

Poland is usually presented as an example of a Catholic country that is an exception from the secularising trends observable in other European countries. This thesis has been confirmed by high indicators of self-declaration and religious practices as well as the strong social and political position of the Roman Catholic Church. Recent research has shown, however, that the religiosity of Polish society is changing, with criticism being aimed at the role of Catholicism in society and the Church's functioning in the public space. The number of declared Catholics has fallen 16% in the last decade, with dwindling attendances at Sunday Mass and a large proportion of respondents declaring that religion is not an essential or the only moral guide in everyday life. The number of people with a positive view of the Church's activity is falling, amid an increasing refusal to accept its political involvement, as shown not only by survey results, but also social mobilisations and protests in recent years.

These observations are the starting point for our project. Its main objective is to answer the question about the mechanisms of the socioreligious transformation currently being observed in Poland. We maintain that secularisation theories that discern the factors triggering changes mainly in the macro sphere (e.g. in such processes as modernisation, rationalisation, institutional differentiation etc.) are insufficient for grasping the significance of local contexts and the complexity of the changes we are observing.

In the project, we propose adopting a social practice theory perspective to investigate the ways in which the existing social order, based on the domination of Catholicism, is being challenged and reshaped. We believe that the socioreligious change can be analysed through practices of secularity. The practices of secularity that are the subject of our research aim to define or redraw the boundary and distinction between religion and other spheres of social life (e.g. politics, education, everyday life). We understand them as complexes of practices comprising bundles of activities, encompassing both what people say and what they do. A key role in practices, apart from embodiment and materiality, is played by knowledge, both overt, e.g. in the form of rules, and covert, tacit or non-discursive knowledge.

Practices reflect and underpin the established social order, but also have the potential to question and change it. This is the function of the practices of secularity that we analyse, which introduce new ways of understanding and defining the relationship between religion and other spheres of social life. In the project, we are interested in answering the following questions: how do social practices questioning the normativity of Catholicism emerge? What kind of activities constitute the practices of secularity? Which symbolic and material resources are used in them? What kind of knowledge gives meaning to activities within practices of secularity? To which alternative norms and knowledge do they refer? How are these alternatives embodied by practising people?

We assume that practices of secularity take place in various spaces and contexts of social life. To grasp the various dimensions of practices of secularity, we focus on three areas: first, institutional politics; second, organisations and initiatives within civil society; third, the case of people who have undergone apostasy from the Roman Catholic Church. The project involves qualitative research, comprising individual in-depth interviews with politicians, activists and apostates, analysis of media materials presenting politicians' and political parties' positions on secularity, analysis of parties' policy documents, and an ethnography in a selected NGO and grassroots civil society initiative whose work (re)defines the relationship between religion and other areas of social life in Poland.