
CATHOLIC CHURCH IN POLAND IN THE FACE OF PAEDOPHILIA ANALYSIS OF IMAGE ACTIONS

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Abstract

Increasing social interest regarding sexual abuse of minors committed by clergymen forces Episcopal Conferences of relative countries to take a formal stance on the subject. Skilful planning of media communicates is a challenge for the Church. Critical analysis of conference involving clergymen giving an account on the scale of the problem is helpful, especially when the media reception of such a conference was very negative. This article tackles cases like that.

Keywords: Catholic Church, media relations, image creation, public relations, paedophilia

1. Introduction

The Catholic Church in Poland - despite the fact that in public opinion is treated as a stronghold of conservatism, traditionalism, suspicion towards progress and novelty, has changed significantly since the end of XX century and continues to change its attitude, especially when it comes to usage of social communication and mass media. Increasing the Church openness towards media relations and using a wider range of social communications tools is increasingly visible, but this activity is too limited, sometimes handled amateurlly and with lots of mistakes. The Church's attitude towards mass media was revolutionised by teachings of Pope John Paul II [1], but considerations regarding relations between the Church and mass media in Poland were initialised in the second half of the XX century by Primate Stefan Wyszyński [2].

Since the Second Vatican Council [3] a dynamic transformation of the Church happens, backed by opening to progress and adjusting to conditions in which its believers live, including an area of social communication [4]. Much indicates that the Internet, information revolution, and social changes leading to

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the creation and consolidation of knowledge society impact the dynamics of those changes. The Internet lost the privilege of being a new medium, became common, and is present in all parts of human activity. Virtualized reality in which modern people live has entered subtle meanders of faith and spirituality. J. Kloch points this out, saying: “at a first glance modern technologies and two thousand-year-old religious community does not match. But if you take a closer look, they overlap in many points - for example, the Church can use the Internet to fulfil its mission or provide a moral code creating a strong axiological foundation for surfers.” [5]

Internet and social media are used more effectively and commonly in the Catholic Church’s communication in Poland [6]. Mass and new media are used by the Church to some extent both to evangelize and for marketing purposes, because environment relations strategies, public relations - which includes media relations - or crisis management can be an element of both typical social communication and marketing [7]. Communication tools used by the Church are most usually similar to marketing mix tools, known in marketing theory [8].

Skilful communication with the environment is especially important when crisis strikes, which can lead to huge image damage, loss of trust, economic, and legal issues. Depending on the type of the crisis, its character, and scale, the organisation is obliged to conduct skilful dialogue with internal and external subjects. Crisis communication is a piece of clear evidence for applying multi-layer social communication for effective management. It is also a part of marketing communication, as its goal is to protect organisation’s image or minimise possible damage. Many authors dealing with crisis management and communication enlist several rules that should be followed in case of a crisis, concentrating on phases of crisis management [9], categorisation of key communicates [10] and rules of cooperation with groups of stakeholders [11].

The Catholic Church in Poland has recently encountered many crises. They were most usually founded on lack of clarity when it comes to sources of money for the Church, but increasing numbers of them are regarding the immoral deeds of the clergymen revealed by mass media. Falling trust to the Church is also caused by the fact that after the political system has changed, it has become one of organisations that had not only its identity and mission but also interests [12]. According to J. Mariański (Polish Catholic priest, professor of Humanities, specializes in the sociology of morality and the sociology of religion), a critique of Church in Polish society, that has been present since the political transformation, has increased in size recently. List of objections is constant from twenty years and includes, among other things: overly concern of priests about tangible goods [13], drive to reclaim privileges that were lost during communism, influence on society and fiddling with politics [14], conservative morality and moral scandals with some priests and bishops that were brought to public attention by mass media [J. Mariański, *Czy ufamy Kościołowi?*, www.ekai.pl, 11/10/2011]. But not only those things increase the risk of a crisis occurring. According to M. Przybysz, the Church is characterised by being in a permanent crisis, as it is “a persistent *sign of opposition* towards

civilisation of death, anticulture, armaments and aggression, communism and forcing anthropology without God, *etsi Deus non daretus* (as there is no God) lifestyle, and in this regards crisis is built into it” [15]. This permanent crisis seems to be increasing in intensity, which is confirmed by Father Kazimierz Sowa (Polish Roman Catholic priest, journalist, publicist): “The Church has become a whipping boy - some media has recently noticed that and started saying that the Church has stopped being a sacred cow. This was always present in the media, but just recently moved into the mainstream.” [16] Everything points to the fact that the Church in Poland has to deal with increasingly common crises, especially those widely reported by media. This should enforce change in attitude towards openness to media and public opinion by the Church authorities and professionalization of actions in the crisis communication area.

The Catholic Church at the beginning of the 21st century had to face not only pastoral but image challenges. Worldview matters, like problems families are facing, institution of marriage, place of homosexuals in the Church, which are in constant debate in mass media [Synod of Bishops, *XIV ordinary general assembly. The vocation and mission of the family in the Church and contemporary World*, Lineamenta, Vatican City, 2014, <https://bit.ly/2P1sHwk>, accessed on 11.02.2020], create dangers of critical public reception. One of the burning problems for the Church at the beginning of the 21st century was paedophilia. This was strongly indicated by a journalistic investigation awarded with a Pulitzer Prize conducted by The Boston Globe regarding sexual abuse of minors committed by American catholic clergymen [The 2003 Pulitzer Prize Winner in Public Service, <https://www.pulitzer.org/winners/boston-globe-1>, accessed on 24.02.2020]. This problem seems different than all others. Medially problematic topics for the Church are usually an intellectual challenge. On theological and philosophical level Magisterium states its official stance and indicates a path that each clergyman and believer should follow. It looks like this when, for example, protection of the unborn, promotion of chastity until marriage, marriage and family institution, priesthood for males only, is concerned. Those official statements are a topic of debate in media, and there they are under public scrutiny.

Cases of paedophilic priests are in stark contrast with the Church’s teachings and are punishable by the strictest penalties under the Code of Canon Law [Code of canon law, can. 1395 §1, http://www.vatican.va/archive/cod-iuris-canonici/eng/documents/cic_lib6-cann1364-1399_en.html#TITLE_V., accessed on 24.03.2020]. In this regard, they can be compared to violating the celibacy or admission of active homosexuality. There are also offenses of different severity for which excommunication is the punishment, like breaking the seal of confession or disrespect to Eucharist. Committing paedophilia will result in a person being expelled from the priesthood, but this happens after a trial. Cases like this can be an image problem for the Catholic Church, which can be shown on an example of ex-priest Krzysztof Charamas, secretary of International Theological Commission [S. Kirchgassner, *Ex-Vatican official Krzysztof Charamas: 'I'm a gay man. I'm not a monster'*, The Guardian,

<https://bit.ly/2X1t92e>, accessed on 24.03.2020]. Balancing homosexuality or violation of celibacy with paedophilia may be correct regarding a breach between official teaching and practices of individual priests, but it is completely unfounded when it comes to the severity of the offense and violation of secular law. Even a case of bishop Paetz, who was accused of homosexual abuse of clerics [M. Paulson, B. Whitmore, *Polish cleric resigns amid scandal*, 2002, *The Boston Globe*, <https://bit.ly/3g6hbf1>, accessed on 24.03.2020] - which greatly damaged media image of the Church in Poland - is hard to compare with sexual abuse of children, due to age of the victims. Episcopacy, in guidelines, issued 08.10.2014 underlined the fact that the most basic rule of the Church's service is respect for the dignity of each person, pointing out the need for children to be raised in a safe and violence-free environment. It also states that violating the physical or mental integrity of children is forbidden. Because of that, the Church treats sexual abuse as a mortal sin and a crime, and people committing it must be punished according to current Canon and civil law [<https://ekai.pl/wytyczne-kosciola-w-polsce-wobec-pedofilii-2/>, accessed on 27.03.2020].

The problem of paedophilia in Poland is very complex and multidimensional. It is a reflection of a global trend to expose the scale of paedophilic problems in the Catholic Church. This trend is not limited to the Church though. Famous in 2017 'me too' initiative, which was regarding unearthing scandals about sexual abuse that women from media had to suffer also when they were minors. Culture and pop culture is more interested in priests committing paedophilia. The topic of mentioned previously investigation was adopted by 'Spotlight' fictionalised movie from 2015 (which was awarded two Oscars, including one for the best movie), which depicted paedophilic affair among American clergymen. In Poland, two notable pictures were widely commented - the first one is 'Kler' (Clergy) - a drama from 2018 by Wojciech Smarzowski and 'Tylko nie mów nikomu' (Tell no one) - a documentary from 2019 by Sekielski brothers.

The purpose of the article is a critical analysis of the image situation of the Church in Poland in the context of the paedophilia problem. The subjects of the study were two aspects. The first one was the analysis of the reception of subjects concerning the Church and paedophilia in the social environment, where the research method was a quantitative analysis of data collected by Google trends and media monitoring. The second aspect was a direct critical analysis of the press conference of the Polish Bishops' Conference, which held the subject of paedophilia in the Church to account.

2. Analysis - social interest in paedophilia problem in Polish Church

Very interesting data regarding the coexistence of paedophilia and the Church can be drawn by analysing number of searches for phrases Church (organisation) and paedophilia (topic) in Google Trends. The number of searches was polled for each week from 01.01.2015 to 31.12.2019. It can be noticed that for the whole timespan (data for 261 weeks) searching for phrases Church and

paedophilia correlates mediocly. In this article correlation significance was interpreted based on J. Guilford's classification [17] - Pearson's $r = 0.316$. But for such a long timeframe it is symptomatic. Looking for correlations for those searches for each year, we can see a significant correlation in the years 2017 and 2019. While in 2017 correlation is medium (Pearson's $r = 0.332$), then in 2019 we can observe a strong correlation (Pearson's $r = 0.525$).

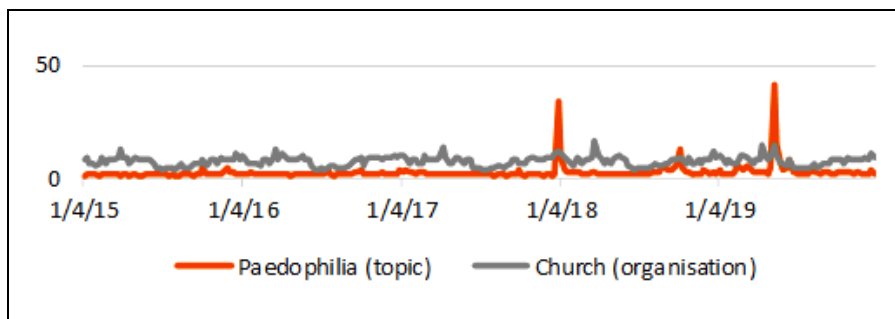


Figure 1. Searches for phrases Church (organisation) and paedophilia (topic) from 01.01.2015 to 31.12.2019, weekly interval.

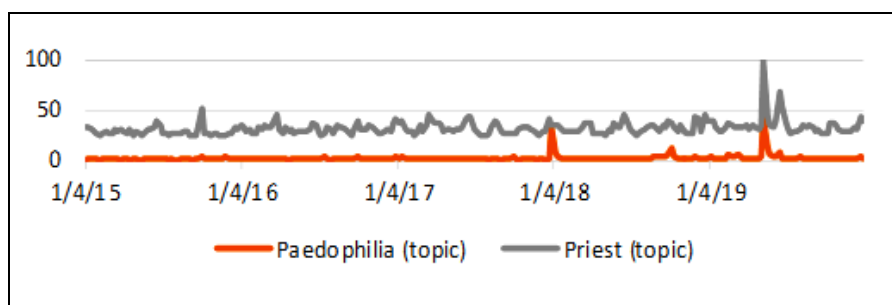


Figure 2. Searches for phrases priest (topic) and paedophilia (topic) from 01.01.2015 to 31.12.2019, weekly intervals.

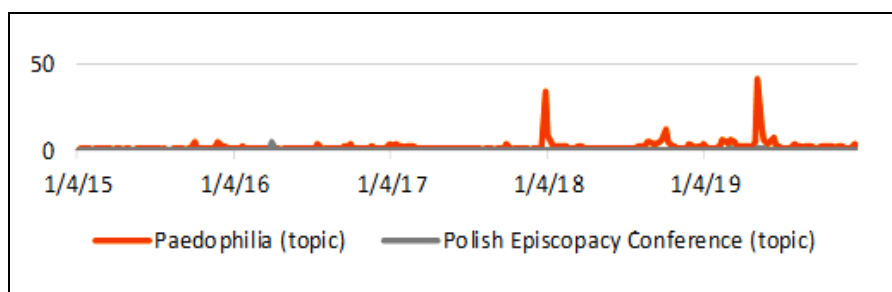


Figure 3. Searches for phrases Polish Bishops' Conference (topic) and paedophilia (topic) from 01.01.2015 to 31.12.2019, weekly interval.

Numbers on Figure 1 represent the number of searches relative to the highest point on the graph. Value of 100 means the highest popularity of the search, the value of 50 means that search was half as popular, the value of 0

means insufficient data was gathered. Phrases analysed: a priest (topic), paedophilia (topic), Church (organisation), Polish Bishops' Conference (topic). Value of 100 was reached by the phrase priest in the week starting from 12.05.2019.

There is an even stronger correlation between phrases priest (topic) and paedophilia (topic). In analogous time (from 01.01.2015 to 31.12.2019) correlation between the number of searches for those phrases in weekly intervals was high - Pearson's $r = 0.584$. Yearly analysis, shows correlations on medium level in 2015 - Pearson's $r = 0.366$, low in 2018 - Pearson's $r = 0.286$ and very high in 2019 - Pearson's $r = 0.853$.

Numbers on Figure 2 represent the number of searches relative to the highest point on the graph. Value of 100 means the highest popularity of the search, the value of 50 means that search was half as popular, the value of 0 means insufficient data was gathered. Phrases analysed were priest (topic), paedophilia (topic), Church (organisation), Polish Bishops' Conference (topic). A value of 100 was reached by a 'priest' phrase in a week starting from 12.05.2019.

In this summary, the phrase Polish Bishops' Conference (topic) was included. It was included as a control because even though the Church or priest have a clearly defined designator, they can function with different meanings, but Polish Bishops' Conference is a very narrow term. The coexistence of this phrase with the topic so seemingly distant as paedophilia can indicate high social interest in actions that the Church authorities have undertaken to solve this burning problem. In analysed five years there was a weak correlation between Polish Bishops' Conference (topic) and paedophilia (topic) - Pearson's $r = 0.220$. An annual comparison shows that from 2015 to 2017 there was no significant coexistence of these topics in web surfers' searches. In 2018 the number of searched correlated weakly - Pearson's $r = 0.278$, and in 2019 it very strongly - Pearson's $r = 0.582$. This is most likely due to this the Church branch taking action, which in turn increased coexistence of Polish Bishops' Conference and paedophilia phrases in searches.

Numbers on Figure 3 represent the number of searches relative to the highest point on the graph. Value of 100 means the highest popularity of the search, the value of 50 means that search was half as popular. Phrases analysed were: a priest (topic), paedophilia (topic), Church (organisation) and Polish Bishops' Conference (topic). A value of 100 was reached by a phrase priest in a week beginning from 12.05.2019.

An analysis of long time frames of Google searches shows that 2019 can be described as breakthrough when it comes to an increase of interest in paedophilia in the Church in Poland. Phrases The Church and priest strongly correlate with searches for phrase paedophilia. Social interest in the topic caused Polish Bishops' Conference to take action. The reception of various topics measured by the number of searches also looks promising. Events that prominently left their mark on the correlation between phrase paedophilia with phrases Church and priest were 2019 movie 'Say no one' by Sekielski brothers

and Polish Bishops' Conference. The second event was accompanied by a press conference that summarized internal findings regarding the scale of the paedophilia problem in the Catholic Church of Poland.

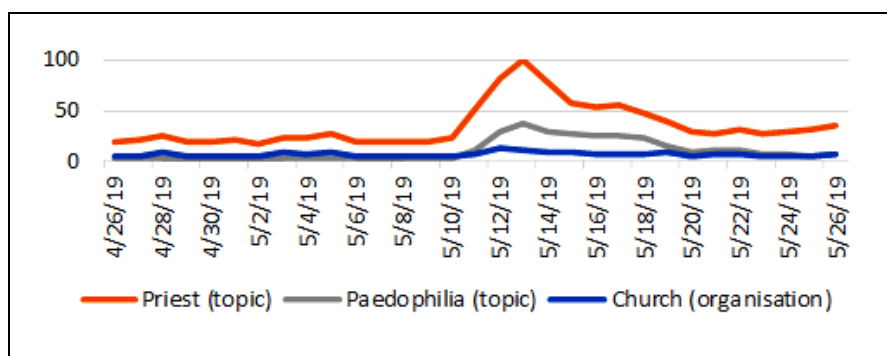


Figure 4. Searches for phrases priest (topic), Church (organisation) and paedophilia (topic) from 26.04.2019 to 26.05.2019, daily interval.

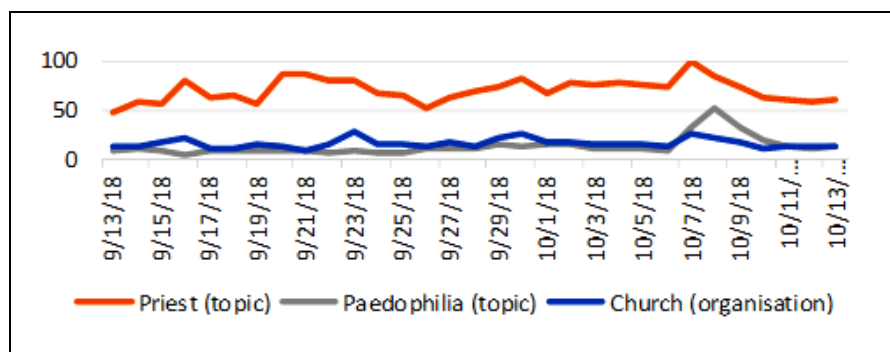


Figure 5. The number of searches for phrases priest (topic), Church (organisation) and paedophilia (topic) for 13.09.2018-13.10.2018, daily interval.

Stronger correlation between phrases Church (organisation) and paedophilia (topic) is visible in time directly before (15 days) and after (15 days) of 'Say no one' movie premiere, which was on 11th of May 2019. During this time the daily number of searches for phrases priest (topic) and paedophilia (topic) correlates nearly fully - Pearson's $r = 0.951$, while yearly average measured in weekly intervals was on the level of Pearson's $r = 0.853$. Correlation between phrases Church (organisation) and paedophilia (topic) was also high - Pearson's $r = 0.703$, while this phrase had an average of Pearson's $r = 0.525$.

Numbers on Figure 4 represent the number of searches relative to the highest point on the graph. Value of 100 means the highest popularity of the search, the value of 50 means that search was half as popular. Phrases analysed: a priest (topic), paedophilia (topic), Church (organisation), Polish Bishops' Conference (topic). A value of 100 was achieved by phrase priest in 13.05.2019.

A benchmark for the impact of 'Say no one' movie can be measured by correlation of the number of searches of tested phrases around the time that Wojciech Smarzowski's 'Clergy' film premiered on 28th of September 2018. The number of searches was probed in daily intervals for 15 days before and 15 days after that day. Correlation between phrases Church (organisation) and paedophilia (topic) was high - Pearson's $r = 0.510$, but it has to be noted that in 2018 when weekly intervals are considered, the correlation was very weak. In the probed timeframe of 13.09.2018-13.10.2018, no statistically significant correlation between phrases priest (topic) and paedophilia (topic) was noted. A similar procedure was used for searches for phrases: a priest (topic), Church (organisation), and paedophilia (topic) in Polish internet for the timeframe from 21.01.2016 to 21.02.2016, in the middle of which Spotlight movie was premiered. Quantitative phrase analysis conducted for the time around premieres of Polish movies proves that creating a film about paedophilia in the Church by Polish filmmakers could be a cultural catalyst for the social sentiment which in effect led Polish Bishops' Conference to take action. The worldly trend of showing the problem in pop culture did not have any significant impact on the number of searches of phrases tested in Poland, but local filmmakers' decision to explore the topic influenced the convergence in the number of searches very clearly.

Numbers on Figure 5 represent the number of searches relative to the highest point on the graph. Value of 100 means the highest popularity of the search, the value of 50 means that search was half as popular. Phrases analysed: a priest (topic), paedophilia (topic), and Polish Bishops' Conference (topic). The value of 100 was reached by phrase priest on 07.10.2018.

As we can see, 2019 was revolutionary in linking paedophilia with the Catholic Church in social reception. One of the most important - if not the most substantive - event of the year was the Polish Bishops' Conference, held on the 14th of March 2019, during which a meeting for the media was organised. It was two months before Siekielski brothers' movie premiere, but that document was pretty well-known already. The main aim of the press conference organised by Polish Bishops' Conference was revealing findings regarding sexual abuse of minors by Catholic priests in Poland. The number of searches for phrases Polish Bishops' Conference (topic) and paedophilia (topic) was probed in March 2019.

Numbers on Figure 6 represent the number of searches relative to the highest point on the graph. Value of 100 means the highest popularity of the search, the value of 50 means that search was half as popular. Phrases analysed: a priest (topic), paedophilia (topic) Church (organisation), and Polish Bishops' Conference (topic). The value of 100 was reached by a phrase priest on 14.03.2019.

Analysing data shown on Figure 6 it can be noticed that number of searches correlated very strongly - Pearson's $r = 0.776$ while the correlation for a whole year in weekly intervals was lower - Pearson's $r = 0.582$.

3. Research and discussion - media reception of PEC press conference

A strong correlation of the number of searches in Google for the phrase Polish Bishops' Conference and paedophilia was an impulse to analyse the topic of the Church's image in media more. March of 2019, which is the month when authorities of the Catholic Church in Poland presented a report about sexual abuse of minors by Catholic priests, traditional and electronic press was put under careful media monitoring for instances of phrases Episcopacy and paedophile/paedophilia stated together. General numerical data concerning the studied publications are included in Figure 7 and Table 1.

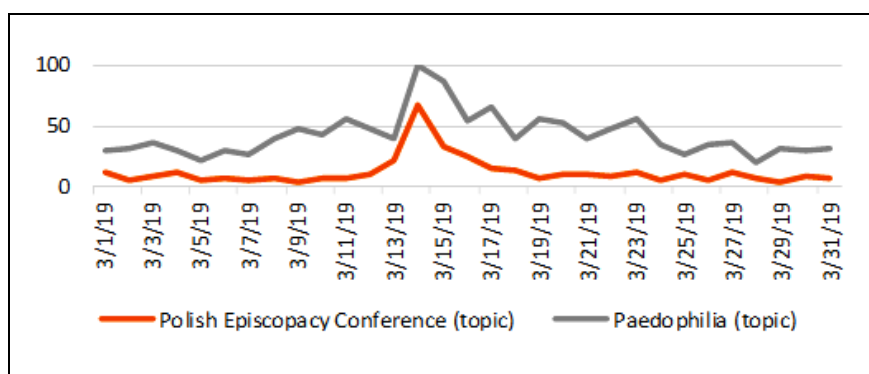


Figure 6. The number of searches of phrases Polish Bishops' Conference (topic) and paedophilia (topic) from 01.03.2019 to 31.03.2019, daily intervals.

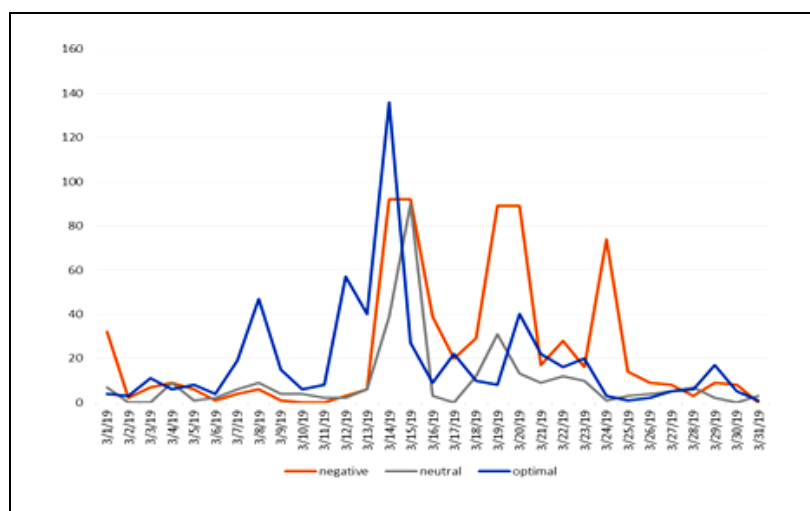


Figure 7. The number of publications divided by their attitude from 01.03.2019 to 31.03.2019, daily interval.

This unearthed 1587 publications that met those criteria. A day when the biggest number of hits was registered was 14th of March 2019 (267 instances) - which was the day of the press conference held by Polish Bishops' Conference.

Table 1. The number of publications divided by their attitude for 01.03.2019 to 31.03.2019, daily interval.

Attitude	All publications ^a		Publications about PEC only ^b	
	1-13.03.2019 N = 357	14-31.03.2019 N = 1230	1-13.03.2020 N = 92	14-31.03.2020 N = 629
negative	21.6%	51.7%	5.4%	46.9%
neutral	14.6%	19.9%	2.2%	21.5%
optimal	63.9%	28.4%	92.4%	31.6%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

^a chi-squared test = 156.040, $p < 0.001$, Kramer's V = 0.314

^b chi-squared test = 124.089; $p < 0.001$; Kramer's V = 0.415

Source: Own elaboration based on PSMM

All previous 13 days scored 357 hits, and all 17 days after - 953. This means that the topic of Episcopacy and paedophilia was intensively explored by the media during the whole analysed time, with a particular increase for the press conference day and the time immediately after. Analysed materials were grouped based on their attitude to the Catholic Church. (Neutral attitude - material strictly informative, its publication has no impact on the image of the organisation, some theoretically neutral materials may be classified as negative or positive if particular adjectives are included. Optimal attitude - material that may improve the image of organisation, this also includes articles that members of organisation make statements or are brought as experts. Negative attitude - material that may damage the image of organisation) During the monitored time, optimal attitude to the Church dominated before the conference. Most of them concentrated on the fact that Episcopacy is dealing with a very difficult problem of paedophilia and on announcements of denouncement and accounting for cases of priest abuse. This tone dominated until the 14th of March included, after which trend completely reversed and negative publications dominate.

Grouping the articles based on attitude from before the conference (1st-13th of March) and after the conference (14th-31st of March) some statistically significant differences between publications with optimal attitude (63.9% for 1-13.03.2019, 28.4% for 14-31.03.2019) compared with negative ones (21.6% for 1-13.03.2019, 51.7% for 14-31.03.2019) can be seen. A relation can also be observed when analysing reactions to the announcement of the PEC press conference and later reports about the event in the media. Among materials announcing the conference (for 1-13.03.2019), 92.4% was positive, while only 31.6% was relating the event in a positive way (for 14-31.03.2019). In turn, negative materials totalled to 5.4% before the event and 46.9% after.

Analysing the topic tackled by the media thoroughly we can notice that announcements about the presentation of the report about the problem of sexual abuse of minors by clergymen and later reaction to the event in media constituted half of the publications from March 2019 (721) that included phrases Episcopacy and paedophilia. Apart from that, around the event, journalistic descriptions of situation inside of the Church in the context of paedophilia (120 hits), among which majority (77) was negative, were also published. Noteworthy

is the fact that the problem of paedophilia among priests became political, as the leader of one of the left-wing parties appealed through media to Abp. Stanisław Gądecki to resign from the function of PEC chairman (106 publications). A strong indication that conference did not help the image, apart from the general negative attitude in articles, was widely reported in media protests against paedophilia among priests organized in front of Curias on 24.03.2019 (93 publications). The conclusion can be drawn that PEC meeting from 14.03.2020 did not meet expectations; what is more, it damaged the media image of the Church even more.

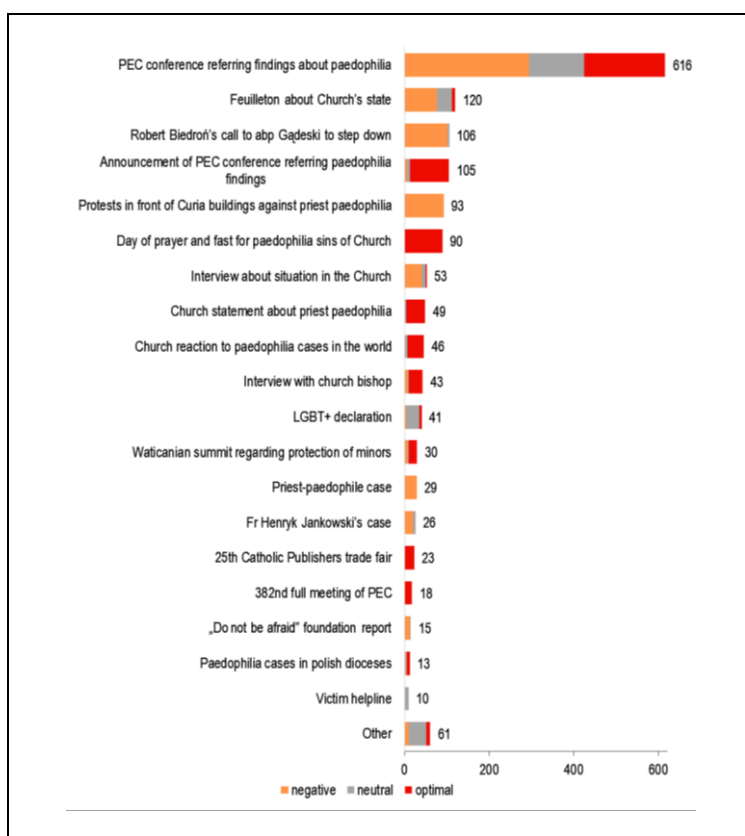


Figure 8. The number of publications, divided by their topic for 01.03.2019-31.03.2019, daily interval.

Numbers on Figure 8 represent the level of interest relative to the highest point on the graph. Value of 100 means the highest popularity of the search, the value of 50 means that search was half as popular. Phrases analysed: a priest (topic), paedophilia (topic), Church (organisation), and Polish Bishops' Conference (topic). Value of 100 was reached by a phrase priest on 13.05.2019.

Summaries presented above unambiguously show that social interest in paedophilia problem in the Catholic Church in Poland increased over the last 5 years. Last year was critical in this regard. This state of affairs met with Polish

Bishops' Conference reaction, and a report dealing with cases of sexual abuse of minors by Polish priests was a highly interesting topic for the media. The announcement itself, but also organised prayer for victims organized on the 8th of March 2019 were received positively. The situation drastically changed after the report was presented. The wave of criticism and dissatisfaction returned. This reception forces us to critically analyse media presentation of Polish Bishops' Conference representatives.

4. Press conference - critical analysis of the event

A press conference is usually held for an important reason, aiming for a clearly stated target, organised to present complicated matters, or to state a clarification [18]. A conference should be the start of a discussion about some topic and a presentation of difficult problems. The conference analysed regarding cases of paedophilia among priests was held in an atmosphere that not only inhibited good presentation of information, but also damaged reception. It was full of representative's fear, which was showing not only by substance presented but also by their kinesics.

From the very start of the meeting, a lack of desire to confront the problem directly was visible, while a key element in each crisis is openness and willingness to take action and responsibility for all decisions [19]. Right from the start of the conference in question, there was a very burning problem visible. A topic that was the most interesting for media - which was the spread of paedophilia among clergymen - was treated very cursory. Abp. Marek Jędraszewski, who was the first spokesperson, almost all of his time devoted to relying on statement from Pope Francis, pointing out at the same time that problem of sexual abuse is visible. He brought facts and data irrelevant to the Church though. He referred to wrongs done to children by different social groups, not just priests. He also presented the Holy Father's programme of fighting with the abuse of minors. Because of this, right from the beginning of the conference, it was apparent that the Church authorities will try to dilute the case, to show problems that people hurt by clergy have to face in a global context. Abp. Marek Jędraszewski, instead of focusing on empathy towards victims - which would be crucial at the moment - spoke about showing mercy towards offenders. Director of Institute of Catholic Church Statistics, Fr. Wojciech Sadłoń continued attempts to delay presentation of the most important data - which general public was most interested in - and in the first part of his speech presented the Institute and its duties.

A substantial error that definitely not help with proper reception of the information presented was the number of people that sat behind the executive table. Most usually two or three people - besides spokesmen - take part, who refer their topic, and then a round of questions from the press follows, which is moderated by the spokesman or the meeting's host [20]. Seven Church dignitaries, out of which only two took an important part in presentation could build a sense of the weight of the matter. This is not what happened. They were

drawing attention, but because of their non-verbal communication. It is also worth noting that there were no secular people by the executive table. Elements like moderating or referring a report should be delegated to people outside of the clergy. This would show that the Church consists not only of clergy, and when cases of sexual abuse of minors are concerned, people not being priests are also invited.

Press conference is indeed for a journalist a place to meet people, who otherwise may be very hard to reach. They can receive answers to their questions, which is why time spent on asking questions during such an event is crucial. The fact of announcing a conference is in itself a way to show readiness to answer questions, clear any uncertainties, settle disputes, and dispel the doubts [21]. A conference is organised when, for example, there is no other way to communicate than direct contact with journalists or when a so-called media crisis has occurred in the organisation - which means that media comment the crisis or are very active in it [22]. Unfortunately, those proportions, so important for journalists, were upset. The kinesics of participants also has to be pointed out as a mistake. When analysing the conference we often see uncontrollable movement, their restlessness, which may be caused by fear, but also an awareness that they have to survive this uncomfortable meeting. Gesticulation, body language, moving objects around, constant use of aids not necessary at the moment, like notepad, papers, or glass of water were outside of the control of people taking part in the conference. It was an attempt to lessen the stress caused by their speeches. Another visible problem for people behind the executive table was eye contact, which was hard for all of them to keep. They failed to build a uniform, positive image based on trust, credibility, which in turn hurt the message.

Crisis conference demands decisiveness, clarity, empathy, controlled emotions, precision in presenting data and crucial information, but also coherence and global attitude. All of them were missing from the conference. Despite Abp. Wojciech Polak's statement that what was committed through those years: "should above all provoke pain, shame, and guilt in clergymen that situations like those had place" [23], the whole conference was overwhelmed by a sad picture of the very tough situation of Polish Bishops' Conference.

Crisis conferences demand short, global statement, which was absent. There were long speeches and attempts to dilute the problem on a huge scale of misfortunes that minors have to suffer all over the world instead. Actions during the crisis, and a press conference like this, should have a coherent message. Abp. Marek Jędraszewski presented methods that should be taken into consideration when fighting the problem of paedophilia in the Catholic Church. He stressed the fact that the Church shall follow 'flawless decisiveness', and not the 'no tolerance' rule. He pointed out that this phrase ('no tolerance'), that is, according to him, often used in the media, has a totalitarian character. He added that "when Hitler's Nazism was fighting the Jews they applied a zero-tolerance rule, which created Holocaust" [<https://www.gosc.pl/doc/5393926>, accessed on 24.03.2020]. This is where huge discrepancy and lack of unambiguity in statements show.

Abp. Jędraszewski overlooked the fact that ‘no tolerance’ rule was included in the official statement of Polish Bishops’ Conference from 20th of February 2019 as: “Opinion of Polish Bishops’ Conference regarding the protection of minors is very clear and firm: no tolerance for sin and crime of paedophilia in the Church and society” [Komunikat z 380. Zebrania Plenarnego Konferencji Episkopatu Polski, <https://bit.ly/2Rx9PqS>, accessed on 24.03.2020].

In conclusion, it has to be said that the conference did not clear any uncertainties, did not free the Church from liability. It also was not a new beginning. We can notice that Episcopacy representatives still commit the same mistakes as in 2013 when Fr. Stanisław Gila’s from Dominicana and nuncio Abp. Józef Wesółowki cases were widely commented in the media. Many bishops stated shocking things, including Bp. Tadeusz Pieronek, who said: “Paedophilia existed, exists and will exist; Pope had to deal much bigger problems” [24].

Another serious problem of the Church representatives is the permanent lack of coherence in statements and even lack of knowledge about ones made in the past. These discrepancies exist not only on the local level, between bishops and priests in their parishes, but also in any interpretation of statements made by bishops, priests, Popes or even documents. Even former Polish Bishops’ Conference spokesmen, Fr. Józef Kloch, in 2014 while explaining statement made by Abp. Józef Michalik pointed to his style of expression - that he had problems with interpretations of thoughts of chairman of Polish Bishops’ Conference for years as he does not finish his thoughts, suspends his voice, is confusing and tries to convey more than can say [20].

Press conference of Episcopacy representatives regarding paedophilia in the Church was overwhelming, and attempt to delay and lack of willingness to show facts was visible in every minute of this over an hour-long meeting - in its presentational part. Conference characterised lack of data visualisation and based on a report that was a material handed over to journalists only. The meeting was in its first part (usually devoted to statement) much too long. Many side topics were brought forth. What will be done to mitigate the dangers to children while contacting some priests glanced over? The Church was perceived as an organisation that denies accountability, points out that it is attacked, and that people use a skilfully crafted phrase ‘paedophilia in the Church’ against them. It was a failure and another element that makes the Church authorities lose credibility in society’s eyes in the context of a problem the Church has to face. Mistakes made by the Church representatives during the conference made the problem worse. In situations like this, every error counts and often reinforces the problem as some content spread virally [25].

5. Conclusions

Global discussion regarding abuse in the Catholic Church helps to spread information about abuse incidents, reactions and practises that aim to mitigate possible further cases. Outlines aiming to safeguard minors in this regard are

introduced all over the world [26]. Poland is not the only country that faces this problem, but it has to be stated that it is the one that has a major problem with communicating clearly about those instances. In all countries that suffer a crisis caused by sexual exploitation, the Church has to constantly act to prevent abuse, which has severe psychological and existential consequences for a victim.

Increasing interest in the topic can be noticed in social reception. It is especially visible in Poland in 2019. This is evidenced by the highest values of the correlation between the co-occurrence of the search for Church and paedophilia phrases in 2019 (Pearson's $r = 0.525$, for the period 2015-2019 Pearson's $r = 0.332$) priest and paedophilia (Pearson's $r = 0.853$, for the period 2015-2019 Pearson's $r = 0.584$) and most symptomatic KEP and paedophilia (Pearson's $r = 0.582$, Pearson's $r = 0.220$). The need to settle the matter was catalysed by exploring the matter by films, journalism, and investigative journalism. The Church authorities face a question - how to communicate the problem and report actions taken in such a way to soothe public opinion and reinforce a belief that the Church is on the side of victims. Incredibly important is planned communication with especial stress on emotions that will be evoked in recipients.

Not only trauma and physiological consequences that victims have to endure but also the Church attitude towards the topic is the problem. There still lacks openness, mistakes in communication happen, which in turn destroy the Church's image as an institution. Above all - there is empathy and understanding of victims missing, which is especially important during the image crisis. Without understanding that only empathic attitude to the topic may bring desired results, there is no chance to rebuild and strengthen the Church's image.

The analysis of publications preceding and following the Polish Bishop's Conference on the abuse of minors in the Catholic Church in Poland has shown that only the promise of settlements and the undertaking of the issue by the highest national church authorities meet with good public reception. Also, actions having a purely spiritual dimension, such as the announcement of 8 March 2019 as a day of prayer and fasting for the sin of paedophilia in the Church, cause a good social resonance. Before the analysed press conference, materials with optimal overtones for the Polish Bishop's Conference accounted for 63.7%, while the negative ones for 21.6%. The Conference was followed by a reversal of the proportions to 51.7% negative and 28.4% optimal, while the number of publications increased by more than 3.5 times. This situation is primarily the result of the adopted communication strategy, the way the speakers were selected, the chosen tactic of referring the case, the duration of the conference, and, above all, the lack of a clear unambiguous, and empathetic approach to the victims. One should also remember about political and social circles that are hostile to the Church. They have exploited this topic to turn it into political and social benefits for themselves.

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