

DID POLISH NATIONWIDE CATHOLIC WEEKLY NEWSPAPERS SUPPORT ANDRZEJ DUDA IN THE PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN IN 2020? A CASE STUDY

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Abstract

The aim of the article was to determine the degree of political involvement of the most important representatives of the Polish Catholic press, i.e. "Gość Niedzielny", "Niedziela", "Idziemy", and "Przewodnik Katolicki" in the 2020 presidential campaign in Poland. The periodicals took into account the important context of the campaign, i.e. the coronavirus pandemic, the lockdown and its social and political consequences, as well as the problem of polarisation of the Polish political scene. "Gość Niedzielny", "Niedziela" and "Idziemy" gave clear support to Andrzej Duda. The political involvement of the above press titles should be assessed as going beyond Catholic social science. "Przewodnik Katolicki" was the only one to point out both the strengths and weaknesses of the incumbent's programme and political activity.

Key words: Andrzej Duda, press, Catholic weekly, newspapers, elections

Introduction

The media are important channels of communication, which not only transmit the message, but also offer its specific interpretation, and consequently create a mediatized reality in the minds of the recipients [Hjarvard, 2017, pp. 1221-1241]. The Catholic Church uses the means of mass communication in its mission, which are regarded as important tools for communication with the modern world and shaping public opinion [González Gaitano, 2010, pp. 26-40]. The above complementarity of information and interpretation implies the need for the recipients to understand what has been communicated in official forms of communication of hierarchs (e.g. announcements of an episcopal spokesperson, information published on the official website of an ecclesial institution) and in alternative mediatized forms, whose sender remains directly dependent on the ecclesiastical hierarchy and carries out the mission commissioned to them (these include, among others, the Catholic media with its assistant who represents the diocesan bishop or other church superior) [Leśniczak, 2019a, pp. 241-242].

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The subject of the political involvement of the Catholic Church in Poland in successive parliamentary and presidential campaigns after 2000 has become the subject of many media and political analyses [Burdziej, 2018, pp. 207-220; Jeziński, 2012, pp. 140-143; Leśniczak, 2018, pp. 37-56; Leśniczak, 2020a, pp. 171-190].

The axis of the presidential campaign was the dispute between Andrzej Duda and Rafał Trzaskowski. It expressed the competition that had been taking place since 2005 on the Polish political scene between 'social-solidaristic' Poland and 'liberal' visions of Poland [Szczerbiak, 2007, pp. 203-232; Sowiński, 2020, pp. 358-380]. Cześniak and Kotnarowski note that in Polish society there was, and still is, a conflict, probably immanent for societies similar to Polish, between the winners and the losers of the transformation. The first is quite naturally closer to the most broadly defined liberalism, which emphasizes the freedom of the individual: the winners expect the least limited by the state and its institutions opportunities to pursue their interests. For others, ideological options referring to social solidarity are more attractive: losers expect state aid, equal opportunities, social protection, etc. [Cześniak, Kotnarowski, 2011, p. 132].

In principle, the formal institutional messages of the hierarchical Church do not manifest the intentions of the bishops to become involved on either side of the electoral competition, i.e. their clear support for a specific political entity. In turn, alternative, mediated forms of communication of the Church, exemplified by publications published in national titles of the Catholic press, prove the support of the right-wing camp and its candidates for the office of president in subsequent electoral elections [ibid.]. For this reason, this article adopts a hypothesis of the continuation of the political commitment of an ecclesial institution in the presidential elections in 2020, using Catholic weekly opinion magazines [Leśniczak, 2020c, pp. 447-459].

Materials and methods

The aim of the research was to verify whether the Polish Catholic press joined the political discourse of the presidential campaign and supported the current President Andrzej Duda in his fight for re-election. The research material consisted of press texts of printed versions of "Gość Niedzielny", "Niedziela", "Idziemy", "Przewodnik Katolicki", which contained one of the following keywords: 'presidential campaign', 'elections' or the name of at least one of the candidates applying for the office of President of the Republic of Poland.

The press titles selected for the analysis are nationwide weeklies. "Gość Niedzielny" is an opinion weekly that is dynamically gaining the market, whose average circulation in October 2017 was - according to ZKDP (Press Distribution Control Association) data - 181,486 copies, and total sales, including traditional and electronic editions, reached the level of 118,695. It is worth noting that in 2015, the average one-off circulation of the periodical exceeded 200,000 copies [Stachowska, 2017, p. 44-45]. The approximate circulation of "Niedziela" fluctuates around 130,000-170,000 circulation (data from 2016) [Leśniczak, 2019b, p. 110]. "Przewodnik Katolicki" is published in a single circulation of approx. 40,000 copies of [A Catholic Guide...], and "Idziemy" - less than 20,000 [Idziemy. pl...]. The catholic weeklies are distributed in over 60% in parishes, sales in distribution networks account for about 35% of the circulation. The overall rate of returns is around 20% [Leśniczak, 2019b, p. 110]. "Niedziela", "Gość Niedzielny" and "Idziemy" are of a right-wing conservative character, while "Przewodnik Katolicki" is a more liberal magazine [Tasak, 2014, pp. 70-85]. The publishers of the analysed periodicals are bishop's curia. The press titles are held by church assistants, hence their content is controlled by the representative of the diocesan bishop and may use the adjective "catholic" [Leśniczak, 2020b, 107].

The temporal scope of the analysis covered the period from 5 February 2020, i.e. from the date of the *Decision of the Speaker of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland on the*

Ordinance on the election of the President of the Republic of Poland, on the basis of which Elżbieta Witek indicated 10 May 2020 as the date of the presidential election [*Postanowienie Marszałka Sejmu Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej z dnia 5 lutego 2020 r...*], to 12 July 2020, i.e. to the date of the second round of the election which selected its winner, the incumbent President Andrzej Duda². As a result of the coronavirus pandemic and the impossibility of holding elections on the 10th of May 2020, the Speaker of the Polish Parliament set a new election date of 28 June 2020, by his decision of 3 June 2020 [*Postanowienie Marszałka Sejmu Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej z dnia 3 czerwca 2020 r...*].

Given that Andrzej Duda was a candidate of Prawo i Sprawiedliwość (*Law and Justice*, PiS), the press texts that referred to the programme and political activities of Mateusz Morawiecki's Council of Ministers were also included in the analysis. The possible positive assessment given to the camp of Prawo i Sprawiedliwość was treated as approval of Andrzej Duda's actions. The negative assessment of the government's actions was interpreted as a concurrent criticism of the president's actions. A quantitative and qualitative method of content analysis was used in the research.

The following research hypothesis was formulated, consisting of two statements:

H1. The national Catholic press titles "Gość Niedzielny", "Niedziela", "Idziemy", "Przewodnik Katolicki" addressed the topic of the 2020 presidential campaign.

H2. The above titles were politically committed and supported Andrzej Duda.

In order to verify the research hypothesis, a categorisation key was constructed, in which the following features were distinguished: NUMBER OF TEXTS, EVALUATION OF 5 YEARS OF THE PRESIDENCY OF ANDRZEJ DUDA (2015-2020), EVALUATION OF THE ELECTION PROGRAMME OF ANDRZEJ DUDA.

Categorisation key with examined features and categories:

I. Feature under examination: NUMBER OF TEXTS

Definition of a feature: number of texts recording as the leading protagonist of one of the candidates for the office of President of the Republic of Poland³.

Categories within the feature under consideration together with definitions:

1. Andrzej Duda - PiS candidate, incumbent;
2. Civic Coalition candidate - Małgorzata Kidawa-Błońska or Rafał Trzaskowski;
3. Szymon Hołownia - independent candidate;
4. Krzysztof Bosak - candidate of the Konfederacja Wolność i Niepodległość;
5. Władysław Kosiniak-Kamysz - PSL candidate;
6. None of the above - a press release notes that any of the above candidates was a prime protagonist, or that the text only dealt with the presidential elections in general without listing any of the candidates.

² Andrzej Duda received 51.03% of votes in the second round. [Cf. Państwowa Komisja Wyborcza, 2020].

³ It was assumed that in one press text the number of the most exposed politicians running for the office of President of the Republic of Poland is 1 or 2. If there is only one politician in the publication, the candidate is assigned one unit. In the case of the presence in the press text of a larger number of candidates for the office of President, the two most stressed were indicated. In such a case, each of the politicians was assigned 0.5 units in the NUMBER OF TEXTS feature under examination. A person who meets at least one of the following conditions was considered to be the leading protagonist: the name of the politician appears in the title or in the lead; the political views of the presidential candidate were presented in the most extensive way in the publication; the illustrative material exposes the politician as the leading person.

II. Feature under examination: EVALUATION OF THE 5 YEARS OF THE PRESIDENCY OF ANDRZEJ DUDA (2015-2020)

Definition of the feature: the way the press publication refers to the political and social activities of Andrzej Duda during his first term of office (2015-2020), presented at the official website of the Presidential candidate Andrzej Duda in the 2020 presidential elections <https://www.andrzejduda.pl/program>⁴.

Categories within the feature under consideration together with definitions:

1. approval - only a positive assessment of the activities is recorded in the press release;
2. disapproval - only a negative evaluation of the actions is recorded in the press release;
3. mixed - both positive and negative evaluation of the actions are recorded in the press release;
4. no assessment - no assessment of the first term of office of President Duda in the press publication.

III. Feature under examination: EVALUATION OF THE ELECTION PROGRAMME OF ANDRZEJ DUDA

Definition of a feature: the way in which a press publication evaluates the election programme of Andrzej Duda, who is applying for re-election⁵.

Categories within the feature under consideration together with definitions:

1. compliance - the legitimacy of the programme is noted in the press release;
2. non-compliance - the press release calls into question the legitimacy of the programme;
3. mixed - the press release records both the legitimacy and the contestation of the programme;
4. none of the above - the press release refers to the evaluation of the programme.

Results of quantitative and qualitative press analysis

The analysis criteria were met by a total of 151 press publications, of which 45 were published in "Gość Niedzielny", 45 in "Niedziela", 52 in "Idziemy" and 9 in "Przewodnik Katolicki".

Tables 1-3 show the number of publications assigned to each category under the examined categorisation key features⁶.

4 Such declaratory effects include restoring the dignity of many families, eliminating the scourge of child poverty, caring for the elderly, reducing the level of unemployment, taking care of the development of Polish companies, restoring public finances, tightening the tax system, implementing a stable state budget with a low deficit and implementing an anti-crisis shield in times of pandemic. [Cf. DUDA 2020, Program...]

5 Andrzej Duda's programme declarations included: social programmes supporting families, caring for a strong economy and maintaining jobs during the coronavirus pandemic, development of the Medical Fund, promotion of Polish products abroad, effective economic diplomacy, development of Polish villages, counteracting water shortages, actions for the safety and energy independence of Poland, care for the historical truth and image of Poland. [Cf. DUDA 2020, Program...; Nowak, 2020].

6 The number of press releases classified into each category is expressed in percentage points dividing the number of these texts by the total number of texts of a given press title meeting the analysis criteria and multiplied by 100 are shown in brackets. The procedure for two other examined categorisation key features characteristics were similar.

Press title / category	Andrzej Duda	Civic Coalition candidate	Szymon Hołownia	Krzysztof Bosak	Władysław Kosiniak -Kamysz	none of the above
"Gość Niedzielnny"	17.5 (38,89)	2.5 (5,56)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	25 (55,55)
"Niedziela"	20 (44,44)	3 (6,67)	2.5 (5,56)	0 (0,0)	0.5 (1,11)	19 (42,22)
"Idziemy"	24 (46,16)	8 (15,38)	1 (1,92)	0 (0,0)	1.5 (2,89)	17.5 (33,65)
"Przewodnik Katolicki"	5 (55,56)	2 (22,22)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	2 (22,22)

Table 1. The examined feature NUMBER OF TEXTS - number of publications assigned to particular categories
Source: Own study.

Press title / category	approval	disapproval	mixed	lack of assessment
"Gość Niedzielnny"	26 (57,78)	2 (4,44)	4 (8,89)	13 (28,89)
"Niedziela"	31 (68,89)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	14 (31,11)
"Idziemy"	25 (48,08)	1 (1,92)	3 (5,77)	23 (44,23)
"Przewodnik Katolicki"	1 (11,11)	0 (0,0)	2 (22,22)	6 (66,67)

Table 2. The examined feature EVALUATION OF THE 5 YEARS OF PRESIDENCY OF ANDRZEJ DUDA (2015-2020) - number of publications assigned to particular categories
Source: Own study.

Press title / category	conformity	non-conformity	mixed	none of the above
"Gość Niedzielnny"	12 (26,67)	1 (2,22)	2 (4,44)	30 (66,67)
"Niedziela"	21 (46,67)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	24 (53,33)
"Idziemy"	20 (38,46)	0 (0,0)	1 (1,92)	31 (59,62)
"Przewodnik Katolicki"	0 (0,0)	2 (22,22)	1 (11,11)	6 (66,67)

Table 3. The examined feature EVALUATION OF THE ELECTION PROGRAMME OF ANDRZEJ DUDA - number of publications assigned to particular categories
Source: Own study.

If one assumes that the number of texts reflects the degree of interest of a given press title in the subject of the presidential campaign, one can see that the "Przewodnik Katolicki" has a significantly lower interest in the political agenda connected with the

election in 2020 than other Catholic periodicals analysed. All, without exception, weeklies recorded the highest number of texts in which Andrzej Duda was the main protagonist. A varied assessment of his first term of office and also an uneven assessment of the ruling camp from which he came can be found in different press titles. The greatest approval was given to a politician in "Niedziela" (over 68% of the total number of publications of the periodical) and "Gość Niedzielny" (over 57%), slightly lower in "Idziemy" (nearly 50%). "Przewodnik Katolicki" in more than 66% of the texts did not undertake the evaluation of the presidency of Duda, and its positive evaluation was recorded in only one publication out of nine (which is about 11%). As far as the evaluation of the incumbent's electoral programme is concerned, there is not a single publication in the weeklies "Niedziela" and "Idziemy" that would call into question the validity of the incumbent's programme statements. More critical in the assessment of Duda's political aspirations turned out to be "Gość Niedzielny", in which a total of 6.66% of publications classified in the categories 'inconsistency' and 'mixed' were recorded in the examined feature EVALUATION OF THE ELECTION PROGRAMME OF ANDRZEJ DUDA. In turn, the "Przewodnik Katolicki" most frequently contested the political project of the President (in total, over 33% of publications undermined, at least in part, the validity of the Duda's programme declarations).

"Gość Niedzielny"

A press analysis proved that you could find statements made by Polish bishops related to the presidential campaign (the position of the President of Polish Episcopal Conference, Archbishop Gądecki concerning the criteria that should be met by the president) [Gądecki, 2020, p. 22] and the statements of the clergy explaining the principles of Catholic social teaching about the criteria that should guide a Catholic in elections, as well as concerning the consequences of concordat for relations between state and church, only in the pages of the "Gość Niedzielny" [Burgoński, 2020, pp. 40-41; Kowalczyk D., 2020c, p. 38]. The above statements did not constitute a formal political commitment and support given to any of the candidates.

The weekly magazine features extensive statements by representatives of the government of Zjednoczona Prawica (*United Right-wing*), exposing the political achievements of the 'good change' camp, for example, an interview with climate minister Michał Kurtyka, in which the politician emphasised Poland's success at the COP24 conference in Katowice [Kurtyka, 2020, pp. 20-21]; an interview with national defence minister Mariusz Błaszczak on the importance of purchasing F-35 planes for Poland's security [Błaszczak, 2020, pp. 20-21]; an interview with foreign affairs minister Jacek Czaputowicz on Poland's involvement in the defence of freedom of religion in the world [Czaputowicz, 2020, pp. 48-49] or an interview with deputy prime minister Jadwiga Emilewicz on government support programmes for companies and housing and pharmaceutical packages [Emilewicz, 2020, pp. 22-24].

The political achievements of the Morawiecki's government and President Duda were presented with approval and recognition by the authors of the *Gość Niedzielny* as a result of joint actions of the head of government and the head of state in the area of foreign policy, social policy and pro-family policy. The weekly magazine addressed, among other things, the following issues of the political agenda: the meeting of President Macron of France with Prime Minister Morawiecki [Dziedzina, 2020b, pp. 34-36; Bault, 2020, p. 35]; the cross-cut of the Vistula Spit, which will enable Poland to gain a significant port in the Baltic trade [Jałowiczor, 2020a, pp. 32-34]; the introduction of further anti-crisis shields during a pandemic [Krzemiński, 2020, pp. 35-37]; the signing of the Family Charter by Andrzej Duda, which assumes, among other things, „maintenance of social benefits such as 500 Plus and 300 Plus, introduction of a holiday voucher and support for the disabled, protection of marriage understood as a relationship between a man and a woman, lack of consent for adoption of children by homosexual couples

and ban on promoting LGBT ideology in public institutions” [Jałowiczor, 2020b, p. 10; Łoziński, 2020b, p. 8].

Andrzej Duda was presented in the weekly newspaper as a man of prayer and Christian values [Dziedzina, 2020a, p. 14]. The periodical paid compliment the actions of the incumbent during the lockdown period, which proved concern for the economy and the health of citizens [Kabiesz, 2020, p. 11], although, as Piotr Legutko [2020, p. 48-49] noted, these were unpopular actions, marked by the risk of losing public support.

The only publication was recorded in the pages of “Gość Niedzielny”, in which the government of Zjednoczona Prawica has been criticised, namely *Aborcja i obrona dzieci w Sejmie* [Abortion and Defence of Children in the Sejm]. It highlights the negative attitude of Prawo i Sprawiedliwość towards the proposals to ban eugenic abortion and to protect children from sexualisation [Łoziński, 2020a, pp. 42-43].

It is worth noting that the periodical presented the views and activities of Rafał Trzaskowski - Andrzej Duda’s main rival - in the tone of disapproval:

“The problem begins when we look at his [Trzaskowski’s] views and activities. In KO he is a representative of the left-wing current. For example, as the ruler of the capital, he signed the LGBT Charter, which, among other things, provided for the introduction of sexual education according to the depraving standards of the WHO, which triggered loud protests. (...) Trzaskowski’s task is to regain the lost electorate, which was largely taken over by Szymon Hołownia. The President of Warsaw, with his liberal views in the sphere of customs, may also be attractive to people with left-wing views [Łoziński, 2020e, p. 10].

The text *Poznaj kandydatów* describes six candidates for the office of President of the Republic of Poland, who received the highest support in surveys, in terms of their reference to the teaching of the Church [Łoziński, 2020d, p. 28]. The above publication presents the differences in worldviews between Duda and Trzaskowski. The President-in-Office was presented as a candidate meeting the criteria of Catholic social teaching, a co-creator of the successes of the government of Zjednoczona Prawica, and a man of high competence to perform the highest functions in the state. In turn, among the activities of the candidate of Koalicja Obywatelska (*Civic Coalition*, KO) it was stressed the signing of the LGBT Charter; financial support for the in vitro programme as Mayor of Warsaw; patronage of equality parades, failure to fulfil the promises made when applying for the office of Mayor of Warsaw, aversion to Prawo i Sprawiedliwość, and good education [Ibid, p. 29].

The editors of the periodical did not omit the political debate on the new election date, in the face of the impossibility of holding a vote on 10 May 2020, explaining that the Prawo i Sprawiedliwość party does not want to introduce a state of natural disaster and postpone the election until a more distant date, due to particular interests, when society will start to feel the negative economic effects of the pandemic and, as a consequence, public support for President Duda in his efforts to re-elect will diminish [Grajewski, 2020a, p. 10]. The *Gość Niedzielny* also presented the legal basis for the elections, which were held on the new date, i.e. 28 June 2020 [Łoziński, 2020f, pp. 40-41; Dziedzina, 2020c, pp. 48-49].

The periodical also highlighted Duda’s independence in making autonomous decisions, as exemplified by Jacek Kurski’s removal from the post of president of TVP in the spring of 2020 [Grajewski, 2020d, pp. 46-47] or the veto on the reform of the judicial system and the law on Regional Chambers of Auditors [Grajewski, 2020b, p. 18]. However, the weekly was not uncritical of the reforms in the justice system by the Prawo i Sprawiedliwość party [Łoziński, 2020c, pp. 40-42] and the negotiations between Deputy Prime Minister Sasin and trade unionists from the Polish Mining Group on the level of miners’

salaries [Grajewski, 2020c, p. 9].

“Niedziela”

The weekly newspaper “Niedziela” reported in detail the Andrzej Duda’s electoral campaign in approving tone, treating him as the candidate with the greatest chance of victory and explaining the reasons for this opinion as follows:

“Whatever Kidawa-Błońska, Holownia, Biedroń or Władysław Kosianiak-Kamysz might say, polls, but also the so-called common sense suggest that Andrzej Duda is the favourite of the race to the Presidential Palace [Dudkiewicz, 2020a, p. 5]. (...) He kept the vast majority of his election promises, remained faithful to his programme, and at the same time forced a correction of the course of the political camp from which he himself originated. He and his wife represent the Republic of Poland in the international forum with dignity [Karnowski M., 2020a, p. 45]”.

“Niedziela” reported extensively - in the form of a reportage - one day from the campaign of the president Duda in Uniejowice, Złotoryja and Trzebnica, on the farm of a married couple of farmers Anna and Grzegorz Bardowski, known from the television show *Rolnik szuka żony* (*The farmer is looking for a wife*) [Woynarowska, 2020, pp. 12-13]. The press publication cited positive opinions about the president:

“The majority will vote for Duda, because he keeps his word. He loves Poland and cares for a family – says the old man. - I’ve never lived better than I do now, adds the second. Both of them burned by the sun, with their hands worked, and thick as a loaf of bread. - He is the best president we have had - said a younger man with a blushing kid in his arms [ibid, p. 13]”.

The statements made by Andrzej Duda himself, concerning fulfilment of the promises of the 500+ programme, the lowering of the retirement age for Poles and the reform of the Polish Supreme Court, are also quoted:

“This support from the Polish state was provided by the 500+ programme. This is a great reason for me to be proud. I will not let those programmes which support the family go! I will neither make them worse nor abolish them! (...) I am not afraid that those who raised the retirement age for Poles, when I lower and sign the law, will call me a ‘pen’. I work for my compatriots. I am not afraid of insults. When I sign the law that is reforming the Polish Supreme Court, they will call me dirty names. Well, it’s hard. It is important that I do what you expect me to do, what Poland needs,’ he points out. (...) I am happy to be here to talk about Poland and what needs to be done so that they - who have nothing to offer except screaming - will not spoil us Poland again (...) I want to continue to work for the Republic of Poland, work for the state that I started in 2015. [ibid.]”.

The editorial staff of *Częstochowa* magazine listed the achievements of Duda’s presidency and the government of the ‘good change’ camp in the area of economy, adopted values, foreign policy and social policy. All the publications of “Niedziela” without exception reported on the achievements of the incumbent and the government of the Prawo i Sprawiedliwość party in the key of the attitude of service for the common good of Poles, for example, the takeover of the German airline Condor by LOT [Grzybowski, 2020, p. 8], the prevention of cases of academic freedom restrictions [Dudkiewicz, 2020a, p. 5], the participation of the Speaker of the Sejm Elżbieta Witek in the Pilgrimage

of Polish Parliamentarians [Tomoń, 2020, p. 9], the signing of the Family Charter by President Duda [Dudkiewicz, 2020a, p. 5], the meeting with Emmanuel Macron [Stelmasiak, 2020b, p. 29], the meeting with Donald Trump at the White House [Dudkiewicz, 2020e, p. 5; Górski, 2020, pp. 8-9], and the reforms in the judiciary [Johann, 2020, pp. 46-47].

The politician was presented as the 'President of Polish affairs', who consistently implemented the 2015 electoral programme, was active at home and in international politics, understood Polish affairs perfectly and fought effectively against the consequences of the coronavirus pandemic in order to reduce the negative consequences for the economy and, above all, save jobs [Mucha, 2020, pp. 10-11; Duda, 2020, pp. 26-29].

The editorial staff of "Niedziela" has highlighted the beliefs of the most important rivals of Andrzej Duda as negative and contrary to Christian science:

"Left-wing candidate Robert Biedroń is too radical in his worldview even for left-wing voters. The participants of LGBT marches, supporters of abortion and homosexual unions will probably vote for him. In recent days, Biedroń has become famous for the fact that Poland was destroyed more during the PiS era than during the Communist era. (...) Władysław Kosiniak-Kamysz can change his views quite often. After all, less than a year ago he sat next to Donald Tusk and applauded Jazdźewski's extreme left-wing and anti-church speech. (...) The question mark is the journalist and TV celebrity Szymon Hołownia. He is partly associated with the Church, and his start is calculated to receive the more conservative PO electorate and probably some of the PiS voters. Unfortunately, Hołownia is very distanced in the election campaign on key issues of the Church's teaching, such as homosexual relationships, he supports eugenic abortion, and recently stated that it has changed its views and supports in vitro [Sarafin, 2020, p. 5]"

"Niedziela" associated with the person of Trzaskowski, among other things, obstructing the enactment of laws enabling the elections to be conducted in a safe, constitutional and democratic manner, obstructive extension by the opposition Senate of work on the law on postal voting, and fulfilment of only five of the 77 promises made during the campaign before the local elections in 2018. The periodical also highlighted the declarations of candidate KO concerning the detention of important 'good change' investments initiated by the camp, i.e. the crossing of the Vistula Spit and the construction of the Central Communication Port [Dudkiewicz, 2020d, p. 8].

In turn, Szymon Hołownia was presented by "Niedziela" as a candidate who instrumentally used the Catholic Church to build his own popularity and authority:

"He probably went around half the Polish parishes, because people of faith saw him as a young person who was taken over by the fate of the Church. They trusted him. Today, many are saddened and bruised, many feel cheated. It can be said that candidate Hołownia is today using the popularity and authority he has gained on his alleged concern for the Church in a bizarre and disorderly way, in my opinion [Karnowski M., 2020b, p. 45].

"Niedziela" also highlighted the possible consequences of choosing Trzaskowski and Duda. The victory of the candidate of the Civic Coalition was associated with the liquidation of pro-social programmes and the dismantling of pro-family policy, which is exemplified by the signing of the Warsaw LGBT+ Declaration. In turn, the election of Andrzej Duda was a guarantee of continuation of the flagship programmes, such as the 'Family 500+', an increase in the minimum pension and the so-called 13th pension for seniors [Stelmasiak, 2020a, p. 28].

“Idziemy”

The “Idziemy” weekly newspaper clearly legitimised the political activities of the ministers of the Morawiecki’s Government, including Health Minister Łukasz Szumowski and Deputy Minister of Justice Marcin Warchoł, and gave political support to Andrzej Duda [Szumowski, 2020, pp. 10-11; Warchoł, 2020, p. 4]. The periodical approved President Duda’s decision not to participate in the Holocaust Memorial Forum in January 2020, which did not provide for a speech by the Polish leader [Jurek, 2020b, p. 22], but also spoke favourably of the reform of the justice system carried out by the Prawo i Sprawiedliwość Party [Karnowski M., 2020b, p. 16].

The coronavirus epidemic was used by the authors of “Idziemy” to apply a bipolar narrative, i.e., on the one hand, to highlight in a positive tone the actions of the PiS’s government and President Duda in the framework of proper crisis management, and on the other hand, to critically assess the Civic Coalition’s programme proposals:

“If it were not for the fact that we have Orlen, Polfa and LOT, our government would not be able to launch the production of disinfectants, nor would it be able to attract citizens who are stuck abroad; it could at most ask for it foreign companies or other governments. Against this background, the programme proposals of the Citizens’ Coalition, which wants to abolish provincial governors, are still particularly dangerous, and in some analytical documents they goes even further, thinking about abolishing the ministries of education, science, the economy, the family, agriculture and sport, and about abolishing a health service that is uniform throughout the country. The question can and should be asked whether the politicians who submitted such projects, which are so dangerous for all of us, now have a moral right to criticise the actions of the government. (...) Indicators of trust for the Prime Minister and Minister for Health are increasing, as are the ratings of the PiS party and President Andrzej Duda. It is no coincidence that the opposition - including Donald Tusk - is beginning to call for a postponement of the presidential elections. If the fight against the epidemic had gone wrong for those in power, they would have called for a vote no matter what [Karnowski J., 2020c, p. 16. Cf. also Jurek, 2020c, p. 22; Karnowski J., 2020b, p. 16; Karnowski J., 2020e, p. 15; Zieliński, 2020a, p. 3; Karnowski J., 2020f, p. 15; Karnowski J., 2020g, p. 16; Kowalczyk H., 2020, p. 4]”.

However, the weekly newspaper criticises the activities of the PiS party, concerning its position on two projects, namely ‘Stop Abortion’ and ‘Stop Paedophilia’, and the lack of support for the Association of Large Families, in connection with their protest against the visits and activities of LGBTQ activists in schools aimed at disrupting the sexuality of children and young people [Wasiewicz, 2020, p. 4]. As Henryk Zieliński points out, these laws were inconvenient for the Zjednoczona Prawica because they arouse great social emotions, especially in LGBT, feminist and left-wing circles. The editor-in-chief of *Idziemy* linked the hope for their implementation with the person of the President of the Republic of Poland [Zieliński, 2020c, p. 3. Cf. also Jurek, 2020a, p. 22; Zieliński, 2020b, p. 3].

In the weekly newspaper “Idziemy” the silhouette of Szymon Holownia was presented in a negative tone as a ‘politically correct celebrity’ and as a ‘non-lame Catholic’ [Karnowski M., 2020b, p. 3]. The periodical pointed out the practical consequences of his election victory: the removal of crosses from public space; the President’s non-participation in official masses; the rejection of the concept of the nation’s religious identity; the removal of religion from schools, thus departing from the idea of the helping state, supporting parents in raising and educating their children. The PSL candidate’s announcement to ‘take politics out of churches’ also remained unclear to the editor-in-chief of

“Idziemy” [Ibid.].

For the weekly newspaper, the ideological dispute was an important part of the presidential campaign [Wasiewicz, 2020, p. 4; Jurek, 2020d, p. 22], in which ‘the unfavourable civilizational and social processes that we have been struggling with for years, such as secularisation, the family crisis, the offensive of LGBT ideology or a kind of new internationalism, centred around the fight against alleged climate change, are accumulated’ [Karnowski J., 2020d, p. 16; Kowalczyk D., 2020a, p. 9]. In this context of the dispute, Andrzej Duda was presented as a guarantor of Christian values [Zieliński, 2020d, p. 3; Karnowski J., 2020i, p. 16]. The periodical also highlighted the patriotic features of the incumbent, concerning concern for the memory of cursed soldiers [Ibid., 2020, p. 26].

Immediately before the second round of the election, the weekly newspaper very clearly supported Andrzej Duda, indicating the consequences of his victory or defeat:

“Andrzej Duda’s victory will give Poland three years of peace. They will endure the changes that have taken place in our country in recent years and cannot be easily reversed. And yet these are changes - despite all the ‘buts’ and all the mistakes of the power camp - fundamental, which means overcoming of post-communism and naive liberalism. Andrzej Duda’s defeat will lead us into a vicious conflict for a long time. It will speed up unfavourable trends in world views and civilisation. It will push us off the course of strengthening our sovereignty. And we will lose a good president, entrusting the highest office in the state to a man who is able to put on any disguise for political gain. Rainbow, if necessary - Catholic and red-white, if necessary. And who he really is, we do not know that. Perhaps he does not know either? [Karnowski J., 2020a, p. 16].

“Przewodnik Katolicki”

The “Przewodnik Katolicki” did not give political support to any of the candidates for the office of President, but focused the reader’s attention on the polarisation of the Polish political scene, explaining its causes and the current significance of the institutional church in the public space. The periodical, referring to the IBRiS survey for the “Rzeczpospolita” daily, highlighted a huge decrease in the social trust of Poles in the Catholic Church: over the four years (2016-2020) as much as 18.5%. (from 58% to 39.5%) [Milcarek, Nosowski, Sowiński, 2020, p. 18]. The weekly magazine presents the position of Paweł Milcarek, editor-in-chief of the Christianitas quarterly, concerning the bishops’ fear of the authorities, expressed in an assumed attitude of silence that ‘deftly creates the impression that it is some kind of foreground of Christianity’ [Ibid, p. 18]. Sławomir Sowiński, commenting on the above results of the survey, stressed the unfavourable consequences of the alliance of the throne and altar for the institutions of the Church:

“(…) in a situation of acute social conflict, which we complain about so much, it is only the Church, and not the government, media or other public institutions, that pays with the loss of social trust (...). It seems, however, that the Church is also paying a very high price today for the growing social conviction that an alliance between the throne and the altar is emerging after 2015 (This is what, for example, 63% of those surveyed by SW Research for the Rp.pl website thought in May 2019) [Ibid, p. 19]”.

The political scientist presented a postulate for the political independence of the Church, ‘to speak more clearly about public matters with one’s own voice, without giving the field of one’s responsibility to politicians, to emphasise more courageously that no political environment has, because it cannot, a patent on Catholicism or a kind of politi-

cal mandate defensor fidei' [Ibid. Cf. also Stopka, 2020, pp. 24-25].

The weekly newspaper praised the 'good change' camp for the pro-social and pro-family programmes of the Mateusz Morawiecki's government, i.e. the 'Family 500 plus', 'Toddler plus' and the 'mother's pension programme' [Wójcik, 2020, p. 29].

The "Przewodnik Katolicki" highlighted the problem of polarisation of the Polish political scene, which was highlighted by the election campaign in 2020. As Antoni Dudek pointed out, Duda and Trzaskowski are centre politicians, declaring a certain system of values and you should not disown the other side with the slogan: we represent values, and you represent only anti-values' [Dudek, 2020, p. 18]. Tomasz Królak criticised the attitude of both Duda and Trzaskowski, who, in his opinion, contributed to the escalation of reluctance, creating a sad and inferior show [Królak, 2020, p. 11]. In turn, the text *Obie strony grały znaczonymi kartami* [Both sides played with marked cards], presenting 'the push for elections blindly of the power camp at a time when the epidemic was paralysing our lives', as well as the demagoguery of the PO, which said that 'the virus is carried through the paper, and a few days after the resignation from the May elections it called for signatures to be collected for its new candidate' [Zaremba, 2020a, p. 39].

The "Przewodnik Katolicki" identified the reasons for Duda's low support among the youngest voters: the negative consequences of an excessive burden on the budget caused by the payment of the 13th and 14th pensions, and the ideological wars of Duda's staff, which confirms 'the image of conservatives as people overtaken by an anti-homosexual obsession' [Szułdryński, 2020a, p. 38; Szułdryński, 2020b, p. 32].

It is also worth noting that the recommendations of Minister of Health Łukasz Szumowski during the coronavirus pandemic were questioned by the weekly magazine, because a mutual contradiction between arguments aimed at protecting the health of citizens and those of a political nature was noticed [Zaremba, 2020b, p. 35].

Conclusions

The analysis carried out leads to the conclusion that the H1 claim is true, i.e. it is true that 'the national Catholic press titles "Gość Niedzielny", "Niedziela", "Idziemy", "Przewodnik Katolicki" have taken up the topic of the 2020 presidential campaign. The results of the quantitative and qualitative analysis of "Gość Niedzielny", "Niedziela" and "Idziemy" clearly proved their support for Andrzej Duda. The percentage of publications of the "Przewodnik Katolicki" dedicated to the incumbent president is the highest compared to the other texts relating to the other candidates. The periodical noticed and positively assessed the achievements of the right-wing camp. This is the basis for concluding that the statement H2 should be considered true for all analysed press titles.

The titles of the Catholic press that were selected for analysis were dedicated most attention to the incumbent. This is proved by the number of texts assigned to the category of 'Andrzej Duda' in the first examined feature. This politician was the only one of the candidates for the office of President of the Republic of Poland with whom the Polish Catholic press conducted an interview [Duda, 2020, pp. 26-29].

The political commitment of periodicals should be assessed as exceeding the limits of the Church's institutional commitment set by Catholic social teaching. The authors of the press texts assessed individual worldviews, political decisions and election programmes of the candidates to whom the election polls attributed the best result. It may be interesting to note that the figure of Krzysztof Bosak has been completely overlooked by Catholic press titles, despite the candidate's declared attachment to the Church and Christian values. Perhaps this was a deliberate move not to weaken Andrzej Duda's candidacy in the skirmish with Rafał Trzaskowski. One should appreciate the "Przewodnik Katolicki", which, unlike "Niedziela", "Gość Niedzielny" and "Idziemy", has not been subject to a unilateral approval of the incumbent's political action and programme. As a re-

sult, the position of the Poznań weekly magazine in the electoral political discourse can be seen as the most credible voice of all analysed press titles, offering a broad spectrum of views on the profiles and programmes of the candidates.

All Catholic weeklies without exception presented the dynamism and specificity of the presidential campaign (the context of the pandemic, lockdown and its economic consequences), the evaluation of the most important social programmes of the PiS party, and the problem of polarisation of the Polish political scene (PiS and Anti-PiS).

The "Gość Niedzielny", "Niedziela" and "Idziemy" used abbreviations, e.g. 'you are in favour of maintaining social programmes - vote for Andrzej Duda', 'you support the LGBT card - vote for Rafał Trzaskowski'. This type of black and white image of the presidential campaign was subjective and unbelievable, in which only one candidate became the 'perfect candidate without flaws' for whom a Catholic should vote, while in the case of the other rivals of Duda, only those issues which are incompatible with the teaching of the Church were highlighted.

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