (which consists of members of the Mason's) and even fashions among the youth, including "Iroquois hairstyle and hair styling gel," "metal near the eyes" or "bright colors of the fingernails" ("black as hell and red as fire"). It is clear that the youth will pay a high price for being tempted. But this regards not only the youth, as the late bishop, Józef Życiński, is already in Hell, while archbishop Dziwisz will probably pay a high price for supporting the evil powers and for his sins committed against Natanek and his movement. The judgement is going to be delivered to all the Poles, unless the Episcopate, Parliament, Government and the President of Poland do not recognize Jesus as the King of Poland and consider God's law as supreme over the secular law.¹² All of the above contains some elements of globalization; however, these are also quite thoroughly mixed with particularization.

The latter present themselves when the person of this "new prophet" of the old faith is taken into consideration along with the place of his activity – The Grzechynia Hermitage (which is a part of the private property of ks. Natanek). Other ways in which the particularization is shown are contained within the way Natanek conducts the cult's activity (as witnessed through its damnation of the TVN24 TV station), referencing himself to private divine encounters, including conversations with Jesus Christ and the Holy Mother, or his public denial of obedience to "his beloved Bishop, because he is a servant to the Church's enemies." It is clear that the definition of enemies and friends

¹² In February 2010 he published a "List otwarty do Biskupów Polskich, Prezydenta Rzeczypospolitej i Premiera Rządu Rzeczypospolitej" [*Open Letter to the Polish Bishops, President of the Republic of Poland and Prime Minister of the Republic of Poland*]. He specified the deadline of this enthronement – the year 2017.

is a matter of Natanek's personal opinion, his conscience, and that it stems from his being haunted.

The case of the priest and his movement described above is not an isolated phenomenon within the Roman Catholic Church. It is quite traditional and phenomena like this one have often occurred, especially during the periods of important changes being introduced in the Church. Changes like these were sanctioned for instance by the Canon Law introduced by the Second Vatican Council. During the Council the internal Church forces emerged, which were against the changes and which later led to the emergence of e.g. the Lefebvrist movement, under the official name of *Fraternitas Sacerdotalis Sancti Pii X*. Father Natanek defended that movement, and his assessment of the post-Council situation in the Roman Catholic Church is quite compliant with the assessment created by the initiator of the described movement, Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre.¹³ Nevertheless, Natanek does not consider himself as a Lefebvrist, and the same applies to his "Knights of King Christ." This is because the Lefebvrists were excluded from the Roman Church (by excommunication by John Paul II, made in June 1988), and were later included in its structures again by Benedict XVI, in January 2009. In the eyes of Natanek, this is a bad publicity for the Church, and questions the opposition of the Lefebvrists. The contemporary situation of the Church was outlined by Natanek in his "List otwarty do kapłanów Kościoła katolickiego" (Open letter to the priests of the Catholic Church), written on 2 November 2010. The letter states that the "One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic, Roman Catholic Church is covered with Darkness. This church has become Satan's playground. (...) being a priest in it has become solely a craftsmanship, and the priests have become materialized professionals of the God's Redemption."

Zbigniew Drozdowicz – BETWEEN THE TEMPTATIONS OF PRIVATIZING AND GLOBALIZING RELIGION

In this article, I analyse two mutually exclusive contemporary temptations in Christianity, that is, the temptation to treat religion as private and the temptation to treat it as global. Both temptations have determinants that can be found inside as well as outside religion. They are also determined by general tendencies present in Western culture. The discussed temptations as well as their determinants can be explained by the functional analysis postulated by the Weberians and performed by me in this paper. The analysis, applied here to two selected cases of catholic priests, Father Lemański and Father Natanek, allows us to explain why their speeches are not and will not be accepted by the Church's authorities.

¹³ Abp M. Lefevre, *Church Soaked with Modernism*, Chorzow – Poznan 2010. According to the official data, the brotherhood, in 2010, included 529 priests along with 750 churches in 63 countries, it was leading two higher schools, 90 schools at lower levels and 7 residential homes. Its activity in Poland started in the early 1990s. It has its priories in Warsaw, Bajerze and Gdynia, and churches in Cracow, Lublin, Lodz, Olsztyn, Poznan, Torun, Szczecin, Wrocław and Rzeszow. Back in 1998, the Polish Episcopate considered this movement to be schismatic.