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Polish news portals in the view of the documentary entitled *Franciszkańska 3: content analysis of the image of John Paul II*

Polskie portale informacyjne w świetle filmu dokumentalnego *Franciszkańska 3* –
analiza treści wizerunku Jana Pawła II

Abstract

The research problem is the image of Karol Wojtyła, who presented five major horizontal portals in reaction to the documentary *Franciszkańska 3*. The analysis comprises the first eight days after its broadcast on TVN24. The adopted research perspective is the phenomenon of personalization. The paper aims to analyze how the five most opinion-forming, free news portals presented the person of Karol Wojtyła. The authors in the conducted research, both quantitative and qualitative, verify the hypothesis that in the film and the analyzed texts, in the reactions to the crime of pedophilia among the clergy in the diocese of Krakow are interpreted in the context of Karol Wojtyła's personal responsibility, not the institution. The research results confirm the above hypothesis.

Keywords

John Paul II, media, personalization, content analysis, polarization

Abstrakt

Problemem badawczym jest wizerunek Karola Wojtyły przedstawiony przez pięć głównych portali horyzontalnych w reakcji na dokument *Franciszkańska 3*. Analizie poddano pierwsze osiem dni po jego emisji w TVN24. Przyjętą perspektywą badawczą jest zjawisko personalizacji. Celem artykułu jest analiza, w jaki sposób pięć najbardziej opiniotwórczych, bezpłatnych portali informacyjnych przedstawiało osobę Karola Wojtyły. Autorzy w przeprowadzonych badaniach, zarówno ilościowych, jak i jakościowych, weryfikują hipotezę, że w filmie i w analizowanych tekstach reakcje na zbrodnię pedofilii wśród duchowieństwa diecezji krakowskiej interpretowane są w kontekście osobistej odpowiedzialności Karola Wojtyły, a nie instytucji. Wyniki badań potwierdzają powyższą hipotezę.

Słowa kluczowe

Jan Paweł II, media, personalizacja, analiza treści, polaryzacja

Introduction

Over the past few decades, the Catholic Church has faced a severe crisis triggered by the emergence of public accusations of pedophilia and inappropriate behavior of the clergy. These cases led to a decline in trust in the Church among the faithful and affected the relationship between the Church and society. A significant change can be observed in this regard, as most researchers had agreed that before the collapse of communism in Poland, the role of the Church as an institution of social trust was substantial. As Janusz Mariański noted: *national polls from the 1980s on the public mood and trust in the public institutions confirm [...] high social status of the Church according to most Polish people*¹.

The communist period in Poland (1945-1989) was a particular time for the Catholic Church, which faced numerous challenges and restrictions; nonetheless, despite these difficulties, the Church managed to maintain its authority among the faithful. It was one of the few places where people could freely express their opinions and criticize communist governments². The Church became an important symbol of freedom and resistance against the regime. Trust in this institution was undeniably high: In a poll conducted by the Center for Public Opinion Research (CBOS) in 1984, the Church obtained the highest index of social trust of all the institutions surveyed—as many as 82.4% of the respondents trusted it³. The change came after 1989, when Poland underwent significant political and socio-cultural transformation⁴. During this period, the Church began to lose social trust gradually, and although the surveys indicated certain variations, it can be stated that this has been a steady declining tendency⁵. This does not mean the Church has lost its strength and importance for social life, building a consensus and shaping collective consciousness. It remains an integral part of the nation's cultural heritage, a significant component of its identity, a source of numerous noble social values, and an important partner on the Polish public scene.

Nonetheless, as the researcher continued, *the assessment of the activity of the Church seen because of the results achieved is already more diversified and*

¹ J. Mariański, *Religia i Kościół w społeczeństwie pluralistycznym. Polska lat dziewięćdziesiątych*, Lublin 1998, Redakcja Wydawnictw KUL, p. 235.

² J. Żaryn, *Kościół katolicki w PRL—wybrane zagadnienia, hipotezy, prowokacje*, „Pamięć i Sprawiedliwość” 7 (2005)1, p.11-34.

³ J. Baniak, *Zaufanie i nieufność dorosłych katolików do Kościoła instytucjonalnego w Polsce. Na podstawie wyników badań socjologicznych z przełomu XX i XXI wieku*, „Studia Koszalińsko-Kołobrzeskie” 29(2022), p.223–248.

⁴ J. Dzwonczyk, *Political Aspects of the Development of Civil Society in Poland after 1989*, „Zeszyty Naukowe/Uniwersytet Ekonomiczny w Krakowie. Seria Specjalna, Monografie” 91(2009)25, p.242-260.

⁵ K. Kowalczyk, *Catholic Church as the power exerting influence on the political system. The research findings*, „Wrocławskie Studia Politologiczne” 17(2014), p. 126-141.

*moderate. There seem to be increased critical voices*⁶. This deterioration in the image was influenced, among other things, by the exposure of pedophile scandals or other misconduct related to clergy members⁷. Not only did the scandals impact the fall of trust in the Church in Poland. The Church's internal and external communications, material issues, and the attitude of the bishops were also important factors. A distinct decline in the assessment of the activity of the Church was indicated, for instance, after the broadcast of a documentary film by Tomasz Sekielski entitled *Tylko nie mów nikomu* (Do not Tell Anyone, 2019), which talks about the sexual abuse of minors by Catholic priests in Poland and the concealment of these actions by the high officials of the Church⁸.

Therefore, the debate on the role of the Catholic Church, the place of the clergy, and the Church officials and their media image is particularly relevant in Poland. A principal element of this debate is Karol Wojtyła, later John Paul II, whose image and its operation were the subject of this research.

Theoretical perspective

In this work, we have considered the institution of the Church a subject of social and political systems, and the clergy the actors engaged in communication in social and political spheres⁹. This appears eligible *because this statement is legitimized by, among other things, the Catholic social doctrine, which indicates and justifies the limits of the Catholic Church's involvement in public affairs, as well as ongoing empirical research on the ecclesial institution's involvement in political campaigns*¹⁰. Other researchers noted that the Church, as an actor in the public sphere addressing socially substantial issues, frequently enters politics unknowingly or is even engaged in it by the intentional actions of politicians¹¹. This supposition allowed for applying a political science concept, namely personalization. It assumes that politics

⁶ J. Mariański, *The Social Authority of the Catholic Church in Poland in the Process of Change*, „Studia Pedagogica Ignatiana” 5(2017a), p. 77-106.

⁷ P. Wojnicz, *Penalizacja czynów seksualnych wobec małoletnich – rozważania na tle prawa kanonicznego i polskiego prawa karnego*, „Civitas et Lex” 2(2020)26, p.59-72.

⁸ R. Leśniczak, *Personalization of the Media Image of the Catholic Church in the Context of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Clergy: Analysis of Polish Weeklies (2018-2019)*, „Studia Medioznawcze” 21(2020)2, p. 555. DOI <https://doi.org/10.33077/uw.24511617.ms.2020.2.170>.

⁹ D. Piontek, *Personalizacja jako efekt mediatyzacji polityki*. „Środkowoeuropejskie Studia Polityczne” 3(2015), p. 91–103.; D. Piontek, *Personalizacja rywalizacji wyborczej w kampanii parlamentarne*, „Roczniki Nauk Społecznych” 40(2020)3, p.109–126.

¹⁰ R. Leśniczak, op. cit, p. 555.

¹¹ K. Dłuska, *Kościół – aktor w przestrzeni publicznej i sferze politycznej*, „Nurt SVD” 2(2018),p.199–214.

is perceived “in the light of individuals, not processes”¹², assigning greater weight to the role of an individual rather than an institution. The policy of the Church can be treated in the same way—here, the subjects are the clergy.

As stated by Rafał Leśniczak, a consequence of personalization of the media image of the Church as an institution results in greater visibility of selected clergymen in the media, the perception of the institution through the history, choices, decisions, and statements of specific individuals associated with the Church. *Individual representatives of the Church*, the researcher wrote, *are becoming its showcase—the face that shapes the image of the entire institution*¹³. It has drastic consequences: *The personalization process will also be expressed concerning individual statements of those involved in the discourse on the clergy abuse of minors. From the point of view of personalization, the official stance of the institution of the Church, as a collective entity, toward the problem of pedophilia among the clergy is less important*¹⁴. The same can be considered in the responsibility for covering up sexual abuse of minors: it would be predominantly born not by the institution but by its particular representatives. Karol Wojtyła is such a representative, yet a greatly specific one: since trust in the Catholic Church in Poland is declining, as indicated above, John Paul II is still an eminent figure, a moral authority for many Poles; there is a widespread belief in Poland that Karol Wojtyła did something special for Poland and Polish people¹⁵.

The subject and context of the research

Marcin Gutowski’s documentary, *Franciszkańska 3* (3 Franciszkańska St.), aired on March 6, 2023, at 8:30 p.m. on a private news station—TVN24. The title refers to the address of the Bishop’s Palace in Cracow, the seat of the Curia, and the archbishop of Cracow. At the address indicated, Cardinal Karol Wojtyła, the metropolitan of Cracow, officiated in 1964-1978 before he became the pope and left for the Vatican. The subject of the analysis addressed in the article was Karol Wojtyła, presented on the five most opinion-forming news portals concerning the documentary within the first eight days after its broadcast on TVN24. To understand the importance of the documentary for Polish society and the Catholic Church, it is necessary to outline the context of the conducted research.

¹² L. Karvonen, *The Personalization of Politics. What does research tell us so far, and what further research is in order?* Paper prepared for the 4th ECPR Conference, Pisa 6–8 September 2007; D. Piontek, op.cit.2015,p.93.

¹³ R. Leśniczak, op. cit. p.556.

¹⁴ Ibidem, p.556.

¹⁵ A. Łukasik-Turecka, A.M. Zaręba, *Społeczne postrzeganie przywództwa Jana Pawła II*, Lublin 2020, Wydawnictwo KUL, p.68-69.

Gutowski is the author of the documentary series entitled *Bielmo* (Leucoma), in which he presents how the Vatican tolerated and overlooked pedophilia during the pontificate of John Paul II. In his documentary *Franciszkańska 3*, the journalist focuses on how Wojtyła behaved toward Polish pedophile priests before he became the pope. Gutowski's film indicates three cases. The first is priest Bolesław Saduś, who worked in the Cracow Curia alongside Wojtyła. He catechized children and young people and later was a parish priest at St. Florian's Parish. He was a collaborator with the Security Service. The future pope sent him to Austria when scandals involving him were revealed. Karol Wojtyła, also the pope, maintained contact with Saduś.

Another of the priests is Eugeniusz Surgent. The Cracow Curia knew about his sexual abuses since at least 1969. Surgent sexually harassed minors in several parishes in Southern Poland and Cracow. In his last village, Kiczora, he was exposed and sentenced to several years in prison. After being released, he was expelled from the Cracow archdiocese by Wojtyła. However, he found a new job in the Koszalin—Kolobrzeg diocese. There, he continued to sexually harass minors as a priest and religion teacher until the mid-1980s. Again, he was registered as a collaborator with the Security Service of the communist government in Poland.

The last of the pedophile priests is Józef Loranc. He repeatedly sexually harassed girls in Mutne (Żywiec county in Southern Poland), putting his hand in their pants or his penis in their mouths. This also happened during religion lessons. A local parish priest, Feliks Jura, went to Cracow and reported the event to Wojtyła. Wojtyła summoned Loranc and sent him to the Cistercian monastery in Mogiła for retreat. In 1970, Loranc was arrested for his crimes, sent to prison, and released after a year. Wojtyła reinstated him to priestly work at the parish of the Holy Family in Zakopane; nonetheless, he was not allowed contact with children. Then, Loranc became a chaplain at a hospital in Chrzanów. The Security Service recruited Loranc as a collaborator.

A journalist investigation into the matter was conducted virtually simultaneously by two journalists, Marcin Gutowski for TVN24 and Dutch journalist Ekke Overbeek, who published his findings in the newly released book *Maxima Culpa. John Paul II knew*. Their findings are consistent. The metropolitan of Cracow in the 1960s and 1970s knew about clergymen who committed the crime of pedophilia within his archdiocese. Gutowski and Overbeek accessed documents collected at the Institute of National Remembrance (IPN). Furthermore, they also reached witnesses, victims, and people who personally informed Cardinal Karol Wojtyła about sexual abuse by the priests under his authority.

It should be clarified that the tasks of the Institute of National Remembrance¹⁶ include the collection and management of documents of state security organs drawn up from July 22, 1944, to July 31, 1990, investigation of Nazi and communist crimes, including crimes committed against persons of Polish citizenship or Polish citizens of other nationalities committed from November 8, 1917¹⁷.

Franciszkańska 3 caused intense emotions in the media, among the elite, and in society. The reason is Karol Wojtyła. A report by the Center for Public Opinion Research in its communiqué indicated that despite the deterioration of perception of the Catholic Church over the past few years and clear symptoms of leaving religion, the Church has considerable social authority¹⁸. In 2022, more than 80% of the adult respondents declared that John Paul II is an important moral authority for them. Despite the Church's weakening authority among the young, John Paul II remains a considerable moral authority for more than half of the youngest respondents.

In March 2023, an Ipsos agency survey asked Poles what they thought of John Paul II. The survey was conducted after the broadcast of Marcin Gutowski's documentary¹⁹. The results indicated that John Paul II is still meaningful to Polish society. As many as 73% of the respondents said he is a principal moral authority for them (including 48% indicating "definitely agree"), and only 24% said he is not. Furthermore, 70% of the surveyed said he is a personally significant figure for them, while 29% indicated that he is indifferent to them. The older the age group, the higher the percentage of the respondents recognizing John Paul II as a substantial moral authority and an important figure in their lives. Among the respondents over 70, it is as high as 94% and 89%, respectively. Among the youngest respondents (aged 18-29), John Paul II is considered a moral authority by 47%, while by 5%, he is not. As the results of the presented surveys indicated, John Paul II remains a moral and religious authority for most Polish people. The role of the Catholic Church as an institution is weakening, as pointed out at the beginning of the article; nonetheless, Karol Wojtyła is still an eminent figure in Poland²⁰.

¹⁶ P. Wawrzyński, *Polityka historyczna w dobie Internetu: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej a nowe media*, „Nowe Media” 5 (2015), p. 13–34, <https://doi.org/10.12775/NM.2014.001>.

¹⁷ The Law on Institute of National Remembrance, "Journal of Laws" 2018.1277, 2.07. 2018.

¹⁸ Public Opinion Research Center Communiqué, No. 87/2022.

¹⁹ D. Sitnicka, *Jan Paweł II "ważnym autorytetem moralnym" dla 73 proc. badanych. Kto się wyłamał?* [SONDAŻ]. Oko Press, [\(02.05.2023\)](https://oko.press/jan-pawel-ii-autorytet-sondaz).

²⁰ A. Łukasik-Turecka, A.M. Zaręba, *Społeczne postrzeganie przywództwa Jana Pawła II*, Lublin 2020, Wydawnictwo KUL, p. 68-69.

Research Methodology

This study aimed to analyze from a personalistic perspective how the five most opinion-forming, free news portals portrayed Karol Wojtyła in view of the documentary entitled *Franciszkańska 3* within the first eight days after its broadcast on TVN24.

In the course of the research, the authors applied the content analysis method with elements of media discourse analysis. They referred to the works of Bernard Berelson²¹, Walery Pisarek²², Devi Prasad²³, Roger Wimmer, Joseph Dominick²⁴, and Kathy Chamraz²⁵.

The research material consisted of 108 texts from the five most opinion-forming, free news portals according to the Media Monitoring Institute²⁶ namely wp.pl, gazeta.pl, onet.pl, interia.pl, and wpolityce.pl. Only portals that distribute costless content and do not require a subscription were included²⁷. The ownership structure of the analyzed portals is as follows:

- Onet.pl – Ringier Axel Springer Polska- Friede Springer (22.50%), Mathias Döpfner (21.90%), Axel Sven Springer (5.00%), Ariane Melanie Springer (1.00%), KKR & Co. Inc. (35.60%), Canada Pension Plan Investment Board (12.90%).
- wp.pl – Wirtualna Polska – Michał Wiktor Brański (via NOW2 SP. Z O.O. and 10X S.A.), Jacek Świdorski (via Eurydyka sp. z o.o. and Orfe S.A.), Krzysztof Daniel Sierota (via Highcastle sp. z o.o. and Albemuth Inwestycje S.A.), Powszechne Towarzystwo Emerytalne Allianz Polska S.A. (12.55%).
- Gazeta.pl – Agora – Nationale-Nederlanden Powszechne Towarzystwo Emerytalne S.A. (9.65%), Agora-Holding sp. z o.o. (11.60%), Media Development Investment Fund. Inc. (11.50%), Powszechne Towarzystwo Emerytalne PZU S.A. (17.45%).

²¹ B. Berelson, *Content Analysis in Communication Research*, New York 1952, Free Press, p. 27.

²² W. Pisarek, *Analiza zawartości prasy, OBP RSW „Prasa – Książka – Ruch”*, Kraków 1983, Ośrodek Badań Prasoznawczych, p. 142-144.

²³ D. Prasad, *Content Analysis. A Method in Social Science Research*. [In:] D.K. Lal Das, V. Bhaskaran (Eds.), *Research Methods for Social Work*, New Delhi 2008, Rawat, p. 173-199.

²⁴ R. Wimmer, J. Dominick, *Mass Media Research. An Introduction*, Boston 2013, Editor Cengage Learning, p. 211.

²⁵ K. Chamraz, *The Genesis, Grounds, and Growth of Constructivist Grounded Theory*, [In:] J.M. Morse, B.J. Bowers, K. Charmaz, A.E. Clarke, J. Corbin, C.J. Porr, P.N. Stern (Eds.), *Developing Grounded Theory: The Second Generation*, New York 2021, Routledge, p.153-187.

²⁶ *RMF FM najbardziej opiniotwórczym medium w styczniu w Polsce. Awans Wirtualnemedi.pl*, Wirtualnemedi.pl [portal], 2023, <https://www.wirtualnemedi.pl/arttykul/rmf-fm-najbardziej-opiniotworcym-medium-w-styczniu-w-polsce-w-rankingu-nowa-kategoria-awans-wirtualnemedi-pl>, [dostęp 2.03.2023].

²⁷

- interia.pl – Grupa Polsat-Interia- Zygmunt Józef Solorz (64.04%), Tobiasz Markus Solorz (0.88%), Tobe Investments Group Limited (0.70%), Nationale-Nederlanden Powszechnie Towarzystwo Emerytalne S.A. (6.42%).
- w polityce – Frataria – Jacek Karnowski, Apella S.A., Spółdzielczy Instytut Naukowy G. Bierecki sp.j²⁸.

The texts selected for the analysis contained at least one of the indicated keywords in any grammatical form, namely *attack on the Church* and *war on the Church*, *attack on the pope*, *pedophile priest*, *harm*, *minors*, *sexual harassment*, *underage victims and children*, *defense of the Church*, *defense of the pope*, *pedophilia*, and *cover-up*. The names of the pedophile priests, Surgent, Loranc, and Saduś, served as keywords in comparison with Karol Wojtyła, John Paul II, and the pope.

The unit of the analysis²⁹ was a paragraph of a newspaper text arranged by the authors following the criteria described above. A codebook was drawn up for each text in the Atlas application with the features indicated in the categorization key, according to which the authors analyzed it. The scope of the analysis covered the period of eight days (March 6, 2023—March 14, 2023) immediately after the broadcast of the documentary on TVN24 on March 6, 2023. During this period, the discussion was the most spontaneous and intense.

The authors arranged the texts in terms of who joined the discussion of the documentary. The three groups of texts primarily included statements by politicians and journalists, experts, and bishops and priests. Politicians and journalists were combined into one group because their statements in all the texts appeared collectively. Another group of texts consisted of statements made by ordinary people and the results of public opinion polls and street surveys. The fourth group of texts contained those describing the reactions of the world media to the documentary. The final group comprised those only summarizing the documentary.

The authors formulated two main hypotheses based on the theoretical material and the articles studied:

The texts analyzed exposed Karol Wojtyła's responsibility for pedophilia in the Cracow diocese more as a person than institutional responsibility of the Church. (H1)

In connection to the documentary, the major portals portrayed Karol Wojtyła as a person covering up or correctly responding to pedophilia cases in the Catholic Church, and this is by the editorial line of a respective publisher (anti-Catholic, pro-Catholic, or neutral). (H2)

²⁸ *Euromedia Ownership Monitor (2023)*, M. Głowacki et al. Poland, <https://media-ownership.eu/findings/countries/poland/>.

²⁹ D. Prasad, op. cit., p.186.

Concerning the main hypotheses, the following research hypothesis was built: In the analyzed articles, the cases of reaction to the crime of pedophilia among the clergy in the Cracow diocese were interpreted in the context of personal responsibility of Karol Wojtyła, rather than the Church as an institution. The analysis is both quantitative and qualitative.

Research procedure

During the research, the authors identified the two key features of the materials studied: Karol Wojtyła's attitude toward pedophilia cases in the Cracow diocese and the attitude of the Church, the elite, and the public opinion toward the results of the investigation presented in the documentary.

Considering the perspective adopted, the focus was on John Paul II (Karol Wojtyła, the pope), the central figure, and the link between all the texts studied. The category of *Wojtyła* was analyzed given both studied features.

The articles' first feature (F1) analyzed was the interpretation of Karol Wojtyła's attitude toward the three pedophilia cases presented in *Franciszkańska 3*. The categories analyzed within this feature were the offenders, namely priests Saduś, Loranc, and Surgent, and the victims and Karol Wojtyła's attitude toward them. Additionally, the categories such as *pedophile priest, minors, sexual harassment, underage victims and children, harm, cover-up, and moral corruption* were analyzed. In this category, expert statements were important in the qualitative analysis; nonetheless, statements by politicians and journalists predominated.

Another studied feature (F2) was the attitude of journalists, politicians, bishops and priests, and the public toward the material presented in the film and the image of Karol Wojtyła in the context of pedophilia in the Cracow diocese in the 1960s and 1970s and the documentary *Franciszkańska 3*. This feature was combined with categories including *attack on the Church, war on the Church, attack on the pope, bezpieka* (the Communists Security Service), *defense of the Church, and defense of the pope*.

Results of quantitative and qualitative analyses

In the case of the first analyzed feature, the figures indicated the emotional nature and polarization of the media discourse on the role of Karol Wojtyła in the three cases of pedophilia in the Cracow diocese presented in the documentary. The table below (Number 1) presents the total number of publications that comment on, interpret, or summarize the documentary regarding the archbishop of Cracow at that time in cases of child sexual harassment by the priests in that diocese. As it can be noted, the topic was prevalent, and there were as many as 108 texts that met the criteria determined by the authors. There was a total of 754 coded paragraphs. The authors displayed the quantitative study in the form of tables. Quotations from

the analyzed materials exemplified the qualitative analysis. Each quoted passage was marked with the publication date and portal of origin.

Table 1. Several coded texts on different portals

	www	number of texts
1	wp.pl	21
2	gazeta.pl	32
3	onet.pl	16
4	interia.pl	11
5	wpolityce.pl	28

Source: own study

Table 2 presents the distribution of categories in the texts analyzed. The category that occurred most frequently was *Wojtyła*. This is understandable as this category appeared with both analyzed features and was considered superior by the authors.

Table 2. Distribution of categories in analyzed texts (108) and coded paragraphs (754)

Item	Category and feature	Number of paragraphs assigned to a category
FEATURE 1		
1.	harm	29
2.	pedophile priest	120
3.	Loranc	33
4.	minors	25
5.	sexual harassment	64
6.	underage victims, children	80
7.	pedophilia	77
8.	Saduś	42
9.	Surgent	32
10.	cover-up	123
FEATURE 2		
11.	attack on the Church, war on the Church	64
12.	attack on the pope	65
13.	<i>bezpieka</i> (the Security Service)	78
14.	defense of the Church	21
15.	defense of the pope	161
WOJTYŁA	239	

It is worth noting which categories occurred together with the *Wojtyła* category (Table 3) in relation F1. It seems intriguing that paragraphs coded in the *Wojtyła* category also co-occurred with categories such as *pedophile priest*, *pedophilia*, and *cover-up*.

Table 3. Co-occurrence of categories of Feature 1

category	WojtyłaGr=239 count
harm Gr=29	7
pedophile priest Gr=120	81
Loranc Gr=33	19
minors Gr=25	5
harassment Gr=64	26
underage victims, children Gr=80	24
pedophilia Gr=77	43
Saduś Gr=42	15
Surgent Gr=32	17
cover-up Gr=123	87

A study of the co-occurrence of the F1 categories in grouped texts revealed significant data.

Table 4. Co-occurrence of categories in groups of texts of Feature 1

	bishops and priests Gr=121; GS=20	experts Gr=168; GS=17	public opinions, polls Gr=38; GS=7	summary of documentary Gr=145; GS=11	politicians and journalists Gr=278; GS=47	international media, opinions from the world Gr=24; GS=6	Total
harm Gr=29	6	17	0	1	4	1	29
pedophile priest Gr=120	20	20	8	42	29	2	121
Loranc Gr=33	2	5	1	19	6	0	33
minors Gr=25	2	15	0	2	6	0	25
harassment Gr=64	10	20	0	16	15	4	65
underage victims, children Gr=80	17	30	1	23	7	2	80

	bishops and priests Gr=121; GS=20	experts Gr=168; GS=17	public opinions, polls Gr=38; GS=7	summary of documentary Gr=145; GS=11	politicians and journalists Gr=278; GS=47	international media, opinions from the world Gr=24; GS=6	Total
pedophilia Gr=77	16	18	5	12	22	4	77
Saduś Gr=42	7	6	2	20	7	0	42
cover-up Gr=121	17	28	6	27	42	6	126
Wojtyła Gr=239	39	58	11	48	77	10	243
moral corruption Gr=7	1	4	0	1	1	0	7

Source: own study. Gs: number of texts. Gr: number of coded paragraphs.

The F1 categories co-occurred the most with three groups: *summary of the documentary*, *politicians and journalists*, and *experts*. It should be noted that there are only 11 texts in the first group, yet they co-occurred with categories such as *pedophile priest*, *pedophilia*, *cover-up*, and *Wojtyła*. Furthermore, the following groups: *politicians and journalists*, and *experts*, were characterized by a high degree of co-occurrence in the F1 categories. The political and ideological discussion intensity in Poland may explain the co-occurrence of the *politicians and journalists* with the F1 categories. The qualitative analysis demonstrates the level of ideological polarization and the intensity of emotion in the texts. *Wojtyła* was undoubtedly the category around which the discussion and comments were most strongly focused.

The materials from March 6, 2023, announced the documentary as a landmark for the entire Church in Poland.

After what we show, it will no longer be possible to say that John Paul II, Karol Wojtyła, did not know that priests, including those subordinate to him, were abusing minors.

wp.pl March 6, 2023

In the materials, the categories such as *cover-up*, *pedophilia*, and *pedophile priest* most frequently appeared in connection to the activity of the then Metropolitan Karol Wojtyła and his decisions. Responsibility for decisions regarding the issue of child sexual harassment by the priests was blamed on Karol Wojtyła, the metropolitan of Cracow at that time. The discussion in the reported media focused on several aspects: whether Karol Wojtyła knew about child sexual harassment by the priests, whether he covered up the misconduct of his subordinates, and whether his response was adequate. The texts included statements by the experts—theologians regarding the attitude of John Paul II toward pedophilia cases in the Cracow diocese. Karol Wojtyła was portrayed as the one for whom the priests meant more

than their victims. Nonetheless, certain of the texts studied presented a view that the then metropolitan of Cracow acted as stipulated in the Church procedures at that time. It should be noted that it was in the 1960s and 1970s. It was pointed out that there was a different sensibility then; there was no knowledge of how such trauma affects the future of a victim of childhood abuse. The documentary's author was accused of lacking credibility, as he relied primarily on untrustworthy sources, namely the Institute of National Remembrance archives.

Marcin Gutowski joined the discussion and argued with these allegations. Certain of his statements from various media require mention.

Today we know without a doubt that Karol Wojtyła knew about and covered up sexual abuse by the priests, even in Poland, before he became the pope.

onet.pl March 3, 2023

The documentary's director's assessment indicated his confidence concerning the conclusions of the evidence presented in the film.

"Can transferring a priest from parish to parish, reinstating him to service and sending him as a chaplain to a hospital with a pediatric ward, as in the case of priest Loranc, not taking away the opportunity to teach religion from priest Surgent, who continued to sexually abuse boys during religion lessons in Pomerania, be called anything else than insufficient action?" Gutowski asks rhetorically in response. He mentioned that in the course of his work, he reached a total of dozens of victims of the priests. "We reached an eyewitness and a whistleblower who personally reported these cases to Cardinal Wojtyła," the journalist says.

wp.pl March 10, 2023

Various voices in the polemic ensued after the documentary was broadcast. Journalists and cultural figures participated in it.

"We remember that he helped with the fall of communism, but is it possible today to think about anything else than the interest of children sexually harassed by the priests, whom the Polish saint helped to escape punishment? Certain foundations must collapse given hard evidence on the crimes of pedophiles in cassocks," the director (Jakub Skrzywanek) assesses.

onet.pl March 8, 2023

The statement is accusatory. A director Jakub Skrzywanek believed that Marcin Gutowski presented sufficient evidence of Karol Wojtyła's involvement in covering up pedophilia. Furthermore, he equated John Paul II with the entire Catholic clergy in this statement. This artist's voice in this discussion is relevant, as he is the author of the renowned play *The Death of John Paul II* and the director at the Contemporary Theater in Szczecin. Artur Nowak, a lawyer who specialized in cases involving pedophilia among priests, speaks uniformly:

Subsequent episodes of sexual abuse in the Church space, corruption, and nepotism should deprive us of illusions about this institution's ability to purge itself.

onet.pl March 8, 2023

In numerous paragraphs analyzed, the authors, even without emotional connotations, pointed to the fact that Gutowski's documentary featured victims' statements, which lent credence to it.

Franciszkańska 3 material described the three clergymen accused of sexual crimes and whose cases were ignored. The priests were transferred to other parishes, and in one case, to another country. In the documentary, people who were victims of these priests speak out.

wp.pl March 9, 2023

The statements of Tomasz Krzyżak, a journalist reporting on the issue of pedophilia in the Church, are highly relevant when analyzing Feature 1. In the following quote, the journalist explicitly referred to historical actuality and defended the decision of the metropolitan of Cracow. Krzyżak appeared in the documentary and defended the pope's actions.

"In the case of priest Loranc, it is clear from the beginning that Cardinal Wojtyła acted by the canon law applicable at that time. It cannot be said that something was covered up here," he states. He admitted that today certain matters are perceived from a different perspective. "Today, for example, someone could accuse Cardinal Wojtyła of not paying enough attention to the victims. But it should be remembered that it was in the 1970s, then no one thought about such things; it was different sensitivity, a different level of knowledge of these issues", he assesses.

interia.pl Mar 8, 2023

Krzyżak reflected on harm to children:

Any harm to a person is shocking to me. I would like to keep this sensitivity to myself, even though there is much information about people who were the victims.

interia.pl Mar 8, 2023

Krzyżak did not criticize Gutowski's work; he just presented his arguments and disagreed with the theses of the TVN24 documentary.

Professor Dominika Żukowska-Gardzieńska, a media analyst, clearly criticized the reporter's work on wpolityce.pl. She used the very arguments that aid and reparation to victims is a practice developed today. In addition, she accused the author of unreliability and manipulation of victims and anonymizing them, which is an accepted journalism practice.

The phrase "offering help to victims" is our current path of building reparation and support.

Some authenticity is lent to the documentary by the testimonies of pedophile priest Sargent's victims, who have remained anonymous. However, none of their statements supported the thesis against John Paul II. We see the human suffering caused by

the horrendous crime of pedophilia. Of course, this suffering is manipulated without clear arguments associated with St. John Paul II.

wpolityce.pl March 8, 2023

“John Paul II’s response to pedophilia crimes among the priests was decisive, given the times in which he lived.” Adam Żak – a clergyman – noted that John Paul II made decisions by the knowledge available during his pontificate.

wpolityce.pl Mar 11, 2023

With regard to Feature 1, there were statements from the other experts. The coordinator for protecting children and adolescents of the Polish Episcopal Conference, Adam Żak, called for interpreting Wojtyła’s deeds in the context of the times in which he acted.

No one, not even someone as broad-minded as Karol Wojtyła, can take a step longer than his legs allow. We cannot expect Cardinal Wojtyła to have had any scientiainfusa at the time when even psychiatric doctors knew little about the trauma of the victims. Judging him by modern standards is mere moralism.

wpolityce.pl Mar 11, 2023

Professor Jan Żaryn, a director of the newly established Roman Dmowski and Ignacy Jan Paderewski Institute for the Legacy of Polish National Thought, tried to comment objectively on the TVN24 documentary; nonetheless, he indicated that Karol Wojtyła acted responsibly.

Cardinal Wojtyła could apply to such a priest the punishment of suspension or dismissal from the clerical state. If there had been strong evidence and Cardinal Wojtyła knew about it, he would have dismissed such a man from the clerical state. On the other hand, if he could not prove it in his conscience, one of the weapons he had to protect the other priests in his archdiocese was to send such a priest to a place where he could regain his clerical status.

gazeta.pl Mar 11, 2023

A substantial contribution to the discussion was a survey conducted on behalf of the wirtualnemedial.pl. It indicated intense polarization of society’s worldview, and interestingly, it reflected the same phenomenon that occurred in the media.

A poll on John Paul II. Poles divided. In a poll conducted by United Surveys, Wirtualna Polska asked Poles how they relate to the allegations against the pope, which had also been formulated before. As it emerged, when asked, “Do you think John Paul II covered up sexual crimes in the Catholic Church,” the respondents did not give unequivocal answers, and opinions were heavily divided. In the sample mean, they were distributed almost equally.

gazeta.pl Mar 12, 2023

The discussion around Karol Wojtyła presented above focused primarily on Karol Wojtyła himself, his reactions, and speculation about his feelings and view of the whole affair. In the F1 materials, categories such as *cover-up*, *pedophilia*, and

pedophile priest most frequently appeared concerning the activity of the then metropolitan Karol Wojtyła and his decisions. The discussion in the selected media focused on several aspects: whether Karol Wojtyła knew about child sexual harassment by priests, whether he covered up the misconduct of his subordinates, and whether his response was adequate. Karol Wojtyła was portrayed as the one for whom the priests meant more than their victims.

In certain of the texts studied, there was a view that the then metropolitan of Cracow acted as stipulated in the Church procedures of the time. It should be remembered that it was in the 1960s and 1970s. The pedophile priests, as indicated by the quantitative analysis, also appeared most frequently in Karol Wojtyła's reaction to their conduct. The experts presented a much more balanced attitude.

In the case of F2, a study of the co-occurrence of categories with a superior category would not give as insightful results as in the case of F1. The categories of *attack on the pope* and *defense of the pope* co-occurred with the category of *Wojtyła*. The co-occurrence of the F2 category among groups was most noticeable in the case of *politicians and journalists*. Furthermore, this group most frequently co-occurred with the categories of *attack on the pope* and *Wojtyła*. In the case of F1, it is worthwhile to concentrate on the qualitative analysis because it revealed interesting results.

Table 5. Co-occurrence of categories in groups of texts of Feature 2

	bishops and priests Gr=121; GS=20	experts Gr=168; GS=17	public opinions, polls Gr=38; GS=7	summary of documentary Gr=145; GS=11	politicians and journalists Gr=278; GS=47	international media, opinions from the world Gr=24; GS=5	Total
attack on the Church, war on the Church Gr=64	2	13	3	3	41	1	63
attack on the pope Gr=65	9	9	5	7	33	1	64
<i>bezpieka</i> (the Security Service) Gr=78	15	15	2	18	27	2	79
defense of the Church Gr=21	2	6	1	1	11	0	21
defense of the pope Gr=161	24	16	17	3	90	3	153

	bishops and priests Gr=121; GS=20	experts Gr=168; GS=17	public opinions, polls Gr=38; GS=7	summary of documentary Gr=145; GS=11	politicians and journalists Gr=278; GS=47	international media, opinions from the world Gr=24; GS=5	Total
Wojtyła Gr=239	39	58	11	48	77	10	243
Total	91	117	39	80	279	17	623

Source: own study. Gs: number of texts. Gr: number of coded paragraphs.

Increased activity of politicians and journalists can be primarily noted in the discussion focusing on F2. The texts that contain their statements are dominated by quotes from Twitter, which is a primary platform for political communication³⁰. Twitter accounts associated with politicians, journalists, or opinion leaders are used as tools to communicate directly with domestic and foreign audiences—it is the element of both public diplomacy and information strategy. News portals extensively quote posts by politicians and other journalists from Twitter. This generates readily available content. Nonetheless, these are brief messages because such are the limitations of this application. Thus, in the analyzed texts, mainly based on the quotes from Twitter, statements of an intensely confrontational nature with clear positive or negative overtones dominated. The rhetoric of war, defense, and attack prevailed. Furthermore, there were significantly fewer statements from experts and clergymen than from journalists and politicians with worldview affiliations. This is presumably because they are not active on Twitter as much as politicians and journalists.

The experts pointed to the political potential of this documentary, which can be employed in the election campaign, as the parliamentary elections are held in Poland this fall. One expert statement is worth quoting.

“The Law and Justice (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość) party will try to encourage its voters and create division in this field, but I am not sure this will contribute to success. Unless, of course, Donald Tusk suddenly calls for the disposal of monuments to John Paul II,” political scientist Professor Antoni Dudek tells Wirtualna Polska.

wp.pl March 8, 2023

The conclusions of Anna Karoń- Ostrowska Ph.D., a friend and disciple of Karol Wojtyła, who spoke in the documentary, were significant and noteworthy. She pointed to a serious crisis in the Church and the discussion’s instrumental nature. Adversaries with pro-Catholic affiliations only stated that the files found in the Institute

³⁰ C. Duncombe, *The politics of Twitter: Emotions and the power of social media*, “International Political Sociology” 13 (2019) 4, p.409–429.

of National Remembrance were the source of information. They neglected the testimonies of the victims. The expert stated that this did not serve the Church.

The question remains—what after the Church? What will fill the strong need for spirituality and community in some people? I think we will reject the Catholic Church as an institution. It could survive, but not in a situation where the day after the broadcast of Marcin Gutowski's shocking documentary, the evidence in the case of John Paul II is called unreliable as it is "files of the Security Service." In addition to the files, we have the witnesses and victims Gutowski reached.

onet.pl March 8, 2023

Furthermore, there was a genuinely emotional tone and rhetoric of war and attack on the Church in the statements of the experts. Statements that appeared on portals with a rather anti-Catholic editorial line deserve mention. It is essential to recall the statements of a writer and lawyer, Artur Nowak, and the aforementioned director—Jakub Skrzywanek.

"The 'golden calf' is undergoing reconstruction. They will no longer induce guilt in Anyone by referring to the 'great Pole.' People will abominate rituals," Nowak predicts.

"While states and corporations are evolving, developing mechanisms of control and transparency, the Roman Catholic Church is an exotic corporation that has stagnated in a fossil of centralism, secrecy, and obedience. Taking advantage of educational deficits and complexes, the Church establishment, which evilly appeals to supernatural authority, has secured obedience and impunity," the co-author of 'Babylon' and 'Gomorrhah' comments.

onet.pl March 8, 2023

"Today, I am not surprised by NBC News calling the Catholic Church in the United States a criminal organization. I think this is how we should start talking about the Church in Poland," Skrzywanek states.

onet.pl March 8, 2023

The documentary provoked outrage on the side of the ruling camp, related circles, and the right wing. The prime minister and numerous ruling party politicians spoke out. Statements by politicians classified in F2 focused on indications that the documentary constituted an attack on Karol Wojtyła, the pope should be defended, the documentary was based on sources from the Security Service, and there has been a war on the Catholic Church. This is a clash of civilizations, and the fight to defend values is required. The Prime Minister of Poland, Mateusz Morawiecki, posted frequently on Twitter, and his statements were quoted.

Today the war is being fought not only across our eastern border. Unfortunately, some circles are trying to provoke not a military conflict but a war of civilization in Poland. These are actions that go beyond a civilized debate and a civil dispute. The list of merits of John Paul II is endless both for the world and Poland. Evidence that John Paul II fought against wickedness, including in the Church, is plentiful.

wp.pl March 8, 2023

The deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Culture, Piotr Gliński, stressed that the documentary attacked the national community.

"This is an attack on Polish raison d'État," he says. "The attack on John Paul II is aggressive and destroys the national community."

interia.pl Mar 9, 2023

Warsaw Mayor Rafał Trzaskowski, who has been involved with the opposition, emphasized the merits of John Paul II and pointed to a purely political war.

For me, there is no doubt that there would be no freedom without John Paul II. On the other hand, issues concerning pedophilia today, very difficult issues, should be clarified by historians, possibly by journalists, not by politicians. On the other hand, Law and Justice (PiS), of course, again want to make a weapon of political struggle of it.

interia.pl Mar 9, 2023

On Thursday, March 9, 2023, the Sejm voted for an act to defend the good name of St. John Paul II. Numerous comments from journalists and politicians assigned to F2 addressed the act, pointing out its necessity or indicating that it is an attempt to limit freedom of speech. The act condemned media attacks on John Paul II.

In the discussion centered around F2, an appeal of the Association of Polish Journalists, the most prominent journalist organization in Poland, which is relatively close to pro-Catholic circles, is noteworthy.

We find it extremely unfortunate and outrageous that the mass communication media distributed in Poland have become the tool used by circles and individuals wishing to destroy the legacy of the most eminent Pole in the history of our country.

wpolityce.pl Mar 9, 2023

All the media analyzed quoted extensively from the homily of Archbishop Marek Jędraszewski, the metropolitan of Cracow. He pointed out that the Church is under attack through St. John Paul II. He called Gutowski's documentary a second attempt on the life of the pope.

"We must fight back, not with violence, but with the truth. We must fight with prayer. We must struggle, a constantly strengthen the solidarity of Polish hearts because this is about Poland. This is about us. This is about loyalty to all those who shed blood for our homeland in our distant and recent past. Because it is about ensuring that today, in this difficult time of the second assassination attempt on John Paul II, we shall return to our elation, our emotion, our cry: Stay with us!" he concludes.

onet.pl March 8, 2023

Another clergyman, Professor Stanisław Kowalczyk, also pointed to the war of civilization. For him, attacks on John Paul II are attacks on the entire Church. He claimed that anti-Catholic circles are full of hypocrisy because they promote sexual freedom. For him, the pope is a symbol of the Catholic Church, and attacks on him can be an excuse for members to take measures.

The circles denigrating John Paul II have never wanted a reliable explanation of the crimes of communism, and they offer pan-sexualization to children and young people in the spirit of gender/LGBT ideology. Sexual harassment of minors interests them insofar as it can be used to rip the Catholic faith from the hearts of people, mainly young people. Fierce attacks on John Paul II may paradoxically awaken the Church.

wpolityce.pl Mar 9, 2023

The discussion within F2 is complemented by the opinions of the global media, which are relatively balanced and objective. Reports on the reaction of the global media to *Franciszkańska 3* appeared only on three portals, namely Onet.pl, wp.pl, and gazeta.pl.

The final group analyzed comprised public opinion regarding F2. It proved solid ideological polarization in society. Wpolityce.pl prepared an account of the public mood in Wadowice, the hometown of John Paul II. Wadowice residents spoke out in defense of Karol Wojtyła; nonetheless, specific initiatives were commented on in the media as inappropriate.

Wadowice. Barka was played in defense of John Paul II. "An excellently-chosen song, written by a pedophile priest."

gazeta.pl Mar 12, 2023

Wadowice residents were asked for their opinions on recent reports about Karol Wojtyła's role in covering up pedophilia cases among Polish priests. The residents of the pope's hometown are defending John Paul II. "I am outraged by what I hear, how much evil is being said about the Holy Father. He has always been and will always be a saint for us, the people of Wadowice," one of the residents says.

wpolityce.pl Mar 11, 2023

The statements of the teachers who commented on the reaction of high school students to *Franciszkańska 3* were quoted by portals such as interia.pl and gazeta.pl, and deserve attention. It was the subject of discussion in classes.

On the other hand, Marek Jędrychowski, a teacher from High School number 9 in Wrocław, admitted that he talked to his students about Marcin Gutowski's documentary in history and identity and civics classes. "Some of them saw the material, and there were discussions about it at some homes. They said they wanted to know the truth. For the past few years, pedophilia has been talked about more and more loudly. They believe that all these issues should be completely clarified," the teacher says.

gazeta.pl Mar 13, 2023

In F2, the current and historical aspects took center stage. Today the documentary has been interpreted as an attack on the image of John Paul II. The legitimacy of this attack depended on the editorial line of a particular portal. Onet.pl indicated arguments that supported it, while wpolityce.pl presented the attack as unfounded and unjustified. Thus, onet.pl and wpolityce.pl are the opposite sides of ideological

polarization. In terms of the historical aspect—the source’s reliability, which is the documents of the communist security service, was mentioned. This is a source that was questioned and considered unreliable.

Summary

The results of the analyses confirm the veracity of the leading hypotheses H1 and H2 and the research hypothesis. As can be concluded from the material under analysis, Karol Wojtyła’s personal responsibility for the crimes of pedophilia committed by members of the clergy in the Diocese of Cracow was given more weight than the Church’s as an institution. The central hypothesis H2 was also confirmed: depending on the editorial line of the publisher, the texts created within eight days after broadcasting *Franciszkańska 3* either defended Karol Wojtyła or condemned him, accusing him of inaction in the cases of sexual harassment of minors or even covering up such cases. As Leśniczak noted, personalization can *build a positive and negative media image of the institutional Catholic Church*³¹. This is particularly correct at the time when the media space is filled with strongly polarized views on matters of importance—essentially, on worldviews. Certain publicists (from both sides) did not hesitate to use the words *struggle, war*. It appears to be significant. Focusing on the pope has another consequence: the victims were once again marginalized, they played supporting roles in this discussion, and once more, their harm did not become a crucial element of the story.

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³¹ R. Leśniczak, op. cit, p. 565.

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