

At the Crossroads of New Catholicism and the “Woman Question”: Polish Roman Catholic Laywomen’s Social Activism on Behalf of Women in the Three Zones of Partitioned Poland, 1878-1918

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Abstract

This thesis explores Polish Roman Catholic laywomen's involvement in various types of social activism on behalf of women in Partitioned Poland from 1878 until 1918, using local, national, and transnational perspectives. The research addresses questions about the timing, forms of and reasons for Polish Catholic laywomen's activism to change women's social, economic and political situation in both the private and public spheres. It explores what triggered the Catholic laywomen's social engagement and who were the leaders, members and recipients of their various projects. The thesis investigates to whom the Catholic laywomen reached out for support and/or possible cooperation, as well as their overall recommendations with respect to altering women's situation in the period. It studies whether their activities were part of Catholic laywomen's movements/networks or were *ad-hoc* or stand-alone initiatives. It also explores instances of Catholic laywomen's cooperation between the zones of Partitioned Poland and on the international level.

Contrary to most available historical scholarship that suggests the early twentieth century as the dawn of modern Catholic laywomen's social activism, by exploring the social projects of four female pioneers – Jadwiga Zamoyska, Antonina Machczyńska, Cecylia Plater-Zyberkówna and Maria Kleniewska – this thesis argues that Polish Catholic female laity of privileged social backgrounds became socially active and began organizing themselves as early as the 1880s. Subsequently, I identify three major forms of social activism available to Polish pious women between the 1880s and 1918: in various pious women-launched and run individual social projects, within the framework of Church-founded and supervised pious associations, and in confessionally motivated nevertheless lay organizations that were supervised by female activists, but stayed in close touch with the Church hierarchy.

My thesis argues that Polish Catholic laywomen's social projects chiefly appeared at the crossroads of two broader phenomena: the woman question and New Catholicism. The woman question was informed by concern over the lack of educational opportunities for Polish women and later over their general socio-economic and political underprivileged position when compared with men, as raised by various parties (secular, religious, feminist, liberal) across the lands of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. During the papacy of Leo XIII (1878-1903) New

Catholicism's emergence propelled the Church's novel approach towards contemporary social issues. The employed tripartite historical perspective – the woman question and New Catholicism in the context of the Polish Partitions – enables me to uncover and analyze these women's responsibilities and loyalties to three intertwined but competing projects: the improvement of women's situation, the reestablishment of Catholicism in the public sphere, and the desire for an independent nation state.

This thesis's major contributions are, firstly, retrieving part of Polish Catholic women's history and depicting them as historical actors engaged in various contemporary processes; secondly, reopening the discussion about the relation between Catholicism and the woman question; and thirdly, adding to the historical debates since the 1980s about the role of the religious and the secular in the modern period. The thesis is based on extensive archival material and primary sources which, for the most part, have not been used in historical investigation yet.

Declaration

I hereby declare that this dissertation contains no material accepted for any other degree in any other institutions and no materials previously written and/or published by another person, except where appropriate acknowledgment is made in the form of bibliographical reference.

Dominika Gruzziel

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List of most frequently used acronyms

BK – Biblioteka Kórnicka (Kórnicka Library)

BN – Biblioteka Narodowa w (National Library in Warsaw)

DKF - Der Katholische Frauenbund (Catholic Women`s League, Germany)

FILCF – Fédération Internationale des Ligues Catholiques Féminines (International Federation of Catholic Women`s League)

KUL – Biblioteka Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego (Library of the Catholic University in Lublin)

KZKP – Katolicki Związek Kobiet Polskich (Catholic Association of Polish Women)

LKMD – Lietuviu Katalikiu Moteru Draugija (Lithuanian Catholic Women's Organization)

LPF - Ligue Patriotique des Francaises (Patriotic League of Frenchwomen)

Oss – Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich in Wrocław (Ossoliński National Institute)

PZNK-Cracow – Polski Związek Niewiast Katolickich (Polish Association of Catholic Women in Cracow)

PZNK-Lviv – Polski Związek Niewiast Katolickich (Polish Association of Catholic Women in Lviv)

KRF – Katholischer Reich Frauenorganisation (Organization of Catholic Women in the [Habsburg] Empire)

WWI – First World War

ZKZ – Zjednoczone Koło Ziemianek (United Circle of Women-Landowners)

SPŻHP – Stowarzyszenie Personelu Żeńskiego w Handlu i Przemysle (Association of Female Workers in Commerce and Industry)

ZRKP – Związek Równouprawnienia Kobiet Polskich (Union for Polish Women`s Equality)

ZSKKDP – Związek Stowarzyszeń Katolickich Kobiet i Dziewcząt Pracujących dyecezyi krakowskiej (Union of Associations for Catholic Workingwomen and Girls in the Cracowian diocese)

ZSKP – Związek Stowarzyszeń Kobiet Pracujących (Union of Workingwomen`s Associations)

Zjednoczenie – Zjednoczenie Stowarzyszeń Kobietych Oświatowych na Rzeszę Niemiecką w Poznaniu (Union of Women`s Educational Associations on the Reich Territory in Posen).

Introduction

This thesis explores Roman Catholic laywomen's involvement in various types of social activism on behalf of women in Partitioned Poland from 1878 until 1918, using local, national, and transnational perspectives.

The research addresses questions about the timing, forms of and reasons for Polish Catholic laywomen's activism to change women's social, economic and political situation in both the private and public spheres. It explores what triggered the Catholic laywomen's social engagement and who were the leaders, members and recipients of their various projects. The thesis investigates to whom the Catholic laywomen reached out for support and/or possible cooperation, as well as their overall recommendations with respect to altering women's situation in the period. It studies whether their activities were part of Catholic laywomen's movements/networks or were *ad-hoc* or stand-alone initiatives. It also explores instances of Catholic laywomen's cooperation between the zones of Partitioned Poland as well as on the international level.

A second set of questions aims to place the retrieved historical phenomenon of Polish Catholic women's activism in broader historical contexts, namely the situation of the Polish Partitions, Catholicism's revival and the unfolding "woman question" on the Polish lands, so as to determine what informed the choice of Polish pious activists' arguments and actions. The research explores how the Polish pious women appropriated contemporary religious, nationalist, secular and/or women-related discourses for their specific needs, as well as the role local, national and transnational factors played in shaping Polish Catholic laywomen's social activism.

In the subsequent pages of the introductory chapter, I provide further details on the scope, theoretical foundation, interpretative frameworks and methodological approach of my research (0.1). I then review and comment on the state of the research on Polish Catholic laywomen's activism (0.2), followed by a brief outline of each chapter's content (0.3). Finally, I introduce the archival and primary sources used in this thesis (0.4).

0.1 The research's scope, basic concepts, frameworks and methodology

My thesis focuses on laywomen from the aristocracy, the landowning class, the middle class and the intelligentsia who thought about themselves as Polish and Catholic of the Roman rite (hereafter Roman Catholic or Catholic) and who acted, first and foremost, on behalf of other women when they launched and/or ran a wide range of clandestine, semi-lawful or lawful projects, which were founded either as *ad hoc* individual initiatives or realized through various associations. In the course of the thesis I will be using the terms “pious women,” “religious women,” and “Catholic women” interchangeably, while referring to the same phenomenon – that is, to laywomen of the Roman Catholic denomination.¹ I focus mainly, but not exclusively, on the broader social involvement of Polish Catholic laywomen in urban areas, focusing on the areas of Warsaw (in the Russian zone; the main city of the so-called Polish Kingdom, Warsawian diocese), Posen (in the Prussian zone; the main city of the Grand Duchy of Posen, Posen diocese), Cracow (in the Austrian zone; the main city of Western Galicia, Cracowian diocese), and Lviv (also in the Austrian zone; the capital of Galicia, located in Eastern Galicia, Lvivian diocese). I have chosen these geographical units of research in order to compare and link developments of Catholic women's social activism in the three zones of Partitioned Poland.

Concerning the definition of Catholic laywomen's “social activism”, used interchangeably with the terms “social engagement” or “social involvement,” it encompasses only acts of laywomen's practical engagement into the social realm. Accordingly, my understanding of the term “social activism” differs from that in the Catholic doctrine in the period, which assumed the possibility of altering earthly conditions due to divine intervention actuated by devotional practices (e.g. processions, collective praying, masses dedicated to a selected cause). My definition of social activism thus excludes numerous and at the time popular forms of activating and/or gathering laywomen for the purposes of prayer only.²

¹ Unless I say otherwise, in the thesis “religious woman” *does not* mean a person who took religious vows and was a member of a female congregation (a nun or sister) .

² To give an example from the period that illustrates an analytical controversy at stake here: in 1884 pope Leo XIII promulgated the encyclical *Superiore Anno* (On the Recitation of the Rosary) in which he urged the Catholics to recite the rosary so as to safeguard the population from the fatal plague approaching the borders of the Italian state. Among other things, the Pope suggested that “wherever it be lawful, the local confraternity of the Rosary should make a solemn procession through the streets as

Regarding laywomen's activism within the framework of various collective bodies I differentiate between two categories. The first, "pious associations for Catholic women," consists of collective bodies in which the primary and explicitly devotional purpose was combined with an obligation to become engaged in some sort of social projects. The second group, "lay associations of Catholic women," comprises confessionally motivated organizations that centered primarily on improvement of the temporal conditions of selected groups. In the latter case, the devotional aspect was always present but of secondary importance. Distinguishing between "pious associations for Catholic laywomen" and "lay associations of Catholic women", I point to the shifting emphasis between women's acts of social engagement that were created and run under the supervision of the Catholic Church (Chapter 5) and the social mobilization of women within the framework of collective bodies, which despite their close contact with the religious authorities and waving of the Catholic banner, were nevertheless lay in character (Chapter 6).³

a public manifestation of religious devotion." (Leo XIII, *Superiore anno* (On the Recitation of the Rosary), in Libreria Editrice Vaticana, accessed September 17, 2010, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/leo_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_30081884_superiore-anno_en.html. In the thesis I use the translations of the papal encyclicals' titles conform with the Vatican's official documents.) The belief in the existence of a divine power that intervenes/might intervene in the temporal affairs is foundational and shared universally by Catholics as is the trust that it is possible to provoke divine involvement by a certain type of behavior. In 1884 those who followed the request of the pope believed that through reciting the rosary and processions they might prevent the spread of the plague or at least limit its deadly impact. One may argue that laywomen involved in the confraternities of the Rosary, very popular at the time across the entire Catholic world, engaged in social work of some sort. Moreover, believers could argue that the fact that not everybody died of cholera proved how successful those women's performance was. Yet, due to the specific, however broadly defined, disciplinary requirements of historical research it would be difficult to point at a link between these women's efforts and, for example, the number of Asian cholera's casualties in the period. For illuminating comments on the analytical difficulties faced by contemporary historians approaching a similar phenomena, see Dipesh Chakrabarty, "Minority Histories, Subaltern Pasts," in *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press 2000), especially 104. Also discussed in Section 1.1.

³ Another point to comment on regarding the category of "pious associations for laywomen" is that it is very likely that the idea of putting societies, confraternities, archconfraternities and sodalities into one group, as I do, would not pass the test if confronted with the classification advised by the Roman Catholic Church (in the past and now), for these organizations differed considerably in terms of their relation to Church authorities (e.g. regarding the degree and type of the clerical supervision) and inner organization (regarding their purpose, time of probation, costumes, rituals, scope of duties, etc.). Also their histories and developments varied. However, differences of this sort are of secondary importance for my research. For a comparison with the definitions of the same phenomenon proposed by the Catholic Church, see for example Joseph Hilgers, "Sodality," in *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1912), accessed June 9, 2010, <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14120a.htm>. *The Catholic Encyclopedia* of 1912 proposes the following categorization of the various forms of bringing the Catholic laity closer to the Church: "All sodalities, pious associations, and confraternities may be divided into three classes, although those classes are not absolutely distinct from one another. The first class, A, includes the confraternities, which seek mainly to attain piety, devotion, and the increase of love of God by special veneration of God, of the Blessed Virgin, the angels, and the saints. The second class, B, consists of those sodalities,

Whereas the year 1878 in the title of the thesis refers to the beginning of Leo XIII's pontificate, the year 1918 indicates the end of a certain socio-political order in Europe, the reappearance of Poland as an independent state after the Partitions, and the legislative change that granted women and men of the newly emerged state with passive and active political rights without exceptions. The years from 1878 until 1918 contextualize my research at the crossroads of three broad historical phenomena, as explained below.

The first historical context for my research is that of the so-called Polish Partitions. The term "Polish Partitions" refers to the period between 1795 and 1918 when the lands of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth were divided between three neighboring empires – the Russian, Prussian and Austrian monarchies – which were characterized by different political, economic, and social conditions.⁴ It is not a sweeping generalization to say that the available Polish historical scholarship regards the Partitions and the efforts to regain Polish self-determination and independent statehood as the dominant explanatory frameworks to describe and interpret various political, economic or social developments that occurred (or did not occur) in this region in the nineteenth century. Scholars acknowledge the impact of broader European and global socio-political processes on various developments on the Polish lands, yet usually refer to those using the umbrella term "modernizing processes," which in the case of the Polish lands supposedly came with their specific ("divergent") trajectories.⁵ Moreover, despite the long period of "foreign" impact on the Polish population, there have been few attempts by researchers to treat the Polish zones as political, economic, legal and/or social parts of larger and highly multicultural entities, or to frame this dynamic in any other terms than conflict, that is, as a struggle against imposed, unwanted conditions.⁶ Furthermore, the scholarship on

which are founded chiefly to promote the spiritual and corporal works of mercy. The third class, C, may be considered to include those associations of the Church the main object of which is the well-being and improvement of a definite class of persons."

⁴ For a general introduction to the Polish Partitions, see Andrzej Chwalba, *Historia Polski 1795-1918* (History of Poland 1795-1918) (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2005); *The History of Poland since 1863*, ed. Roy Francis Leslie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 1-112.

⁵ For example Anna Żarnowska argues: "In Poland, modern political culture (...), developed later than in Western Europe and had specific features which distinguished it from other European countries," see "Family and Public Life: Barriers and Interpretation – Women in Poland at the Turn of the Century," *Women's History Review* 5 (1996): 469.

⁶ For examples of a new approach in the Polish historiography, see Andrzej Chwalba, *Imperium korupcji w Rosji i w Królestwie Polskim 1861-1917* (The empire of corruption in Russia and the Polish Kingdom 1861-1917) (Kraków: Wyd. Towarzystwo Autorów i Wydawców Prac Naukowych Universitas, 1995) and also by the same author *Polacy w służbie Moskali* (Poles in the service of the

the time of the Partitions, including the historiography on Polish women, typically focuses on selected historical phenomena exclusively within a single zone.⁷ Hence, with its comparative focus on the developments in question in the three zones, this dissertation aims at furthering such scholarship on Polish women's history that would, in my view, avoid an unnecessary "partition" of research areas resulting from conceptualizing the Polish zones as separate entities.

While it would be unmerited to question entirely the legitimacy of the approach that emphasizes the impact of the Partitions on developments in the three zones, the radical focus of historians on the alleged uniqueness of the Polish Partitions and/or (some) Poles' desire to (re)gain political independence has made other historical drives, projects, and ambitions invisible or seemingly less important. For this reason, in addition to the framework of the Polish Partitions and its consequences, my analysis introduces the second historical context, that is, the phenomenon of

Russians) (Warszawa: PWN, 1999). There is a growing interest in research on other than Polish/Catholic groups that lived on the lands of Partitioned Poland as well as on the relations between Poles and other national/ethnic groups, for example see Czesław Partacz, *Od Badeniego do Potockiego. Stosunki polsko-ukraińskie w Galicji w latach 1888-1908* (From Badeni to Potocki. The Polish-Ukrainian relations in Galicia 1888-1908) (Toruń: Wydawn. Adam Marszałek, 1996); Tadeusz Stegner, *Polacy-ewangelicy w Królestwie Polskim 1815-1914* (Poles-Evangelicals in the Polish Kingdom 1815-1914) (Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego, 1992).

⁷ For example Ewelina Kostrzewska, *Ruch organizacyjny ziemianek w Królestwie Polskim na początku XX wieku* (Women-landowners' activism in the Polish Kingdom at the beginning of the twentieth century) (Łódź: Ibidem, 2007); Andrzej Chwalba, "Kobiety w życiu politycznym Galicji na przełomie wieku XIX i XX" (Women and political life in Galicia at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth century) and Włodzimierz Mędrzecki, "W społecznościach lokalnych i w parafii. Kobiety w życiu publicznym wsi polskiej na przełomie wieków" (In local communities and in the parish. Polish peasant women in the public sphere at the turn of the centuries), in *Kobieta i świat polityki* (Woman and the world of politics), ed. Anna Żarnowska and Andrzej Szwarz (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo DiG, 2004), 119-134, 163-168; Włodzimierz Mędrzecki, "Konwenans wiejski i nowe wzorce zachowań kobiet na wsi w Królestwie Polskim na przełomie XIX i XX wieku" (Traditional conduct and new patterns of women's behavior in the Polish Kingdom villages at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth century), Stanisław Wiech, "Kobiety w życiu codziennym środowiska małomiasteczkowego rzemieślników Królestwa Polskiego na przełomie XIX i XX wieku" (Women-artisans in everyday parochial life at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth century) and Natali Stegmann, "Wielkopolskie wzorce kobiecej aktywności społecznej w życiu codziennym na przełomie XIX i XX wieku" (Patterns of female social activism in the Wielkopolska province at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth century), in *Kobieta i kultura życia codziennego* (Woman and everyday culture), ed. Anna Żarnowska and Andrzej Szwarz (Warszawa: Instytut Historyczny Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego: DiG, 1997), 71-87, 347-362, 363-369. Occasionally have historians made an effort to research the same phenomenon in two or three zones simultaneously, see for example Jan Molenda, *Chłopi. Naród. Niepodległość. Kształtowanie się postaw narodowych i obywatelskich chłopów w Galicji i Królestwie Polskim w przededniu odrodzenia Polski* (The peasants. Nation. Independence. The emergence of the peasantry's national and civic attitudes in Galicia and the Polish Kingdom before Poland's rebirth) (Warszawa: Instytut Historii PAN, 1999). Within the field of Polish women's history Natali Stegmann's research on Polish feminist women's movement is the first and only study to date that examines the developments in question in the three zones during the time of the Partitions. Natali Stegmann, *Die Töchter der geschlagenen Helden. „Frauenfrage,” Feminismus und Frauenbewegung in Polen, 1863-1919* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2000).

transnational Catholicism's rebirth in the long nineteenth century, as a useful and counterbalancing approach to interpret Polish Catholic laywomen's social activism. Until very recently, historians did not perceive Catholicism, or religion in general, as factors worth considering in their analysis of modern processes. This thesis's focus on nineteenth-century Catholicism is informed by current scholarly shifts in conceptualizing the role religion played/plays in the modern period. My observations in the subsequent chapters are principally inspired by the ideas of Christopher Clark who argues that in the second half of the nineteenth century, especially during the papacy of Leo XIII (1878-1903), the efforts of the Vatican, national and local clergy, and the Catholic laity came together to give rise to a new kind of Catholicism that was capable of entering the discussion on the principles informing the modern polity with its adversaries: socialist, nationalist, radical factions and/or the secular state.⁸ Next to the framework of the Catholic revival, in the subsequent chapters I employ Wolfram Kaiser and Christopher Clark's concept of "European culture wars", understood as a struggle between religious and secular factions that penetrated virtually all aspects of private and public life during the period across the Catholic world.⁹

Historians interested in the phenomenon of the spectacular rebirth of Catholicism agree that it was significantly enhanced by women's involvement in the process.¹⁰ Despite the losses suffered in the post-revolutionary era, from the early years of the nineteenth century the Catholic Church launched hundreds of women's congregations across Europe, whose members carried out activities in schools, hospitals, shelters, kitchens for the poor, nurseries, and/or orphanages. Catholic nuns and sisters also took part in missionary projects outside of Europe. However, whereas there is a considerable amount of research on the size and variety of social areas the Catholic female congregations were engaged in in the nineteenth century, a

⁸ Christopher Clark, "The New Catholicism and the European Culture Wars," in *Culture Wars: Secular-Catholic Conflict in Nineteenth Century Europe*, ed. Christopher Clark and Wolfram Kaiser (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 13.

⁹ Christopher Clark and Wolfram Kaiser, "Introduction. The European Culture Wars," in *Culture Wars*, 1. Although I initially regarded the word "war" with some reservation – as it risks positioning "religion" and "secular" in an antithetical relationship yet again, which would run against the intentions of my project – after considering the problem and studying the subject, I concluded that "war" aptly conveys the concept of the interaction (that would be missed in case of the word "clash" for example), but also the actual temperature of the exchange between the parties (which would not be conveyed by "debate," "argument" or "quarrel").

¹⁰ Oded Heilbroner, "The Age of Catholic Revival," in *Companion to Nineteenth Century Europe 1789-1914*, ed. Stefan Berger (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006): 241-242; Clark, "The New Catholicism," 16.

phenomenon called the “silent revolution,”¹¹ the social involvement of laywomen remains one of the most underexamined areas in studies of Catholicism’s revival. This dissertation contributes to the research on the Catholic rebirth by exploring how (Polish) Catholic laywomen’s efforts to improve the social, civil, and economic situation of women were entangled with and/or were enhanced by the agenda of revamped nineteenth-century Catholicism. Conversely, it contributes to that research by exploring how through the various social projects of pious laywomen Catholicism aimed at re-establishing its areas of influence. My findings on and interpretations of Polish laywomen’s activism add to our general knowledge about the re-emergence of Roman Catholicism in this period and enhance our understanding of how religion in general reinvented itself in various contexts in response to the challenges of secularizing discourses and practices. Further, this thesis’s research results complicate our understanding of the phenomenon of “European culture wars” by providing and discussing examples of their local variations in the Polish context.

The third historical framework for my research is that of the so-called Polish “woman question,” understood in this thesis as a particular, context-informed phenomenon that emerged within the transnationally unfolding process of formulating responses to one of the most fundamental questions of the time – the role and position of women in modernity. The point of departure is that the failure of the January Uprising (1863) and the anti-Polish repressions that followed, the socio-economic changes brought about by the agricultural reforms, prompting the financial collapse of many land estates, and/or the rapid industrialization that occurred across the lands of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the second half of the nineteenth century profoundly affected the social structures, as well as all social groups and both sexes, albeit to different extent. From the 1860s onwards there was a growing number of women from all social backgrounds who were forced, for various reasons, to join the paid labor force. Often professionally unprepared and facing customary resistance towards the newly emerging phenomenon of female paid employment, Polish women of diverse factions since the turn of the 1870s and 1880s began to advocate for long-lasting changes to the social, civil, economic and political situation of women through (first) creating independent, often semi-legal or clandestine, educational projects of various kinds since the 1880s; to (second) formulating informed insights about the

¹¹ Claude Langlois, *Le Catholicisme au féminin: les congrégations françaises à supérieure générale au XIX siècle* (Paris: Le Cerf, 1984), 67.

detrimental conditions of women`s existence at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth century; to (third) advocating for their political suffrage from the beginning of the twentieth century.

Historians have eloquently covered the wide variety of Polish women`s efforts in this period, however what is missing from the picture is how Polish Catholic women reacted and contributed to the unfolding “woman question” in the three zones of Partitioned Poland. Hence, this thesis makes an empirical contribution to the developing field of Polish women`s history as well as to the general scholarship on women`s history by taking on an in-depth exploration of particular confessionally motivated solutions and strategies to the “woman question” employed by Polish Catholic female laity. On the theoretical level it calls for the inclusion of religion as an analytical category into scholarly research on Polish women in the modern period.

In the subsequent chapters, the empirical findings about Polish Catholic laywomen`s social projects, provided through a close reading of the material produced by the activists/organizations under consideration, are contextualized within the transnational phenomena of Catholicism`s revival and women`s efforts to advance their social, civil, economic and political situation in the modern period as well as distinct local political and social conditions, uneven economic advancement, and the religio-national landscape of the three zones. Combined with the comparative approach, these three historical perspectives are the contexts and explanatory frameworks within which I situate the ideas, arguments and actions advanced by pious Catholic Polish laywomen. I assume that my strategy of shifting between the local, national and transnational contexts as well as between the competing/untangled projects – that is the secular-religious conflicts, the unfolding Polish version of the “woman question” and the struggle for national independence – will help to identify factors pertaining to the development of Polish Catholic laywomen`s activism from the 1880s to 1918.¹²

In addition to the goal of keeping the tripartite historical perspective in the

¹² It must be emphasized that in my research I have decided to focus on Polish Catholic laywomen`s engagement with the woman`s question and New Catholicism. Although rising nationalism also informed these women`s work and thinking I have not foregrounded it because of two reasons. First, in my reading of the sources it seemed to be of secondary importance to the women involved. Secondly, an equal focus on nationalism would have reproduced the framework of the Polish Partitions as the explanatory framework for the developments on the Polish lands in the period, whereas I propose to highlight other projects and thus to widen the scope of the historical explanations.

course of the analysis, along with a close reading of the sources as the primary research method, I have employed a number of approaches depending on the focus of the chapters and the material used. Chapter 3, which explores the course of actions undertaken by the pioneers of Polish Catholic laywomen's activism, employs a biographical approach, focusing on selected women, with a case-study method. Chapter 4, however, privileges the method of content analysis to interpret the publications left by the pioneering women-activists. Whereas Chapters 3 and 4 focus on individuals and their social involvement, Chapters 5 and 6 rely on the "association" or "organization" as the starting point of analysis.¹³

Unless stated otherwise, I use the word "local" in reference to the conditions Poles experienced within the respective parts of Partitioned Poland (be it the specific legislative changes imposed by the foreign states on the Polish population, the multinational landscape, or the Roman Catholic religious domination in the three zones). The term "national" assumes a sense of distinct (Polish) nationality and a common agenda shared by initially the upper class, the middle class, and the intelligentsia, but increasingly spreading among the lower classes as well, which sustained and developed a sense of group unity despite and across the borders of the three zones. The term "transnational" raises certain difficulties. On the one hand, I agree with Christopher Bayly, as discussed in *The American Historical Review* (2006), that the term "'transnational history' would not be very useful before 1914, if then."¹⁴ If I understand his point correctly, he objects to the semantic overuse of the word "transnational," since, as he argues, in the period under consideration a sense of nationality existed only in some parts of the non-Western (his word) world and "large parts of the globe were not dominated by nations so much as by empires, city-states, diasporas, etc."¹⁵ Having acknowledged this, however, I see the advantage of using the term "transnational" in the context of late-nineteenth century Europe: not only does it indicate the geographical scope of my research, which is larger than one zone,

¹³ From the huge amount of literature available on these various methods, I found the following especially useful: *Theories and Methodologies in Postgraduate Feminist Research: Researching Differently*, ed. Rosemarie Buikema, Gabriele Griffin, and Nina Lykke (New York: Routledge, 2011); Nina Lykke, *Feminist Studies: a Guide to Intersectional Theory, Methodology and Writing* (New York: Routledge, 2010); *Handbook of Feminist Research: Theory and Praxis*, ed. Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: SAGE Publications, 2007).

¹⁴ "AHR Conversation: On Transnational History. Participants: C.A. Bayly, Sven Beckert, Matthew Connelly, Isabel Hofmeyr, Wendy Kozol, and Patricia Seed," *The American Historical Review* 111 (2006): 1442.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 1442.

but it also signals my affiliation to a “transnational approach” as a research method, which centers on the circulation and movements of people and ideas and the interpretation of those elements.

0.2 The state of the research on Polish Catholic laywomen`s activism in the nineteenth century

Polish women`s history as a field of separate scholarly investigations has been growing for more than two decades. Initially it had been established and developed by historians connected with the *Uniwersytet Warszawski* (Varsovian University) and the *Polska Akademia Nauk* (Polish Academy of Science), who managed to invite scholars from other research centers and disciplines to do research on a variety of Polish women-related topics, predominantly in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The network regularly shared the results of their investigations in the form of what eventually became nine thematically organized volumes, known commonly as the “Woman and...” series.¹⁶ Recently two interesting volumes have been specifically dedicated to Polish women`s activism within the framework of various organizations up to 1918: *Działaczki społeczne, feministki, obywatelki... Samoorganizowanie się kobiet na ziemiach polskich do 1918 r.* (The social activists, feminists, citizens...The organized activism of women on the Polish lands until 1918) and *Aktywność kobiet w organizacjach zawodowych i gospodarczych w XIX i XX wieku* (Women`s activism in professional and economic associations in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries).¹⁷

¹⁶ *Kobieta i społeczeństwo na ziemiach polskich w XIX wieku* (Woman and society on the Polish lands in the nineteenth century), ed. Anna Żarnowska and Andrzej Szwarc (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo DIG, 1990); *Kobieta i edukacja na ziemiach polskich w XIX i XX* (Woman and education on the Polish lands in the nineteenth and twentieth century), ed. Anna Żarnowska and Andrzej Szwarc (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo DIG, 1992); *Kobieta i świat polityki; Kobieta i kultura* (Woman and culture), ed. Anna Żarnowska and Andrzej Szwarc (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo DIG, 1996); *Kobieta i kultura życia codziennego* (Woman and culture of everyday life), ed. Anna Żarnowska and Andrzej Szwarc (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo DIG, 1997); *Kobieta i praca w XIX i XX w.* (Woman and work in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries), ed. Anna Żarnowska and Andrzej Szwarc (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo DIG, 2000); *Kobieta i kultura czasu wolnego* (Woman and free time), ed. Anna Żarnowska and Andrzej Szwarc (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo DIG, 2001); *Kobieta i małżeństwo. Wiek XIX–XX* (Woman and marriage. The nineteenth and twentieth century), ed. Anna Żarnowska and Andrzej Szwarc (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo DIG, 2004); *Kobieta i rewolucja obyczajowa. Społeczno-kulturowe aspekty seksualności. Wiek XIX i XX* (Woman and the moral revolution. The social and cultural aspects of sexuality. The nineteenth and twentieth century), ed. Anna Żarnowska and Andrzej Szwarc (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo DIG, 2005).

¹⁷ *Działaczki społeczne, feministki, obywatelki... Samoorganizowanie się kobiet na ziemiach polskich do 1918 r.* (Social activists, feminists, citizens...The organized activism of women on the Polish lands until 1918), ed. Agnieszka Jasińska-Janiak, Katarzyna Sierakowska, and Andrzej Szwarc (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Neriton, 2008); *Aktywność kobiet w organizacjach zawodowych i gospodarczych w XIX i XX wieku* (Women`s activism in professional and economic associations in the nineteenth and twentieth century), ed. Krzysztof Makowski (Poznań: Instytut Historii UAM 2007).

Along with the thematic volumes that present the latest developments in research on Polish women's history and their activism, there have been several books that explore in detail selected parts of Polish women's movements, organizations, and/or social/political involvement through 1918.¹⁸

Scholars of Polish women's history have discovered and analyzed an impressive variety of women's activism (for example philanthropic, feminist, socialist, political, military) in numerous forms (clandestine, lawful, organizations, parties, networks).¹⁹ With few exceptions, however, Catholic laywomen – either their individual or public religiosity, worldviews, patterns of behavior, or, to bring it closer to the subject of this dissertation, their confessionally motivated social activism – have not been the topic of separate scholarly studies. Although several historians acknowledge that, first, the Church could function as a force to activate Polish laywomen outside of their familial environments, primarily within a framework of pious associations; and second, that probably a significant number of laywomen were engaged in social work through various confessionally motivated groups, they have limited themselves to formulating concise, general remarks.²⁰ In the form of brief articles, the two Polish historians, Tadeusz Stegner and Daniel Olszewski, have

¹⁸ Stegmann, *Die Töchter der geschlagenen Helden*; Kostrzewska, *Ruch organizacyjny ziemianek*; Joanna Dufurat, *Kobiety w kręgu lewicy niepodległościowej. Od Ligi Kobiet Pogotowia Wojennego do Ochotniczej Legii Kobiet (1908–1918/1919)* (Women in the Circle of the Pro-Independence Left-Wing. From the Women's League for War Alert to Women's Voluntary Legion, 1908–1918/1919) (Toruń: Wydawnictwo Adama Marszałek, 2001).

¹⁹ See the earlier mentioned two volumes *Działaczki społeczne, feministki, obywatelka* and *Aktywność kobiet w organizacjach zawodowych i gospodarczych*, but also Elżbieta Mazur, "Działalność dobroczynna kobiet z warszawskich elit społecznych w drugiej połowie XIX wieku. Wariant tradycyjny i nowoczesny" (The charity work by women from the Varsovian elites in the second half of the nineteenth century. Traditional and modern versions), in *Kobieta i kultura życia codziennego*, 373-381; Paweł Samuś, "Socialistki w Królestwie Polskim przełomu XIX i XX wieku. Szkic do portretu zbiorowego" (Socialist women in the Polish Kingdom at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Collective portray), Barbara Szabat, "W szkółkach i organizacjach bojowych. Kobiety na Kielecczyźnie na przełomie XIX i XX wieku" (In the military schools and organizations. Women in the Kielce region at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth century), Katarzyna Sierakowska, "Aspiracje polityczne Związku Równouprawnienia Kobiet Polskich" (The political aspirations of the Polish Women's Suffrage Union), in *Kobieta i świat polityki*, 191-217, 218-225, 245-254.

²⁰ For example Rudolf Jaworski, "Polish Women and the National Conflict in the Province of Posen at the Turn of the Century," in *Women in Polish Society*, ed. Rudolf Jaworski and Bianka Pietrow-Ennker (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 57; Mazur, "Działalność dobroczynna kobiet z warszawskich elit społecznych," 341; Maria Nietyksza, "Tradycyjne i nowe formy aktywności publicznej kobiet w warunkach zaborów" (Traditional and new forms of female public activism in the conditions of the Partitions"), in *Kobieta i świat polityki*, 93; Włodzimierz Mędrzecki, "W społecznościach lokalnych i w parafii. Kobiety w życiu publicznym wsi polskiej na przełomie wieków" (In the local social milieus and parish. Women in the village public life at the turn of the centuries), in *Kobieta i świat polityki*, 167; Barbara Hoff, "Czas wolny mieszkanki miasta galicyjskiego w XIX w." (The female inhabitants' free time in a Galician city in the nineteenth century), in *Kobieta i kultura czasu wolnego*, 90.

investigated the position of the nineteenth-century Polish Catholic Church on laywomen's social roles, activism and emancipatory claims.²¹

Historians of the Polish Church have not analyzed the social activism of Catholic laywomen or laymen during the time of the Partitions either. The latter group of scholars has privileged the religious institution and clergy as the main focus of their investigations into how the Church engaged in the social realm.²² For this reason comments and observations on the activism of the Catholic female laity are scarce.²³

²¹ Tadeusz Stegner, "Miejsce kobiety w społeczeństwie w opinii środowisk katolickich i ewangelickich w Królestwie Polskim w drugiej połowie XIX i na początku XX wieku" (Woman's place in society in the opinion of the Catholic and Evangelic milieus in the second half of the nineteenth century and at the beginning of the twentieth century), in *Spoleczeństwo w dobie przemian* (Society in the period of change), ed. Maria Nietyksza, Andrzej Szwarz, Katarzyna Sierakowska and Agnieszka Janiak-Jasińska (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo DIG 2003), 109-118; Daniel Olszewski, "Postawy społeczno-religijne kobiet w Królestwie Polskim w drugiej połowie XIX wieku" (The socio-religious viewpoints of women in the Polish Kingdom in the second half of the nineteenth and early twentieth century), in *Kobieta i kultura religijna. Specyficzne cechy religijności kobiet w Polsce* (Woman and religious culture. The features of women's religiosity in Poland), ed. Jadwiga Hoff (Rzeszów: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Rzeszowskiego, 2006), 11-22. The volume *Kobieta i kultura religijna* has a pioneering character with respect to histories of Polish pious women. The investigations published in the volume tackle Polish devout women of different religions from the Middle Ages until the modern period.

²² Konstanty Turowski, "Ruch chrześcijańsko-demokratyczny w Galicji. Część 1" (The Christian-democratic movement in Galicia. Part 1), *Chrześcijanin w świecie* 9, 51 (1977): 56-68 and "Ruch chrześcijańsko-demokratyczny w Galicji. Część 2" (The Christian-democratic movement in Galicia. Part 2), *Chrześcijanin w świecie* 9, 52 (1977): 87-102; Lech Trzeciakowski, "Model księdza społecznika. Duchowieństwo archidiecezji poznańskiej i gnieźnieńskiej w dobie zaboru" (The model of a priest-social activist. The clergy of the Posen and Gniezno archdioceses during the Partitions), *Życie i myśl* 64, 3 (1999): 29-42; Stanisław Gajewski, *Działalność społeczna duchowieństwa w Królestwie Polskim* (The clergy's social activism in the Polish Kingdom) (Lublin: Redakcja Wydawnictw KUL, 1990); Stefan Kowal, "Rola duchowieństwa w kształtowaniu więzi społecznych Wielkopolan w XIX i początkach XX wieku" (The role of the clergy in shaping the social bonds of the Grand Duchy of Posen's population in the nineteenth century and in the early twentieth century), in *Spoleczno-kulturalna działalność Kościoła Katolickiego w Polsce XIX i XX wieku* (The social and cultural activism of the Catholic Church in Poland in the nineteenth and twentieth century), ed. Regina Renz and Marta Meducka (Kielce: Kieleckie Towarzystwo Naukowe, 1994), 43-52.

²³ For example Ryszard Bender, *Spoleczne inicjatywy chrześcijańskie w Królestwie Polskim 1905-1918* (The social Christian initiatives in the Polish Kingdom 1905-1918) (Lublin: Towarzystwo Naukowe Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, 1978), 120-123. Bender mentions various social projects of Cecylia Plater-Zyberkówna and several organizations for Catholic laywomen in the Polish Kingdom. Zofia Chyra-Rolicz, "Kościół katolicki a ruch kobiecy przed 1993 rokiem" (The Catholic Church and the women's movement before 1993), in *Spoleczno-kulturalna działalność kościoła katolickiego w Polsce*, 151-152. Chyra-Rolicz lists several social projects of the Cracovian laywomen before 1918; Leszek Wilczyński, "Z dziejów kościelnej działalności charytatywnej w Wielkopolsce pod zaborem pruskim" (The Church's charity activism in the Grand Duchy of Posen in the Prussian zone), *Poznańskie Zeszyty humanistyczne* 7 (2006): 62-63. Wilczyński mentions the Ladies of Charity in the Grand Duchy of Posen. The disproportionate focus on clergy-driven social activism among the historians of the Church versus activism carried out by the Catholic laity, by both women and men, is visible, for example, in the content of *Słownik biograficzny katolicyzmu społecznego w Polsce* (Biographical dictionary of social Catholicism in Poland) in which the vast majority of the entries are dedicated to the achievements of priests and nuns. *Słownik biograficzny katolicyzmu społecznego w Polsce A-J*, (Biographical dictionary of social Catholicism in Poland, A-J), ed. Ryszard Bender (Lublin: Towarzystwo Naukowe Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, 1991); *Słownik biograficzny katolicyzmu społecznego w Polsce, K-P*, ed. Ryszard Bender (Lublin: Towarzystwo Naukowe Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, 1994); *Słownik biograficzny katolicyzmu społecznego w*

In contrast to the lack of investigation of Catholic laywomen`s activism, there is a considerable amount of historical research that explores the size, scope and forms of social work carried out by Polish nuns and sisters in the period. In the context of my research I have found particularly useful the scholarship on the social activism of the so-called Honorat hidden female congregations that were launched in the second half of the nineteenth century, in particular the studies of Roland Prejs, Marianna Mazurek and Krystyna Trela in which the authors pay attention to the cooperation between the female congregations and female laity.²⁴

A search for scholarship on Catholic laywomen`s social activism in the nineteenth century in other contexts has shown that the shortage of research on this issue has a transnational character. Most historical research that centers on Catholic laywomen`s activism at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth century deals with the French context. *Ladies of the Leisure Class: the Bourgeoisies of Northern France in the Nineteenth Century* by Bonnie Smith, *Associations féminines et catholicisme: XIXe-XXe siècle* by Sylvie Fayet-Scribe, *The Ligue patriotique des Françaises, 1902-1933: a Feminine Response to the Secularization of French Society* by Odile Sarti and *Au service de l`église, de la patrie et de la famille: femmes catholiques et maternité sous la IIIe République* by Anna Cova are the best known and elaborated examples. In the German context, Gisela Breuer wrote a monograph of the first powerful Catholic laywomen`s organization: *Frauenbewegung im Katholizismus: Der*

Polsce, R-Ż, ed. Ryszard Bender (Lublin: Towarzystwo Naukowe Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, 1995).

²⁴ Roland Prejs, “Środowisko zakonne Bł. Honorata Koźmińskiego. Klasztory Kapucynów w Zakroczymiu i Nowym Miście nad Pilicą w latach 1864-1916” (The monastic milieu of Blessed Honorat Koźmiński. The Capuchins` monasteries in Zakroczym and Nowe Miasto near Pilica); Marianna Honorata Mazurek, “Działalność oświatowa-wychowawcza Zgromadzenia Sióstr Posłanniczek Maryi od Najświętszego Serca Jezusa w latach 1874-1908” (The educational and pedagogical activism of the Congregation of the Mary`s Messengers` Sisters under the invocation of the Holiest Jesus`s Heart 1874-1908), Krystyna Trela, “Działalność społeczno-charytatywna Zgromadzenia Sióstr Imienia Jezus w latach 1887-1946” (The social and charity activism of the Sisters` Congregation under the invocation of Jesus`s name 1887-1946), *Nasza Przyszłość* 74 (1990): 5-35, 36-63, 71-108. Also for more general information on the “hidden convents,” see Maria Mazurek and Marianna Wójcik, “Honorackie zgromadzenia bezhabitowe w latach 1874- 1914 w Królestwie Polskim i Cesarstwie Rosyjskim” (The Honorat non-frock convents 1874-1914 in the Polish Kingdom and the Russian Empire), in *Materiały do historii zgromadzeń zakonnych na ziemiach polskich w XIX i w początku XX w.* (The sources to the histories of the convents on the Polish lands in the nineteenth century and at the beginning of the twentieth century), ed. Halina Dylągowa (Lublin: Towarzystwo Naukowe KUL, 1976). Agata Mirek has recently published an article that also explores the contribution of the Catholic female congregations to the process of launching and managing labor organizations for workingwomen. Agata Mirek, “Udział żeńskich wspólnot zakonnych w organizowaniu stowarzyszeń i związków zawodowych kobiet na ziemiach polskich na przełomie XIX i XX wieku” (The contribution of the female congregations in organizing associations and labor organizations for women at the turn of the XIX and XX century), in *Aktywność kobiet w organizacjach zawodowych i gospodarczych w XIX i XX wieku*, 77-101.

Katholische Frauenbund 1903-1918. Indrė Karčiauskaitė investigated the pioneering attempts at social organizing by Lithuanian Catholic laywomen in the article “For Women's Rights, Church, and Fatherland: The Lithuanian Catholic Women's Organization, 1908-1940.” Although *Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth-Century Ireland* privileged Catholic female congregations’ activism, its author Maria Luddy attempts at doing justice to Catholic laywomen as well. Finally, Deirdre Moloney gave a picture of American Catholic laywomen activists in her *American Catholic Lay Groups and Transatlantic Social Reform in the Progressive Era* (especially in the chapter “Promoting Maternal over Material, Ideal over Idle: The Emergence of Catholic Women’s Groups”).²⁵ Although my search for scholarship on Catholic laywomen’s social engagement at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth century is limited by my particular knowledge of foreign languages, it is clear that in comparison with other women’s groups and movements in the period, the scholarship on Catholic laywomen in general and their activism in particular is vastly underrepresented in women’s history.

0.3 Chapter outline

The aim of Chapter 1 is to identify the intellectual settings/traditions/imaginaries that have informed the recent abundance of historical studies on Polish women in Partitioned Poland – studies addressing a wide range of women- related phenomena yet exclude Catholic laywomen, their religiosity and the religious aspects of their social activism. In other words, my question is why Polish women’s secular charities, educational, feminist, liberal, or socialist projects/organizations have merited greater consideration from historians than Polish Catholic lay women’s initiatives and associations between the 1880s and 1918. In order to examine the roots of the scarcity of contemporary research on Polish (and other) Catholic laywomen in the nineteenth

²⁵ Bonnie Smith, *Ladies of the Leisure Class: the Bourgeoises of Northern France in the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1981); Sylvie Fayet-Scribe, *Associations féminines et catholicisme: XIXe-XXe siècle* (Paris: Editions ouvrières, 1990); Odile Sarti, *The Ligue patriotique des Françaises, 1902-1933: a Feminine Response to the Secularization of French Society* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1992); Anne Cova, *Au service de l’église, de la patrie et de la famille: femmes catholiques et maternité sous la IIIe République* (Paris: L’Harmattan, 2000); Gisela Breuer, *Frauenbewegung im Katholizismus: Der Katholische Frauenbund 1903-1918* (Frankfurt: Campus-Verlag, 1998); Indrė Karčiauskaitė, “For Women's Rights, Church, and Fatherland: The Lithuanian Catholic Women's Organisation, 1908-1940,” *Aspasia* 1 (2007): 128-152; Maria Luddy, *Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth-Century Ireland* (Cambridge, UK.: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Deirdre Moloney, “Promoting Maternal over Material, Ideal over Idle: The Emergence of Catholic Women’s Groups,” in *American Catholic Lay Groups and Transatlantic Social Reform in the Progressive Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002).

century, I focus on the secularization thesis, the feminization of religion thesis and the privatization of religion thesis, and the comparative frameworks that juxtapose Catholic and Protestant settings in the respective period. The discussions addressed in Chapter 1 provide the reader with the main intellectual foundations that inform this research project, in particular the recent scholarly shift in conceptualizing the role religion played in historical developments in the modern period.

There is a considerable amount of literature that covers various aspects of the historical realities of Partitioned Poland, as well as literature on (Polish) women's activism in this period. What is perhaps less known is the transnational phenomenon of the so-called Catholic revival that emerged in the long nineteenth century. Hence, in Chapter 2 I give an overview, based on the available research and my reading of the papal encyclicals, of the major developments affecting Roman Catholicism in the period, with a special emphasis on the means with which the Vatican was activating Catholic laity around its agenda. In this brief chapter I also introduce the concepts of New Catholicism and the "Europeans culture wars".

The investigations in Chapter 3 stem from my observation that the existing research on Catholic lay female activism in various national contexts in the modern period centers on the confessionally motivated women's organizations created at the beginning of the twentieth century. This may lead to the assumption that the establishment of organizations for lay Catholic women and the rise of modern Catholic female lay activism occurred in the same period. In Chapter 3, however, I trace the beginnings of Polish Catholic lay female activism to the turn of the 1870s and 1880s by focusing on the confessionally motivated social projects of four prominent women-leaders: Jadwiga Zamoyska (1831-1923), Antonina Machczyńska (1837-1919), Cecylia Plater-Zyberkówna (1853-1920) and Maria Kleniewska (1863-1947). Specifically I explore the new model of the school for girls and young women, *Zakłady Kórnickie* (The Kórnicki Institute), proposed by Zamoyska in 1882 in Kórnik (the Prussian zone) and further demonstrate how this particular model of an educational institution was disseminated and re-created across the lands of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Examples include the Lvivian dormitory for women started by Antonina Machczyńska in 1892 (the Austrian zone), the so-called school on Piękna street and agricultural school for women of landowning class in Chyliczki founded by Cecylia Plater-Zyberkówna in 1883 and 1891 respectively (the Russian zone), and the school for peasant women in Nałęczów run by *Zjednoczone*

Koło Ziemiarek (The United Circle of Women-Landowners) from 1906 (the Russian zone). The links I have established between the four women, representatives of bigger laywomen-activists' communities, and their social projects, enable me to argue for a systematic emergence of Polish Roman Catholic laywomen's networks developing across the borders of Partitioned Poland's zones since the early 1880s.

In Chapter 4 I situate the new type of a Catholic school for girls in the context of the broader efforts to construct a Catholic modern civic womanhood and, what I call, "modernization" of female piety. I analyze the range of arguments employed by the four women mentioned above while they were seeking support from religious authorities, secular reformers, nationalist movements, members of their own social group, and of their own sex.

What historians of Catholicism's revival and women's history have under-examined is the ways in which the Church mobilized upper-class, intelligentsia, and middle-class laywomen around its agenda by offering them the possibility of engagement in the public realm through various pious associations that obliged their members to undertake social work. Chapter 5 investigates the social projects undertaken by Polish Catholic laywomen through pious associations, with a focus on the Ladies of Charity, the Confraternities of Christian Mothers and the Sodalties of Mary's Children. I examine the circumstances in which the associations were introduced in the three zones, their growth, and, when possible, how these associations reacted to contemporary secular criticism of their compatibility with social and/or national issues. I attempt to establish how the women, as members of pious associations, conceived of and facilitated the idea of subsequently launching lay organizations of Catholic women.

Chapter 6 discusses the development of lay organizations of Catholic women, established and managed by pious female activists with the assistance of the clergy, in the three zones of Partitioned Poland. Specifically, I turn to the Polish upper-class, middle-class and intelligentsia women's organizations: *Polski Związek Niewiast Katolickich* in Cracow (Polish Association of Catholic Women in Cracow, hereafter PZNK-Cracow), *Polski Związek Niewiast Katolickich* in Lviv (Polish Association of Catholic Women in Lviv, hereafter PZNK-Lviv) and *Katolicki Związek Kobiet Polskich* in Warsaw (Catholic Association of Polish Women, hereafter KZKP). In addition to highlighting the type of social activism these organizations employed, I identify the ways in which they positioned themselves in the developing conflict

between secular and religious factions, as well as towards transnationally unfolding Catholic women's cooperation that began in the early-twentieth century. Finally, I attempt to explain the puzzling absence of a women-only organization for Catholic laywomen in the Grand Duchy of Posen.

0.4 The archival material

Before outlining the main types of historical material used in this research it is necessary to list five factors that explain the limited availability of primary sources on Polish Catholic women-activists in the period between the 1880s and 1918. First, researchers of nineteenth-century Polish laywomen (their religiosity and activism) agree that both the Catholic press as well as the documents produced by the Church (intended internally or for the general public) in the period hardly tackled women's issues. Women seldom appear as the topic of the Polish Church's internal debates, and when they do, it is in the context of comments on the level of their engagement in obligatory religious ceremonies and rituals, usually in comparison to men.²⁶ Second, a disappointing discovery I made during the process of searching for historical material was that the memoirs or/and diaries of various women active in the public sphere contain little information either about their religiosity or confessionally motivated social actions.²⁷ Third, in the period I focus on – the Polish Partitions – public activism of any kind, among both men and women (albeit to different degrees), was limited by the existing legal codes. The people, networks and/or organizations I deal with in this thesis often operated on the edge of lawfulness, they carried out numerous underground projects alongside their official activities, or they simply operated on a clandestine basis. For obvious reasons, then, the individuals involved in these endeavors purposely minimized the production of written records. Fourth, both the Polish state's and the Church's archives suffered substantial losses during the Second World War.²⁸ Last, access to Church archives is not always easy to get for a

²⁶ Stegner, "Miejsce kobiety w społeczeństwie w opinii środowisk katolickich i ewangelickich w Królestwie Polskim," 467; Olszewski, "Postawy społeczno-religijne kobiet w Królestwie Polskim," 11-12.

²⁷ I have read around 80 published and unpublished materials of this kind deposited in various Polish libraries and archives. For a similar observation, see Elżbieta Mazur, *Dobroczynność w Warszawie XIX wieku* (Charity in nineteenth-century Warsaw) (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Instytutu Archeologii i Etnologii PAN, 1999), 9.

²⁸ Naczelną Dyрекcyję Archiwów Państwowych (The Head Office of State Archives), accessed January 12, 2012, http://www.archiwa.gov.pl/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=383&catid=110&Itemid

layperson, such as myself, without formal affiliation to any religious community.

Regarding the existing archival and primary sources, the amount of material on the activism of the four women introduced in Chapters 3 and 4 is uneven. The research on Jadwiga Zamoyska's biography and activism seems most developed. She left behind a vast amount of archival material, consisting of, among other things, ingoing and outgoing correspondence, notes, and documents that illustrate the developments related to the institution she founded. Part of the archival material related to Zamoyska has been published in books. The first one is *Wspomnienia* (Memoirs), in which Zamoyska gave an account of her life up to 1864 (written between 1893 and 1895).²⁹ The second book on Zamoyska is *Une grande Ame. Une grande Oeuvre* (A Great Woman. A Great Oeuvre), which is a careful and extensive selection of correspondence from and to Zamoyska, casting light on the history of planning, launching and managing *Zakłady Kórnickie* (The Kórnicki Institute) – the school project she dedicated her life to.³⁰ The vast majority of the archival material regarding Zamoyska is deposited in *Biblioteka Kórnicka* (Kórnicka Library, hereafter BK) near Posen.³¹ In the 1920s and 1930s a few brochures were published on Zamoyska, mainly in connection to her school and her status as the wife of a famous politician, general Władysław Zamoyski. Most of these early publications were written by women who graduated from Zamoyska's school and they give rather repetitive, glorifying, and general accounts of the circumstances in which the institution was established, its organization and its beneficial impact on its students.³² After the Second World War, Zamoyska's efforts occasionally appeared in the form of chapters in few publications about the history of the Catholic Church's social involvement at the time of the Partitions. They attempted to familiarize a broader

d=183.

²⁹ Jadwiga Zamoyska, *Wspomnienia* (Memoirs) (Londyn: B. Świdorski, 1961).

³⁰ *Une grande Ame. Une grande Oeuvre. La Comtesse Hedwidge Zamoyska* (A great woman. A great oeuvre. The countess Zamoyska), ed. Jeanne Houcke and Maria Zamoyska (Paris 1930).

³¹ Also Archiwum Instytutu Wydawniczego Księży Misjonarzy w Krakowie "Nasza Przeszłość" (The Archive of the Publishing Institut of the Missionary Priests in Cracow "Our Past") would be another place that holds important archival material, mainly correspondence, of Jadwiga Zamoyska.

³² For example Maria Zamoyska, *Jak powstało dzieło św. jeneralowej Zamoyskiej?* (How did oeuvre of the late General's wife Zamoyska come into being?) (Kórnik: Zakłady Kórnickie, 1927); Maria Zamoyska, *Ze spuścizny generalowej Zamoyskiej. Wspomnienie Zjazdu Kuźniczerek w Warszawie w dn. 22. IV 1927r.* (The heritage of the General's wife Zamoyska. Memoirs [written] after the reunion of the graduate students in Warsaw, April 22, 1927) (Warszawa: 1927); Michalina Grodzicka, *Niewiasta mężna. Jeneralowa Jadwiga Zamoyska* (The courageous woman. Jadwiga Zamoyska, the wife of General) (Kraków: Drukarnia Powściągliwość i Praca 1931).

audience with both the purpose and views that informed Zamoyska's project.³³ Recently one can observe a growing interest in Zamoyska, which involves a thorough research of the archival material deposited in the Kórnicka Library. Among the newly published pieces on Zamoyska, there is Zofia Nowak's meticulously detailed article "Historia Zakładu Kórnickiego" (History of the Kórnicki Institute).³⁴

As opposed to Jadwiga Zamoyska, who dedicated her life to practically one task, Antonina Machczyńska engaged in numerous projects and initiatives. Her lavish collection of materials of various kinds (diaries, memoirs, correspondence, organizations' documents, books' manuscripts, lectures and articles) related not only to her personal biography, but also to contemporary women's history and women's activism in Galicia, is available in the National Library in Warsaw. Beside the archival material, she left behind numerous books as well as articles and lectures published in the press during her lifetime. However, neither archival nor published materials have been used for any historical studies or analyses about Machczyńska. In 1931 Marja Strzelecka published a short brochure dedicated to Machczyńska, which contains basic information about the Lvivian activist and her projects.³⁵

Similarly to Antonina Machczyńska, Cecylia Plater-Zyberk (or Plater-Zyberkówna or Plater) was involved in numerous projects, yet unfortunately the archival material related to her activism is modest and scattered in various archives, journals, and others' memoirs. Therefore Plater-Zyberkówna's unpublished autobiographical note, kindly presented to me by members of the Instytut Świecki Służebnic Najświętszego Serca Jezusa – Posłanniczek Maryi w Konstancinie Jeziorna

³³ Mieczysława Czaplicka, "Moje wspomnienia. Szkoła domowej pracy w Zakopanem-Kuźnicach" (My memoirs. The school of household work in Zakopane-Kuźnice), *Nasza Przyszłość* 48 (1964): 197-217; Jan Ziółek, "Jadwiga Zamoyska," *Nasza Przyszłość* 72 (1988): 31-74.

³⁴ Zofia Nowak, "Historia Zakładu Kórnickiego. Cz. 1. Kórnik-Lubowla. Kalwaria Zebrzydowska 1882-1889" (The history of the Kórnicki Institute. Part 1. Kórnik-Lubowla. Kalwaria Zebrzydowska 1882-1889), *Pamiętnik Biblioteki Kórnickiej* 26 (2003): 197-226; "Historia Zakładu Kórnickiego. Cz. 2. Zakopane-Kuźnice, Wrzesień 1889-Lipiec 1914" (The history of the Kórnicki Institute. Part 2. Zakopane-Kuźnice, September 1889-July 1914), *Pamiętnik Biblioteki Kórnickiej* 27 (2004): 31-80; "Historia Zakładu Kórnickiego. Cz. III. Lipiec 1914-Październik 1924" (The history of the Kórnicki Institute. Part 3. July 1914 – October 1924), *Pamiętnik Biblioteki Kórnickiej* 29 (2009), 33-51. Also Katarzyna Czachowska, "Drogi edukacyjne generalowej Jadwigi z Działyńskich Zamoyskiej" (The education of Jadwiga Zamoyska), *Pamiętnik Biblioteki Kórnickiej* 26 (2003): 173-189, and "W kręgu 'Hotelu Lambert'. Działalność polityczna Jadwigi Zamoyskiej" (In the milieu of the Hotel Lambert. The political activism of Jadwiga Zamoyska), *Pamiętnik Biblioteki Kórnickiej* 28 (2005): 3-28.

³⁵ Marja Strzelecka, *Antonina Machczyńska* (Lwów: Drukarnia Towarzystwa Świętego Michała, 1931). In the context of Polish Catholic laywomen-activists another interesting resource is worth mentioning, that is, *Dziennik lwowski, 1840-1930* (The Lvivian diary, 1840-1930) by Zofia Romanowiczówna, also a Lvivian teacher, who like Machczyńska was also known for her religiosity. Zofia Romanowiczówna, *Dziennik lwowski, 1840-1930* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Ancher, 2005).

(Lay Institute of the Servants of the Holiest Jesus's Heart – The Messengers of Mary) in Konstancin Jeziorna, has been of crucial importance since it has allowed me to establish/confirm connections between her and the other women examined here.³⁶ Plater-Zyberkówna was the author of numerous books and articles published in various Catholic journals in the Polish Kingdom. There are two books written by people affected by her projects. The first one, *Cecylia Plater-Zyberk. Życie i działalność wychowawczo-społeczna* (Cecylia Plater-Zyberk. Life, and social and educational activism) by Bronisław Załuski, published in 1930, focused on her projects addressed to young Catholic laymen.³⁷ The second book is a monograph of the school for girls on Piękna Street in Warsaw, set up by Plater in 1883, and consists of former students' memoirs.³⁸ In addition, several articles focus on chosen aspects of Plater's work.³⁹ However, there is no study that encompasses the variety of activism Plater undertook during her life or that explores and interprets her connection with and engagement in the Honorat movement. This dissertation does not answer this need either, since I concentrate exclusively on Plater's pro-women's activism.

The archival material related to Maria Kleniewska is deposited mainly in two archives. The manuscript of her memoirs is located in the National Library in Warsaw. In 2005 it was edited and published under the title *Wspomnienia* (Memoirs).⁴⁰ In addition, the *Biblioteka Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego* (Library of the Catholic University in Lublin, hereafter KUL) has a rich collection of documents related to the powerful organization *Zjednoczone Koło Ziemianek* (United Circle of Women-Landowners, hereafter ZKZ) set up by Kleniewska, as well as more private materials, especially regarding her personal religiosity. As far as the research on her activism is concerned, the introduction to *Wspomnienia* contains a fairly

³⁶ In March 2007 I received a typed copy of the autobiographical note Cecylia Plater-Zyberkówna wrote in 1915 or 1916. I did not receive permission to see the original text. The copy does not have a signature; the pages are numbered (11). Archiwum Instytutu Świeckiego Służebnic Najświętszego Serca Jezusa - Posłanniczek Maryi w Konstancinie Jeziorna (The Archive of the Lay Institute of the Servants of the Holiest Jesus's Heart – The Messenger of Mary in Konstancin-Jeziorna), Cecylia Plater-Zyberkówna, *Życiorys* (Autobiography, hereafter Plater, *Życiorys*).

³⁷ Bronisław Załuski, *Cecylia Plater-Zyberk. Życie i działalność wychowawczo-społeczna* (Cecylia Plater-Zyberk. The life, and social and educational activism) (Warszawa: Pro Christo, 1930).

³⁸ *Szkola Cecylii Plater-Zyberkówny 1883-1944* (The school of Cecylia Plater-Zyberkówna 1883-1944) (Warszawa: PIW, 1987).

³⁹ For example Zbigniew Skrobicki, "Geneza i dzieje czasopisma 'Prąd'" (The origins and history of the journal "Prąd"), *Chrześcijanin w świecie* 14, 6 (1982): 38-49; Konstanty Turowski, "Cecylia Plater-Zyberkówna (1853-1920) – twórczyni ruchu prądowego" (Cecylia Plater-Zyberkówna (1853-1920) – the founder of the 'Prąd' movement), *Chrześcijanin w świecie* 15, 5 (1983): 31-48.

⁴⁰ Maria Kleniewska, *Wspomnienia* (Memoirs), ed. Wojciech Włodarczyk (Wilków: Regionalne Towarzystwo Powiślan, 2002).

informative and detailed biography of Kleniewska. Further, Ewelina Kostrzewska published a detailed monograph of ZKZ, *Ruch organizacyjny ziemianek w Królestwie Polskim na początku XX wieku* (The movement of women`s landowners in the Polish Kingdom at the beginning of the twentieth century).⁴¹

Regarding the material used in Chapter 5, I rely predominantly on the various reports produced by the associations in question for the public or the religious authorities, as well as relevant articles in the Catholic press – e.g. *Miłosierdzie Chrześcijańskie* (Christian Charity), *Ruch Chrześcijańsko-społeczny* (The Christian-social movement) and *Sodalis Marianus* – and the private correspondence of a Galician woman-activist, Maria Harsdorfowa.⁴² Both the library of the *Uniwersytet Jagielloński* (Jagiellonian University, hereafter UJ) and the *Archiwum Państwowe w Krakowie* (State Archive in Cracow) hold particularly rich collections of reports and statutes of various Catholic women`s organizations operating in Galicia.

Concerning confessionally motivated organizations for Polish Catholic laywomen, neither PZNK-Cracow nor PZNK-Lviv⁴³ published their own journals. Instead they circulated articles that offer extensive, yet rather dry accounts of their activities in the contemporary press. Between 1909 and 1911 the Varsovian KZKP published information about the organization in the journal *Przebudzenie* (Awakening). Therefore the annual reports published by the three organizations became the main source of information about them.

With respect to transnational Catholic laywomen`s activism, apart from the research available on the subject, I have used the published reports on international meetings of the *Fédération Internationale des Ligues Catholiques Féminines* (International Federation of Catholic Women`s League) in Brussels (1910), Vienna (1911) and Madrid (1912). For the labor associations for lower-class Polish Catholic

⁴¹ Kostrzewska, *Ruch organizacyjny ziemianek w Królestwie Polskim*.

⁴² The letters of Maria Harsdorfowa née Gniewosz to her friend Helena Mycielska are deposited in the Kórnicka Library, 12961. Her correspondence has recently been transcribed by Maria Hłyń and published as “Listy Marii z Gniewoszków Harsdorfowej do Heleny Mycielskiej. Cz. 1” (The letters of Maria Harsdorfowa née Gniewosz to Helena Mycielska. Part 1), *Pamiętnik Biblioteki Kórnickiej* 27 (2007): 153-188; “Listy Marii z Gniewoszków Harsdorfowej do Heleny Mycielskiej. Cz. 2” (The letters of Maria Harsdorfowa née Gniewosz to Helena Mycielska. Part 2), *Pamiętnik Biblioteki Kórnickiej* 28 (2008): 243-285; Listy Marii z Gniewoszków Harsdorfowej do Heleny Mycielskiej. Cz. 3” (The letters of Maria Harsdorfowa née Gniewosz to Helena Mycielska. Part 3), *Pamiętnik Biblioteki Kórnickiej* 29 (2009): 199-233.

⁴³ In December 1913 PZNK-Lviv published for several months “Głos Kobiet Pracujących” (The Workingwomen`s Voice) as an appendix to the Catholic journal *Kronika Powszechna* (Common Chronicle). *Sprawozdanie z czynności Polskiego Związku Niewiast Katolickich we Lwowie za rok 1913* (Report on the activities of Polish Association of Catholic Women in Lviv in 1913) (Lwów: Drukarnia W.A. Szykowskiego, 1914), 5.

women I rely predominantly on these associations' annual reports as well as their journals that addressed workingwomen: *Pracownica Polska* (Polish Workingwoman) and *Pracownica Katolicka* (Catholic Workingwoman) for the context of the Polish Kingdom; *Przyjaciel Sług* (Female Servants' Friend) and *Kobieta Polska* (Polish Woman) for the Galician settings; and finally, *Pracownica* (Workingwoman), *Gazeta dla Kobiet* (Journal for Women), *Głos Wielkopolanek* (Women' Voice in the Grand Duchy of Posen) and *Ruch chrześcijańsko-społeczny* (The Christian-social movement) with respect to the Grand Duchy of Posen. As far as I have been able to establish, most of this rich archival material and the Catholic journals have not yet been used for historical research. Using these materials in the frameworks outlined above, the aim of this thesis is to retrieve and interpret an unknown but significant part of Polish women's activism, that is, the social involvement of Polish Catholic laywomen between the 1880s and 1918.

Chapter 1: The debates and frameworks that have informed the historical research on (Polish) Catholic laywomen in the nineteenth century

The starting point of my research was the observation that, although the field of Polish women's history is now well established, Polish Catholic laywomen's activism in the long nineteenth century has not attracted the attention of researchers. The objective of Chapter 1 is to explain this remarkable gap, in particular by identifying and discussing selected historiographies, concepts, representations, debates and/or frameworks that directly or indirectly may have informed the contemporary lack of research on Polish Catholic laywomen's social activism, and more generally, the scarcity of investigations into Catholic laywomen's activism in the nineteenth century until 1918. I propose that, in order to understand the contemporary scarcity in studies on the relation between Roman Catholicism and Polish women in the nineteenth century, one should seek answers beyond the field of Polish women's history and Polish historiography of the period, namely in broader theoretical debates on modernization.

To this end, I contextualize my object of investigation in relation to the secularization thesis, the debates on its applicability to the long nineteenth century as well as the discussions on the limitations of secular conceptualizations of agency when applied to religious historical actors (1.1); the theses on the privatization and feminization of religion in the nineteenth century (1.2); and the comparative framework that juxtaposes Catholic and Protestant settings in the respective period (1.3). In Section 1.4, I discuss how these frameworks may have influenced the development of Polish women's history.

1.1 The secularization thesis

Although the writings of the influential social theorists of the long nineteenth century did discuss religion, these theorists shared a confidence that scientific and technological advancement would or should make people reluctant to search for explanations through magic, mysticism, or/and religion. The "classical" secularization thesis perceived religion as incongruent with modernity and professed its continuing

and irreversible decline.⁴⁵

This assumption about the inevitability of religious decline in modern societies was passed on to successive generations of social scientists, to be elaborated in the 1960s. However, even renowned proponents of the secularization thesis felt uncomfortable about the limits of its conceptualization. As noticed by José Casanova, in the 1960s for the first time scholars who dealt with the issue separated “the theory of secularization from its ideological origins in the Enlightenment critique of the religion,” and further distinguished “the theory of secularization, as a theory of the modern autonomous differentiation of the secular and the religious spheres, from the thesis that the end result of the process of modern differentiation would be the progressive erosion, decline, and eventual disappearance of religion.”⁴⁶ As a result, the assumption about the death of faith in the modern period was replaced by more carefully elaborated observations on how functions of religion changed within long-established areas of its influence.

A new phase in the research on religion in the modern world was triggered by the socio-political events of the 1970s and onwards, such as the Iranian revolution, the rise of Protestant fundamentalism in the US, Pentecostalism worldwide, the Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua, and the Solidarity movement in Poland. Social scientists agreed that if religion was not only not in decay, as had been anticipated, but even capable of instigating powerful social processes, then the secularization thesis had to be reexamined. This more-than-three-decades old intellectual endeavor of revisiting the secularization thesis has led to diverse proposals. On the one hand, studies such as “Secularization, R.I.P – rest in peace” by Rodney Stark, *The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and World Politics* – a collection of essays edited by Peter Berger, and soon thereafter the findings of Talal Asad and Andrew M. Greeley, announced the death of the secularization thesis.⁴⁷ On the other

⁴⁵ Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart, *Sacred and Secular. Religion and Politics Worldwide* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009, c2004), 3.

⁴⁶ José Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), 19, for details on the shifts in the secularization debate see Chapter 1. Also David Martin, *On Secularization: Towards a Revised General Theory* (Aldershot, England, Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005), the chapters 1 and 9; Norris and Inglehart, *Sacred and Secular*, Chapter 1.

⁴⁷ Rodney Stark, “Secularization, R.I.P – rest in peace,” *Sociology of Religion* 60 (1999): 249-273; Peter Berger, *The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and World Politics* (Washington: D.C.: W.B. Eerdmans, 1999); Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993) and *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2003); Andrew Greeley, *Religion in Europe at the End of the Second Millenium: A Sociological Profile* (New

hand, their claims have been persistently counterbalanced as well. In his *Public Religions in the Modern World*, Casanova, without questioning the need for further research into and criticism of the thesis, argues that the secularization paradigm still has much to offer in terms of reflecting upon and conceptualizing both the historical and contemporary meanings of religion. Hence, he calls not for a rejection, but for a refinement of the theory. Casanova and others who joined his efforts aimed at rescuing the secularization thesis try to work out frameworks that allow for accommodating historically, culturally and geographically informed variations of the complex relations between religion and modernity.⁴⁸

The latest stir in the debate over the place of religion in the modern polity was sparked by the 9/11 events. Among the first comments was Jürgen Habermas's response, in which the philosopher argued that we have entered a post-secular age, understood not as a return to the supremacy of religions/magic/irrationality, but rather as a necessary coexistence of religious and secular world views. The terms of this dialog, Habermas argued, are to be negotiated by both religious and secular oriented factions.⁴⁹

The discussions around the secularization thesis have helped to identify some explicit or implicit assumptions (biases) about religion and its function in the modern period, and also cast some light on the role the social sciences have played and continue to play in the process of constructing and perpetuating the secularization paradigm's suppositions in scholarly practice.⁵⁰ Another understanding brought about by the debate over the secularization thesis was the acknowledgment that this thesis has always been part of a broader theoretical framework, namely of theories of modernization, and, equally importantly, that it facilitated the emergence of particular political projects.

Among the most frequently discussed books dealing with the latter issue are Talal Asad's *The Genealogies of Religion* and his *Formations of the Secular*. Asad's

Brunswick, N.J: Transaction Publishers, 2003).

⁴⁸ Casanova, *Public Religions*, 11, 211-234; also Callum G. Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain: Understanding Secularisation, 1800-2000* (London: Routledge, 2000), 30-33; Martin, *On Secularization*; Shmuel N. Eisenstadt, "The Reconstruction of Religious Arenas in the Framework of 'Multiple Modernities'," *Millennium - Journal of International Studies* 29 (2000): 591-611.

⁴⁹ Jürgen Habermas, "Religion in the Public Sphere," *European Journal of Philosophy* 14 (2006): 1-25. For a critical overview of the recent developments in research on religion and secularization in various scholarly fields see Phillip S. Gorski and Ateş Altmourdu "After Secularization?," *Annual Review of Sociology* 34 (2008): 56-85.

⁵⁰ For an overview of the debates on the inherent biases of the "classical" secularization thesis, see for example Stark, "Secularization, R.I.P".

research showed how the singular Western version of modernization was circulated globally by means of imposing new epistemological categories through which non-Western subjects began conceptualizing their actions. Criticism of this kind was by no means new,⁵¹ but it was Asad who accentuated the profound roles of the “religious” and “secular” – as notions derived from the Western Christian milieu – in endorsing the Western political project across the world in the modern period. Asad argued that the conceptual exclusion of religion from history-making processes and the promotion of secularism, as both present in the secularization paradigm, were/are essential for establishing the hegemony of Western modernity. Not only have they informed the contemporary understanding of what “modern” and “modernity” meant/mean (secular, objective, democratic, etc.) as well as the current conceptualizations of political governance (the democratic secular nation-state), the public sphere (exclusion of religious arguments from debates), legal codes (secular), or human rights (secular), but they have also contributed to the production of global, political, economic, and cultural inequalities.⁵² What results from this insight is that any maneuvers concerning the secularization thesis – a critical examination of the meanings of both “religious” and “secular”, their societal functions, historical alterations, etc. – involve an examination of the definitions of modernity, and might lead to a new conceptualization of modernity, of modern history, and modern subjects.

The prescriptive pronouncement of religion’s decline in the modern period embedded in the “classic” secularization thesis has greatly informed Western historical scholarship. For this reason, until recently scholars did not perceive belief or spirituality as factors worthy of consideration when interpreting the major historical developments, especially in Western settings in the nineteenth century. Conversely, the recognitions brought about by the debates on the secularization thesis have laid the foundation for an increasing presence of various religion-related topics in

⁵¹ For earlier examples of similar investigations, see Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979); Dipesh Chakrabarty, “Postcoloniality and the Artifice of History: Who Speaks for ‘Indian’ Past?” *Representations* 37 (1992): 1-26; Steven Feierman, “African Histories and the Dissolution of World Histories” in *Africa and The Disciplines: The Contributions of Research in Africa to the Social sciences and Humanities*, ed. Robert H. Bates, V.Y. Mudimbe, and Jean O’ Barr (Chicago, London: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 167-205; Fernando Coronil, “Beyond Occidentalism: Toward Nonimperial Geohistorical Categories,” *Cultural Antropology* 11 (1996): 51-87; Uma Narayan, *Dislocating Cultures. Identities, Traditions, and The Third Wolrd Feminism* (New York: Rutledge, 1997); Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000), especially “Epilogue. Reason and the Critique of Historicism”; Walter D. Mignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs, Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000).

⁵² Asad, *The Genealogies of Religion and Formations of the Secular: Christianity*.

historical scholarship. However, it would be too simplistic to describe the historiographical change that occurred in the last two to three decades as a one-sided development, namely from exclusion to gradual inclusion of religion into scholarly research, for even in the period when the secularization thesis seemed still unchallenged, historians had problems when dealing with religion in the nineteenth century. The works of Eric Hobsbawm serve as a telling example here.

One cannot overestimate the profound influence this British historian's trilogy – *The Age of Revolution* (1962), *The Age of Capital* (1975) and *The Age of Empires* (1987) – has had on the understanding of Western European history and Europe's global supremacy in the modern age.⁵³ Hobsbawm's major argument about the impact of the dual revolution (the French Revolution and the British industrial revolution) had on the development of liberal capitalism and later the political and economic domination of the West is well known. Here I shall pay attention to his view on the place of religion in these processes.

The chapter "Ideology: Religion," in *The Age of Revolution*, starts from a global overview of attitudes towards faith broken down by the categories of class and, to a lesser extent, sex. Hobsbawm argued that in the years 1789-1848, Europe witnessed an advanced dechristianization of the male elite (the class of the "polite and educated"), while the ladies of the same class remained pious.⁵⁴ The latter propensity, the historian claims, was valid for women of all social strata. Further, the bourgeoisie were divided between a minority of free-thinkers and a majority of religious Protestants, Catholics, and Jews. "However," – Hobsbawm promptly added – "the new historic fact was that of the two the free-thinkers' sector was immeasurably more dynamic and effective".⁵⁵ Finally, the masses stayed largely religious, although the new proletariat became gradually more indifferent to religion, mainly because the established churches were incapable of responding to the needs of the working class.⁵⁶ Subsequently Hobsbawm pointed to a "return to militant, literal, old-fashioned religion"⁵⁷ on a considerable scale, for which he offered three interrelated explanations: 1) the growth of religion as an outcome of the general global increase in

⁵³ Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution, Europe 1789-1848* (London: Cardinal, 1991, c1962), *The Age of Capital, 1848-1875* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1975); *The Age of Empires 1875-1914* (New York: Pantheon, 1987).

⁵⁴ Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution*, 267.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 270.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 271.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 279.

population, 2) the expansion of Protestantism and Islam,⁵⁸ 3) the way in which different groups employed religion in the service of their specific ends: that is, “the masses” used it to cope with the “oppressive society of middle-class liberalism,” the middle class to justify their social and economic expansion, and the aristocracy to assure social stability.⁵⁹

Several assumptions in Hobsbawm’s work would be repeated or paralleled in the works of other historians over the following decades. Some of them once belonged to the core of the “classical” secularization thesis. The first is the assumption that, although neither linear nor evenly distributed among classes, sexes, and locations, secularization was nonetheless a dominant and irreversible process of the modern period. Hence, religion is perceived as either a historical force of decreasing importance or of no importance at all. Second, dechristianization manifests itself with greater intensity in urbanized and industrialized contexts. Hence, the strong link assumed between the processes of secularization, urbanization and industrialization. Third, religion and science are positioned in an antagonistic relationship to one another, as are religion and the emerging nation-states.

In addition to the assumptions of the secularization thesis, Hobsbawm repeats the suppositions of the Marxist framework of analysis. The masses for whom religion offered relief from the hardships of life remained irrational, emotional, and superstitious. The religiosity of the upper classes is explained as their desire to cling to inherited privileges. Once freed from the authority of religion, the lay minority was more effective economically, and more powerful in promoting their secular ideals in the public sphere. For Hobsbawm, like for Marx, “emancipation” of both society and individuals was conditioned by their rejection of religious beliefs. Finally, what is at stake here is a scholarly practice that attempts to grasp the histories of all people in one unidirectional narrative. In the case of Hobsbawm’s work, which is preoccupied with tracing the developments that facilitated the supremacy of the West over the world, religions outside of the Christian world often do not exist in his narrative,

⁵⁸ Ibid., 279, 272-279.

⁵⁹ Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution*, 279-280. Staying with the historical scholarship of the 1960s, in *The Rise of The West. A History of the Human Community*, William H. McNeill argues that “two themes seem paramount in the history of the past [nineteenth] century [namely] industrial and politico-social revolutions”. Religion appears once in a while in parts of the book that deal with earlier periods of modernity to disappear entirely towards the end of the nineteenth century from the chapters devoted to the European settings. Interestingly, religion is taken for granted in “Muslims” and “Hindu India” contexts and portrayed as something disturbing and to be struggled with. William H. McNeill, *The Rise of The West. A History of the Human Community* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), 729.

unless they absorbed Western ideas or resisted Western expansion.⁶⁰

What is striking in Hobsbawm's analysis is his simultaneous recognition of the strength of religion and his denial of its influence on the major historical processes of the long nineteenth century. On the one hand, he pointed at the variety of forms in which religion reinvented itself in the years 1789-1848, and argued that it should be perceived as a period in "which increasing secularization and (in Europe) religious indifference battled with revivals of religion in its most uncompromising, irrational, and emotionally compulsive forms." On the other hand, he concluded that religion "was no longer (...) dominant but recessive, and has remained so to this day within a world transformed by the dual revolution. (...) The most obvious proof of this decisive victory of secular over religious ideology is also its most important result. With the American and French revolutions major political and social transformations were secularized."⁶¹ In 1975, Hobsbawm published his *The Age of Capital*, in which he repeated his conflicting opinion on the role of religion in the nineteenth century: "Compared to secular ideology, religion in our period is of comparatively slight interest, and *does not deserve extended treatment. Nevertheless it deserves some attention, not only because it still formed the idiom in which the overwhelming majority of the world's population thought*, but also because bourgeois society itself (...) was plainly worried about the possible consequences of its own daring" [my emphasis, D.G].⁶² The problematic role of religion in historical processes prevails in all parts of Hobsbawm's trilogy, which illustrates the difficulties it posed for a historian working within the secularization paradigm and within a Marxist framework of analysis.⁶³

While in the 1960s and 1970s religion still played little role in conceptualizing developments in the modern period in scholarly works on historical processes within

⁶⁰Ibid., 274-275; Hobsbawm, *The Age of Capital*, 276 and also *The Age of Empires*, 265. Interestingly, although Hobsbawm argues that it would be incorrect to reduce an understanding of Mahatma Gandhi's spiritual life to an instrument against imperialism, since there was more to it than an anti-western struggle he did not show the same understanding for religions in the modern European contexts, especially for Catholicism, see *The Age of Revolution*, 264.

⁶¹ Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution*, 269.

⁶² Hobsbawm, *The Age of Capital, 1848-1875*, 271. For other example of the absence of religion historical investigations, see Irene Collins, *The Age of Progress. A Survey of European History from 1789- 1870* (London: E. Arnold, 1970).

⁶³ In Hugh Thomas's *A History of the World*, one cannot find religion in the parts dedicated to the history of the modern era. Industrialization, capitalism, commerce, class struggle, new means of transport and communications are the highlights of the period. However, in the epilogue Thomas dedicates a few pages to religion, namely to the phenomenon of its perplexing persistent presence, although in different forms. Hugh Thomas, *A History of the World* (New York: Harper & Row, 1979), 590-598.

larger geo-political units (either global or European history) in the nineteenth century, the scholarship of the 1980s was slowly opening itself to new conceptualizations in this respect. A telling example, in my view, is J.M. Roberts's *The Triumph of the West* from 1985, in which religion is already perceived as an instrumental medium for exporting "the idea of the West" through missionary work elsewhere. Roberts's new approach to religion may be interpreted as a combination of the influences of the debates on the secularization thesis and of growing colonial and post-colonial criticisms.⁶⁴

I would like to pause to make two observations. In the preceding paragraphs, I referred to Hobsbawm's trilogy as an example of scholarly work that interprets developments within larger geo-political units in the modern period, arguing that such work does not consider religion as a possible explanatory force. However, the same cannot be argued as strongly for at least some national historiographies. For example, the conflict between Catholics and Republicans or the relation between the Church and the secular state are *the* topics in historical scholarship about nineteenth-century France. Even if in the past historians often considered these conflicts in terms of a clash between modern and anti-modern forces, religion not only did not vanish from the scholarly works on the nineteenth century, but was in fact explicitly recognized as a force that shaped the course of events.⁶⁵ The second observation is that besides examples of scholarly interest in religion within some national historiographies, the number of studies done within then marginalized fields of church histories, histories of religions, or religious histories (or whatever name one wishes to use for these fields that were fighting for recognition) increased significantly.⁶⁶

⁶⁴John M. Roberts, *The Triumph of the West* (London: Guild Publishing, 1985).

⁶⁵For example, see the pioneering essays in *Conflicts in French Society: Anticlericalism, Education and Moralism in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Theodore Zeldin, (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1970); John McManners, *Church and State in France, 1870-1914* (London: Harper & Row, 1972); Maurice Larkin, *Church and State after the Dreyfus Affair. The Separation Issue in France* (New York: Barnes and Nobel, 1973); Marvin L. Brown, *Louis Veillot: French Ultramontane Journalist and Layman, 1813-1883* (Durham, North Carolina: Moore Publishing Company, 1977). The Dutch historiography may serve as another example. In case of Dutch historiographical practices, historians not only acknowledged the impact the denominational segregation had on the socio-politico-economic realities of the Netherlands, but also unreflectively copied this division while designing their research projects. The "pillarization" or *verzuiling* of the Dutch historiography has only recently started to be overcome and replaced with attempts to bridge histories of Catholic and Protestant communities within one framework. See Arend Lijphart, *The Politics of Accommodation. Pluralism and Democracy in the Netherlands* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968); Francisca de Haan, *Gender and the Politics of Office Work: The Netherlands, 1860-1940* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1998); James C. Kennedy and Jan P. Zwemer, "Religion in the Modern Netherlands and the Problems of Pluralism," *The Low Countries Historical Review* 125, 2-3 (2010): 237-268.

⁶⁶James E. Bradley and Richard A. Muller, *Church History. An Introduction to Research, Reference*

I think it is reasonable to argue that the combination of the secularization debate, the recent transnational turn in historical writing and the availability of studies that tackle religious phenomena in their various forms and contexts, produced within national historiographies and/or broadly defined religious history, has laid the foundation for what may easily be called a career of religion in historical scholarship from the turn of the twenty-first century onwards.

One example of the recent radical focus on religion is Christopher Alan Bayly's much acclaimed *The Birth of the Modern World 1780-1914: Global Connections and Comparisons*, published in 2004. Contrary to the beliefs of sociologists and historians in previous decades, Bayly takes a fundamentally different view of religious phenomena in the nineteenth century. Drawing on examples from Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Islamic and Jewish contexts, the British historian argues that during the age of revolution, capital and empire one observes the victorious expansion of religions, and importantly, on a global scale.⁶⁷ In Europe, Bayly maintains, although radicals, liberals and philosophes embraced/perpetuated anti-clerical discourses, they stayed largely ambiguous to religion itself. Similarly, outside of Europe, borrowing from the "old" continent's cultural and intellectual developments, intellectuals, revolutionaries and reformers scrutinized their respective religious cultures, yet while doing so they did not reject religion entirely, but rather called for a turn towards the more "rational" elements of the doctrines. The latter developments as well as the competition between the religions themselves about the areas of their influence, forced spiritual authorities across the world to rethink their religious systems' content. This resulted in efforts aimed at reevaluating doctrines, sharpening their identities, formalizing rituals and unifying religious practices. Further, religious authorities developed and centralized bureaucracies and training institutions, and made successful use of the modern opportunities for travel and communication. Religious writing was at the forefront of printing culture, the world maps became full of places of pilgrimage, and the construction of sacral buildings flourished. The reformulated and consolidated "great world religions" (Bayly's term) attempted, successfully, to penetrate and transform all aspects of social life and spread out geographically. Bayly argues that "More even than a period when liberalism or

Works, and Methods (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans, 1995), 11-25.

⁶⁷ Christopher Alan Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World 1780-1914: Global Connections and Comparisons* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2004), 325-365.

the concept of class rose to power, the nineteenth century saw the triumphal reemergence and expansion of ‘religion’ in the sense in which we now use the term.”⁶⁸ Later on, the historian concludes, “this process is as important as, *if not more important* than, the theme of the rise of nationalism or liberalism, which has so often dominated studies of this period [my emphases D.G].”⁶⁹

Bayly’s claims parallel the views of the editors and authors of *A Companion to Nineteenth Century Europe* of 2006, in which Protestantism, Catholicism, Orthodoxy, and Judaism receive attention in separate, lengthy chapters. More importantly for my research, the author of the part dedicated to Catholicism, Oded Heilbronner, argues that there are good reasons to speak about the nineteenth century as the age of the Catholic revival, rather than the age of revolution, capital and imperialism – an observation that clearly engages in polemical dialogue with the writings of Hobsbawm, as well as other Marxist historians, who have shaped Western historiography of the modern period since the 1960s.⁷⁰

Assertions such as those of Bayly or Heilbronner confirm the emergence of scholarly attention for areas of individual and collective experience that were previously overlooked, by means of relocating interest from once privileged analytical concepts (e.g., industrialization, urbanization, nation-state building) to the category of religion. Scholars interested in exploring the role of religion in the modern period not only introduce a new body of knowledge into mainstream historical writing but also alter the terms of the scholarly conceptualizations and practices so as to do justice to this (re)discovered phenomenon.

Feminist scholars have made important contributions to the latter scholarly endeavor. In her 1990 essay “Women, Religion and Social Action in England, 1500-1800”, Patricia Crawford argued that: “Spirituality, apprehension of the divine, oneness with God (...) were the first priorities” of many women of early modern England, however their “religious belief was central [to them] in ways which are not comprehensible in our more secular culture.”⁷¹ The employment of “secular” analytical terms to pious women’s religiously motivated actions resulted in interpreting them, as Phyllis Mack observed, as being “really about something else”: i.e., as signs

⁶⁸ Ibid., 325, the whole argument and examples 325-365.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 363-364.

⁷⁰ Heilbronner, “The Age of Catholic Revival,” 236.

⁷¹ Patricia Crawford, “Women, religion and social action in England, 1500-1800,” *Australian Feminist Studies* 28 (1998): 269.

of successful socialization of women, their deviancy, imprudence, sexual frustration, or even menopausal related reactions. Already in 1991 Mack called for examining religiosity “somewhat at face value”, for taking “the soul” as a distinctive category of analysis.⁷² However, her proposal confronts the epistemological premises of history as a discipline for it questions the notion of the “real” in the modern historical narrative. As eloquently pointed out by Dipesh Chakrabarty, even if a historical actor testified to the presence of the divine in worldly matters, such testimony,

needs to be reinterpreted. Historians will grant the supernatural a place in somebody’s belief system or ritual practices, but to ascribe to it any real agency in historical events will go against the rules of evidence that give historical discourse procedures for settling disputes about the past. (...) A narrative strategy that is rationally defensible in the modern understanding of what constitutes public life – and the historians speak in the public sphere – cannot be based on a relationship that allows the divine or the supernatural a direct hand in the affairs of the world.⁷³

At the beginning of the twenty-first century feminist scholars are revisiting the analytical difficulties embedded in the women-religion relationship from the perspective of the concept of agency used in the social sciences with respect to pious subjects. In an essay on eighteenth-century Quakerism, Phyllis Mack observes that since the 1980s feminist theories have systematically contributed to the deconstruction of modern conceptualizations of agency by pointing at the biases embedded in them. Although due to the feminist criticism the free agent stopped being presupposed to be male, autonomous, historically and socially detached, dispassionate, self-conscious, and/or reasonable, the subject is never theorized as pious.⁷⁴ Mack argues that according to most of the feminist theories of agency, in the process of becoming “truly” modern and agentive an individual is essentially expected to/must cease his or her religious world views. A religious-free consciousness is seen as a prerequisite for developing autonomous choices, individual freedom, self-fulfillment, and the ability to act in one’s own best interest.⁷⁵ In her book *Politics of Piety* Saba Mahmood makes a further contribution to the criticism of feminist theories of agency by pointing out how scholars have often conveyed/convey

⁷² Phyllis Mack, “Teaching about Gender and Spirituality in Early English Quakerism,” *Women’s Studies* 19 (1991): 223-237, especially 225, 226; *Visionary Women: ecstatic prophecy in seventeenth-century England* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 2-3.

⁷³ Dipesh Chakrabarty, “Minority Histories, Subaltern Pasts,” 104.

⁷⁴ Phyllis Mack, “Religion, Feminism, and the Problem of Agency: Reflections on Eighteenth-Century Quakerism,” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 29 (2003), 150-151.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, especially pages 149-161.

their political views, specifically their understanding what feminism should look like, into their analytical categories and research subjects. Drawing on Asad's genealogical investigations of the modern Western secular liberal and leftist conceptualizations of religion and agency, Mahmood exposes the normative assumption embedded in feminist theorizations of women's movements and/or collective actions, namely the teleology of women's empowerment, emancipation from and resistance to (male) domination, which essentially obscures the understanding of numerous contemporary religious women's actions like, for example, the Egyptian women's mosque movement.⁷⁶

The recent criticism of the secular, liberal, and leftist conceptualizations of agency has made scholars conscious of at least two issues. Firstly, the secular intellectual traditions ignore a wide range of human experiences, whether religiosity, or freely accepted bodily or psychological discomfort,⁷⁷ or interpret them as examples of "the wrong use of agency" as is often the case with pious women's voluntary submission to religious constraints.⁷⁸ Secondly, because gender studies, women's studies or women's history were essentially born out of feminist politics and activism, personal experiences have often informed historians' curiosity to study topics that were of direct relevance for their own contemporary anxieties: women's empowerment, their involvement in politics, women's social, legal or civil discrimination and modes for overcoming them. This may have been one reason why certain forms of pious women's activism, including that of Catholic laywomen, were overlooked by women's history scholars for these forms of activism have been perceived as unappealing, too distant from contemporary historians' feminist agenda, and/or without relevance for long-lasting major historical processes.

⁷⁶ Saba Mahmood, *Religion, Feminism, and the Problem of Agency: the Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2005), especially Chapter 1 "The Subject of Freedom".

⁷⁷ Asad, *Formations of the Secular*, especially the chapter "Thinking about Agency and Pain"; Mack, "Religion, Feminism, and the Problem of Agency," 153-155.

⁷⁸ Mack, "Religion, Feminism, and the Problem of Agency," 151.

1.2 The feminization of religion and the privatization of religion theses

The first practitioners of women's history, as it was developed in the 1970s in the US, aimed – to use a somewhat sweeping generalization – at re-writing the dominant interpretations of the long nineteenth century by pointing at women's presence and reevaluating their roles in the wide range of socio-political processes that mainstream historical scholarship had identified as crucial for the modern period. Although much early women's history writing shared the foundational beliefs of the secularization thesis,⁷⁹ the correlation between women and faith, spirituality or piety was frequently explored in women's history before doubt about the validity of the secularization paradigm became one of the central topics of mainstream scholarly interest. Barbara Welter's groundbreaking essay "The Feminization of American Religion" or Gerda Lerner's book *The Grimke Sisters from South Carolina* are well known examples of research on women, undertaken in the pioneering stages of women's history, in which religion received prominent attention.⁸⁰ I propose that the relative ease with which women's history accepted religion as a potentially vital dimension of nineteenth-century women's existence has been informed by two interrelated propositions, which are both parts of the secularization paradigm, namely the feminization of religion thesis and the privatization of religion thesis.

The thesis on the feminization of religion in European and North American contexts in the nineteenth century consists, in fact, of three interconnected proposals: 1) the growth in female callings for convent life (in Catholic contexts) and the higher level of attendance by women than men at religious rituals, 2) changes to religious doctrines to, supposedly, meet the needs of female believers' 3) an appearance/persistence of irrational forms of pious practices.⁸¹

⁷⁹For example, see the classic book by Sheila Rowbotham, *Hidden from History. 300 Years of Women's Oppression and the Fight Against It* (London: Pluto Press, 1977, c1973), 18.

⁸⁰Barbara Welter, "The Feminization of American Religion, 1800-1860," in *Clio's Consciousness Raised: New Perspectives in the History of Women*, ed. Mary Hartmann and Lois Banner (New York: Harper and Row, 1976); Gerda Lerner, *The Grimke Sisters from South Carolina: Pioneers in Women's Rights and Abolition* (New York: Schocken Books, 1971); Caroll Smith Rosenberg, *Religion and the Rise of the American City; The New York City Mission Movement, 1812-1870* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1971); Kathryn Kish Sklar, *Catharine Beecher: A Study in American Domesticity* (New Heaven: Yale University Press, 1973); Nancy F. Cott, *Bonds of Womanhood: "Woman's Sphere" in New England 1780-1835* (New Heaven: Yale University Press, 1977).

⁸¹Welter, "The Feminization of American Religion"; Richard D. Shiels, "The Feminization of American Congregationalism, 1730-1835," *American Quarterly* 33 (1981): 46-62; Claude Langlois, *Le catholicisme au féminin*; Caroline C. Ford, *Divided Houses: Religion and Gender in Modern France*

The privatization of religion thesis assumes that starting from the sixteenth century onwards politics, the economy and science liberated themselves from the influence of ecclesiastical powers and religious doctrines. The four realms that are the state, the market, science, and religion developed their sovereign logics of conduct and, as Casanova put it, the first three “started to function ‘as if’ God would not exist.”⁸² As a result, religion was forced to withdraw from the modern secular spheres of the state, the economy, and science and was gradually relegated to/marginalized within a newly emerged private sphere, in which religious beliefs became subjective and strictly personal affairs.⁸³

Similarly to the secularization paradigm described in Section 1.1, the above mentioned theses should be understood here simultaneously as theoretical frameworks to interpret certain socio-historical phenomena and as long-standing historically developed political projects. In other words, the “feminization of religion in the nineteenth century” thesis, as proposed in historical scholarship, and the “privatization of religion” thesis, as employed in socio-historical analysis, cannot be disconnected from the socio-political contexts they emerged from.

There is a sort of consensus among feminist historians, supported by much empirical research, that in the course of the nineteenth century the political, civil, economic, and legal condition of women in many parts of the Western world (and not only there) significantly worsened compared to those before the end of the eighteenth century. Considerable amount of literature talks about the establishment of a new gender regime according to which women got relegated to domesticity, reproduction, and child bearing that dispossessed them from the opportunity to exercise citizenship.⁸⁴ Historically, the relegation of women from public to private (implemented by, for example, new legislation, e.g. the Napoleonic Code) paralleled the dawn of the proposition about the growing irrelevance of religion for the modern world (e.g. Marx, Spencer) as well as the concrete actions undertaken by various European states against religious institutions in the same period (e.g. suppression of

(Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2005); Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain*; Michael B. Gross, *The War against Catholicism. Liberalism and the Anti-Catholic Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2004), 210-215.

⁸² Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World*, 40.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 19, 31, 35, 37. For critical approach of the privatization thesis see 35-39.

⁸⁴ Jean Bethke Elshtain, *Public Man, Private Woman: Woman in Social and Political Thought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981); Linda J. Nicholson, *Gender and History: The Limits of Social Theory in the Age of the Family* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), especially the chapter 5.

monastic orders, the relegation of priests and nuns from the educational sector, developed in Section 2.1).

The privatization of religion and feminization of religion theses when joined together in my view point towards several interrelated historical processes/prescriptive political projects that occurred in the modern period: 1) the relegation of religion to the private sphere and the establishment of the public sphere as secular, 2) the relegation of women to the private sphere and the masculinization of the public sphere, 3) the social production of the seemingly “natural” religiosity of women, 4) the struggle of religion to challenge its prescribed place, 5) the battle of women to (re)enter the public sphere, 6) the alliance between some women and religious authorities, as well as 7) the proposal about the “conservative” or “reactionary” character of the relation between religion and women endorsed via secular anti-religious discourses and anti-women discourses.⁸⁵

The critical employment of the two theses, as done by feminist critics and some sociologists of religion, has facilitated the exposure of the historically developed dormant prescriptiveness and the exclusionary character of the liberal conceptualization of the public and private spheres by means of making suppositions about acceptable gendered patterns of conduct in the private and public spheres, the gendered division of the societal order (e.g. politics, labor), or the gendered separation of the religious from the secular. The application of these two theses has indicated that the modern liberal social order differentiates between the male sphere of reason, politics, paid labor, citizenship, culture and secularity and the female sphere of irrationality, sentimentalization, subjectivization, unpaid labor of love, affection, nature, morality, imbalanced familial relations, and religion. Thus, the presupposed irrelevance of religion for processes in the public sphere, defined as dynamic, rational, and unemotional, was reinforced by equipping religion with allegedly feminine features, understood as passivity, irrationality, and emotionality. The claim about the incompatibility of women with the public sphere was strengthened by pointing at women’s “natural” connection to religious (irrational) worldviews that were assumed to be in conflict with the values of the public sphere (market, politics).⁸⁶

⁸⁵ For an excellent study of these processes and their interconnectedness in the modern period, see Gross, *The War against Catholicism*, especially the chapter “The Women’s Question, Anti-Catholicism, and Kulturkampf”; also Patricia Crawford, *Women and Religion in England, 1500-1720* (London: Routledge, 1996), the chapter “Piety and Spirituality”.

⁸⁶ Carole Pateman, “Feminist Critiques of the Public/Private Dichotomy,” in *The Disorder of Women*:

The combined feminization/privatization of religion theses enabled the inclusion of religion into women's history. However, although religion was included as a historical force, as I intend to show below with two scholarly examples, in the earlier stages of women's history feminist researchers did take for granted the supposition about the negative impact of religion on women's situation broadly defined.

In 1977 Ann Douglas published *The Feminization of American Culture*,⁸⁷ in which she argued that the first half of the nineteenth century was decisive in developing the inferior social position of (white) American women vis-à-vis men. As a result of their relegation from business and politics, women, according to Douglas, sought an alliance with Protestant ministers – another group which had also lost its once strong influence. The historian pointed out modifications to theological doctrine that, in her view, occurred so as to match women's spiritual needs. The replacement of the cruel theory of amendment with the picture of a loving, forgiving and more “feminine” God laid the foundation for a new theology of feeling, which in Douglas's view, was entirely anti-intellectual in its spirit and disconnected American Protestantism from dispute, doctrine and scholarship. More importantly, however, and this is where Douglas's main argument comes into the picture, the feminization of religious doctrine paved the way for profound changes in American culture in general, that is, it informed its allegedly anti-intellectual character.

The forces of feminization were significant enough – they had tapped industrialization, commercialization, and mass culture deeply enough (...) Certain forms of deprivations and exclusion had made middle-class American women, the readers and consumers of the nation, and the men who imitated, flattered, and exploited them, logical heir to the anti-intellectual tradition of American culture; and they had conspired willy-nilly with changing historical circumstances to make anti-intellectualism the tradition in American culture.⁸⁸

Another American historian, Bonnie Smith, offered one of the first elaborated approaches of the feminization of religion thesis in the context of a modern Western

Democracy, Feminism, and Political Theory (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1989), 118-139; Seyla Benhabib, “Models of Public Space: Hannah Arendt, the Liberal Tradition, and Jürgen Habermas,” in *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, ed. Craig Calhoun (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, c1992), 65-99; Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World*, Chapter 2; a collection of essays on this issue *The Pious Sex: Essays on Women and Religion in the History of Political Thought*, ed. Andrea Radasanu (Lanham, Md. : Lexington Books, 2010).

⁸⁷ Ann Douglas, *The Feminization of American Culture* (Knopf: New York, 1977).

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 328.

European setting.⁸⁹ Published in 1981, *Ladies of the Leisure Class* was born out of its author's disappointment with existing historical scholarship that was not doing justice to the experience of bourgeois women in the nineteenth century.⁹⁰ Smith argued that during the shift from mercantile to industrial modes of manufacturing women were gradually pushed away from production and relegated to reproductive functions. Due to the sharp division of responsibilities, men and women developed and maintained utterly different relationships to the modern world.⁹¹ Religion, Bonnie Smith claims, was of central importance for refining and perpetuating the psychological and political domestication of bourgeois French women.⁹²

In 1981 the inclusion of religion into an analytical framework of historical processes, as an alternative to categories of "politics" or "market", as done in *Ladies of the Leisure Class*, was an original move on at least two levels. Firstly, within the discipline of women's history, Smith was among the first historians to point at religion as a rich, yet uncharted, historical source for exploring women's lives. Secondly, *Ladies of the Leisure Class* added to the revision of the secularization thesis by bringing evidence for the growth, not decay, of religion in France toward the end of the nineteenth century. However, what has triggered my interest in Smith's book in particular is the fact that she concluded "as if despite" the evidence she offered in her own book. Let me illustrate this with some examples.

Smith argued that the Catholic ideology (her word) played a crucial role in antagonizing the French middle-class women towards the modern world, made them passive, purposely unproductive, and hostile to any social change, most of all to the idea of women's emancipation, which was of primary concern to feminist and socialist women in the period. According to Smith, French middle-class Catholic women rejected the possibility of *active* participation in the processes of shaping the modern world in the public sphere.⁹³ Contrary to Smith's opinion, yet at the same time based on the results of her research, I can point at examples of how these laywomen did influence socio-economic realities outside of their domestic environments. Smith described how Catholic women furnished their homes, bought

⁸⁹ Smith, *Ladies of the Leisure Class: The Bourgeoises of Northern France*.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 3, 16.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 4, 10, 13, 47

⁹² *Ibid.*, 8, also the chapter "Cosmos: Faith versus Reason".

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 49.

garments, or purchased pieces of art according to their religious worldview.⁹⁴ I see here a strong reciprocal relation between Catholic women, relegated by Smith to domestic environments, and the market, which she defined as part of the public sphere. Specifically, I claim, with their newly developed taste, Catholic laywomen as customers made interventions into the patterns of artisan or industrial productions. Also, Smith showed that the educational initiatives founded/sponsored by Catholic laywomen were so numerous and at the same time so independent and powerful in conveying the religious message that they provoked intervention from both state and Church authorities. As Smith herself argued, pious laywomen`s stubborn persistence in supporting Catholic schools was one of the reasons for launching a new secular educational system for girls.⁹⁵ In my view the latter is evidence for a strong involvement of Catholic laywomen in the conflict between religious and secular forces that occurred in France in the period. However, what matters to me as an example of women`s intervention into/within the public sphere, which brought about very concrete historical developments, probably did not count as such for Bonnie Smith and other scholars at the turn of the 1970s and 1980s. Most likely Smith disregarded these women`s presence/activism/engagement in the public sphere since it did not aim to bring about change understood in her book as an “improvement” in women`s political, civil and social situation when compared with men, as in the liberal and/or socialist understanding of this concept. In other words, since the operational definition of “change” in Smith`s analysis is understood as a chain of initiatives/projects that aimed at furthering the emancipation of women (entering the labor market, secular educational opportunities, political rights), she qualified actions that did not share this agenda as either passivity or an aberration of modern developments.

Smith reinforced the assumption that religion and religious worldviews lacked the vitality to induce large-scale processes by employing two explanatory frameworks in the course of the analysis. The first one is the framework of, perhaps not always linear, yet continuous modernization understood in terms of progress, emancipation, scientific and technological developments, the emergence of the nation-state, and the secularization of the public sphere. Smith used this framework to grasp the actions of

⁹⁴ Ibid., 79-81.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 149-156.

bourgeois men as well as feminist and socialist women.⁹⁶ The second framework combines anthropological theories about pre-modern cultures with the psychoanalytical and psychological insights of Freud and Piaget. Eliade's theory of the eternal return to the source of the first energy/life/archaic innocence achieved by members of "pre-modern" cultures through cyclically performed rituals Smith applied to the situation of bourgeois women who, being exposed to the life-threatening biological experience of giving birth, found comfort in semi-mythological explanations and rejected scientific approaches to the same phenomena. With this move, she situated the nineteenth-century Catholic French middle-class laywomen outside of modern history, that is, in some mythical pre-modern period or in a vaguely defined realm of "primitive" cultures untouched by Western modern processes.⁹⁷ Following Smith's logic, one may conclude that whereas "history" happens in the public sphere, Catholic laywomen lived according to an a-historical order of rituals.⁹⁸ Building on the insights of colonial and post-colonial criticism of the assumptions embedded in Western anthropology about the non-Western world, it is possible to argue that Smith posited Catholic women as the Other of European modernity. She reinforced the status of Other for the French Catholic women by applying Piaget's theory about the different stages in children's psychological development as well as Freud's views on the function of religion for the psychological development of human beings. Referring to both theories, Smith suggested that French bourgeois women's religiosity should be perceived as a sign of their immaturity, infantilization or the psychological troubles women experienced due to the new gender regime. The author also indicated that while not entirely responsible for their social "misery," French bourgeois laywomen did little to overcome their childlike or neurotic attitude towards the changes brought about by the modern period, as opposed to feminist and socialist women.⁹⁹

The examples of Ann Douglas's and Bonnie Smith's books, published more or less at the same time (1977 and 1981), shows the difference in terms of the application of the feminization of religion thesis for the West European and North American contexts at the beginning of women's history writing. Although both pieces convey a negative message about religion, they draw diametrically different

⁹⁶ Ibid., the chapter "The Nord and Its Men".

⁹⁷ Ibid., 14, 66, 83, 88-91, 214-215.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 11.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 11, 12, 17.

conclusions with respect to its role in the modern period.

In *Ladies of the Leisure Class*, the feminization of religion meant its exclusion from history-making processes and the marginalization of both religion and pious women. Ann Douglas argued that, although middle-class American women resisted the modernizing developments of their times, through their alignment with the religious authorities, they nevertheless managed to bring about a fundamental and long-lasting alternation to American culture, that is, its trivialization. According to Douglas's analysis, religion could have been feminized, its privatization was already doubtful, but the argument about its marginalization was not defensible. Although Douglas was openly negative about the impact of feminized religion and pious women on American culture, she did not perceive religion or women as passive witnesses of historical developments.

Ann Douglas's book received a considerable amount of scholarly attention. It was among the first pieces that stimulated further research into women and religion in the United States and strengthened the thesis about the feminization of religion in the American context. The growing amount of scholarship on religion and women currently offers a reassessment of both the impact of devotion on women's lives and the feminization of religion itself.¹⁰⁰ As opposed to the early stages of women's history, when religious faith was interpreted as having a predominantly detrimental impact on women's lives, recent scholarship gave examples of how pious women employed religion to (re)enter the public sphere (e.g. through charity associations, missionary work, temperance movements), formed separate female communities (e.g. congregations, deaconess communities, women-only organizations), challenged male authority by reevaluating religious doctrine, or even used their religious beliefs as platforms for feminist claims. The myriad of religiously motivated women's activisms, emerging from the historical research, has also forced a rethinking of the

¹⁰⁰ For a critical approach to the feminization of religion thesis, see Caroline Ford, "Religion and Popular Culture in Modern Europe," *Journal of Modern History* 65 (1993): 152-175. For the different timing of the feminization of religion phenomenon, see Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain*. Also, the feminization of religion thesis has been nuanced by examples of how religion was crucial in the process of forming male identities in the nineteenth century, see Gail Bederman, "'The Women Have Had Charge of the Church Work Long Enough': The Men and Religion Forward Movement of 1911-1912 and the Masculinization of Middle Class Protestantism," *American Quarterly* 41 (1989): 432-465; Paul Seeley, "O Sainte Mère: Liberalism and the Socialization of Catholic Men in Nineteenth-Century France," *Journal of Modern History* 70 (1998): 862-892; Raymond Jonas, *France and the Cult of the Sacred Heart: An Epic Tale for Modern Times* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000); Carol E. Harrison, "Zouave Stories: Gender, Catholic Spirituality, and French Responses to the Roman Question," *The Journal of Modern History* 79 (2007): 274-305.

automatic appliance of “public” and “private” to nineteenth-century contexts. As Sue Morgan notices,

any dichotomous polarization of private and public fails to explain adequately the convergence of the spiritual and the social that is so often prevalent in these women`s discourses. Because the primary force that inspired and legitimized the personal and public lifestyles of so many Christian women was charismatic authority in which the life choices made were regarded as an act of obedience to God, a lack of distinction between private and public is frequently exhibited. If religious and secular life in its entirety was regarded as part of God`s kingdom with oneself as dutiful laborer in that kingdom, then there was no area of life from which women could be excluded. In the light of this frequent convergence of the spiritual and the social, then, any dualistic understanding of the separate spheres completely misses the mark.¹⁰¹

Smith`s book, which was pioneering for the writing of Western European pious women`s history, although influential in conceptualizing histories of middle-class women, did not lead to research on female religiosity or religiously motivated activism in the 1980s in a way comparable with the scholarship Ann Douglas instigated. Surely, one can point to the “underdevelopment” of women`s history as a discipline in Western Europe if compared to the North American academies in that period as one explanation for this difference. Yet, in addition, I would like to focus on the denominations the two historians engaged with. Therefore in the next section (1.3) I will examine what difference the Protestant and Catholic confessional difference made for writing about devout laywomen.

1.3 The Protestantism-versus-Catholicism comparative framework

Ellen DuBois, a first-generation US scholar of women`s history, recalled the pioneering period of women`s history in the United States as one in which researchers put a special emphasis on the influential nineteenth-century “ideology” (her word) of femininity known as “the cult of true womanhood,” which consisted, as identified by Barbara Welter, of purity, subordination, domesticity and, last but not least, piety. The elaboration of the different elements, so also religion, of the nineteenth century`s “true womanhood” was what the pioneers of North American women`s history had in common since the early 1970s.¹⁰² The authors of various summaries of the Western

¹⁰¹ Sue Morgan, “Rethinking Religion in Gender History: Historiographical and Methodological Reflections,” in *Gender, Religion And Diversity: Cross-cultural Perspectives*, ed. Ursula King and Tina Beattie (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2005), 121.

¹⁰² Ellen Carol DuBois, “Three Decades of Women`s History,” *Women`s Studies* 35 (2006): 49.

European historiographies observe that with few exceptions, the popularity of scholarly investigations of women and religion in European settings did not begin until the turn of the 1980s and 1990s.¹⁰³

Similar to the issue raised above as to why Bonnie Smith's book did not instigate scholarship on women and religion in Europe whereas Douglas's book did for the US setting, this again raises the question of why American practitioners of women's history turned to religion as a possibly important dimension of women's lives two decades earlier than European scholars. Three interrelated factors, in my view, explain the time difference. The first is related to the already mentioned later development of women's history as an academic field in Europe. Secondly, one could argue that the North American context, in which the high (highest?) level of modernization (understood in the "classical" way as industrialization, urbanization, democratization etc.) coexists with obviously vigorous and publicly manifested religion, has provided palpable and difficult to ignore evidence that the secularization thesis with its normative supposition about the diminishing influence of religion does not hold water when applied outside of (Western) European settings. For that reason, I propose, it might have been somewhat "intuitive", and at the same time legitimate, for American women's history practitioners to assume that, if faith and spirituality play an important role in the contemporary period, this might also have been the case in the past. The third explanation pertains to prevalent scholarly views on the meanings of Protestantism and Catholicism for the development of women's movements in the nineteenth century in Western feminist historical scholarship; views not explicitly recognized in early stages of women's history.

In this context, it is not a surprise if I start from the fundamental work of Max Weber. His thesis about the congruence between the Calvinist reworked idea of predestination with the development of Western capitalism as we find it in *The*

¹⁰³ As far as exceptions are concerned beside Smith's *Ladies of the Leisure Class* see also Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850* (London: Routledge, 1992, c1987); on the British historiography see Jacqueline de Vries, "Rediscovering Christianity after the Postmodern Turn," *Feminist Studies*, 31 (2005): 135-155; on German context see Ann Taylor Allen, "Religion and Gender in Modern German Historiography" in *Gendering Modern German History: Rewriting Historiography*, ed. Karen Hagemann and Jean H. Quataert (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2008), 190-207; in the French context the first works on women and religion Smith, *Ladies of the Leisure Class*, Sylvie Fayet-Scribe, *Associations féminines et catholicisme*, Odile Sarti, *The Ligue patriotique des Françaises*; on the Nordic context see Pirjo Markkola, "Introduction. The Lutheran Context of Nordic Women's History," in *Gender and Vocation. Women, religion and Social Change in the Nordic Countries, 1830-1940*, ed. Pirjo Markkola (Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society, 2000), 2-10.

Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism is widely known. What is perhaps less known is what triggered Weber's interpretation. According to Alastair Hamilton, it was a doctoral dissertation written by one of Weber's students, Martin Offenbacher, about the economic position of Catholics and Protestants in Baden, published in 1901. Offenbacher carried out his research on the population of the Grand Duchy of Baden that consisted of both Catholics and Protestants in the proportion of 60percent to 40percent. Providing abundant statistics (challenged by now), the author compared the situation of the two groups to conclude that the Catholics, predominantly peasants, showed little ambition to further their basic education and had difficulties in finding employment in the industrial sector or occupied the lowest positions. In contrast to the Catholics, the Protestants preferred urban settings, undertook professional training, and occupied senior managerial positions. As businessmen they showed an entrepreneurial spirit that the Catholics lacked and as a result they accumulated more capital.¹⁰⁴

Also, in 1895, that is six years before Offenbacher's thesis, Max Weber gave an inaugural lecture in Freiburg titled "The National State and Economic Policy." The overall aim of his speech was to "make clear the role played by racial differences of a physical and psychological nature, as between nationalities in the economic struggle for existence."¹⁰⁵ To this end he used the single example of the socio-economic situation on the lands of West Prussia. The results of his research were supposed to propose solutions for successfully establishing "the German national character" and "German standards" in the future in this region and elsewhere.¹⁰⁶ Drawing extensively on statistics, Weber observed a tendency of uneven reduction in population. German, predominantly Protestant, day-laborers were moving out from areas with high level of agricultural cultivation whereas Poles, predominantly Catholic peasants, "multiplied" in areas where agriculture was on a low level. The continuous growth of the Polish population in the poorer regions of West Prussia, according to Weber, resulted from the Poles' "lower expectations of living standards, in part physical, in part mental, which the Slav race either possesses as a gift from nature or has acquired through bearing in the course of its past history. This is what helped

¹⁰⁴Alastair Hamilton, "Max Weber's 'Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism'," in *Cambridge Companion to Weber*, ed. Stephen P. Turner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 151-171.

¹⁰⁵Max Weber, "The National State and Economic Policy," in *Reading Weber*, ed. Keith Tribe (London: Routledge, 1989), 188-209.

¹⁰⁶*Ibid.*, 188.

their victory.”¹⁰⁷ Further, Weber explained that German day laborers were leaving West Prussia not so much because of the harshness of the material conditions, but because of their longing for freedom and a democratic social order. The framework of the *estate* offered them only one type of social relations, that is, a master-slave relation that stood against the spirit of German Protestants. Weber argued that the German Protestants were inherently (“a mass psychological phenomenon”) seeking continuous improvement in their situation (economic, educational, civil) while the Polish Catholics showed a greater adaptability to the miserable conditions of their lives. Once they had accepted the harsh conditions, the Poles lived to survive, not to develop and accumulate.¹⁰⁸ In addition the German day laborers, assertive in demanding their rights, could be easily substituted with low paid, seasonal Polish workers from Russia.¹⁰⁹ In Weber’s lecture “The National State and Economic Policy,” then, Polish Catholics became an ultimate enactment of economic, cultural and political passiveness, of the Other incompatible with the changes engendered by the modernizing world.

It must be emphasized that Weber did not make up these anti-Catholic or anti-Polish prejudices. In his illuminating essay “The Thesis before Weber,” Paul Münch has traced how since the sixteenth century the struggle between German secular authorities and the Catholic Church gradually undermined the relatively peaceful co-existence of German Protestants and German Catholics. The increasing popularity of a materialistic approach that estimated the value of religion predominantly in terms of its economic utility for the state provoked non-Catholics’ criticisms of Catholic forms of piety and forced the Church to adjust to the modern changes by reducing the number of holy days and feasts as well as altering some traditional forms of religiosity. However, these reforms did not silence the anti-Catholic factions and discourses that portrayed Catholics as unproductive outcasts addicted to pleasure and politically unreliable citizens who showed their loyalty “beyond” the state - that is to the Pope. In a somewhat parallel process, Protestants became equipped with civil diligence and an innovative entrepreneurial spirit, but also they “monopolized” the word *deutsch*, leaving the Catholics outside of the imagined boundaries of the German nation. This process culminated during the *Kulturkampf* period, which mixed

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.,192.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 194.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 193.

ethnic prejudices, national interests, confessional conflicts, economic agendas and class dynamics in such a way as to produce a picture of Protestantism as a religion that embodied a higher culture, economic vitality and progress and of Catholicism as a confession of non-advanced, uncivilized races and nations.¹¹⁰

A brief summary of Weber's views on Protestantism and Catholicism would look as follows: Protestantism promotes the spiritual equality of all individuals and proves its constructive character through the endorsement of the principle of work. Protestant settings have more rooted liberal and democratic values, greater vitality, and progress, which infiltrate all spheres of life. Catholicism is described as indifferent to the temporal world, interested in maintaining a status quo that is assured through the Church's control over all individuals.

Although Weber's work has been thoroughly commented upon and criticized, I believe that his characterization of the two Christian denominations, as sketched above, has been influential in historical scholarship, including women's history. For example, in his well-known 1977 book *The Feminists: Women's Emancipation Movements in Europe, America, and Australasia, 1840-1920*, Richard Evans argued that "the social ideology of liberal Protestantism" was an inspirational force for the development of feminism. He perceived this factor as equally important as the changes brought about by the Enlightenment and French Revolution. The Protestant belief in the responsibility of individuals (not churches or the clergy) for their own salvation facilitated a profound mental change in women on which they built their confidence to act in the public sphere. Evans elaborated:

These changes in mentalities and values took place mainly in Protestant communities. Protestantism itself originated not least in the dissatisfaction of early modern urban societies with the restrictions placed by Catholicism on its freedom of action, and it gained widest support in the most economically and socially advanced areas of European civilization. (...) This inward-directed piety of Catholic married women similarly discouraged the involvement of women in public life in Catholic societies. (...) even in predominantly Catholic countries such as Italy and France, feminism was overwhelmingly Protestant or anti-clerical in character and composition, just as liberalism in the nineteenth century was almost exclusively Protestant or anti-clerical.¹¹¹

¹¹⁰ Paul Münch, "The Thesis before Weber: an Archeology," in *Weber's Protestant Ethic: Origins, Evidence, Contexts*, ed. Hartmut Lehmann and Guenther Roth (Washington, D.C.: German Historical Institute, Cambridge University Press, 1993), 51-71. By no means was the modern German context the only one that formulated such anti-Catholic prejudices. I understand the German/Weberian detrimental portrayal of Catholicism in the nineteenth century as one of numerous expressions of the conceptualization of Catholicism as incompatible with the modern period.

¹¹¹ Richard J. Evans, *The Feminists: Women's Emancipation Movements in Europe, America, and*

In subsequent parts of the book, Evans ordered the factors operating for or against women's emancipation in various contexts as following: "In favor were Protestant religion, liberal piety, and bourgeois society, against were the Catholic Church, authoritarian constitution, feudalism and aristocracy". He concluded that Catholicism was "a major obstacle," whereas Protestantism was an "essential precondition" for the emergence of feminism.¹¹²

Bonnie Anderson and Judith Zinsser first published their widely read *A History of Their Own: Women in Europe from Prehistory to the Present* in 1988. Although still in favor of the thesis about the positive impact of Protestantism on the development of women's emancipatory movements in Europe, they formulated their propositions in a less absolute manner: "Even though Protestantism and liberalism were more conducive to feminism than Catholicism and conservatism, the difference was only one of degree rather than kind."¹¹³ What made Protestantism, in their view, more conducive to women's emancipatory aspirations was an inherent contradiction in the doctrine. On the one hand, Protestantism emphasized the spiritual equality of all individuals, regardless their gender, as far as work for salvation and contact with God were concerned. On the other hand, there was a strong emphasis on women's traditional roles as wives and mothers, subordinated to men. According to Anderson and Zinsser, the contradiction between a claimed spiritual independence and social subordination made Protestant women re-think and challenge their long-established social position.¹¹⁴ Thus "unintentionally Protestantism contributed to the long process by which women begun to free themselves from the denigrating and devaluating premises fostered and formalized for so many centuries in the name of religious truth."¹¹⁵

Combining the observations I made in the three sections of Chapter 1, the following picture emerges: although the secularization thesis envisioned religion as a marginal force confined to the private sphere, the emphases on the compatibility of at least some elements of Protestantism with the principles of the modern polity, as argued by Weber and repeated by the authors of *The Feminists* and *A History of Their Own*, facilitated the perception of Protestant settings as milieus with the potential for

Australasia, 1840-1920 (London: Croom Helm, 1979, c1977), 30.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 238, 237.

¹¹³ Bonnie S. Anderson and Judith P. Zinsser, *A History of Their Own: Women in Europe from Prehistory to the Present* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988), vol. 2, 354-356.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, 265.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, 266.

bringing about “positive” changes in women’s situations. Even if, as earlier mentioned, “secular” tools applied to interpretations of Protestant women’s actions may have caused analytical misunderstandings, the emphasis especially on the “dynamic”, but also “rational” and “democratic” elements of the reformed religion allowed a perception of Protestant women as modern historical actors invested in “improving” their broadly defined social position. In the context of the discussion about the meaning of religion for women’s struggle, historians have seen Catholicism as less productive than Protestantism, not in terms of its economic efficiency this time but in terms of the promotion of liberal and democratic values.¹¹⁶ The Weberian portrayal of Catholic settings as “static”, “divorced” from modern processes and an obstacle to advancement of any type, accepted by women’s history scholars in earlier stages of the field, facilitated implicit conceptualizations of Catholic women as “immobile” objects of historical developments, which were happening as if behind these women backs. This has contributed to a delay in historical studies about Catholic women’s activism.

Although already in 1991 Patricia Crawford warned that “the debate about which of these churches [Protestant or Catholic] was ‘better’ for women has sometimes obscured the essentially patriarchal nature of both,”¹¹⁷ the narrative as proposed by Evans, and to a lesser extent Anderson and Zinsser has informed numerous studies on the activism and emancipation of women in Protestant and

¹¹⁶ Apart from the already discussed uncritical employment of the notions of Protestantism and Catholicism, the macro comparative frameworks discussed here hinder distinctions among Protestant and Catholic rites. When it comes to the debates about the importance of Protestantism for the women’s struggle there is space for differentiation between distinct religious rites, which shows, for example, that not all Protestant groups were equally supportive of women’s claims. Since the amount of existing scholarship on Catholic women can hardly be compared with the advanced studies on Protestantism, one can hardly find examples of similar attempts to nuance Catholicism. Let me illustrate potential consequences that the usage of such a framework might have for the area of my interest. When it comes to discussion about Partitioned Poland and religion, it is assumed that one talks about Roman Catholicism. It puts out of sight the multifaceted tensions and inner struggles between distinct factions of population inhabiting Partitioned Poland. To put it straightforwardly it conceals the discussion about the dominant positions of Roman Catholics versus other Catholics. It ignores, for example, the presence of Greco-Catholics and Armenian Catholics whose culture had often been overshadowed by Roman Catholics for the sake of producing a homogeneous “imagined community”. Furthermore, the presupposition as described earlier ends the possibility of examining a variety of solutions to the women’s question within Polish Catholicism. Thirdly, the authors have also left unproblematized the units of comparison. The cross European comparative analyses and the model Protestant versus Catholic renders the presence of other then mentioned Christian religions, starting from the Orthodox believers whose number is significant enough to enter the discussion within the context of cross-European comparisons. Such designed framework of examination – Protestant versus Catholic – gives away the authors’ understanding of “Europe” - “Europe” to which the lands of Partitioned Poland has been anchored only with a part of its population, the (Roman) Catholic part.

¹¹⁷ Patricia Crawford, *Women and Religion in England, 1500-1720* (London: Routledge, 1996), 41.

Catholic settings well into the twenty-first century. For example, in her 2004 essay “The French Feminist Movement and Republicanism, 1868-1914,” the French historian Florence Rochefort argues that:

The evolution among Protestant women philanthropists from gender consciousness to feminist consciousness is exemplary. Their charity and organizing work gave them detailed knowledge of women’s condition and moved them to denounce women’s legal inferiority. Meanwhile (...) left-leaning Protestants particularly concerned about social issues, gradually became receptive to feminism in their struggle against prostitution – a problem, of course, that directly concerned relations between the sexes. (...) The Catholic milieu, on the other hand, remained thoroughly hostile not only to feminism but to the “radical” Republic – understandably so since it had launched a veritable anticlerical offensive. (...) Catholic women philanthropists refused any role in the National Council of French Women though overtures were made to them. Their submission to the Catholic hierarchy and absolute acceptance of the Church’s patriarchal concept of the family were clearly manifested in some of the small groups they founded. But Catholic culture is not alone to be blamed for Catholic women’s inability to attain gender consciousness before 1914; precluded as they were from assuming the collective identity of wife and mother generated by the anticlerical, “enemy” republican state, passing from sex to gender was more difficult to them.¹¹⁸

The Protestant-Catholic comparative framework applied to women’s history hampered the development of research into Catholic laywomen’s activism. However, on the other hand, the conceptual disconnection of Catholic women and milieu from pursuing feminist goals, that is from the history of feminism in the second half of the nineteenth century, made scholars engaged in writing about Catholic laywomen’s social activism search for alternative frameworks of interpretation. For example, the findings in Sylvie Fayet-Scribe’s *Associations féminines et catholicisme: XIXe-XXe siècle* show that although French Catholic lay pious women-activists did not champion feminist ideals, they emerged as influential actors engaged in a major movement in French social history with a long-lasting impact on French culture until the 1960s, that is, the development of *éducation populaire* and *éducation sociale*. Further, Odile Sarti’s *The Ligue Patriotique des Françaises, 1902-1933* and Gisela

¹¹⁸ Florence Rochefort, “The French Feminist Movement and Republicanism, 1868-1914,” in *Women’s Emancipation Movements in the Nineteenth Century: a European Perspective*, ed. Sylvia Paletschek and Bianka Pietrow-Ennker (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2004), 89-90. In her essay “Feminism and Protestantism in nineteenth-century France” Florence Rochefort argues that “the contributions of Protestant women and men to the dynamics of women’s emancipation in France are remarkable enough to allow the conclusion that privileged ties exist between feminism and reformed religion”. She continues that this fact is “agreed on by specialists on Protestantism and feminism alike.” Florence Rochefort, “Feminism and Protestantism in nineteenth-century France,” in *Globalizing Feminisms, 1789-1945*, ed. Karen Offen (Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2010), 67. Also Pirjo Markkola, “Introduction. The Lutheran Context of Nordic Women’s History,” 9.

Breuer's *Frauenbewegung im Katholizismus: Der Katholische Frauenbund 1903-1918* offer meticulously researched studies of the biggest and most powerful organizations of Catholic laywomen before 1918. Although perceiving the members of both associations as rather "conservative" with respect to women's and social issues, the three historians pointed at the instrumental role of the LPF and DKF in the struggle between religious and secular factions in their respective countries. Further, they demonstrated these pious Catholic laywomen's enormous organizational energy and efficiency that allowed their associations to launch an impressive variety of religious, social, charity and educational projects as well as attract a large number of members – numbers that other women's organizations, be it secular, socialist, or labor, were not even close to. Although Fayet-Scribe, Sarti or Breuer did not challenge the perception of Catholicism as a force (at best) "one step behind" modern developments in comparison with other, secular or Protestant factions in the period, nevertheless they argued convincingly for its strong impact on large scale socio-political developments and for a significant involvement of Catholic laywomen in these processes.¹¹⁹

During recent years, historians have employed the Protestant-Catholic conceptualization – or more precisely, the question of impact of these denominations on women's emancipation – with much critical consideration. In *Women in European History* (2002), in the section "First Comers' and 'Late Comers'. European Paths to Women's Suffrage," German historian Gisela Bock asks:

Why did [women's suffrage] come through almost all Europe at approximately the same time as in the United States [1920], where suffragism was so much stronger (not in comparison with Britain, but definitely with respect to continental Europe) and where a democratic culture had become much more firmly anchored? Why did some European countries follow such an incredible long time later, not until after World War II?¹²⁰

Bock does not explicitly scrutinize the biases of the Protestant-Catholic comparative framework – actually religion plays a marginal role in her book – yet she revisits the popular assumption about Catholicism as a factor hampering women's suffrage with a critical assessment of attitudes towards women's emancipation in countries that were supposed to be the cradles of the modern political order. Using

¹¹⁹ Fayet-Scribe, *Associations féminines et catholicisme*; Sarti, *The Ligue Patriotique des Françaises, 1902-1933*; Breuer, *Frauenbewegung im Katholizismus*.

¹²⁰ Gisela Bock, *Women in European History*, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2002), 145.

France as an example of a country that granted women political rights later in comparison with other European countries, Bock argues that it was not Catholicism that delayed women's suffrage but secular republicans' hostility to female voters who were suspected of supporting conservatives and betraying the "cult of reason." She proposes that "France and Switzerland were late-comers, not *although* they were the oldest male democracies in Europe, but *because* they were."¹²¹ Bock exposes how secular anti-women discourses in these countries understood democratization as an extension of male suffrage (for the lower classes) and how they endorsed the masculine character of the political realm. She claims that in states with historically longer and well-established democratic orders there was a stronger prescriptive model of the citizen as a white, middle-class, and secular male. Thus, in seeking political participation, women confronted stronger resistance there than in countries with a weaker democratic tradition.¹²² The argument about the exclusionary character of republican modern polity as a factor responsible for hampering women's suffrage in Catholic France may serve as a good counter-example to the arguments of Evans, and Anderson and Zinsser who pictured Catholicism as the main reason for women's delayed political participation.

In his *The War against Catholicism* on the conflict between liberals and Catholics in German settings between the 1850s and 1870s, Michael Gross has recently proposed an interesting twist on the Protestant-Catholic framework of historical investigations. Gross offers an illuminating argument as to why German liberals during the *Kulturkampf* period so strongly opposed Catholicism and Catholic women in particular and, more importantly, why fighting Catholicism and Catholic women was fundamental to the project of establishing a liberal societal order of separate spheres in the modern period in Germany, but also elsewhere. Gross points out how the liberal factions' rhetoric equipped Catholicism with "feminine features" of irrationality and stupidity, and how due to this maneuver the latter became perceived as a force running counter to the prescriptive pronouncement of the secular rational male public sphere. Subsequently, in his overview of German Catholic religious women (nuns) and laywomen's social activities since 1830, Gross concludes: "The missionary crusade, the new religious congregations, charitable societies, church associations, pilgrimages and shifting devotional patterns were dramatically changing

¹²¹ Ibid., 142.

¹²² Ibid., 142-143.

the lives of Catholic women. All introduced women to public life.”¹²³ Commenting on the strikingly massive character of these women’s participation, Gross observed: “By comparison, it would be only much later and then only rarely that the German labor movement would be able to mobilize and employ so many women. It was not the case therefore, that Catholic women were lagging behind middle-class secular and Protestant women in their demands to access to public space. (...) Catholic women were coupling religious life with public life in open religious congregations, associations, assemblies, and the missions in ways generally not available to women or not desired by women at the same time in Protestant bourgeois culture.”¹²⁴

Contrary to previous scholars whose analyses centered on a comparison of Protestant and Catholic women’s activisms, Gross examined which confession’s women’s social involvement posited a bigger danger/challenge to the liberal secular order, specifically to the ideology of separate spheres, in the opinion of nineteenth-century secular liberals. Although Protestant women were part of various organizations too, the “participation of Catholic women in public was,” according to Gross, “both quantitatively and qualitatively different than of their Protestant social counterparts. The flood of Catholic women in the years after 1848 entering the public through female congregations, church organizations, parish life, and religious devotion was faster, more dramatic, and therefore more conspicuous than the engagement of Protestant women. (...) It was Catholic women,” with their radically embraced and manifested faith, “not Protestant women, who seemed to critics to be doing the demonstrable damage to the traditional separation of public and private.”¹²⁵ Hence liberals employed hateful and fierce rhetoric against Catholicism and Catholic women to hinder advancement of women into the public and to prevent possible damage to the ideology of separate spheres.¹²⁶

1.4 Religion in Polish women’s history

As observed in the Introduction, scholars interested in Polish women’s history have not taken on separate investigations on Catholic laywomen’s activism related topics. Instead they have limited themselves to making sporadic comments on broadly defined relationship between religion and women in the long nineteenth century in the

¹²³ Ibid., 218.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 219.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 221.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 221.

context of their research into secular women`s movements, activism or various aspects of their social situation. Based on these scattered comments I will try here to reconstruct these scholars` views on religion and propose further the reasons why Polish Catholic laywomen`s activism has not attracted scholarly attention.

In her article “Family and Public Life: Barriers and Interpretation – Women in Poland at the Turn of the Century,” published in the *Women`s History Review* in 1996, Anna Żarnowska, a distinguished Polish historian and pioneer of women`s history in her country, argued that:

Although the situation was different in each partition zone, the Catholic Church played an important role in the socialization of the younger generation as late as the early twentieth century. This fact, which distinguished Poland from some West European countries, was a result of its lagging behind the West in the democratization of society, both in the socio-cultural and the legal-political sphere.¹²⁷

As Żarnowska`s article exemplifies, similar to scholars in other contexts, already in the early period of Polish women`s history researchers recognized that religion should be taken into consideration in historical analysis; however, they faced theoretical difficulties when dealing with the phenomenon. On the one hand, they acknowledged that religion was a strong part of, especially but not exclusively, nineteenth-century women`s lives. However, repeating the assumptions of the “classic” version of the secularization thesis – well embedded in Polish mainstream historical conceptualizations – they interpreted the strength of religion`s impact on society as an indicator of and simultaneously as a factor contributing to a civilizational “delay” of the secularly understood modernizing (democratization) processes on the Polish lands in general, and hindering women`s emancipatory claims in particular.

Conceptualizations of religion as “old”, “anti-modern”, and “old-fashioned” versus “modern” religious-free factions appeared in the works of other historians too. For example, in an essay centered on the patterns of women`s behaviors in rural areas at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Włodzimierz Mędrzecki, a noted historian and anthropologist specializing in the social history of the Polish peasantry, claimed that there were two competitive programs for modernizing the Polish female peasantry. The first one, originating in the clerical and landowners milieu, promoted

¹²⁷ Żarnowska, “Family and Public Life,” 476.

“traditional virtues: devotion, laboriousness, modesty, obedience to the authorities, respect for tradition and family.” The second program, Mędrzecki argued, proposed by the intelligentsia and the first generation of the folk people’s movement’s leaders, “endorsed a decisively different model of (...) a female peasant, in which the assurance of social, legal and economic equality was perceived as a fundamental necessity. In this case,” he continued, “education and improvement of the skills of the peasant women would not serve God and family, but the development of the woman herself.”¹²⁸ Mędrzecki, repeating the assumptions of the secularization paradigm, as well as the Marxist and liberal feminist teleological suppositions about women’s emancipation, suggested that religion (be it an institution, doctrine, or religiosity) must be overcome to create both an agent capable of formulating her claims and an environment to orchestrate emancipatory actions. The assumption as present in Mędrzecki’s argument may indicate that, similarly to their colleagues in other academic settings, Polish women’s history’s scholars initially turned their attention towards “liberating” and “empowering” forms of nineteenth-century women’s activism, that aimed at, very generally speaking, “improving” women’s situations, taking for granted that such developments were inspired predominantly by secular ideas of emancipation. Hence, an abundance of research has covered a wide range of Polish secular women’s initiatives. At the same time, being influenced by the popular conceptualization of Catholicism and the Catholic Church as “static”, “passive” and inherently incompatible with modernity, scholars assumed that Polish Catholic milieus were lacking in potential for creating and engaging laywomen in any historical processes that would be significant for describing Polish women’s history in the modern period.¹²⁹

The picture of the Church and Catholicism as milieus invested in the societal immobilization of women within their familial environments has been additionally strengthened by observations about the negative impact on women’s situations that resulted from the alliance of Catholic ideologies and national projects. In 1991 Bianka-Pietrow Enker argued:

Both the Church and society at large joined forces to commit women to setting an edifying moral and emotional example. In line with religious tradition, the qualities sought from women were self-sacrifice and self-abnegation; these

¹²⁸ Włodzimierz Mędrzecki, “Konwenans wiejski i nowe wzorce zachowań kobiet na wsi w Królestwie Polskim na przełomie XIX i XX wieku,” in *Kobieta i kultura życia codziennego*, 85-86.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 86.

were now invested with new prestige as exemplified in the person of *Matka Polka* [Polish Mother], the divine protectress and patron saint of the nation. This idealization of women was certainly, on the one hand, a source of strength for national resistance; yet, on the other hand, it bound together family and nation so tightly that any strivings by women for emancipation from family ties seemed tantamount to national and religious betrayal. Such attempts at emancipation were strictly taboo.¹³⁰

However, the growing body of research on Polish women's history has proved that, while the Church did not endorse forms of women's emancipation or activism that secular socialist, liberal or feminist factions would have found desirable, it did open possibilities for women to leave their familial environments or enter social work. As observed by Anna Żarnowska,

religious life, especially at the parish level, became an alternative form of public life. Traditional religious forms of community collective activity provided women (especially those in the popular classes) with a role outside their family. This was paradoxical, for it was also the Catholic Church which emphasized women's tasks in the family and indeed sought to confine their role in society to that of mother and wife. (...) The Catholic Church's initiatives to promote parishioners' collective activity had a double-edged effect, however, for even in the religious sphere, the Church did little to reduce the inequality between men and women. The Catholic Church backed the segregation of the sexes and woman's subordination to man not only in theory, but in practice.¹³¹

Although Żarnowska raises doubts about the actual "empowering" potential behind confessionally motivated women's activism in the parish and pious associations, another article by Mędrzecki signals a shift in approaching Catholicism with respect to its impact on Polish laywomen. Referring to the pious associations as the primary form of organized involvement of Polish peasant women outside of their homes, the historian comments:

They [pious associations] were patron organizations, so their ways of functioning were quite distant from patterns and principles present in the modern society of the industrial era. Nevertheless they did create a platform for the social activism of a large group of women. The fact that they supported the right wing or even reactionary milieu is another thing.¹³²

Going against the well-established tradition of exploring Polish women's movements and organizations that "rebelled", "resisted", "liberated", or "empowered"

¹³⁰ Bianka Pietrow-Ennker, "Women in Polish Society. A Historical Introduction," in *Women in Polish Society*, ed. Rudolf Jaworski and Bianka Pietrow-Ennker (New York: Boulder Distributed by Columbia University Press, 1992), 11-12.

¹³¹ Żarnowska, "Family and Public Life," 480.

¹³² Mędrzecki, "W społecznościach lokalnych i w parafii," 167.

women, Mędrzecki argues that research into confessionally motivated activism is worth undertaking for the sole reason of its potential for offering insight into a significant number of Polish women's lives and their social views, which, I add, is impossible to retrieve from the materials left by other, rather elitist Polish secular or feminist organizations. In the same article, Mędrzecki also challenges the conceptualization of Catholic women in the period as passive tools in the hands of clergyman by making an insightful comment about the development and popularity of the so-called Mariavits at the beginning of the twentieth century in the Polish Kingdom. The Mariavits, labeled by Rome as a heretic sect, were a group of former Catholic believers who, being disappointed in the moral condition of the Roman Catholic Church and its clergymen, separated from the institution and established their own religious group.¹³³ Mędrzecki reminds us that the Mariavits's growth, especially in the rural regions of the Polish Kingdom, should be chiefly attributed to the persistence and devotion of peasant women who resisted pressure from both the Catholic Church and other lay Catholic believers and gave their support to the newly emerging religious movement.¹³⁴ In other words, while accepting the argument that the Catholic Church had a strong position and a powerful influence over Polish women, Mędrzecki challenges the notion of Catholic pious laywomen as merely passive recipients of ideas, pointing out their creative engagement with religious doctrine despite the pressure from religious authorities.¹³⁵

Mędrzecki's observation about the Catholic Church and Catholicism resembles a comment by Robert Blobaum, an American historian of Central and Eastern Europe. While commenting on the development of the "woman question" in the Russian zone between 1900-1914, he gave the example of the Church's role in changing the social situation of some women in the period, concluding that it "would be (...) misleading to denounce the Church's formulation of and response to the 'woman question' simply as conservative, if not reactionary and misogynist."¹³⁶ Finally, in her "Introduction" to *Kobieta i kultura religijna. Specyficzne cechy*

¹³³ For general information about the Mariavits, see Krzysztof Mazur, *Mariawityzm w Polsce* (Mariavitism in Poland) (Kraków: Zakład Wydawniczy Nomos, 1991). For the role of women in this religious movement, see Małgorzata Adamczyk, "Kobieta w mariawityzmie" (Woman in Mariavitism), in *Kobieta i kultura religijna*, 141-165.

¹³⁴ Mędrzecki, "W społecznościach lokalnych i w parafii," 168.

¹³⁵ Similar comment by the same author, see Mędrzecki, "Konwenans wiejski i nowe wzorce zachowań kobiet na wsi w Królestwie Polskim," 85-86.

¹³⁶ Robert E. Blobaum "The 'Woman Question' in Russian Poland, 1900-1914," *Journal of Social History* 35 (2002): 809-810.

religijności kobiet w Polsce (Woman and religious culture. The distinctive features of women`s religiosity in Poland) – a pioneering volume of essays on Polish pious women published in 2006 – Anna Żarnowska acknowledged that it often was through religious movements that women contested and sought solutions to their various forms of subordination.¹³⁷ Her comment confirms the emergence of a new approach towards examining the relationship between women and religion in Polish women`s history, to which my thesis hopes to contribute both theoretically and empirically.

1.5 Conclusions

Chapter 1 has explored the reasons for the unpopularity and delay of historical explorations of Polish Catholic laywomen`s activism when compared with the activism of other women`s groups or factions. In order to answer my question I proposed to examine broader theoretical frameworks that may have influenced the conceptualization of the relationship between Catholicism and Polish women`s activism.

I have contextualized the debates on women and religion in the long nineteenth century within the so-called secularization thesis and the debates on its limits. Specifically I have engaged with two recognitions resulting from discussions on the issue. The first is that for a considerable amount of time the secularization paradigm has been the unchallenged theoretical framework through which social scientists, including historians, thought about religion as irrelevant for developments in the modern period. Secondly, the “genealogy” of the secularization thesis has shown that the history of its formation was intertwined with a specific (western, white, liberal, middle-class, male) political project of “emancipating” the social and individual from “religious” to “secular”. Although the secularization paradigm was responsible for the neglect and tardy inclusion of religion into mainstream historical analysis, the same cannot be argued without some qualifications for women`s history, even in its early stages. I argued that the correlation between women and religion as established by the feminization of religion thesis and privatization of religion thesis not only facilitated the inclusion of religion into women`s history, thereby helping to retrieve an important part of women`s existence in the past, but also offered a platform for critical investigations of the assumptions about women and religion

¹³⁷ Anna Żarnowska, “Wprowadzenie” (Introduction), in *Kobieta i kultura religijna*, 10.

embedded in the modern socio-political order. Further I proposed that Weberian definitions of Protestantism (dynamic, democratic, productive) and Catholicism (anti-modern, reactionary, antidemocratic) as applied in Western women's historical scholarship facilitated a great deal of studies on Protestant women, their piety and various forms of activism but hampered an analogical development in studies on women's activism in Catholic contexts.

With respect to the presence of the category of religion in Polish women's history, I have observed that already in the early stage of the field's development scholars acknowledged the importance of religion in women's lives, although they defined its impact chiefly in negative terms. The historians pointed to the "reactionary" character of Catholicism and its strong connection with emerging nationalistic aspirations, which was interpreted as a particularly disempowering combination for Polish women's emancipatory claims. The scholars exposed Polish Catholicism's "conservative" face by comparing it to secular factions' social reforms or/and secular women's activism. In the closing paragraphs I have indicated recent changes in the attitudes of scholars of Polish women's history towards the role of religion in sustaining and/or altering women's situations in the long nineteenth century.

Chapter 2: The transnational emergence of New Catholicism in the nineteenth century

The nineteenth century Catholicism's revival was a powerful and truly transnational historical process, but is known to a relatively small group of scholars and research on it is still in an early stage. For this reason, in Chapter 2 I offer an overview of the phenomenon – based on the available recent historical research and my reading of the papal encyclicals – with an emphasis on how the Vatican aimed to mobilize the laity during the period of rapidly unfolding competition between religious and secular factions from the 1880s until 1918. The first aim of this chapter is to equip the reader with the necessary historical information on Catholicism's rebirth so as to enhance her understanding of the broader context within which the activism of Polish pious laywomen developed at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth century. The second goal of the chapter is to introduce the concepts of “New Catholicism” and the “European culture wars”, which play a key role in the subsequent chapters.

Leo XIII inaugurated his pontificate on 20 February 1878. Just two months later, on April 21, he promulgated the encyclical *Inscrutabili Dei Consilio* (On the Evils of Society) in which he presented the agenda of his papacy to “the Patriarchs, Primate, Archbishops, and Bishops of the Catholic World in Grace and Communion with the Apostolic See.” The pope started the encyclical by painting a disconcerting picture of the contemporary world. In his view it was marked by,

a widespread subversion of the primary truths on which (...) human society is based; an obstinacy of mind that will not brook any authority however lawful; an endless sources of disagreement, whence arrive civil strife, and ruthless war and bloodshed; a contempt of law which molds characters and is the shield of righteousness; an insatiable craving for things perishable (...); reckless mismanagement, waste, and misappropriation of public funds; shamelessness of those who, full of treachery, make semblance of being champions of country, of freedom, and every kind of right.¹³⁸

The very reason for this “deadly kind of plague,” the pontiff continued, was rejection of the authority and teachings of the Church, “which in God's name rules

¹³⁸Leo XIII, *Inscrutabili Dei Consilio* (On the evils of the society), in Libreria Editrice Vaticana, accessed June 9, 2010, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/leo_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_21041878_inscrutabili-dei-consilio_en.html.

mankind,” by lay authorities (specifically the states) or other doctrines struggling for recognition (socialism, freemasonry). In the subsequent paragraph he listed the active measures undertaken to further the destruction of “the foundations of society” – that is, the Church’s authority.¹³⁹ The list of grievances was long, for Leo XIII had begun his pontificate in an exceptionally difficult period for the Catholic Church.

It was commonly assumed that the misfortunes of the Catholic Church had begun in 1789.¹⁴⁰ The French Revolution brought, among other things, an intensive de-Christianization of society, confiscation of Church properties, dissolution of all religious orders, and the abolition of monastic vows. The remaining French clergy became employees of the state assigned through an elective system, which meant Rome lost its authority over the country with the largest Catholic population in Europe and a once flourishing monastic life.¹⁴¹ Despite the *Concordat* of 1801, signed between the French Church and Napoleon, the anti-Catholic politics was continued and, furthermore, spread in the countries in which the Napoleonic regime was established.¹⁴² The resolutions of the *Concordat* were abrogated during the period of the Third Republic (1870-1940), which began a new phase in the struggle between the French state and the Church, starting with harshly anticlerical legislative changes in 1879 and ending with the total separation of the two bodies in 1905.¹⁴³ Conflicts about changes in the situation of the Church occurring in the nineteenth century divided French society so deeply that contemporaries talked about “the war of the two Frances.”¹⁴⁴

The 1870s were also difficult for the Catholic Church in Germany. During the

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/leo_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_21041878_inscrutabili-dei-consilio_en.html.

¹⁴⁰ Nigel Aston, *Christianity and Revolutionary Europe, 1750-1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), especially the chapter “Revolution and its aftermath”.

¹⁴¹ For a general introduction into the relations between the Church and the state, see John McManners, *Church and State in France, 1870-1914* (London: Harper & Row, 1972); for the church related developments during the revolutionary period Frank Tallet, “Dechristianizing France: The Year II and the Revolutionary Experience,” in *Religion, Society and Politics in France Since 1789*, ed. Frank Tallet and Nicholas Atkin (London: Hambledon Continuum, 1991), 1-29; Ralph Gibson, “The Revolution,” in *A Social History of French Catholicism, 1798-1914* (London: Routledge, 1989), 30-56.

¹⁴² Aston, *Christianity and Revolutionary Europe, 1750-1830*, especially chapters 5-7; about the Concordat of 1801 see Georges Goyau, “The French Concordat of 1801,” in *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1912), accessed January 12, 2011, <<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04204a.htm>>.

¹⁴³ For a good overview of the anti-clerical legislation in France Judith F. Stone, “Anticlericals and Bonnes Soeurs: The Rhetoric of the 1901 Law of Associations,” *French Historical Studies* 23 (2000): 103-128.

¹⁴⁴ James McMillan, “‘Priest Hits Girl’: On the Front Line in the ‘War of the Two Frances,’” in *Culture Wars*, 77. Also Ralph Gibson, “Why Republicans and Catholics Couldn’t Stand Each Other in the Nineteenth Century,” in *Religion, Society and Politics in France Since 1789*, 107-120.

Kulturkampf between 1871 and 1878, the Chancellor of the German empire launched anti-Catholic legislation that aimed at reducing the Church's social and political impact. Governmental supervision was imposed on religious schools and the appointment of the clergy, while religious orders were dissolved, diplomatic relations with the Vatican ceased and civil marriage was made obligatory for all citizens. Clergy who resisted the new laws as well as those who helped these clergymen were imprisoned, exiled, or removed from their posts.¹⁴⁵ As Oded Heilbronner has pointed out, the scenario of the German "culture struggle" was replicated in other European regions.¹⁴⁶

In 1870 the first Italian parliament annexed the Papal States and the city of Rome. The latter was proclaimed the capital of the newly united Kingdom of Italy. As a result, pope Pius IX and his successors resided within the Vatican's walls, referring to themselves as "prisoners."¹⁴⁷ Habsburg-Austria would be among few settings to maintain good relations with the pontiffs during this period.¹⁴⁸

The confiscation of Church properties undermined the material wealth of both the Bishop of Rome and national Catholic churches. The dissolution of religious institutions, along with the almost total suppression of religious orders (e.g. the Jesuits) and the closure of seminaries, put the fulfillment of pastoral duties in question. The educational and charity sectors were gradually removed from the clergy's control. In addition, Church doctrine faced growing challenges from scientific discourses. The encyclical *Syllabus errorum* (The syllabus of errors) of 1864 and the proclamation of papal infallibility in 1870 reinforced the image of Catholicism as antithetical to modernity. Also, in the increasingly complicated socio-economic realities of the nineteenth century, Catholicism had difficulties generating an alternative to national, liberal, radical, or socialist discourses. Urbanization and industrialization, occurring in different times and places in various parts of Europe, triggered processes of massive migration to the cities and the growth of working-class masses, who became particularly problematic for the Church to access.¹⁴⁹

The language of *Inscrutabili Dei Consilio* and most of Leo XIII's other

¹⁴⁵ Gross, *The War Against Catholicism*, especially the chapters "Revolution, the Missionary Crusade, and Catholic Revival" and "Kulturkampf, Unification, and the War against Catholicism".

¹⁴⁶ Oded Heilbronner, "The Age of Catholic Revival," 239.

¹⁴⁷ Martin Papeheim, "Roma o Morte: Culture Wars in Italy," in *Culture Wars*, 202-226.

¹⁴⁸ Laurence Cole, "The Counter-Reformation's Last Stand: Austria," in *Culture Wars*, 285-312.

¹⁴⁹ For an example of research about similar difficulties faced by other religions, see Hugh McLeod, ed., *European Religion in the Age of Great Cities 1830-1930* (London: Routledge, 1995).

encyclicals aimed at discrediting adversaries and conveying the feeling of a nearing catastrophe. “The enemy forces, inspired by the evil spirit, ever wage war on the Christian name,” “the evils” oppressed “the human race (...) on every side,” the socialists acted with the sole purpose of the “overthrowing of all civil society whatsoever,” and the naturalists and Freemasons had “no knowledge as to what constitutes justice and injustice.”¹⁵⁰

Given these circumstances, pontiff Leo XIII proposed a plan to save the Church and while doing so, prevent civilization from heading towards calamity. In order to push through his agenda, the pope repeatedly issued encyclicals and letters to various national Catholic churches to comment on the hardships they experienced and to ensure that their initiatives were in accordance with the politics of Rome. Throughout the next twenty-five years of his pontificate Leo XIII adhered to the approach and strategy launched in his 1878 *Inscrutabili Dei Consilio*. He labeled “an evil” (e.g. mostly socialism, freemasonry, nihilism, civil marriages, but also liberalism or certain forms of capitalism), acknowledged the existence of burning social problems to be solved (e.g. the condition of the working class) and aimed to mobilize the “venerable brothers” to undertake actions against the “evil” and, at the same time, to bring relief to those in moral and material need. Bearing in mind how effective the rival discourses were in influencing the people, he stressed that the most desirable result would be achieved if “the character and conduct of individuals also will be reformed.”¹⁵¹ Since the papal project could not succeed without a base of sympathetic believers capable of orchestrating effective campaigns against the Church’s adversaries, the pope urged local clergy “to strengthen ever more and more the union of members with the head, of the children with their father.”¹⁵²

Inscrutabili Dei Consilio’s rhetorical figures about the detrimental condition of the Church *vis-à-vis* its adversaries may be misleading for at least two reasons. First, Leo XIII was far less fearful of the world beyond the Vatican walls than his predecessors. He accepted that democratic tendencies were widespread in the period. The example of the United States proved that a democratic order with its insistence on

¹⁵⁰ Leo XIII, *Inscrutabili Dei Consilio*,
http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/leo_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_21041878_inscrutabili-dei-consilio_en.html.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/leo_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_21041878_inscrutabili-dei-consilio_en.html.

¹⁵² Ibid., http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/leo_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_21041878_inscrutabili-dei-consilio_en.html.

the separation of state and Church did not worsen the condition of Catholics there. The pope repeatedly approached European states that launched anti-clerical or anti-religious legislation to negotiate better conditions for Catholics. Secondly, despite the actual misfortunes of the Church in the period and the (uneven) advancement of secularization in the public sphere (e.g. politics, education, charity),¹⁵³ the apocalyptic tone of the pontiff when talking about the condition of religion was exaggerated. In fact, after the initial shock caused by the events of the French Revolution and subsequent Napoleonic period, the Catholicism of the nineteenth century experienced a remarkable revitalization that had been underway already several decades before Leo XIII's papacy began.¹⁵⁴ Indeed, British historian Christopher Clark argues that since the middle of the nineteenth century, Europe witnessed:

a flowering of Catholic religious life (...). There was a proliferation and elaboration of popular devotions, church buildings, religious foundations and associations, and confessionally motivated newspapers and journals. This revitalization of religious energies coincided with profound changes within the church itself. The New Catholicism of later nineteenth century Europe was more uniform, more centralized, and more "Roman" than the eighteenth-century church had been. It was marked by a convergence of elite and popular devotions, an interpretation of lay and clerical organization, a rhetorical vehemence and resourcefulness in the management of communicative media that impressed contemporaries, whether sympathetic or hostile.¹⁵⁵

In opposition to earlier scholarly conceptualizations of nineteenth-century Catholicism as an enactment of conservatism and hostile to modernity,¹⁵⁶ Christopher Clark observes that similar to many European states in the period:

¹⁵³ Hugh McLeod, *Secularization in Western Europe, 1848-1914* (London: St. Martin's Press, 2000).

¹⁵⁴ Kłoczowski, *A History of Polish Christianity*, 202-205.

¹⁵⁵ Clark, "The New Catholicism," 11, 18-23. This period also saw a dramatic increase in the number of people entering religious orders, see Caroline Ford, *Divided Houses*, 33. For the New Catholicism as European phenomenon, see Nigel Aston, *Christianity and Revolutionary Europe, 1750-1830*, especially the chapter "Religious Revival after 1815?"; Clark, "The New Catholicism and the European Culture Wars"; Heilbronner, "The Age of Catholic Revival". For the French context consult Ralph Gibson, *A Social History of French Catholicism*, especially the two chapters "The regular clergy" and "Dechristianization and rechristianization: from a God of Fear to a God of Love"; for the German context see Gross, *The War against Catholicism*, especially the chapter "Revolution, the Missionary Crusade, and Catholic Revival"; Jerzy Kłoczowski, *A History of Polish Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 201.

¹⁵⁶ As observed by the Polish historian Krzysztof Lewalski, the juxtaposition between *The Communist Manifesto* of 1848 and *Rerum Novarum* of 1891 typically served the critics of the Church as an illustration of the stark time difference between the socialist and Catholic movements with respect to formulating answers to pressing socio-economics realities in the long nineteenth century. In such a comparison, socialism was posited as an example of the radical and modern, whereas Catholicism was seen as conservative and behind the times. Krzysztof Lewalski, *Kościół rzymskokatolicki a władze carskie w Królestwie Polskim na przełomie XIX i XX wieku* (The Roman Catholic Church and the tsarist authorities in the Polish Kingdom at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth century) (Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego, 2008), 127.

The means adopted by the nineteenth-century Catholics – mass-circulation media, voluntary associations, demonstrative forms of mass action, the expansion of schooling among deprived social groups and the increasingly prominent involvement of women in positions of responsibility – were *quintessentially modern* [my emphasis, D.G.]¹⁵⁷

Based on this observation, in his research on the New Catholicism the British scholar proposes to move beyond binary oppositions (modern-anti-modern, passive-dynamic, reactionary-progressive) and perceives various ideological formations of the nineteenth century – be it anticlericalism, liberalism, socialist secularism, nationalism but also Catholicism – as “artefacts of political modernity” that were “deeply implicated in that epochal sharpening of collective identities that reshaped political cultures across Europe. (...) For the fundamental problem [they] faced was not whether to embrace or reject ‘modernity’ but how to respond to the challenges it posed.”¹⁵⁸ Clark defines the relationships between Catholicism and its opponents as a rivalry of diverse strategies of managing the political, economic, and social changes brought about by modernity. Further, in place of the long-standing perception of Catholicism in the nineteenth century as an inherently anti-modern and passive force, Wolfram Kaiser and Christopher Clark suggest a new framework for researching Catholicism in the nineteenth century – that is, the framework of the “European culture wars,” understood as a struggle between religious and secular factions that infiltrated virtually all aspects of private and public life during the period across the Catholic world. They argue that in the second half of the nineteenth century the conflicts between the church and states and secular factions in general in Western and Central Europe differed from the frictions that had occurred in the past,

they involved processes of mass mobilization and societal polarization. They embraced virtually every sphere of life: schools, universities, the press, marriage and gender relations, burial rites, associational culture, the control of public space, folk memory and the symbols of nationhood. In short, these conflicts were ‘culture wars’, in which the values and collective practices of modern life were at stake.¹⁵⁹

In order to counterbalance the influence of secular radical, mainly socialist,

¹⁵⁷ Clark, “The New Catholicism,” 45.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 13.

¹⁵⁹ Christopher Clark and Wolfram Kaiser, “Introduction. The European Culture Wars,” in *Culture Wars*, 1. Kaiser’s and Clark’s proposal may be further complicated by adding Oded Heilbrunner’s comment that nineteenth-century Catholicism not only competed with secularism in its various disguises, but also with different branches of Christian religion or new types of religious beliefs (e.g. Spiritualism), see Heilbrunner, “The Age of Catholic Revival,” 240, 245.

critics of the contemporary socio-economic injustices – or, drawing on Kaiser and Clark’s conceptualization, to take a stance in the unfolding “culture wars” – in 1891 Leo XIII proclaimed the encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (On Capital and Labor), considered as the founding document of modern Catholic social teaching. Because of “the misery and wretchedness pressing so unjustly on the majority of the working classes,” the pope urged that next to the duty of the apostolate, the clergy should engage in social work in its most concrete sense. What he had in mind was to set up workers’ labor associations, through which they would receive moral and in particular material assistance as well as support in negotiating better working conditions with their employers. The pope emphasized that entering into voluntary private associations was a natural right of man. Any limitation of this right put forth by the state interfered with the natural inclination of people to participate in the life of society.¹⁶⁰

In outlining the basis of modern Catholic social teaching in the seminal *Rerum Novarum*, Leo XIII followed “his great [spiritual] predecessor” Wilhelm Emmanuel Freiherr von Ketteler (1811-1877), the bishop of Mainz, theologian, and prominent politician. Ketteler already in 1848 maintained that the Church should take responsibility for the process of improving the living and working conditions of the masses, not only through moral teaching, but also through involvement in work on the ground. To this end, during a meeting of German bishops in Fulda in 1869, Ketteler urged the Church to demand economic reforms (shorter labor hours, wage increases, laws protecting young women and children, prohibition of factory work for children) as well as the foundation of labor associations, in which workers would advance their moral growth, vocational development and acquire skills to exercise their rights. The so-called Fulda Program established the German Catholic Church as the vanguard of social Catholicism and set an example for other national Churches in the period.¹⁶¹

In the encyclical *Sapientiae Christianae* (On Christians as Citizens), promulgated in 1890, the pope argued that “the chief elements of Catholics’ duty consist in professing openly and unflinchingly the Catholic doctrine, and in

¹⁶⁰ Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum* (On capital and labor), in Libreria Editrice Vaticana, accessed January 2, 2011, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/leo_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_15051891_rerum-novarum_en.html.

¹⁶¹ The seminal encyclical *Rerum Novarum* repeated Ketteler’s insights and social teaching. Zbigniew Waleszczuk, “Wprowadzenie” (Introduction), in *Wilhelm Emmanuel von Ketteler. Nauczanie społeczne* (Wilhelm Emmanuel von Ketteler. The Social Teaching) (Warszawa: Instytut Wydawniczy PAX, 2007), 5-32.

propagating it to the utmost of our power.”¹⁶² Although the competence of the apostolate belonged primarily to the bishops and pontiff, this time the pope also addressed the Catholic laity, declaring,

no one must entertain the notion that private individuals are prevented from taking some active part in this duty of teaching, especially those on whom God has bestowed gifts of mind with the strong wish of rendering themselves useful. (...) Such co-operation on the part of the laity has seemed to the Fathers of the Vatican Council so opportune and fruitful of good that they thought well to invite it. In respect, consequently, to the duties that bind us to God and the Church, it should be borne earnestly in mind that in propagating Christian truth and warding off errors the zeal of the laity should, as far as possible, be brought actively into play.¹⁶³

In 1901 the pope addressed the Catholic laity again, now in the encyclical *Graves de Communi re* (On Christian Democracy). He happily reported an increase in the number of new institutions benefiting the working masses, such as “popular bureaus, which supply information to the uneducated; rural banks, which make loans to small farmers; societies for mutual help or relief; unions of working men and other associations or institutions of the same kind.”¹⁶⁴ The pope reiterated that the lay Catholics` zeal to comfort the masses was expected, praiseworthy and in accordance with the spirit of the Church. In particular he appealed “to the kindly assistance of those whose rank, wealth, and intellectual as well as spiritual culture give them a certain standing in the community.”¹⁶⁵ Similar to the redefined scope of the pastoral obligations, the involvement of lay Catholics in social matters was defined as “a strict duty, which binds them.” Despite the organizational variety of Catholic enterprises, the pontiff insisted that,

that kind of help is especially worthy of recognition which forms the minds of mechanics and laborers to thrift and foresight, so that in the course of time they may be able, in part at least, to look out for themselves. To aim at that is not only to dignify the duty of the rich toward the poor, but to elevate the poor themselves, for, while it urges them to work in order to improve their condition, it preserves them meantime from danger, it refrains immoderation in

¹⁶² Leo XIII, *Sapientiae Christianae* (On Christians as citizens), in Libreria Editrice Vaticana, accessed January 2, 2011, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/leo_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_10011890_sapientiae-christianae_en.html.

¹⁶³ Ibid., http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/leo_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_10011890_sapientiae-christianae_en.html.

¹⁶⁴ Leo XIII, *Graves de Communi re* (On Christian democracy), in Libreria Editrice Vaticana, accessed May 11, 2011, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/leo_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_18011901_graves-de-communi-re_en.html.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/leo_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_18011901_graves-de-communi-re_en.html.

their desires, and acts as a spur in the practice of virtue.¹⁶⁶

Numerous initiatives launched by the laity enhanced the rise of the New Catholicism. Some of those initially local forms of social activism spread across the Catholic world as in the case of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul – an organization of Catholic laymen committed to personal service of the local poor in the form of material and moral support as well as religious self-development. Launched locally by the Parisian Catholic layman Frederick Ozanam in 1833, the Society soon became intensively involved in developing international associations. Around 1912 there were more than 100,000 active members of male Vincientian societies in all European countries and elsewhere.¹⁶⁷ The types of charity acts of the society's branches were determined by local conditions. The Council General in Paris oversaw all societies and published an annual report with detailed accounts of the work done all over the world. The report was read aloud during the branches' meetings, which meant all members were familiar with the general condition of the association.¹⁶⁸ The Society was repeatedly approved by Gregory XVI, Pius IX, and Leo XIII.¹⁶⁹

In addition to the new types of Catholic initiatives, middle- and upper-class laymen and laywomen were encouraged to become members of various pious associations, such as the Third Orders,¹⁷⁰ sodalities,¹⁷¹ or confraternities,¹⁷² which had been part of the Catholic Church's pious life for several centuries. Yet, over the

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/leo_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_18011901_graves-de-communi-re_en.html.

¹⁶⁷ Also in British Guiana, Paraguay, Uruguay, Ecuador, Peru, Argentina, Colombia, Chile, Brazil, Philippines, Mexico, United States, Canada, China, India, Egypt, Ceylon, Natal, Transvaal, the Philippines. Thomas Mulry, "Society of Saint Vincent de Paul," in *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1912), accessed March 2, 2011, <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13389a.htm>; "Początki Towarzystwa św. Wincentego a Paulo" (The beginnings of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul), *Milosierdzie Chrześcijańskie* 1 (1905): 6-18; "Katechizm Towarzystwa św. Wincentego a Paulo" (The Catechism of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul), *Milosierdzie Chrześcijańskie* 1 (1905): 18-25.

¹⁶⁸ "Zarys Prac Towarzystwa Świątego Wincentego à Paulo w r. 1900" (Summary of the activities performed by the Societies of St. Vincent de Paul in 1900), *Sodalis Marianus* 1 (1902), 22; "The speech of the main chairman of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul during the General Meeting in Paris, April 21, 1901," *Sodalis Marianus* 1 (1902), 35; Maryan Bartynowski, "Zarys prac Towarzystwa św. Wincentego a Paulo roku 1901" (Overview of the activities of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul), *Sodalis Marianus* 2 (1903), 106.

¹⁶⁹ The Society was set up as an example to follow in the 1884 encyclical *Humanum Genus* (On Freemasonry). Leo XIII, *Humanum Genus*, in Libreria Editrice Vaticana, accessed December 12, 2010, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/leo_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_lxiii_enc_18840420_humanum-genus_en.html,

¹⁷⁰ Explained in Chapter 3.

¹⁷¹ Explained in Chapter 5.

¹⁷² Explained in Chapter 5.

course of the nineteenth century, especially during the papacy of Leo XIII, these old forms were adapted to new social realities. Among other things, they too became loaded with a new message of active apostolate and engagement in social projects, perceived as a Catholic duty.

Pope Leo XIII's successor, Pius X (1903-1914), continued the efforts of unification and centralization of the Church around the papal agenda. To this end he launched a policy of putting Catholic social initiatives, those founded both by the clergy and the laity, under Rome's stricter supervision. In accordance with this principle, in 1906 he forbade bishops from launching or giving their permission to set up any association without the authorization of the Holy See.¹⁷³ However, contrary to Leo XIII, Pius X was neither conciliatory when it came to relations with the lay authorities nor was he open to internal doctrinal debates. As a result, the papacy of Pius X slowed down the process of settlement between Catholic and secular culture that had begun with Leo XIII. One of the most controversial aspects of Pius X's papacy was his rejection of the so-called modernist Catholic thinkers who called for a reconciliation of Catholic doctrines with modern philosophical trends. The "modernists" argued that Catholic doctrines should be perceived as the products of historical evolution. Anti-modernists warned that the idea of doctrines being changeable over time and by historical conditions would lead to their being questioned and reinterpreted. Pius X put an end to this discussion by launching a salvo of documents in which he condemned the modernist approach, e.g. the encyclical *Pascendi Dominici Gregis* (On the doctrines of the modernists) in 1907.¹⁷⁴ As a result, Pius X's papacy was marked by a deep internal conflict between modernist and anti-modernist factions that involved clergymen and laity. In time the term "modernist" became one of the most derogatory labels against a fellow Catholic. Importantly, the various controversies during the papacy of Pius X did not stop the Catholic revival but certainly slowed its pace.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷³ Pius X, "Motu Proprio," *Przegląd Katolicki* 44, 36 (1906): 545-546; Kłoczowski, *A History of Polish Christianity*, 207.

¹⁷⁴ Pius X, *Pascendi Dominici Gregis* (On the doctrines of the modernists), in Libreria Editrice Vaticana, accessed July 12, 2011, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_x/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-x_enc_19070908_pascendi-dominici-gregis_en.html

¹⁷⁵ Kłoczowski, *A History of Polish Christianity*, 207-208.

In Chapter 2 I have offered a brief overview of Catholicism's (re)emergence in the nineteenth century, with a focus on the ways in which Rome began to activate the clergy and laity to its various socio-economic projects. The Church's purpose was to react to the challenges of the modern period and counterbalance the growing influence of various secular factions in the public sphere. Among the questions raised by historians of New Catholicism is one pertaining to the contribution of laywomen to this process. Although in principle scholars agree that the Catholic revival was strongly influenced by the significant involvement of pious female believers, questions about its scale, the forms of their involvement, the degree of their autonomy from clergymen, the extent to which cooperation developed transnationally, as well as the approach these women had to the "woman question" have not yet been asked.¹⁷⁶ In the subsequent chapters, I will add to the existing research on the ways laywomen contributed to the Catholic revival by providing empirical findings and interpretations of the Polish Catholic laywomen's social activism from the 1880s until 1918.

¹⁷⁶ Clark, "The New Catholicism," 16.

Chapter 3: The emergence of Polish Roman Catholic laywomen`s projects and networks from the 1880s onwards

The majority of the available scholarly research on Catholic lay female activism in various national contexts in the modern period centers on confessionally motivated women`s organizations.¹⁷⁷ This scholarship implicitly suggests that the dawn of Catholic laywomen`s organizations was identical with the beginnings of their social activism in general. Hence, it seems as if modern Catholic laywomen`s activism hardly occurred prior to the early years of the twentieth century. Chapter 3 aims at revisiting the contemporary scholarly implicit suppositions about the forms and timing of Catholic laywomen`s social engagement in the long nineteenth century by providing and discussing examples of Polish pious women`s activism undertaken outside of the Church`s structure, that is not within the framework of pious associations, from the 1880s onwards. The initial approach that has informed the investigations of this chapter was to shift attention from the organization as a basic unit of analysis towards identification of individually launched projects, the formation of activists` communities and later on networks.

Specifically, this chapters aims to, firstly, identify the authors, recipients and types of the individually launched social projects from the 1880s; secondly, explain what triggered those projects and conditioned their developments; and, thirdly, retrieve how the Polish Catholic laywomen moved from individually launched local initiatives towards exchanging ideas and concepts within and across the zones` borders. My findings on Polish Catholic laywomen`s activism before 1900 will be further complemented by an analysis of Polish women`s social engagement undertaken

¹⁷⁷ For example Sarti, *The Ligue patriotique des Francaises, 1902-1933*; Breuer, *Frauenbewegung im Katholizismus*; Fayet-Scribe, *Associations féminines et catholicisme*; Karčiauskaitė, "For Women's Rights, Church, and Fatherland". There are a few exceptions though. Smith listed charities, foundation of work-schools and clubs for working women, kindergartens, nurseries, and patronage as the most popular forms of French laywomen`s social involvement prior to the 1880s, Smith, *Ladies of the Leisure Class*, 136-156. Moloney described several charities as well as various forms of women-immigrants` protection launched and run by American Catholic laywomen. Moloney, *American Catholic Lay Groups*, 91-100, 174-176. Maria Luddy also mentioned several projects of Irish laywomen launched before 1850s, however, she argues that in the second half of the nineteenth century Irish laywomen`s activism was replaced by philanthropic initiatives carried out by female congregations, Luddy, *Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth-Century Ireland*, 21, 35-45.

through pious associations, presented in Chapter 5.

In addition to retrieving and interpreting the rise of Polish Catholic laywomen's activism, Chapter 3 adds to the scholarly research on New Catholicism at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth century. It highlights how pious laywomen's involvement in the public sphere could contribute to strengthening Catholicism's position during the transnationally unfolding "culture wars" and, conversely, how the Vatican's agenda of revamping the Church, so as to respond to the challenges of the modern period, could enhance female activists' attempts of altering women's situation. In the subsequent sections I will illustrate how during the transnational "culture wars" Catholicism, represented here by the Polish Catholic laywomen's very particular, local projects, sought and tested new forms of bringing believers closer to its agenda as well as to reach a new audience. At the same time, the newly launched educational opportunities for women discussed here offer material through which one can possibly detect how through and/or despite their alliance with religion, Polish Catholic laywomen advocated for and/or brought about changes in women's educational patterns and socio-economic situation.

This chapter explores the activism of Jadwiga Zamoyska (1831-1923), Antonina Machczyńska (1837-1919), Cecylia Plater-Zyberkówna (1853-1920) and Maria Kleniewska (1863-1947). Specifically, I focus on one project: the new model of a school for girls and young women proposed by Zamoyska in Kórnik (the Prussian zone, Section 3.1). In subsequent sections I demonstrate how this particular model of an educational institution was disseminated and re-created across the lands of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, referring to the examples of the Lvivian Dormitory for women wanting to pursue careers as teachers commenced by Machczyńska (the Austrian zone, Section 3.2); the school for girls, known as the school on Piękna Street, and the agricultural school for women of the landowning class in Chyliczki founded by Plater-Zyberkówna (the Russian zone, Section 3.3); and the school for peasant women in Nałęczów run by *Zjednoczone Koło Ziemianek* (The United Circle of Women-Landowners, the Russian zone) set up by Maria Kleniewska (Section 3.4).

There are several reasons why I focus on these four figures. Despite their differences in age, these women all founded most of their projects during the same

decade, the 1880s. They left behind a substantial and diverse body of archival material, which not only offers insights about their individual activism but also provides portraits of the Polish Catholic women's communities these figures created or were involved in. There is strong evidence for the existence of links – personal and conceptual – between the selected protagonists, which help to demonstrate that the women's groups were interconnected and influenced each other in a multitude of ways.¹⁷⁸

3.1 Jadwiga Zamoyska (1831-1923)

To end with my recollections of Kuźnice, I will say one word about the name day of the General's wife, celebrated on the day of Saint Jadwiga, October 15. (...) In the afternoon there was an exhibition of the schoolgirls' work. (...) And there was something to watch indeed. The sewing room placed white goods and trousseau, ordered in the institute, on the walls and tables – laboriously made, embellished, according to the fashion of the time, with laces, embroidery (...) all beautifully ironed. Vegetables and flowers, cultivated in thankless mountainous conditions, were shown in the garden. The bakery presented a great variety of bakery goods, the dairy: different types of foreign cheeses. The kitchen tempted with cakes, delicious mayonnaise, and pate.¹⁷⁹

The exhibition of goods produced in the school for girls in Kuźnice (Galicia, the Austrian zone), as described here by its former student Jadwiga Smolkówna, was organized once a year, but the institution was open to the public twice a week. No

¹⁷⁸ In the Introduction, Section 0.5, I offered an overview of the scholarly research on the selected four protagonists as well as the archival material I use in this chapter. I wish to supplement the information already provided with a remark about the various attempts of historians to establish links between the activism of the four women undertaken prior to my investigation. In the Library of the Catholic University in Lublin I came across an obituary entitled *Wspomnienia o Marii Kleniewskiej* (Memoirs of Maria Kleniewska) written by Halina Doria-Dernałowicz (Kleniewska's social worker colleague) in 1947, in which the author compared Kleniewska's social activism with the activism instigated by Jadwiga Zamoyska, see KUL, Materiały wspomnieniowe o Marii z Jarocińskich Janowej Kleniewskiej (1862-1947) (Materials about Maria Kleniewska nee Jarocińska (1862-1947), 1300, Halina Doria-Dernałowicz, "Wspomnienie o Marii Kleniewskiej" (Recollection about Maria Kleniewska), typescript, 1-5. There is also an unpublished doctoral dissertation entitled "Idea powołania w twórczości Jadwigi Zamoyskiej i Cecylii Plater-Zyberk" (The idea of the calling in the writings of Jadwiga Zamoyska and Cecylia Plater-Zyberk) by T. [?] Romaniuk defended in 1982 at Catholic University in Lublin. I did not receive a permission to see this doctoral thesis. More recent publications hint at similarities between Zamoyska, Plater and Kleniewska's projects, for example, the introduction to the memoirs of Maria Kleniewska *Wspomnienia* (Memoirs) in 2002, and a book of Ewelina Zakrzewska in 2007. Although precise links between all four protagonists and their environments have not been established in the past – and in this respect, my project is original – my aim of addressing Zamoyska, Machczyńska, Plater and Kleniewska as different aspects of the same phenomenon is in some respects a continuation of the earlier investigations.

¹⁷⁹ Ossolineum, Jadwiga Smolkówna, *Kilka słów o rodzinie. Wspomnienia z lat 1880-1939* (A few words about the family. Memoirs from the years 1880-1939), 14136//II (hereafter Oss, 14136/II), 62-63.

matter how perfectly organized a dairy the school could show, or tasty the cheeses it could serve, the highlight of the visit was a conversation with, or at least a glimpse of, the school's founder, Jadwiga Zamoyska. And there were good reasons for this. Zamoyska was born to one of the finest Polish aristocratic families and was the widow of one of the most important Polish politicians of the middle of the nineteenth century, General Władysław Zamoyski. She had impressive social connections to European aristocratic and diplomatic elites, spoke several languages, including Turkish, Persian, and Swedish, and had traveled extensively.¹⁸⁰ Yet in her early fifties, she settled in a remote area of Galicia, in Kuźnice near Zakopane, to pursue a single project known under several names as *Zakłady Kórnickie* (The Kórnicki Institute), *Szkoła Domowej Pracy* (The School of Household Work), *Szkoła w Kuźnicach* (The School in Kuźnice) as well as *Chrześcijańska Szkoła Życia* (The School of Christian life, hereafter I use the English versions interchangeably). Visitors to the school also heard about Zamoyska's extraordinary religiosity and patriotic feelings as well as were intrigued by her Spartan living conditions, intentionally chosen.¹⁸¹

Zamoyska, born in 1831 in Warsaw (the Russian zone), was fourteen years old when she expressed her desire to study in a sort of school of life for the first time: "I used to tell my Mother about my desire to go to a school, but when my Mother was asking what kind of school and education I had in mind, I used to answer: I want to go to a school of life, in which I would learn everything (...) women need to fulfill their duties."¹⁸² Then the early years of her marriage, marked by serious troubles with household management, made Zamoyska aware that what she believed to be her individual handicap was, as a matter of fact, a condition shared by women of all social groups; namely, that they were not prepared to perform the duties, chiefly marital and maternal, that society expected of them.¹⁸³ It took her thirty years to turn this initial insight into a project, and then into an actual school. For the time being, she was loaded with parental obligations, but even more so with helping her husband in his diplomatic

¹⁸⁰ Czachowska, "Drogi edukacyjne Generalowej Jadwigi z Działyńskich Zamoyskiej," 188-189.

¹⁸¹ Ossolineum, Maria Bobrzyńska z Paygertów, *Życie zmiennym jest. Pamiętnik z lat 1900-1958*, tom 1, 1900-1918 (Life is changing. Diaries from the years 1900-1958. Volume 1, 1900-1918), 13533/II (hereafter Oss, 13533/II t.1), typescript, 93.

¹⁸² Zamoyska, *Wspomnienia*, 8-9.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, 174.

work.¹⁸⁴

In 1854 Jadwiga moved to Paris where she arrived as the wife of General Władysław Zamoyski, who was one of the most prominent Polish politicians in emigration, closely connected with the Hôtel Lambert – a political and cultural milieu, with an impressive financial basis, which played an important role in keeping “the Polish question” alive in international European politics, especially in the years between 1831 and the 1870s. The charismatic Prince Adam Jerzy Czartoryski, who led the Hôtel Lambert faction, was often perceived as an informal king of Poland abroad.¹⁸⁵

Due to her husband’s political obligations, Zamoyska frequently traveled abroad. From 1859 to 1861 she stayed in England, where she visited charity or educational institutions making careful notes on what could be introduced in the lands of former Poland in the future, and how this could be done. In London she visited a hospital that assisted children and at the same time provided high-quality professional training for nurses. Zamoyska was impressed at how the institution was able to combine two functions: serving others and offering knowledge “down to the smallest details.”¹⁸⁶ She compared the hospital to a laundry run by nuns that offered jobs to homeless women. Zamoyska argued that the latter was out of place since properly performed duties could not be performed by ad-hoc workers, but must be based on permanent, educated employees.¹⁸⁷

After her father’s death in 1861, Zamoyska had a short encounter with piety as

¹⁸⁴ For an overview of Zamoyska’s diplomatic and political activism see Czachowska’s article, “W kręgu ‘Hotelu Lambert’”.

¹⁸⁵ The name referred to a particular group of Polish emigrants, mostly aristocracy, but also rich nobility and officers, who fled from the Polish lands after the collapse of the November uprising (1830-1831). Czartoryski believed that the chance for regaining an autonomous Polish state would depend on the transformation of the European political order. For general information about Hôtel Lambert, see Henryk Żaliński, *Poglądy Hotelu Lambert na kształt powstania zbrojnego* (The views of Hôtel Lambert on the shape of the military uprising) (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Wyższej Szkoły Pedagogicznej, 1990); Antoni Cetnarowicz, *Tajna dyplomacja Adama Jerzego Czartoryskiego na Bałkanach: Hôtel Lambert a kryzys serbski 1840-1844* (The clandestine diplomacy of Adam Jerzy Czartoryski on the Balkans: Hôtel Lambert and the Serbian crisis 1840-1841) (Kraków: Nakładem Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 1993). Zamoyska claims that Czartoryski’s status as monarch as well as his antidemocratic views were widely known, *Wspomnienia*, 160-161, also 334.

¹⁸⁶ Zamoyska, *Wspomnienia*, 309.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 309-310. Also, she was highly impressed by the perfect organization of some landed estate she visited, 291-296, 307.

practiced by the members of the Third Order.¹⁸⁸ In *Wspomnienia* she recalled that she did not then understand that this incident would have a tremendous impact on her later life.

An association that aimed to help souls of the death by prayer, alms and good works was set up under the supervision of Miss S., later called Mère Marie de la Providence. Soon the association (...) became the convent des Auxiliatrices des Ames du Purgatoires. (...) It had *Triers Ordre* too, who vowed to surrender all prayers and indulgences in favor of the souls of the dead for no personal benefit. I always loathed associations, sessions, meetings, committees of women, confraternities, commitments of sorts. Because it appeared to me I performed everything that was compulsory and obligatory so inadequately, I saw little sense in taking new duties, which, most likely, I would not have fulfilled. (...) The tertiaries were obliged to pray a small officium on behalf of the dead, attend one poor family under the supervision of the Convent, pay an annual fee and once a week, on Mondays, gather to sew for the poor in the convent, which was followed by the blessing, joint prayer and the teachings of a Jesuit. Frankly speaking they were not big duties, but (...) [e]verything made me tired and bored, and nothing answered my needs. Whatever was good in me, any good thought or inspiration came to me, if one may say so, from below not from above. I found light, strength, focus, and logical direction of thoughts and for live through performing the most ordinary tasks. (...) This is why I used to ask God to give me opportunities to serve him and sanctify myself under my own roof while performing my own compulsory duties without the necessity of searching for his will [by] fulfilling acts of charity; to give me opportunities to sanctify myself every day while doing things I have to do anyway without the burden of searching and choosing between duties that are additional.¹⁸⁹

Based on my reading of her memoirs – specifically the quote about her longing for a school of life cited earlier and the section cited above – I argue that Zamoyska was able to draw a link between her individual experience and the broader social conditions as early as the beginning of the 1860s, and as a result, was capable of

¹⁸⁸ The idea of bringing the laity closer to a form of piety practiced by religious orders, known as Third Orders or the tertiary, dates back to the twelfth century. The name tertiary refers to a layman or woman of any social background, age and marital status who chose to live according to the rule of a selected religious order. In 1883, Leo XIII introduced modifications to the rules of the Third Order in the Apostolic Constitution *Misericors Dei Filius*. This reduced the amount of daily prayers and provided recommendations about modesty in dressing, theatre attendance or books and press choices supposed to answer the needs of the Catholic laity *vis-à-vis* the nineteenth-century state and society. After these reforms, the Third Order flourished. Starting from the early 1890s the Third Order held local, national, and international congresses. In 1907 there were 122 monthly periodicals in various languages published by and for different branches of the tertiaries. Jarrett, B., Heckmann, F., Zimmerman, B., Olinger, L., Jouve, O., Hess, L., et al., “Third Orders,” in *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1912), accessed August 25, 2010, <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14637b.htm>.

¹⁸⁹ Zamoyska, *Wspomnienia*, 354-355.

formulating insights that laid the foundations for the school in Kuźnice. The first recognition, grounded in her personal experience as well as based on observations of various milieus, was that the majority of women, regardless of their social background, were actually not prepared for any of the roles society imposed on them, be it marital, parental, household management or paid work. Zamoyska insisted this must be addressed by creating proper educational opportunities for women. The second idea, again rooted in her personal experience, was related to Zamoyska's awareness that the forms of piety offered by the Roman Catholic institutions of the period did not answer the spiritual expectations of at least some laywomen. These two ideas merged into one project: the Christian school of life.

In a brochure written with the explicit purpose of explaining to the public the principles according to which the Christian school of life was run, Zamoyska, notwithstanding the importance of the work carried out in various convents, emphasized the need for lay institutions run by lay people who would facilitate their own spiritual development and that of other lay people. The ultimate goal of the institute was to teach grown women how to live a Christian life once they were back in their environments. "For women obliged to live in the world [outside of a convent], but desiring to lead a Christian life," Zamoyska proposed,

1) setting up an institution, in which people of all ages and classes would be able, with full freedom, permanently or temporarily, to aim not for monastic perfection using tools appropriate to monastic life, but for Christian perfection using tools given to all Christians in the catechism, 2) setting up a Christian school for girls who have finished their general education, with the aim of bringing them up in the Christian spirit and prepare them for the duties that await them.¹⁹⁰

In June 1882 Zamoyska returned to the Grand Duchy of Posen, part of the Prussian zone, to open the school in Kórnik.¹⁹¹ Predominantly Polish and Catholic (an estimated 3,514,000 inhabitants around 1914), with its high concentration of major Polish cultural and economic institutions, the Duchy had a great impact on Poles in other areas of the Prussian zone (Western Prussia, Eastern Prussia, Upper Silesia). In terms of economic growth, it had minimal industrial development (which was

¹⁹⁰ Jadwiga Zamoyska, "Zakład Kórnicki. Szkoła domowej pracy w Zakopanem" (The Kórnicki Institute. The school of household work in Zakopanem) (Poznań: Nakładem Biblioteki Kórnickiej, 1899), 10.

¹⁹¹ *Une grande Ame*, 29, 32.

concentrated mainly in Posen) and its economy was based primarily on agricultural production from large land estates.¹⁹² The history of the Prussian zone in the period was marked by conflicts between German Protestants and Roman-Catholic Poles. The relationship between nationality and religious denomination was exposed during the *Kulturkampf* period, when both groups came into conflict.¹⁹³

After its unification in 1871, the newly emerged German state launched various projects that aimed at internal cultural and national homogenization. With respect to the situation of Poles in the Prussian zone, it meant that Polish landowners, peasants, as well as a slowly developing middle class, experienced various legislative difficulties that aimed at damaging Polish enterprises (e.g. the Colonization Committee that bought lands from Poles to settle German inhabitants, the so-called Hakata (*Deutscher Ostmarkenverein*), founded in 1894 to advance Germanization of the Prussian zone through giving financial support to German entrepreneurs in the urban areas). Further, the intelligentsia, which was emerging rapidly in the Polish Kingdom and Galicia, emerged slowly in the Grand Duchy of Posen due to politics that excluded Poles from high-ranking administrative positions within the state or judicial systems. In addition to economic barriers imposed by the German authorities on Polish residents, from 1876 it was also illegal for Poles to communicate in Polish in any administrative institution, Polish men were forbidden to organize public meetings of a political character in a language other than German (from 1886 until 1908) and they were required to obtain special permission to build houses (from 1904). There was not an institution that would offer higher education to Poles in the region.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹² The agricultural sector employed 65 percent of the Duchy's population and Polish peasants were the largest social group in the region. Daniel Olszewski, "Okres wzrastającego ucisku i głębokich przemian społecznych (1864-1914)" (The period of growing oppression and deep social changes [1864-1914]), in *Chrześcijaństwo w Polsce* (Christianity in Poland), ed. Jerzy Kłoczowski (Lublin: Towarzystwo Naukowe Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, 1992), 463-465. For an overview of the socio-economic and political situation in the region see, for example, Chwalba, *Historia Polski 1795-1918*, 435-475.

¹⁹³ There were also Polish Protestants in the Prussian zone, although they were of minor importance in the Grand Duchy of Posen. Jews made up 1 percent of the region's total population. Olszewski, "Okres wzrastającego ucisku," 463-464; Ryszard Michalski, *Polskie duchowieństwo katolickie pod panowaniem pruskim wobec sprawy narodowej w latach 1870-1920* (The Polish Catholic clergy and national case under the Prussian rule 1870-1920) (Toruń: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, 1998), 7-18.

¹⁹⁴ Jan Ziółek, "Stosunki kościelno-państwowe w Królestwie Polskim" (The relations between the Church and state in the Polish Kingdom), in *Na przelomie stuleci. Naród-Kościół-Państwo w XIX I XX wieku* (At the turn of the centuries. Nation-Church-State in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries), ed., Mirosław Piotrowski (Lublin: Klub Inteligencji Katolickiej, 1997), 61; Daniel Olszewski, *Polska kultura*

The Germans' anti-Polish politics had its impact also on the situation of the Polish Church, which underwent suppression of its religious orders, confiscation of its properties, a decline in the number of clergy, and state control over its pastoral duties. Although the German state took similar measures against the German Catholic Church during the *Kulturkampf* period, at the turn of the century anti-Catholic politics overlapped with a rise in anti-Polish discrimination.¹⁹⁵

According to a Prussian law of 1850, women were forbidden from participating in public gatherings if the meeting had a political character. The Prussian authorities, however, often interpreted "political" in such a broad way that in reality women had great difficulties exercising their right to organized activism. The first organizations set up by women were charities (e.g. The Ladies of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul in Posen, set up in 1850) or self-help activities like *Towarzystwo Pomocy Naukowej dla Dziewcząt Polskich* (The Society of Educational Help for Polish Girls in Posen, 1869). However, a more intensive development of women's organized activism did not take place until the 1890s. Also, as the research of Rudolf Jaworski shows, the Prussian authorities perceived Polish women as the main driving force behind the cultural and educational activities carried on in "the Polish spirit", which ran against the project of achieving national homogenization of the recently unified German state. For this reason, Jaworski argues, the state employed severe measures specifically against Polish women's activism in the region.¹⁹⁶

With a curriculum that combined educational, national and religious (Catholic) aspects, as I show on the subsequent pages, Zamoyska's school did not find acceptance of the Prussian authorities. In 1885 the school was closed and its founder was forced to move away from the Prussian zone.¹⁹⁷

Zamoyska began to seek a new location for her school in the territory of

religijna na przełomie XIX i XX wieku (Polish religious culture at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth century) (Warszawa: Instytut Wydawniczy Pax, 1996), 3; Michalski, *Polskie duchowieństwo katolickie pod panowaniem pruskim*, 7-18, 22.

¹⁹⁵ Andrzej Rogala, "Źródła do dziejów Związków Robotników Polskich i Związku Kobiet Pracujących w Wielkim Księstwie Poznańskim w latach 1890-1914" (The archival sources to the history of The Union of the Polish Workers' Associations and The Union of Working Women in the Grand Duchy of Posen 1890-1914), *Przegląd Tomistyczny* 1 (1984): 301-302.

¹⁹⁶ Rudolf Jaworski, "Kilka refleksji nad dziejami Wielkopolanek w XIX i na początku XX wieku" (A few reflections about the histories of the women in the Grand Duchy of Posen in the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century), in *Kobieta i społeczeństwo na ziemiach polskich*, 24-25.

¹⁹⁷ Nowak, "Historia Zakładu Kórnickiego. Cz 1," 209-212.

Galicia, which was then part of the Habsburg monarchy (the Austrian zone). Although predominantly rural, with minimal industrial development, and often perceived as the most underdeveloped part of the former lands of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, since the 1860s Galicia was marked by a level of political autonomy for Poles which opened up possibilities for various types of activism not available to their compatriots in the other two zones. The Polish Church in Galicia was no exception. If the conditions of the Polish Church in the Prussian and Russian zones were less than favorable, in Galicia Catholicism was at home, as Catholicism was *the* religion in Austria. Religious life flourished, especially in the western part of Galicia, (the Tarnovian and Cracovian dioceses), where Polish Roman Catholics comprised 92 percent of the total population.¹⁹⁸ Cracow was often called the religious capital of the Polish lands. In 1910, there were 3,965,000 Poles in the Austrian zone.¹⁹⁹

For several years Zamoyska ran her school in various locations in Galicia before settling in Kuźnice near Zakopane in 1889.²⁰⁰ At first sight, the school could have been easily mistaken for a school of household work and/or a vocational institute, where girls who had completed their primary education could master the skills they would need while running a household or seeking employment in the future. However, the school curriculum was founded on the idea of developing students through simultaneous physical, intellectual, and spiritual work so as not to neglect any aspects of human existence.²⁰¹

A typical day at the school started with meditation on a selected part of the Bible. During the day women received training in household/vocational activities (cooking, washing, sewing, gardening, farming, baking, etc.), but could also deepen their general knowledge (understood very broadly as household economy, writing business correspondence, orthography, calligraphy, mathematics, history of Poland, geography, history of art, languages). In the afternoon, they continued to study the

¹⁹⁸ Olszewski, "Okres wzrastającego ucisku," 461-463; For more information on the situation of the Greco-Catholics and the Ormian Church in Galicia consult Bolesław Kumor, *Historia Kościoła. Czasy najnowsze 1815-1914*. t. 7 (The History of the Church. The most recent period 1815-1914, vol. 7) (Lublin: Redakcja Wydawnictw KUL, 2001), 405-409.

¹⁹⁹ Kumor, *Historia Kościoła*, 399-405. For a general picture of the socio-economic and political situation in the region, see Chwałba, *Historia Polski 1795-1918*, 477-531.

²⁰⁰ Nowak, "Historia Zakładu Kórnickiego. Cz 1," 225.

²⁰¹ Zamoyska, "Zakład Kórnicki. Szkoła domowej pracy w Zakopanem," 31.

Bible and catechism.²⁰² Jadwiga Smolkówna, a former student of the Institute, recalled: “The pedagogical program of the General’s wife was clearly formulated: to overcome (...) faults by replacing them with virtues. Laziness was juxtaposed with laboriousness, thriftlessness with frugality, recklessness with prudence. (...) Orderliness was strictly kept.”²⁰³ Being personally involved in everything produced in Kuźnice, breeding poultry and cattle, pig-fattening, laundry rooms, gardening, cooking and baking, sewing and embroidery, Zamoyska continued to perfect the procedures to achieve maximum effects with minimum investment of time, energy, and capital.²⁰⁴

In the very initial stages of the project, Zamoyska planned her school would prepare upper-class women to pass on knowledge, skills and attitudes to women of lower classes.²⁰⁵ Finally, the Institute decided to accept students from all social classes and divided them into three departments (*oddziały*). The minimum required period of time to be spent in the school was one year for girls from the second (middle class) and first (aristocracy, nobility) departments, who were supposed to be older than 17. The students of the third department were expected to spend between 3 and 5 years at the school and to be at least 14 years old. Students in all three departments were meant to perform the same type of work and wore the same white caps. Although the amount of physical work was diminished for upper-class students, they too were nevertheless obliged to tend animals, make cheeses, do laundry, and clean. Lodgings as well as diet were differentiated according to the department, which, in Zamoyska’s view, was supposed to remain consistent with the students’ social backgrounds.²⁰⁶ Education was free, yet the students were required to cover the costs of their accommodation, food, and clothes.²⁰⁷ For those girls who could not afford this, the school created a scheme that allowed them to earn their stay by working for the Institute.²⁰⁸

Already during the initial stages of Zamoyska’s project, the school was

²⁰² *Une grande Ame*, 291, 315; Nowak, “Historia Zakładu Kórnickiego. Cz 1,” 203, 222-223; Nowak, “Historia Zakładu Kórnickiego. Cz .,” 31.

²⁰³ Oss, 14136/II, 58. For an example of a similar recollection, see Oss, 13533/II t. 1, 94.

²⁰⁴ Czaplicka, “Moje wspomnienia,” 197; Nowak, “Historia Zakładu Kórnickiego. Cz 1,” 203.

²⁰⁵ *Une grande Ame*, 393-394.

²⁰⁶ Jadwiga Zamoyska, *O trzech oddziałach* (About the three departments) (Poznań: Nakładem Biblioteki Kórnickiej, 1900), 1-8; also Czaplicka, “Moje wspomnienia,” 198.

²⁰⁷ *Une grande Ame*, 316. For details, see the excellent Nowak’s study, “Historia Zakładu Kórnickiego. Cz 1,” 203, 221; Nowak, “Historia Zakładu Kórnickiego. Cz. 2,” 37, 44; also Czaplicka, “Moje wspomnienia,” 198-199.

²⁰⁸ Nowak, “Historia Zakładu Kórnickiego. Cz 2,” 44.

regarded as a pioneering enterprise, without a comparable equivalent in the three zones or elsewhere.²⁰⁹ The popularity of this innovative educational possibility for girls spread quickly through the three zones of Partitioned Poland, and was constant until 1914.²¹⁰

In 1889, the first students completed their education.²¹¹ A diploma from the Christian school of life significantly enhanced their chances on the job market. Zamoyska reported with delight that her “students are booked two years in advance by the finest Polish families. For each girl there are from 5 to 10 places to choose from. People from all parts of Poland are simply killing one another for having one.”²¹² She would also complain that some students gave up their education half way so as to profit from the education in her school as soon as possible.²¹³ Also, as Zofia Nowak, the author of a detailed study on the Kórnicki Institute noticed the education received in the Institute also increased women’s chances on the partnership market, for there were men who turned to Zamoyska seeking a candidate for a wife specifically among the school’s students.²¹⁴

The Institute stayed in touch with its former students by publishing and circulating a magazine, *Pisemko Kuźniczanek* (The Journal of the Kuźnice students). Its main aim was to give further spiritual guidance to former students, but also to encourage them to list the social projects they partook in after they graduated. In addition *Pisemko* published brief reports from meetings of former students organized in circles (*kola*) in various locations of former Poland (Warsaw, Posen, Łódź, Bydgoszcz, Cracow, Lviv, Katowice). The magazine also announced job offers addressed

²⁰⁹ The second exhibition of the goods produced in the Institute, still in Kórnik (the Prussian zone) in 1885, was visited by more than 1,500 people. *Une grande Ame*, 140-141.

²¹⁰ The General’s wife recorded that in 1888 she had 32 girls from Kórnik (the Prussian zone), 2 from Wołyń (the Russian zone), 3 from Lithuania, 3 from Inflants, 6 from Warsaw, 1 from Moscow, 1 Jewish girl from Czestochowa (the Prussian zone), 5 from Galicia, 2 from Spiż. Nowak, “Historia Zakładu Kórnickiego. Cz 2,” 220-221; Nowak, “Historia Zakładu Kórnickiego. Cz 1,” 207, 223.

²¹¹ Unfortunately, due to the incomplete lists, I am unable to give the total number of women who graduated from the school up to 1918. I can give only numbers for some years: in 1883, there were 43 students, in 1890 around 80, 1902 around 120 only in the third department, together with personnel around 200, around 1905 there were 150 girls (approximately 100 studied free of charge). Zofia, “Historia Zakładu Kórnickiego. Cz 1,” 205; *Une grande Ame*, 276, 361, 386-387; Władysław Kirchner, “Praca społeczna kobiet w Galicji. Zakład Kórnicki” (Women’s social work in Galicia. The Kórnicki Institute), *Bluszcz* 41, 1, (1905), 7.

²¹² Quoted after Nowak “Historia Zakładu Kórnickiego. Cz 1,” 221.

²¹³ *Une grande Ame*, 114.

²¹⁴ Nowak, “Historia Zakładu Kórnickiego. Cz 2,” 33.

specifically to former students of Kuźnice.²¹⁵

Despite its isolated location, the Institute became a vibrant center for exchanging and disseminating ideas. What is interesting about its inner organization is that from the very beginning, the personnel consisted of women from all three zones of Poland as well as non-Polish women who, inspired by Zamoyska, decided to dedicate sometimes many years of their lives to her project.²¹⁶ The teachers and students also regularly traveled abroad to acquire new skills.²¹⁷ Furthermore, the school attracted not only students of all social backgrounds and from all regions of former Poland, but also visitors.²¹⁸ The restaurant run by the Institute was a popular place among tourists who spent their holidays in the Tatry Mountains.²¹⁹ Żółtowska, one of the visitors to Kuźnice in 1912, recalled the rooms prepared for those women who were unable to enroll in the school yet wished to perform some kind of religious retreat there.²²⁰ Zamoyska made a habit of talking to all her guests personally.²²¹

Based on the available research as well as the archival material analyzed here, the rather puzzling phenomenon emerges of a relatively small school for girls, located in a remote, deeply provincial area of Galicia, that nevertheless for several decades managed to attract and keep the attention of a large audience in the Polish lands and abroad. As I intend to show, the popularity of the Kuźnicki Institute should be attributed to Catholic laywomen's capability of making themselves relevant for their contemporaries by establishing connections between the Christian school of life and several chief developments and discourses in the period: not only the secular-religious conflict, but also discussions over educational reforms for women, women's entrance

²¹⁵ See for example BK, *Pisemko Kuźniczanek*, Cz. 2280 (hereafter BK, Cz. 2280), typed, *Pisemko Kuźniczanek* 1, June (1912); *Pisemko Kuźniczanek* 2, 4 (1912); *Pisemko Kuźniczanek* 2, 6 (1912); *Pisemko Kuźniczanek* 2, 8 (1913); Czaplicka, "Moje wspomnienia," 204.

²¹⁶ Ibid., 214-217; *Une grande Ame*, 206. Also Nowak, Nowak, "Historia Zakładu Kórnickiego. Cz 1," 204, 206, 208; Nowak, "Historia Zakładu Kórnickiego. Cz. 2.," 52-59,

²¹⁷ Nowak, Nowak, "Historia Zakładu Kórnickiego. Cz 1," 204, 210, 216; Nowak, "Historia Zakładu Kórnickiego. Cz 2," 31-32.

²¹⁸ For example Maria Bobrzyńska recalled in her memoirs that when she was about to enter the school in Kuźnice, several relatives accompanied her from Cracow to visit the Institute. Oss, 13533/II t.1, 94. Jadwiga Smolkówna remembered that during her stay as a student, she saw the famous Polish actress Helena Modrzejewska, who paid a visit to Kuźnice and gave even a short performance there, Oss, 14136/II, 62-63. Also Nowak, Nowak, "Historia Zakładu Kórnickiego. Cz 2," 46.

²¹⁹ *Une grande Ame*, 300-302.

²²⁰ BN, Janina Żółtowska, "Dziennik" (Diary), IV 10227, t. (vol.) 10 (hereafter BN IV 10227, t. 10), 22; BK, Cz. 2280, *Pisemko Kuźniczanek* 2, 2 (1913): 8-10.

²²¹ Oss, 13533/II t.1, 94.

to paid labor, rising Polish nationalism, and, finally, the anxiety of the upper classes about their social, economic and political position.

The first possible explanation for Zamoyska's project's popularity contextualizes this enterprise as a voice in the ongoing discussion over schooling opportunities on all levels for Polish women, which took place on the lands of former Poland since the 1860s. Concern about women's education was the main motor behind the emergence of Polish women's movements in the three zones since the 1880s.²²² The discussion was provoked and evolved in the context of the major socio-economic phenomena spreading, unevenly, across the Polish lands. In the first place, the rapidly unfolding industrialization demanded lower-class women's entrance into paid employment outside of the home and triggered massive migration of illiterate or poorly educated women from rural to urbanized areas. Unfamiliar with urban settings, poorly qualified, without the support of their family, and remaining single more often than men, these women joined the ranks of the poorest social strata, often turning to prostitution for additional income.²²³

Another phenomenon that prompted the discussion over Polish women's education was rooted in local developments and affected mainly, but not exclusively, Polish women residing in the Polish Kingdom. After the failure of the January 1863 uprising, in 1864 the tsarist authorities carried out a land reform, which undermined the social and economic position of the landowning class. As a result a considerable number of women from this group was forced to seek employment to sustain themselves and often also their families. The new living conditions revealed that the knowledge and "proper upbringing" these women had acquired were not enough to find employment since the law, social attitude and received type of education worked against their professional ambitions.²²⁴

²²² Rudolf Jaworki, "Kilka refleksji nad dziejami Wielkopolanek w XIX i na początku XX wieku," 24-25. Maria Nietyksza, "Tradycyjne i nowe formy aktywności publicznej kobiet w warunkach zaborów" (Traditional and new forms of women's public activism during the Partitions), in *Kobieta i świat polityki*, 96; Maria Nietyksza, "Kobiety w ruchu oświatowym w Królestwie Polskim na przełomie wieków" (Women's educational movement in the Polish Kingdom at the turn of the centuries), in *Kobieta i edukacja na ziemiach polskich*, 96-100.

²²³ Olszewski, "Okres wzrastającego ucisku," 471-473.

²²⁴ Danuta Rzepniewska, "Kobieta w rodzinie ziemiańskiej w XIX wieku. Królestwo Polskie" (Woman in the landowning family in the nineteenth century. The Polish Kingdom), in *Kobieta i społeczeństwo*, especially 34-48.

In the Prussian zone education at the primary level was obligatory for both sexes. The secondary schools for women that offered more general knowledge, be it governmental or private, were run without precise directives from the state until the reform in 1894 that aimed at, among other things, improving and standardizing the curriculum in various educational institutions in the region. Until the outbreak of the First World War, Poles in the Grand Duchy of Posen complained about the lack of schooling opportunities that would offer vocational trainings for girls and women from the lower classes.²²⁵

In the Polish Kingdom primary education was not compulsory for boys or girls before 1914. Further there was a general lack of primary schools and the number of boys who were schooled was considerably higher than the number of girls, especially in poorer social strata. There were only a few governmental schools for girls on the secondary level, so that the majority of better-off Polish families interested in giving their daughters a post-primary education turned to various privately run educational institutions, so-called *pensje*. Beside *pensje*, at the turn of the 1870s and 1880s there were institutions that offered professional training useful in broadly defined artisan sectors or, since the 1890s, schools of commerce. Because most of the educational possibilities were not free of charge, the least financially privileged girls were deprived of opportunities for obtaining any vocational training prior to entering the labor market.²²⁶

In Galicia, education was compulsory for both sexes. However, an inadequate network of folk schools (*szkoły ludowe*) combined with conservative parental attitudes resulted in a much lower number of girls enrolled in the schools. As far as secondary schools for women in the 1870s and 1880s were concerned, only a few offered free education. Further, similar to the other two zones, there was a general concern about the absence of institutions offering vocational training for women of the lower classes.²²⁷ Because of these problems from the 1870s onwards various groups launched a variety of private projects that were supplementary to the state schooling system or

²²⁵ A.S., "Szkolnictwo średnie w Prusach, a polska młodzież żeńska" (The secondary education for Polish female youth in the Prussian zone), in *Pamiętnik Zjazdu Kobiet Polskich odbytego w dniach 11 i 12 maja 1913* (Memoire of the Polish women`s convention held on May 11-12, 1913) (Kraków: Nakładem Biura Porady Kobiet „Gościna,” 1913), 55-58.

²²⁶ Nietyksza, "Kobiety w ruchu oświatowym," 102-105.

²²⁷ Żarnowska, "Family and Public Life," 479.

outside it as clandestine initiatives.²²⁸

In a context in which a growing number of women from various social classes were forced to seek employment outside of their families, Zamoyska's school was the first legally operating institution that offered a comprehensive vocational training to girls and young women of all classes on the lands of former Poland.²²⁹ It is worth noting that the Institute was simultaneously an answer to the changes brought about by the socio-economic context of the period, and a factor that facilitated new strategies for children's upbringing (at least for girls) that families adopted in the context of the emerging economic realities. The latter point helps to locate the schooling efforts undertaken in Kuźnice within wider social processes of alterations to family structure and women's entrance into the workforce as skilled laborers in the period.²³⁰ Importantly, those social changes the Institute assisted in bringing about were undertaken in the name of feminine familial obligations since, as stated earlier, the main goal of the Christian school of life was to familiarize its students with household management and maternal duties in accordance with Catholic doctrine. In Chapter 4, I will show that the tactic of introducing changes in women's social and economic situation while nourishing "traditional" values was the overriding strategy of Catholic laywomen in this period.

Besides the fact that it offered a response to the socio-economic changes, the second reason for the Institute's success was that its curriculum appealed to the nationalistic ambitions of the period. As discussed by several scholars, during the Polish Partitions the "family" and the "home" became the milieu within which Poles nurtured practices otherwise (under different political conditions) performed in the public sphere. Women were of crucial importance to the project of "preserving Polishness".²³¹ Because in the Polish Kingdom and the Grand Duchy of Posen the official working language at the schooling systems was Russian and German respectively, parents often resisted the education of girls and young women, from all social groups, so as to spare them from Russification or Germanization. By staying

²²⁸ Ibid., 474-476; Nietyksza, "Kobiety w ruchu oświatowym," 96-100.

²²⁹ Czaplicka, "Moje wspomnienia," 198.

²³⁰ About the changing family patterns in this period on the Polish lands, see Anna Żarnowska, "Social Change, Women, and the Family in the Era of Industrialization: Recent Polish Research," *Journal of Family History* 22 (1997):191-203.

²³¹ Żarnowska, "Family and Public Life," 474.

“immune” to the foreign, “alien” influences, the future wives and mothers were supposed to maintain the truly Polish values – culture, language and tradition – within the family environment.²³² While students from Galicia, the region that enjoyed political autonomy, might have been interested primarily in the quality of teaching at Zamoyska’s school, the women and their parents from the Russian or Prussian zones may have been attracted by the fact that the Institute provided education exclusively in the Polish language and also offered its students courses in the Polish language as well as the history and geography of the Polish lands – subjects strictly forbidden under Russian and Prussian authority. Moreover, the Kuźnice school’s teaching philosophy openly embraced the discourse of growing Polish nationalism by emphasizing the importance of women’s upbringing in accordance with the national spirit for the condition of the families, the very basic social cells, informing the nation’s general well-being.²³³ The latter claim facilitated the incorporation of women into an imagined national community by developing them as patriots ready to pass on their knowledge, skills and civic enthusiasm not only to their immediate homely environment, but also to the public sphere, understood as a sphere of broadly defined social activism in areas in which the state was believed to fail its citizens (developed in Chapter 4). The fact that the school became a meeting point for girls from the three different zones gave the impression, according to one of the students’ father, that borders could not prevent them from identifying themselves as Polish.²³⁴

The third reason for the popularity of Kuźnice links the Institute with the Catholic Church’s project of formulating a comprehensive criticism of socio-economic conditions in the second half of the nineteenth century. The condemnation of the capitalist economy from the Catholic perspective, as outlined in *Rerum Novarum*, was to counterbalance the socialist denunciation of the same problem. Importantly, the Church did not question the disturbing revelations made by the socialists regarding the appalling conditions that the capitalist economy imposed on the working masses. On the contrary, the Vatican acknowledged the dehumanizing aspects of labor as performed by the working class, its slave-like dependence on poor compensation, the

²³² Ibid., 470, 479,

²³³ Zamoyska, *O trzech oddziałach*, 1-8.

²³⁴ *Une grande Ame*, 336.

accumulation of large capital at the expense of the material and spiritual well-being of the workers, and, last but not least, the utter powerlessness of the working masses.²³⁵

Zamoyska contributed to criticism of the capital economy from a Catholic perspective with her conceptualization of ‘work’, proposed in her book *O pracy* (On work). The General’s wife argued that “Man’s natural aptitudes divide themselves into three classes: they are manual, intellectual and spiritual. So, in order to correspond with these aptitudes, work must likewise be threefold – manual, intellectual and spiritual.”²³⁶ Zamoyska observed that in the age of science, intellectual work was valued most while manual work was condemned and spiritual work entirely neglected. Further, she argued, contemporaries usually either devoted themselves (scientists to intellectual, clergy to spiritual) or were confined (workers) to one type of labor only. Also there was a large number of people whose privileged social position allowed them not to engage in any type of work at all. This stood at odds, Zamoyska claimed, with God’s will to keep the work in its tripartite form “as these three divisions of work (...) differ in character, they are intended to form one harmonious whole: taken singly, each would fall short of its true value.”²³⁷ Zamoyska recommended that this recognition be taken into consideration while training youth as well as when organizing the social order, because only by doing justice to the three forms of work could an individual and society aim at achieving harmonious growth.²³⁸ In her school Zamoyska proposed to educate women of various social backgrounds by assigning them physical and intellectual tasks, which was supposed to bring value back to physical work by showing that its proper execution required not only muscular force but also professional education and training.

However, although condemning aversion to physical labor as well as indifference to the misery of the working masses, Zamoyska opposed upward social mobility, the idea of temporal equality even more so and, finally, the idea of sharing property evenly among individuals.²³⁹ On the one hand, those views of the Christian school of life’s founder link her endeavor back to the Catholic doctrine of the period,

²³⁵ Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum*, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/leo_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_15051891_rerum-novarum_en.html.

²³⁶ Jadwiga Zamoyska, *Ideals in Practice*, trans. Margaret Domwile (London: Art and Book, 1903), 2-3.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, 3

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, 3, 5, also Czaplicka, “Moje wspomnienia,” 201.

²³⁹ Zamoyska, *O trzech oddziałach*, 1-8.

which saw the earthly social status of individuals as part of the divine plan and therefore unchangeable, and also to the belief that social distinctions did not necessarily lead to conflict.²⁴⁰ On the other hand, Zamoyska's views point to the deep anxiety of privileged groups at the prospect of possible structural changes to the social order, which brings me to the fourth reason why contemporaries may have been paying close attention to developments at the school.

The fact that young women from all social strata learned the same things at the same location made this endeavor unique on the Polish lands, as repeatedly emphasized by those who studied there or visited the place. It may indicate the deep interest of contemporaries in the results of what I propose to call a "social experiment" designed by Zamoyska in Kuźnice, an experiment, which, in my view, tested whether and under which conditions the co-existence and cooperation of the various social groups was possible. The opinions and impressions of contemporaries varied. In her memoirs, Janina Żółtowska, a visitor in Kuźnice, remembered that during her stay in the Institute she saw Zamoyska's son, Władysław, who "was unconditionally in love with the idea of equality,"²⁴¹ shaking hands with the cook in the sanatorium kitchen in Zakopane. The correspondent of *Przegląd Kościelny* (The Church Review), published in Posen, pointed out the benefits resulting from the co-habitation of students from different social classes.

It has an enormous significance from the point of view of society. By working together, individuals from different classes learn to understand and respect each other. The daughters of well-off, richer parents not only observe, but also must engage in work themselves. [In this way] the work acquires bigger meaning for them (...) girls have a better understanding of the answers to social questions. On the other hand, girls who have been sentenced to physical work since their birth can see that people from the higher parts of society are working and will work in the future. In this way they [girls from lower classes] slowly get rid of the opinion that physical work is demeaning for people, is a burden put only on the poorest.²⁴²

At the same time, Żółtowska observed that, although Zamoyska and her

²⁴⁰ For the Church's position on these issues in the period see, for example, Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum*, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/leo_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_15051891_rerum-novarum_en.html.

²⁴¹ BN IV 10227, t. 10, 24.

²⁴² Stanisław Okoniewski, "Z Zakładu Kórnickiego w Zakopanem" (From the Kórnicki Institute in Zakopane), *Przegląd Kościelny* 10 (1906): 305-306.

daughter used to eat with the students, not all members of Kuźnice's pedagogical staff shared the Zamoyski's family's "democratic" spirit towards members of the lower classes.²⁴³ The same hesitation must have existed among the students. A former student of the Institute, Maria Bobrzyńska, recalled:

The democratic spirit of Kuźnice was far more advanced there than anywhere else. This is why a peasant girl lost recognition of her social position to some extent and thought she could do anything. It was forbidden to use the form of address with others (*tykac się*), which was proof of Zamoyska's wisdom since certain kinds of acquaintanceship made in the Institute could have been a bit troublesome after leaving the place.²⁴⁴

Also, Zamoyska used to comment on the students' achievements in relation to their social status. On several occasions, the General's wife complained bitterly that due to the education they had received in the Institute the girls from the third department, the lower class, had no intention of returning to their original milieu, which Zamoyska interpreted as a sign of their ungratefulness.²⁴⁵ Interestingly, what a feminist historian would potentially find as a sign of empowerment of women from the lower classes, Zamoyska perceived as a failure of her pedagogical endeavor, for the ambitions of upward social mobility expressed by some of her students ran against the Catholic doctrine and added to the upper classes' anxiety about their social position. For this reason, Zamoyska even considered whether instead of focusing on girls from all classes, the Institute should turn to girls from privileged groups only.²⁴⁶ Although former students from the first and second departments began to send reports on the social activism they engaged in after leaving school,²⁴⁷ Zamoyska was not always successful, in her view, with these groups either. In 1912, she expressed her concern that the young upper-class women from the Grand Duchy of Posen represented an especially low intellectual level and read less than the girls from the third department.²⁴⁸ Finally, in her private conversation to Żółtowska, Zamoyska,

confessed that neither the first nor the third departments work well, that she started her work focusing on the first class [upper-class girls] to reform the

²⁴³ BN IV 10227, t. 10, 25v, 25.

²⁴⁴ Oss 13533/II, t. 1, 94.

²⁴⁵ *Une grande Ame*, 327, 391-392.

²⁴⁶ Nowak, "Historia Zakładu Kórnickiego. Cz 2," 38.

²⁴⁷ *Une grande Ame*, 392-393.

²⁴⁸ BN IV 10227, t. 10, 25.

country from its head – however the conspicuous softness of the upper classes, their lack of ambition and will for change, make them like water - they do not accept any imprint (...). The most ambitious are the girls of the second department [middle class].²⁴⁹

Returning to my exploration of the strategies the Kuźnice school employed to trigger the interest of contemporaries in Zamoyska's initiative, the Institute offered unique opportunities for vocational training and religious development for laywomen provided within an entirely lay, yet pious environment. It seemed to answer the needs of a large population of young women (and/or their parents) who longed for professional education or for acquiring the necessary skills to manage their households but who did not wish to compromise their religious views, which in their opinion may have happened if they enrolled in schools with secularized curriculum. In addition, the pious women who decided to get an education in Kuźnice may also have been attracted by Zamoyska's rejection of a cheap religious sentimentalism, popular in the period. Instead she insisted on thorough religious education based on careful Bible study, meditation or retreat and believed that Christian perfection was attainable not only for people who took religious vows, but also for lay people performing their regular daily activities.²⁵⁰ With her new approach to religious education, Zamoyska responded to the needs of at least some Catholic laywomen who were not satisfied with the forms of religious education and spiritual development provided in, for example, parish churches or convents.

Zamoyska's approach to religious education for laywomen aroused the continuous interest of clergymen abroad. In the context of the transnationally unfolding conflict between religious and secular factions and the difficulties the Church experienced in the public sphere, Leo XIII's blessing for and unconditional approval of Zamoyska's Institute, in his *breve* of 1886, could be interpreted as a sign of how carefully the Vatican was watching the various projects spread across the Catholic world and accepted them as new forms of the Catholic laity's involvement in social work.²⁵¹ Comparing the ideal model for lay social involvement, as prescribed by Leo XIII (Chapter 2), with Zamoyska's project, one notices a perfect match between the

²⁴⁹ BN IV 10227, t. 10, 63v. For similar Nowak, "Historia Zakładu Kórnickiego. Cz 2," 39.

²⁵⁰ Zamoyska, *Zakłady Kórnickie*, 10.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 10.

two. The Christian school of life was “professing openly and unflinchingly the Catholic doctrine” (*Sapientiae Christianae*), it “formed the minds of mechanics and laborers to thrift and foresight, so that in the course of time they may be able, in part at least, to look out for themselves,” and “preserves them (...) from danger, it restrains immoderation in their desires, and acts as a spur in the practice of virtue” (*Graves de Communi re*).²⁵² In addition, the school developed a system to keep in touch with its former students, which was crucial for the Vatican’s policy of mobilizing forces around the papal agenda. With respect to the last remark, I need to point out that the very same move of developing well-informed and socially aware women’s groups operating in the public sphere served the Church’s agenda, appealed to the nationalistic discourses and finally offered Catholic women-activists a network of support while launching their projects on behalf of other women.

The Kórnicka Library’s rich collection of Zamoyska’s correspondence proves that the school’s program and its developments were worked out in extensive consultation with the congregation of the French Oratorians.²⁵³ It was the Oratorians who actually encouraged Zamoyska to leave Paris and move to Kórnik near Posen, in the Prussian zone in 1882. Besides a possible personal sympathy that the Oratorians felt for Zamoyska, there may have been a more political reason for their interest in Kuźnice. Since the 1880s, French governments had introduced a salvo of laws aiming at diminishing the influence of the French Catholic Church on society. As a result, clergymen were gradually removed from the educational sector, which meant the Church’s influence on the public was diminishing.²⁵⁴ Thus for the French Oratorians, finally expelled from France in 1903, the school of Christian life in Kuźnice could be a laboratory in which they could test the possibility of religious education for lay people provided by entirely lay, yet pious personnel.

On the other hand, what some Catholic factions found attractive about Zamoyska’s school, its strong emphasis on religious education and the spiritual

²⁵² Leo XIII, *Sapientiae Christianae*, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/leo_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_10011890_sapientiae-christianae_en.html and *Graves de Communi re*, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/leo_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_18011901_graves-de-communi-re_en.html.

²⁵³ Most of the letters in *Une grande Ame* consist of correspondence between Zamoyska and the French priests.

²⁵⁴ Stone, “Anticlericals and Bonnes Soeurs: The Rhetoric of the 1901 Law of Associations,” 103-128.

development of its students made other contemporary Catholics suspicious. In the view of some, the school was a sort of a convent, or at the very least, a place with the potential to evolve into one.²⁵⁵ It is true that Zamoyska kept in close touch with the French Oratorians and welcomed priests who offered their support to her students.²⁵⁶ Nevertheless, she repeatedly emphasized the entirely lay character of the institution, insisting that this was the founding idea of the Christian school of life.²⁵⁷ In fact, Zamoyska's insistence on keeping the Institute lay nearly sparked a conflict with the prominent archbishop Feliński, who imagined a close cooperation between the school in Kuźnice and the convent he intended to set up.²⁵⁸ There were also instances when, due to its insistence on students engaging in careful Bible study,²⁵⁹ not then practiced in the Catholic tradition, the school in Kuźnice was accused by local clergy of spreading Protestant ideas among young women.²⁶⁰ Under these circumstances, the pope's blessings and approval for Zamoyska's efforts were necessary to legitimize her work and protect her from interventions of the Polish Catholic hierarchy.²⁶¹ The disagreements over the provision of religious teaching to women in Kuźnice (how much of it there should be, the forms it should take, the teaching personnel, etc.) demonstrate the presence of several conflicting approaches to this issue engendered by the contemporary Polish Catholic milieu. The latter observation, I propose, may broaden the conceptualization of the "culture wars," which Clark and Kaiser understand as primarily a conflict between religious and secular forces, by pointing out internal struggles between competing strategies/factions within the same religion.

Former student Jadwiga Smolkówna, quoted earlier, offered another recollection of the Institute:

One of the older colleagues, blessed with great intelligence and character, told me that she had arrived at the Institute reluctantly, under pressure of her parents. Together with her cousin, she made fun of and derided the rules of procedure applied in the Institute as well as the mode of life led there. At the beginning of the school year, at the very first class, the General's wife told of the unfortunate position of Poland, about the necessity of serving Poland with

²⁵⁵ Nowak, "Historia Zakładu Kórnickiego. Cz. 1," 223.

²⁵⁶ Ibid., 204, 208, 223, "Historia Zakładu Kórnickiego. Cz. 2," 76-77.

²⁵⁷ Nowak, "Historia Zakładu Kórnickiego. Cz. 1," 223.

²⁵⁸ Nowak, "Historia Zakładu Kórnickiego. Cz. 2," 71-76.

²⁵⁹ *Une grande Ame*, 235-236, 300, 330; Czaplicka, "Moje wspomnienia," 203.

²⁶⁰ Nowak, "Historia Zakładu Kórnickiego. Cz. 1," 205; "Historia Zakładu Kórnickiego. Cz. 2," 70-78.

²⁶¹ Zamoyska, *Zakład Kórnicki. Szkoła domowej pracy w Zakopanem*, 10.

work and fighting evil. When Zamoyska presented the aims and program of the Institute in details, the eyes of the young woman opened to the reality and she left the class as if reborn. A few years after, she founded a small school for peasant girls near Warsaw (the Russian zone). She used the methods of Kuźnice there. There were many conversions of this type.²⁶²

I am rather hesitant to using the word “conversion”, yet the school in Kuźnice made a strong impact on more than a few people. *Pisemko* provided numerous examples of social projects in the spirit of Kuźnice established by former students, such as schools, children`s religious education, and libraries. Being faithful to the Christian idea of modesty, the students often did not mention their names in the journal, only the location of their activism.²⁶³

Encouraged by her school`s success, Zamoyska published books, in which she shared the philosophy of her teaching as well as more general remarks. *O miłości Ojczyzny* (On love for the fatherland²⁶⁴, 1899), *O pracy* (On work, 1900) and *O wychowaniu* (On upbringing, 1904) soon became popular among Catholics of both sexes in the lands of Partitioned Poland.²⁶⁵ In 1899, Maria Harsdorfowa, an activist in the provincial areas of Eastern Galicia, wrote to her friend Helena Mycielska, resident of the Grand Duchy of Posen, that *O miłości Ojczyzny* was considered “as a second Bible” among young Cracowian lay Catholics.²⁶⁶ Moreover, once translated into French, the fame of Zamoyska`s books extended beyond the Polish lands and her writings were rewarded by the *Société Nationale d`Encouragement au Bien* in 1905 and 1914.²⁶⁷

Since the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, a growing number of the School of Christian Life`s students with first-hand experience of Zamoyska`s teaching, as well as those inspired by her books, began to make attempts, on bigger or

²⁶² Oss, 14136/II, 59.

²⁶³ BK, Cz. 2280, *Pisemko Kuźniczanek* 1, June (1912): 10; *Pisemko Kuźniczanek* 2, 4 (1912): 9-10; *Pisemko Kuźniczanek* 2, 6 (1912): 5-7; *Pisemko Kuźniczanek* 2, 8 (1913): 2-4, Cz. 2280.

²⁶⁴ I use the word “fatherland” instead of “motherland” since the first one is closer to the Polish word “ojczyzna”.

²⁶⁵ Jadwiga Zamoyska, *O miłości Ojczyzny* (On love for the fatherland) (Kraków: Druk i Nakład W.L. Anczyca i Spółki, 1900, c 1899); *O pracy* (On work) (Poznań: Nakładem Naczelnego Instytutu Akcji Katolickiej, 1938, c 1900); *O wychowaniu. Zeszyt Pierwszy*. (On upbringing. First volume) (Poznań: Nakładem Biblioteki Kórnickiej, 1902).

²⁶⁶ “Listy Marii z Gniewoszków Harsdorfowej do Heleny Mycielskiej. Cz. 3,” November 17, 1899, 213 and 217.

²⁶⁷ Nowak, “Historia Zakładu Kórnickiego. Cz. 2,” 69-70.

smaller scales, of replicating the Institute of Kuźnice and its philosophy of women's upbringing in various parts of Partitioned Poland. As I show in the subsequent sections, Zamoyska laid the blueprint for an entire movement of Catholic laywomen activists.

3.2 Antonina Machczyńska (1837-1919)

The literary talent of Antonina Machczyńska, born to a landowning family in the Russian zone, was first noticed during her years as a student at a boarding school for girls in Warsaw. In 1856, only 19 years old, she published *Szkółka wiejska* (The village school), a book in which she urged the elevation of *lud* (peasants) through carefully planned educational reform. The book earned a reputation throughout Partitioned Poland, and was also noticed by Prince Adam Jerzy Czartoryski, who invited the young author to the Hôtel Lambert, where she resided between 1860 and 1864.²⁶⁸ In Paris Machczyńska taught Polish language and literature in the Institute for Young Ladies and worked as Czartoryski's personal secretary.²⁶⁹

Historians typically focus on the diplomatic activism of the Hôtel Lambert, and not on the profound religiosity of the environment, especially of Prince Czartoryski and General Zamoyski – which, as Zamoyska recalled in her memoirs, was uncommon among men at the time.²⁷⁰ It was in Paris where Machczyńska made the decision to develop in two directions: to deepen her religiosity and to master the skills needed to perform as a teacher. Also she formulated a claim that would become one of the hallmarks of her teaching methodology, that is, the necessity of religious education as a foundation for education of any other kind.²⁷¹

Based on Machczyńska's unpublished diaries detailing the social life of the Hôtel Lambert, she appeared to be among the Prince's closest circle. It is almost certain

²⁶⁸ Strzelecka, *Antonina Machczyńska*, 5-6. Antonina Machczyńska, *Szkółka wiejska* (The village school) (Warszawa: Nakładem G.L. Glucksberga Księgarza, 1856). While staying in Paris, she wrote and published another important for her career book *Młoda nauczycielka* (The young female teacher) (Poznań: L. Merzbach, 1863).

²⁶⁹ Antonina Machczyńska. BN, Dokumenty osobiste i materiały biograficzne Antoniny Machczyńskiej (The personal documents and biographical materials of Antonina Machczynska), IV 9812 (hereafter BN, IV 9812), handwritten, 1-2; Strzelecka, *Antonina Machczyńska*, 6. Beside its diplomatic activity, Hotel Lambert served as a cultural and educational center running several institutions: Polish Literary Society, Polish Library in Paris, Polish School in Batignolles, and also two teaching schools: a School for Young Men and an Institute for Young Ladies.

²⁷⁰ Zamoyska, *Wspomnienia*, 120-122.

²⁷¹ BN II 9813, 8, 19, 26.

that Antonina Machczyńska and Jadwiga Zamoyska, the wife of General Zamoyski – Czartoryski's close affiliate – met frequently during this period.²⁷² It means that at the beginning of the 1860s both women found themselves in a milieu marked by very strong political ambitions and were surrounded by people with a conviction that they were obliged and equipped to engage in broadly defined social issues. The acquaintance of Zamoyska and Machczyńska did not evolve into friendship, nevertheless after Machczyńska left Paris, she and Zamoyska stayed in occasional touch, at least corresponding.²⁷³

Although Machczyńska was originally based in Warsaw, the Polish Kingdom's main city under the governance of the Russian empire, after returning from Paris she decided to settle in Lviv, the capital of Galicia, then part of the Habsburg monarchy.²⁷⁴

Machczyńska decision to settle in the Austrian zone as well as the subsequent success of her various social projects were likely informed by two factors. First, as stated in Section 3.1, the Polish Church in Galicia enjoyed the most conducive political conditions to operate in. The new social teaching of Rome was widely disseminated, discussed, and introduced in practice. The social work of the Polish Church centered both on the slowly developing working class and artisans, but also on the masses of uneducated peasants. However, along with the focus on disadvantaged groups, from the 1880s the Galician clergy succeeded in involving Catholic men and women of the privileged groups in a new type of organizations – confraternities, sodalities, Societies

²⁷² BN, Dziennik i notatnik Antoniny Machczyńskiej z lat 1860-1864, t.1, (Diary and notes of Antonina Machczyńska from the years 1860-1864, vol.1), II 9813 (hereafter BN II 9813), handwritten, 11, 80. Both Machczyńska and Zamoyska were eye-witnesses of Prince Czartoryski's death, compare their descriptions of the same event in Zamoyska, *Wspomnienia*, 251-252 and BN, Antonina Machczyńska: *Wspomnienia z lat 1861-1863* (The memoirs from 1861-1863), IV.9815, *Zwyciestwo w ostatniej walce* (Victory in the last fight), handwritten, 1-8.

²⁷³ In addition, Machczyńska later in life could have had first-hand information about Zamoyska from Archbishop Feliński (1822-1895), who supported and participated in the initiatives launched by the two women in Galicia as well as Jadwiga's sisters, with whom Machczyńska was in close relations. BN, *Korespondencja Antoniny Machczyńskiej* (The correspondence of Antonina Machczyńska), IV 9818 (hereafter BN IV 9818), t. (vol.) 2. A letter of Zygmunt Feliński to Antonina Machczyńska, November 13, 1895, 107-108. Machczyńska kept close relations with some members of the Zamoyski family. There are a few letters of Machczyńska to Zamoyska's sister: to Anna Potocka (BN, IV 9818, t. 3, 346) and Elżbieta Czartoryska (BN, IV 9818, t. 4, 234). Machczyńska was also in touch with students who stayed in Zamoyska's Institute in Kuźnice or with its personnel. She also sent a letter to one of the teachers from the Christian school of life, Chiżyńska (BN, Antonina Machczyńska: *Dzienniki-notatniki z lat 1874-1919* (Antonina Machczyńska: *Diaries-notes from the years 1874-1919*), II.9816 (hereafter BN 1874-1919), t. (vol.) 2, zeszyt (book) 8, handwritten, 9 and 18.

²⁷⁴ Strzelecka, *Antonina Machczyńska*, 6.

of St. Vincent de Paul and various confessionally motivated associations – which encouraged their members to pursue social activism in the public sphere, as advised by the Catholic new social teaching (Chapter 2, developed in Chapter 5). In contrast to their counterparts in the Grand Duchy of Posen and the Polish Kingdom, the Polish Church in Galicia managed to involve large numbers of intelligentsia in its work. The latter group had particularly good conditions for development in this region. There were two Polish universities in Cracow and Lviv and the state authorities did not block the ambitions of those men who wished to pursue careers in public institutions. An estimated 44 percent of the Western Galician intelligentsia was concentrated in Cracow. This group was less affected by so-called Positivist ideas strongly present in the Polish Kingdom (developed in Section 3.3), yet still demanded from the Church forms of social involvement that would match the times.²⁷⁵

The second possible reason for Machczyńska's moving to the Austrian zone was that apart from the political and cultural autonomy Poles enjoyed there, more importantly, Polish women had the legal right to form organizations – with the exception of political organizations – and exercised this right as early as the 1870s starting with charity and educational projects.²⁷⁶

Machczyńska took full advantage of a system that allowed Poles to organize lawfully. As her archives show, she was a woman destined for public life. She appeared to find genuine pleasure in contacts with various officials, with writing petitions, statutes, organizing committees, commemorations, searching for funds, etc.²⁷⁷ Although now almost entirely forgotten, her contemporaries recognized her as one of the most popular personalities in Lviv,²⁷⁸ and her strong religious conviction was known beyond the borders of Galicia.²⁷⁹

²⁷⁵ Olszewski, *Polska kultura religijna*, 73.

²⁷⁶ Based on the law launched May 13, 1867. Chwalba, "Kobiety w życiu politycznym Galicji na przełomie XIX i XX wieku," in *Kobieta i świat polityk*, 127.

²⁷⁷ For an introduction into the scope of Machczyńska's activism, see BN, Antonina Machczyńska: "Drobny przyczynek do dziejów działalności kobiecej w Galicji, 1868-1914" (Antonina Machczyńska: "Brief introduction to the history of women's activism in Galicia, 1868-1914), IV. 9830 (hereafter BN IV 9830), t. (vol.) 2.

²⁷⁸ "Antonina Machczyńska, nekrolog" (Antonina Machczyńska, obituary), *Nauczycielka* 6 (1919): 32. The author of the obituary wrote "she [Antonina Machczyńska] was one of the best known personalities in Lviv". Various journal outside of Galicia pitched information about Machczyńska's activism. For example see "Antonina Machczyńska," *Kurier Warszawski* April 23, 1898, 3.

²⁷⁹ In 1909, Roman Pleniewicz, the editor of *Encyklopedia Wychowawcza's* (The Educational

Once settled in Lviv, Machczyńska continued her career as a Catholic author of books for children and peasants,²⁸⁰ a teacher in the Lvivian *Seminarium* for girls who wanted to pursue careers as professional teachers, a fighter for creating educational opportunities for women (on the secondary and university levels), and an activist involved in numerous social projects, mainly but not exclusively, addressing women.²⁸¹ Machczyńska was also a founder or an active member of several organizations for women, including *Towarzystwo Oszczędności Kobiet* (The Women's Savings Society, 1887),²⁸² *Zjednoczenie Polskich Chrześcijańskich Towarzystw Kobięcych* (Union of Polish Christian Women's Associations, 1912),²⁸³ *Związek Koleżeński Byłych*

Encyclopedia), wrote to Machczyńska from Warsaw (the Russian zone): "there are numerous women-writers in Warsaw, literally I do not find one who would match the aspiration and spirit that should be in *The Encyclopedia* [The Educational Encyclopedia]. Among these women there are educated and talented ones, but all of them atheist, without religion. *The Encyclopedia* that aims at educating future generations in accordance with the Christian principles cannot cooperate with this kind of forces. (...) There are topics that can be tackled by a female pen only, but I cannot give them [these topics] into unreligious hands." BN IV 9818, t. (vol.) 2, letter of Roman Pleniewicz to Antonina Machczyńska, October 1, 1909, 103.

²⁸⁰ For example *Powieści dla młodocianego wieku* (Stories for the youth) (Poznań: 1868); *Złota Księga* (The golden book) (Poznań: Nakładem Ks. F. Bażyńskiego, 1870); *Opowiadanie dla ludu* (Stories for the folk) (Lwów: Nakładem Macierzy Polskiej, 1883); *Rzut oka na literaturę pedagogiczną i ludową niewieściego pióra w Polsce* (Overview of the pedagogical and folk literature written by women in Poland) (Lwów: Nakładem Dyrekcji Powszechniej Wystawy Krajowej, 1894); *Pobudka* (The Waking up) (Lwów: Polskie Towarzystwo Pedagogiczne, 1909); *Kobieta polska* (Polish woman) (Lwów: Nakładem Komitetu Lwowskiego Wystawy Praskiej, 1912); *Powrotna fala* (The returning wave) (Lwów: Nakładem Macierzy Polskiej, 1917).

²⁸¹ In terms of her work of broadening women's educational opportunities, in 1869 Machczyńska published two pieces, *O wychowaniu żeńskim* (About women's upbringing) and *O usiłowaniach prywatnych dla oświaty ludowej* (Private attempts for the education of the folk people), in which she listed reasons why women were especially suited for elevating the lower classes. According to Machczyńska, there was hence a need for a new type of schools for women who wished to take on such noble and needed careers. BN, IV. 9830, t. (vol.) 2, 14-13 and 24-39. Also for Machczyńska's writings of a similar kind, see "Kilka słów o zgrupowaniach pedagogicznych" (A few words about the pedagogical meetings, 1868), "Rzecz nakreślona z powodu zamierzonej reorganizacji szkółek wiejskich na szkoły wydziałowe lub z odcieniem przemysłowym" (Piece written because of the planned reorganization of the folk schools into primary schools or to those with an artisan profile, 1880), "O odczytach dla kobiet" (About the lectures for women, 1889), BN IV. 9830, t. 2, 6-13, 40-51, 68-75. For an introduction into the scope of Machczyńska's activism see BN, IV 9830, t.1, 14, 40-47. In the subsequent years, she joined the campaign advocating for women to be allowed to enter universities, BN, Antonina Machczyńska: Pisma pedagogiczne (Antonina Machczyńska: Pedagogical writings), IV 9828, handwritten, 93-104 and 122-137.

²⁸² *Towarzystwo Oszczędności Kobiet* was set up as a response to the new anti-Polish measures undertaken in the Prussian zone, according to which the so-called Colonization Committee purchased farms and estates from Polish landowners and peasants struggling with financial difficulties to give them into the hands of German inhabitants. The statute of the organization obliged women to collect funds to help their compatriots in the other zone. BN, II 9816, t. 1, zeszyt 5, 5-8.

²⁸³ According to the statute, the main aim of the association, founded in 1912 in Lviv, was to unify Catholic women's organizations to serve the national interest in case of war. The members of the union, the organizations, were represented by their chairwomen. ZPChK decided to be a-political organization. During the first general meeting, there were around sixty various Christian organizations from entire

Seminarzystek i Nauczycielek in Lviv (The Union of Former Students and Teachers from the Lvivian Seminarium for Future Female Teachers, 1891) and *Związek Nauczycielek* (The Union of Women Teachers, 1902). *Związek Koleżeński* was among the first organizations for female teachers in Partitioned Poland. It supported the professional development and broadly defined material well-being of its members, including during illness, unemployment, and retirement.²⁸⁴

After a brief overview of Machczyńska's confessionally motivated activism, I would like to focus in details on one of her projects. As an experienced teacher, Machczyńska attracted public attention to the fact that most students at the Lvivian *Seminarium* for female teachers-to-be had limited financial resources and as a result faced great material difficulties during their years of education. In order to help them, Machczyńska proposed setting up a dormitory.²⁸⁵ This was achieved in 1892. The Dormitory option was offered to young, poor girls from outside Lviv, or to those regarded as especially "vulnerable". In exchange for accommodation and all services received, the residents paid a full or partial fee. In case a student received a waiver for the payment, she was obliged to take on employment as a teacher in a rural area for a period of at least two years.²⁸⁶ The Dormitory stayed under the supervision of *Towarzystwo Opieki Obywatelskiej nad Internatem dla Kandydatek Seminarium*

Galicia present. BN, II 9816, t. (vol.) 5, zeszyt (book) 32, 4-11. BN, II 9816, t. 4, zeszyt 26, 25, 27v-32. Machczyńska was also active in the management of *Czytelnia dla Kobiet* (The Reading-Room for Women) in Lviv, founded in 1885, which was run in a "Catholic and national spirit" yet open to all women. In 1893 it reported 105 members, mainly of middle-class and intelligentsia background, *Sprawozdanie z czynności wydziału Czytelni dla Kobiet we Lwowie za rok 1892-93* (Annual report on the activities of the Reading Room for Women's Board 1892-93) (Lwów: 1893), 3, 13-15. Just before the outbreak of WWI she undertook the task of editing the section for workingwomen in the journal *Świt (Dawn)*, BN, II 9816, t. 4, zeszyt 28, 1-20. She also kept professional relations with *Związek Stowarzyszeń Katolickich Kobiet i Dziewcząt Pracujących diecezji krakowskiej* (Union of Associations for Catholic Workingwomen and Young Girls in the Cracowian diocese, described in Chapter 6), BN, II 9816, t. 5, zeszyt 33, 14v. During WWI, Machczyńska resided in Cracow, where she co-founded *Bursa Przemysłowa dla Dziewcząt* (The dormitory for working girls), BN, II.9816, t. 5, zeszyt 34, 14; II 9816, t. 5, zeszyt 33, 34. In 1917, she enrolled herself in *Polski Związek Niewiast Katolickich* in Cracow (Polish Association of Catholic Women, see Chapter 6), BN, II 9816, t. 5, zeszyt 33, 21.

²⁸⁴In 1891 she founded *Związek Koleżeński Byłych Seminarzystek i Nauczycielek* in Lviv. In 1902-1903 the organization unified with *Stowarzyszenie Nauczycielek* (The Association of Women-teachers) to become *Związek Nauczycielek*, in which Machczyńska was a chairwoman until 1909. During her years as a chairwoman of *Związek Nauczycielek*, she insisted on organizing the activities of the association under the Catholic banner, which put her in conflict with other members of these organizations, see Romanowiczówna, *Dziennik lwowski*, vol. 2, 177.

²⁸⁵BN, Papiery dotyczące Internatu dla Kandydatek Seminarium Nauczycielskiego Żeskiego we Lwowie (Documents of the Lvivian *Seminarium*'s Dormitory for Future Female Teachers), IV. 9837 (hereafter BN, 9837), handwritten, 1-2.

²⁸⁶BN, IV 9837, 7-36.

Nauczycielskiego Żeńskiego we Lwowie (The Society of Civic Protection of the Dormitory of the Lvivian Seminarium for Future Female Teachers), a group of around 40 women, the majority of whom were duchesses or countesses. The Society was expected to ensure the material and moral condition of the institution.²⁸⁷

What makes Machczyńska's Dormitory project interesting is the distinctive religious character of its organization. According to the statute, the main aim of the establishment was to give "asylum, subsistence and upbringing, which would help them [students] to acquire religious and patriotic feelings as well as moral virtues they should master as women, citizens and teachers."²⁸⁸ The statute further stated that the institution should "provide opportunities for acquiring fluency in practical and household duties."²⁸⁹ In earlier drafts of the founding document, Machczyńska wrote that the Dormitory was "to compensate for the insufficiency of girls' upbringing,"²⁹⁰ which indicates that it was conceived as an educational institute of sorts, functioning in parallel to the Lvivian *Seminarium* for female teachers-to-be. The Dormitory's internal regulations reveal that the girls received a thorough religious education, alongside the practical skills of managing a household. A close reading of the Dormitory's rules confirms that their scheme repeated that of Zamoyska's school. Machczyńska recalled that during the preparatory period there was not an institution after which she could model the Dormitory.²⁹¹ For this reason, she turned to Zamoyska for advice. Although the wife of the General expressed her regrets at not being able to get involved in the project personally, the school of Christian life in Kuźnice, with its distinctive philosophy of developing the intellectual, physical and spiritual capacities of young women, served as a blueprint for the Dormitory for girls in Lviv.²⁹²

There is another key issue involved in the organization of the Dormitory, which illustrates how in various educational establishments patterned on the Kuźnicki Institute, Zamoyska's educational scheme was altered by local national, social, religious and/or economic factors. Early versions of the Dormitory statute indicate that

²⁸⁷ In practical terms, this meant that the institution was almost entirely financed from private donations, and the Ladies from the Society ensured the girls would receive "proper entertainment". BN, IV 9837, 3-4.

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 41.

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 41.

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 30.

²⁹¹ BN, "Internat dla Kandydatek Seminarium Nauczycielskiego Żeńskiego we Lwowie. 1892-1918" (The Lvivian *Seminarium*'s Dormitory for future female teachers 1892-1918), III 9839, 2.

²⁹² BN, IV 9818, t. (vol.) 6, Jadwiga Zamoyska to Antonina Machczyńska, September 2, 1890, 78-79.

Machczyńska and others involved in designing the Dormitory originally planned it for Polish students of Roman Catholic denomination only. It was proposed that the committee responsible for admissions to the Dormitory should include one Roman Catholic priest and that the institution's working language should be Polish. To assure the Roman Catholic and Polish character of the place, the early version of the statute proposed that "in case the Dormitory withdrew from the idea of bringing up the girls in the spirit of the Catholic faith and Polishness, then the funds, according to the intentions of the founders, will be transferred to the shelter for female Roman Catholic teachers."²⁹³ The final version of the statute allowed for the Dormitory's occupants to be either of Roman or Greco Catholic denominations. Yet, the working language of the place remained Polish.²⁹⁴

In order to explain the changes between the first draft and the final version of the Dormitory's statute, I shall first introduce the broader religious-national context of this era. As opposed to Western Galicia, which was dominated by Polish Roman Catholics, in the eastern part of the region (the Przemyslan and Lvivian dioceses) the religio-national milieu was more complicated. The majority of the population was Greek Catholic, who, with a few exceptions, declared Ukrainian nationality. The majority of the Roman Catholics were Poles. At the end of the nineteenth century, both national groups, Poles and Ukrainians, wanted to become the leading group in the region. Religious differences sharpened national identities on both sides.²⁹⁵ There were also Ormian Catholics in the Eastern Galicia, but with an estimated 4,000, mainly Polish, believers, this denomination was of less importance in the unfolding national-religious tensions.

The Greek Catholic Church surpassed the Roman Catholic Church in this region not only with respect to the number of its members, but also in terms of its organizational capacity. In 1907, there were 1,983 Greek Catholic parish churches compared to just 321 Roman Catholic ones. The latter often consisted of 30 or more villages located a few dozens of kilometers from the church, which made the pastoral work of the Roman Catholic priests difficult, if not impossible, during winter months.

²⁹³ BN, IV 9837, 34-36.

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 42, 83-84.

²⁹⁵ There were also German Protestants and Jews. The latter consisted of 11 percent of the total population. Olszewski, "Okres wzrastającego ucisku," 461-463.

The three religions – Roman Catholicism, Greek Catholicism and the Ormian Church – accepted the supremacy of the Holy See. According to the Vatican instructions, the Roman Catholic and Greco Catholic clergy could fulfill pastoral duties for followers of the other denomination, which served to increase Greek Catholic influence in the region. At the beginning of the twentieth century, archbishop Józef Bilczewski was in charge of the Roman Catholics, Andrzej Szeptycki supervised the Greek Catholics, and Józef Teodorowicz led the Ormian Church. These bishops, residing in Lviv, were distinguished leaders – distinguished not only in a pastoral sense, but also in terms of their engagement in social and political matters. Both Bilczewski and Szeptycki were strong advocates for the national independence of Poles and Ukrainians respectively. In this context archbishop Teodorowicz's activism played a particularly important role in moderating the tensions between the two competing nationalities.²⁹⁶

The political, national, and religious tensions required from the conflicting parties inhabiting the same region a certain degree of understanding and cooperation. Traces of this can be seen in the organization of the *Seminarium* for future female teachers in Lviv. Machczyńska recalled, for example, that the twentieth anniversary of the school began with a mass celebrated by the archbishop in the cathedral of the Ormian Catholic Church. The celebration took place there, she explained, to commemorate the fact that at the early years of the *Seminarium*, Holy Masses for the students were held in this particular church.²⁹⁷ Also, the *Seminarium*'s schedule accommodated the religious holidays of different Catholic denominations.²⁹⁸ Furthermore, many students of the Lvivian *Seminarium*, who passed their state exams to obtain a teacher certificate, were fluent in both Polish and Ukrainian. A reporter from a Lvivian magazine wrote that during the celebration on the occasion of Machczyńska's retirement, students sang for her two songs, *Sto lat sto lat* and *Mohodnyje*, that is, in Polish and Ukrainian.²⁹⁹ Finally, the archbishop of the Ormian Church, Teodorowicz, wrote to the Roman Catholic Machczyńska: "It is a great fortune

²⁹⁶ On the situation of the Greco-Catholics and the Ormian Church in Galicia, see Kumor, *Historia Kościoła*, 405-409.

²⁹⁷ This was possible due to the fact that under special circumstances the Holy See allowed the priests of the three denominations to serve believers of other denominations.

²⁹⁸ BN, II.9816, t. (vol.)1, zeszyt (book), 1, 61.

²⁹⁹ "Pożegnanie" (Good bye), *Kurier Lwowski* February 12, 1901, 7.

(...) to meet a person with such a kind heart like yours.”³⁰⁰

Despite such examples of cooperation across religious and national divides, the first draft of the Dormitory's statute excluded Greek Catholics and non-Polish speakers. Perhaps the reason was that Machczyńska, a Roman Catholic herself, had drafted the document. Another possibility was that most of the members of the Society, the main sponsors of the project, were aristocratic Polish women, which in Lviv most likely meant they were Roman Catholic too. Hence, by emphasizing Dormitory's Polish and Roman Catholic character, Machczyńska possibly wished to secure financial resources for the institution. After the initial attempt of Roman Catholicization and Polonization of the project, the Dormitory accepted students of the two Catholic denominations and allowed priests of both denominations to sit on the recruitment committee. While it is not clear why these changes to the statute were made, they reveal the kind of negotiations Catholic laywomen-activists were required to engage in within the particular context of Eastern Galicia.

The case of the Dormitory demonstrates how already in the early 1890s Zamoyska's Institute was perceived by the Catholic female laity as a reliable pattern of educational institution for girls and if needed was appropriated specifically to local needs. Second, discussions over Dormitory's religious affiliation offer a glimpse into how religion worked in everyday life, not in parliamentary or press discussions, but in informing very ordinary decisions. This Dormitory's case shows the role of religion in influencing the evolution of an institution of rather local meaning³⁰¹ from a very particular perspective – that is, how the development of confessional identities (Roman Catholic and Greek Catholic) merged with the process of making nations (the Polish and Ukrainian), which serves as another opportunity for rethinking the concept of transnational “culture wars” in the period. Abandoning the restrictive understanding of the latter as secular versus religious antagonism allows for the broadening of the phenomenon of “culture wars” with the issue of competition between different

³⁰⁰ BN, IV 9818, t. (vol.) 6, Józef Teodorowicz to Antonina Machczyńska, 1908, 48-49.

³⁰¹ The dormitory hosted 24 students in the school year 1892/1893, 25 in 1894/95, 43 in 1895/96, 44 in 1896/97, 1904 56 students. In the years 1892-1911 Machczyńska was a secretary of the Society, BN, IV 9837, 87-93; BN, Protokoły z walnych zgromadzeń i sprawozdania z czynności wydziału Towarzystwa Opieki Obywatelskiej nad Internatem dla Kandydatek Seminarium Nauczycielskiego Żeńskiego we Lwowie (Minutes of the general meetings and annual reports on the activities of the Society of Civic Protection of the Boarding School of the Lvivian *Seminarium*'s Dormitory for future female teachers), II 9838, handwritten, 25, 54, 82.

religions, or even more specifically, between different denominations of the very same religion.³⁰² It shows that despite the Vatican's persistent efforts in bringing believers closer to the Catholic Church, understood as an institution that transcended borders and national divisions (Chapter 2), many Catholics privileged loyalty to their respective national Churches over loyalty to Rome.

The Galician Polish Catholic Church succeeded in inviting into cooperation on social problems many members of the rapidly growing Catholic intelligentsia. The confessionally motivated social engagement of Antonina Machczyńska symbolically represents numerous other Polish Catholic women's activism.³⁰³ Inspired by the Vatican's new social teaching, these Catholic activists, while undertaking their projects in the spirit of *Graves de Communi re*, could count on the Catholic hierarchy and local clergy's kind support and collaboration. As I will show in Chapters 5 and 6, the respectful cooperation between the Church and Galician Catholic laywomen was an important factor in developing the scope and size of the latter's social projects.

3.3 Cecylia Plater-Zyberkówna (1853-1920)

Born in 1853 in Passa (near Warsaw, the Russian zone) to one of the most known Central European aristocratic families of landowners, in 1876 Cecylia Plater-Zyberkówna spent the winter in Cracow, where she participated in a religious retreat. "It was then," Plater recalled in her autobiographical note, "that I made up my mind to withdraw from the world and take on the apostolate work as I had always been dreaming about." In 1877 the 24-year old Plater traveled to France. "I spent seven months in Paris (...) educating myself in social work and visiting various Parisian charity organizations with (Jadwiga's daughter) Maria Zamoyska."³⁰⁴ At that time, Jadwiga Zamoyska's project of the school of Christian life was already advanced and she was taking the last necessary steps before her departure to Kórnik in the Prussian zone. Maria Zamoyska and Plater-Zyberkówna took several vocational courses together with the intention of passing this knowledge on once back on the Polish lands.

³⁰² For a similar approach see, for example, Heidi Bossardi-Borner, "Village Quarrels and National Controversies: Switzerland," in *Culture Wars*, 281.

³⁰³ For other examples of Catholic laywomen activists-teachers, see e.g. the diaries by Zofia Romanowiczówna, *Dziennik lwowski, 1840-1930*.

³⁰⁴ Plater, *Życiorys*, 6.

Cecylia Plater-Zyberkówna returned to Paris in 1879 to continue her education. This time archbishop Czacki introduced her to a Polish teacher, Józefa Chudzyńska. Plater recalled that “from the very moment we met we decided to work together in the future.” And further:

I stayed in Paris until the spring to learn everything that would be needed to open a school together with Miss Chudzyńska – a school that would provide scholarly courses and handcraft training to poor young girls. To this end I spent every day in the school of handicrafts run by the Sisters who Bring Relief to Purgatory Souls practicing golden embroidery, painting on wood, satin and china. Next I learned to tailor bras and dresses.³⁰⁵

The meeting with Józefa Chudzyńska had a remarkable impact on Plater’s life for it made her part of one of the most interesting Catholic social movements in the period, not only on the Polish lands, but across the Catholic world. However, before I investigate Plater’s social activism, I will first provide an overview of the religious, socio-economic and political conditions in the Polish Kingdom that informed the patterns of Plater’s social engagement.

Compared with the Grand Duchy of Posen and Galicia, the Polish Kingdom was the most intensively developing region in terms of its rising population, urbanization and industrialization.³⁰⁶ In 1910, there were 9,400,000 inhabitants, of whom 72 percent declared themselves Roman Catholics – which, in most cases, also coincided with Polish nationality.³⁰⁷ As a result of the rapid socio-economic changes, aside from the poor material conditions of the working class, the fastest-growing

³⁰⁵ Ibid., 6

³⁰⁶ Between 1864 and 1914, the population of Warsaw increased four times, that of Łódź, ten times. Olszewski, “Okres wzrastającego ucisku,” 474-475. Between the 1860s and 1910 the population of the Polish Kingdom increased with 173 percent. In Galicia and the Grand Duchy of Posen, the population grew with 85 percent and 61 percent, respectively. Olszewski, *Polska kultura religijna*, 22.

³⁰⁷ 75 percent to 80 percent of approximately 500,000 Evangelicals declared themselves as Germans, residing mostly in urban areas. In 1913, the Orthodox made up 4 percent of the total number of the Polish Kingdom’s inhabitants and were mainly Russians scattered around the region or former Greco-Catholics forced to accept the Orthodox religion by the Russian authorities after 1839. Among non-Christian religions, there were 1,700,000 Jews in the Polish Kingdom, accounting for 15 percent of the total population in this region. A quarter of the Jews lived in urban and industrial areas. Also there was continuous increase in the number of Jews emigrating from the region of Lithuania and parts of the Russian empire where anti-Jewish laws were implemented. As a result, in some areas of the Polish Kingdom’s eastern regions, Jews comprised half of the total population. The northern-eastern part of the Polish Kingdom was exceptional in this respect. Beside the Roman Catholic Poles, there was a significant number of Roman Catholic Lithuanians there, see Olszewski, “Okres wzrastającego ucisku,” 457- 460, 464.

group,³⁰⁸ one of the most pressing issues was the massive movement of migrants (permanent and seasonal) from the poorest and least developed areas of the Polish Kingdom to the industrial centers. Among them there were young unskilled female workers and girls who, unable to support themselves on low wages, turned to prostitution, which became alarming in its scale.³⁰⁹

The condition of the Catholic Church in the Polish Kingdom deteriorated rapidly following the collapse of the January Uprising. Post-uprising repressions involved all aspects of cultural, social, economic and political life, yet were particularly drastic for the Catholic Church, as punishment for the Polish priests' significant role in the insurrection. In 1864, the Spiritual Roman Catholic Collegium in St. Petersburg began to supervise the Polish Church, which for the latter meant interruption of contacts with the Vatican. Another wave of suppression of Catholic religious orders practically eliminated monastic life. The state confiscated Church estates. The priests' roles were strictly limited to pastoral duties (even then under rigorous supervision) and the clergy was forbidden to travel without permission.³¹⁰

The two social groups that were most difficult for the Church to reach were the emerging working class and the intelligentsia.³¹¹ The Polish Church authorities perceived the working class as a highly de-Christianized group. The existing number of parishes was disproportionate to the number of the believers, something that was especially noticeable in industrial areas where gigantic parishes emerged.³¹² The Polish Kingdom's intelligentsia fueled radical social tendencies. The most significant discourse produced by this group was the so-called "Varsovian positivism," derived from nineteenth-century scientism. The social proposals of this faction were based on

³⁰⁸ From the 1860s to the end of WWI, the number of workers increased from 70,000 to 400,000 concentrated mainly in the three rapidly developing industrial regions: Zagłębie Dąbrowskie, around Łódź and Warsaw. Olszewski, "Okres wzrastającego ucisku," 474-475.

³⁰⁹ Ibid., 471-473. For further details on the working class in the Polish Kingdom see Anna Żarnowska, *Klasa robotnicza Królestwa Polskiego 1870-1914* (The working class of the Polish Kingdom 1870-1914) (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1974). For a general picture of the socio-economic and political situation in the region see, for example, Chwalba, *Historia Polski 1795-1918*, 319-384.

³¹⁰ Kumor, *Historia kościoła. VII*, 348-372; Lewalski, *Kościół rzymsko-katolicki*, 67-126.

³¹¹ Olszewski, "Okres wzrastającego ucisku," 474-475.

³¹² The largest parish in the Kingdom was the parish of Saint Cross in Łódź, which had 142,000 followers; the parish Wola near Warsaw had 65,000 members. The size of these parishes was not unique if compared with other, Western European cities. This meant that across Europe in the second half of the nineteenth century, there emerged a new social environment beyond the reach of the Catholic Church. Ibid., 482-483.

the idea of “organic work” (“praca organiczna”) that aimed to rebuild the Polish national economy and culture from the grassroots (“praca u podstaw”). Although Polish positivists did not openly clash with the Church, they declared themselves anti-clericalists and endorsed the secularization of public life.³¹³

In terms of the social engagement of the Polish Church in the Russian zone, the available research demonstrates that the institution did not respond to the socio-economic changes. In comparison with the Polish Churches in the other two zones, due to the anti-Catholic and anti-Polish politics of the Russian empire, the Church in the Polish Kingdom had the loosest ties with the Vatican. Hence, there was a delayed and rather superficial reception of Rome’s new social doctrine among the Polish clergy in this region. In addition, due to the legislative constraints until 1905 the Church had rather limited possibilities for social work. On the other hand, historians interpret the lack of clergymen’s knowledge of the contemporary papal social teaching also a result of a generally traditionalist, static and conservative attitude on the part of the Polish Church in this region toward societal problems.³¹⁴ The new legislation of 1905 introduced in the entire Russian empire, which was more advantageous for the Polish Catholic Church, did not bring about significant change in this respect. Bishops could finally publish pastoral letters, yet they referred to *Rerum Novarum* and to the new Catholic social doctrine only in general terms. The same was true of the Catholic press. In addition, the Church hierarchy was not convinced of the necessity of its engagement in social activism and even discouraged priests from engaging in social work on behalf of the working class so as not to accelerate conflicts with socialist movements.³¹⁵ The only Catholic social project, *Związek Katolicki* (The Catholic Union) launched by Church officials in 1905, did not manage to attract either the intelligentsia or the working classes.³¹⁶

³¹³ Ibid., 475.

³¹⁴ Lewalski, *Kościół rzymskokatolicki*, the chapter 3.

³¹⁵ Bender, *Spoleczne inicjatywy chrześcijańskie*, 61-63; Lewalski, *Kościół rzymskokatolicki*, 127, 165.

³¹⁶ *Związek* was set up as an organization active on the territory of the entire Polish Kingdom and aimed at gathering people of all classes as well as organizations. It supposed to answer problems of the workers, yet the group had little support in the urban areas. In 1909, *Związek* reported 39,000 members, mainly from rural areas. Ryszard Bender, “Katolicka myśl i działalność społeczna w Polsce w XIX i XX wieku” (Catholic thought and social activism), in *Z dziejów katolicyzmu społecznego* (A history of social Catholicism), ed. Ryszard Bender (Lublin: Redakcja Wydawnictw KUL, 1987), 111-112, 147; Bender, *Spoleczne inicjatywy Chrześcijańskie w Królestwie Polskim 1905-1918* (The social Christian initiatives in the Polish Kingdom 1905-1918) (Lublin: Towarzystwo Naukowe Katolickiego Uniwersytetu

Between the 1880s and 1918, the most successful Catholic social initiatives in the Polish Kingdom were instigated within settings that were either marginalized, or received little, if any, support from higher Catholic authorities.³¹⁷ The phenomenon of the so-called Honorat movement is one example. After the suppression of the Catholic religious orders in the Russian zone, Honorat Koźmiński, a Capuchin and a strong believer in social engagement, proposed a new form of religious orders. From 1874 to 1895, Koźmiński founded 20 so-called “hidden orders” for women, who carried out apostolate and social work while concealing their convent identity, that is, in the public sphere they were passing as laywomen. In the literature on the subject those women are known as “sisters in concealment” (*skrytki*). The internal organization and social impact of the Honorat convents had no precedence in the history of Polish Roman Catholic Church’s activism or elsewhere.

Members of the hidden orders were divided into three categories. The first consisted of women who lived together in the congregations’ houses and took religious vows. The second group consisted of sisters in concealment, so-called *united*, who affiliated to their respective orders by taking only temporary vows and who lived outside of the orders’ houses. The third category consisted of women, called *associated*, who were connected with the respective convents but did not take vows and lived according to the rules of the Third Order in their own surroundings. As said by Koźmiński, members of the second and third categories were the real foundation of the Honorat movement, since their residing in their natural environments allowed more possibilities to become directly involved in social issues. Koźmiński said: “They have more opportunities to do [social activism], in their families, and villages (...) they reach even the places untouched by the foot of a priest. (...) there they set up schools, teach catechism, introduce religious practices, they go there under disguise of artisans, nursery teachers, nurses etc.”³¹⁸ The Honorat movement’s aim was to realize a social apostolate among the poorest rural and urban social strata, which in practical terms

Lubelskiego, 1978), 94-112.

³¹⁷ For examples of the local clergy’s social initiatives in the region see Bender, *Spoleczne inicjatywy chrześcijańskie*, 50-63. Also Stanisław Gajewski, *Działalność społeczna duchowieństwa w Królestwie Polskim* (The clergy’s social activism in the Polish Kingdom) (Lublin: Redakcja Wydawnictw KUL, 1990).

³¹⁸ Honorat Koźmiński. *Pisma. Listy do hierarchii kościelnej 1885-1916*, t. 1 (Writings. The letters to the Church’s hierarchy 1885-1916, volume 1), ed. Halina Irena Szumił (Warszawa: Instytut Bł. Honorata Koźmińskiego: Kuria Prowincjalna Zakonu Braci Mniejszych Kapucynów, 1997), 155-156.

meant bringing material and moral help at the same time. Each of these hidden religious orders had its own social group to attend to. Some worked with the old, the ill, or the homeless. Other groups carried out educational activities, running schools and libraries, or organizing vocational training.³¹⁹ At the beginning of the century, there were around 7,500 sisters in concealment on the territory of the Russian zone. Researchers claim there were 100,000 people who benefited in various ways from the existence of these hidden convents.³²⁰

The Congregation of the Messenger Sisters of Mary under the invocation of the Holiest Jesus's Heart was the first hidden convent set up by Honorat Koźmiński in 1874. The first sisters and professional teachers were Bogusława Arndt, Antonina Szumska and Józefa Chudzyńska (the abbess of the congregation for the next 37 years). From 1875 the congregation had its main house in Warsaw, but operated in various locations of the Polish Kingdom. According to the statute, the Messengers Sisters were supposed to raise and educate children and young girls, which was to be achieved by attending and founding schools, boarding schools, dormitories, and nursery schools.³²¹

The convent of Messenger Sisters violated the Russian law on three levels. First, it promoted the idea of religious orders, albeit in a modified form, despite their suppression by Russian authorities. Second, its educational agenda intended to compensate for the poorly designed schooling system in the Polish Kingdom, which was systematically jeopardized by the Russian authorities after the January Uprising.³²² The curriculums in the Messenger Sisters' educational establishments often consisted of subjects that were forbidden to teach under the Russian law. Third, the Messenger Sisters' activism was semi-lawful and/or clandestine nature because women and men

³¹⁹ Bender, *Spoleczne inicjatywy chrześcijańskie*, 43-47; also Ewa Jabłońska-Deptuła, "Boży organicznik" (God's social worker), *Znak* 48, 3 (1996): 58-63; Roland Prejs, "Środowisko zakonne Bł. Honorata Koźmińskiego," 5-33.

³²⁰ Lewalski, *Kościół rzymskokatolicki*, 135.

³²¹ In 1879 the congregation consisted of 14 sisters, see Marianna Honorata Mazurek, "Działalność oświatowa-wychowawcza Zgromadzenia Sióstr Posłanniczek Maryi od Najświętszego Serca Jezusa w latach 1874-1908," 35-36.

³²² As far as the primary education is concerned, between the years 1879 and 1895 the number of schools dropped from 9,210 to 3,409. The governmental schools taught barely 17.9 percent of the children in the Polish Kingdom (age 8-14). The working language was Russian and any exceptions from this rule were penalized. The official statistics showed that in 1862 90.7 percent of the population was illiterate and in 1897 – 69.5 percent. Since the governmental education did not meet either the didactic nor the national criteria of Poles, there was an increasing number of educational projects run on a clandestine basis. Mazurek, "Działalność oświatowa-wychowawcza Zgromadzenia Sióstr Posłanniczek," 35.

were prohibited from performing any collective organized activism in the Polish Kingdom until 1906. In this political context, being concerned about the scarcity of educational opportunities for girls, and as a result, their underprivileged position on the job market, Polish women of various factions began organizing themselves in a clandestine way from the beginning of the 1880s (Section 3.1).³²³ The educational projects of the Messenger Sisters, which provided girls and young women with knowledge and skills to succeed in the emerging social and economic conditions, I perceive as a specifically Catholic response to this broad movement and the discussions in the period.

In 1880, Plater-Zyberkówna returned to Warsaw from Paris and began novitiate in the hidden convent of the Messengers Sisters. Her decision to join the congregation was of special importance for its development, since Plater-Zyberkówna was the first member with an aristocratic background and had considerable financial resources at her disposal.³²⁴ In 1883 Plater-Zyberkówna, aka Sister Maria of Christ's Feet in the hidden convent, opened the first school for 53 girls between the ages of 12 and 17 from "the lower class to educate them accordingly to their needs so as to enable them to earn for their living in an honest way in the future without a ballast of useless and expensive to obtain knowledge."³²⁵ The education was also to make the girls "morally and religiously molded",³²⁶ yet the school was presented to the public as an entirely lay institution. The school acquired several names over the years, mirroring the changes introduced to the institution. For the sake of clarity, I will use its most popular name: "the school on Piękna street." In 1884-1885 the school was already divided into two departments, which offered general courses (e.g. Russian and Polish language (the latter taught clandestinely), math, geography, history of Russia) and vocational ones

³²³ In 1886, the so-called *Latający Uniwersytet* (Flying University) was set up in Warsaw. Although without granting official diplomas, the university educated numerous accomplished women teachers and renowned women social activists. In 1883 women concerned about the education of the lower classes, especially peasants, set up *Koło Kobięc Oświaty Ludowej* (The Women's Circle of the Common People's Education). *Koło Kobiąt Korony i Litwy* (The Circle of Women from the Former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth), set up in the Polish Kingdom in 1886, was the first clandestine organization for and run by women that operated in the three zones, dedicated mainly to creating clandestine educational opportunities for Poles. Nietyksza, "Kobiety w ruchu oświatowym w Królestwie Polskim na przełomie wieków," 96-99, 105-106.

³²⁴ Mazurek, "Działalność oświatowa-wychowawcza Zgromadzenia Sióstr Posłanniczek," 35-36.

³²⁵ Plater, *Życiorys*, 7.

³²⁶ *Ibid.*, 7.

(e.g. sewing, embroidery, laces). The department with general courses gradually developed into a secondary school. Due to the growing number of students from outside of Warsaw, the Messenger Sisters opened a dormitory in 1886.³²⁷

According to the statute of the Messenger Sisters` congregation, the education of the girls on all levels should be conducted in parallel with their religious development. To this end, the sisters, as lay teachers, introduced several additional practices performed in the school on Piękna street on a daily basis, like teaching catechism, reading and explaining Bible and Catholic doctrine, or collective prayers. Plater-Zyberkówna also introduced the custom of gathering students before classes to read and explain a short part of the Gospel, which resembled the practice Jadwiga Zamoyska introduced in her Christian school of life.³²⁸ The reputation of the school on Piękna street spread quickly, and already in its second year girls applied not only from Warsaw but also from the other part of Polish Kingdom, the Russian empire, and from the Grand Duchy of Posen, Cracow, and Silesia.³²⁹

At the end of the 1880s, Plater-Zyberkówna and Chudzyńska planned to open a branch of the school on Piękna street, which was designed as “a school of household activities.” Plater-Zyberkówna wrote: “In 1894 I traveled to Paris and its surroundings in order to visit similar schools there. In 1896 I visited (...) the whole of Germany and Czech for a similar reason.”³³⁰ After her return, Plater purchased an estate in Chyliczki, near Warsaw. In 1891-1892, the school accepted its first students. The students were divided into the three categories. The first consisted of young women from wealthy landowning families who sought the education needed to run a household and a land estate. They studied for a year and paid 300 rubles to cover the costs of tuition and lodgings. In the second category were girls from less privileged families. They studied for between 2 and 3 years, paid 170 rubles, but were obliged to perform extra duties for

³²⁷ Mazurek, “Działalność oświatowa-wychowawcza Zgromadzenia Sióstr Posłanniczek,” 42-43, 46-49.

³²⁸ Ibid., 44-46.

³²⁹ Soon the school experienced problems with the Russian authorities that suspected, correctly, that the institute provided other courses beside the ones officially listed in the curriculum, Plater, *Życiorys*, 7, 8. Beside the official educational activities, the school on Piękna street was a place for several illegal projects. Firstly, one of the school`s buildings functioned as the main house of the congregation for 31 sisters in concealment. Secondly, until 1916 the institute on Piękna street run a clandestine school for women who wanted to pursue careers as teachers. From 1883 until 1908 around 240 women graduated from the school. Mazurek, “Działalność oświatowa-wychowawcza Zgromadzenia Sióstr Posłanniczek,” 59.

³³⁰ Plater, *Życiorys*, 9.

the school. The girls from the third category, who were supposed to run other people's houses in the future, were to pay 120 rubles, but many of them were exempted from any payment. Similar to Zamoyska's Institute, in the Chyliczki school the girls from the different categories received diverse meals and lodging. Between the years 1894-1908 there were 434 students, most of whom came from the Polish Kingdom. Almost all of them were of Roman-Catholic denomination³³¹

During her visit to Chyliczki, Maria Zamoyska, described the school as a "daughter of the Institute in Kuźnice."³³² The similarities between Zamoyska's Christian school of life and the school in Chyliczki – their internal organizations, payment scheme, curriculum and the ultimate goals of the institutions – are clear indeed. Similar to the Christian school of life in Kuźnice, in the Chyliczki school the women from all departments were obliged to study all topics and performed all the duties on their own. Furthermore, the main goal of the Chyliczki school was to offer a wide range of education to women, with a special emphasis on their religious and national upbringing, so as to mobilize them into social and patriotic activism outside of their immediate households.³³³ The school in Chyliczki served as a model for establishing *Szkoła Gospodarczo-Rzemieślnicza* (The School of Handicrafts) for girls in Marianów in 1903, which was also run by the hidden order of sisters in concealment, in this case the Congregation of Servant Sisters, dedicated to the apostolate and social work among peasants.³³⁴

In 1909, at the peak of its development, the Messenger Sisters, one out of 20 female hidden convents, consisted of 93 women, mostly professional teachers, who ran 14 educational initiatives. In primary schools and nurseries, the sisters took care of approximately 1,370 children each year. Girls aged between 8 and 17 could learn in the four schools run by the Messenger Sisters and/or attend various vocational trainings organized by the same congregation. For women above 17, the congregation ran 2 agricultural schools and 4 schools for those who wished to pursue teaching careers. According to Mazurek's count, in 1909 the Messenger Sisters took care of altogether

³³¹ Around 25 percent of the students studied free of charge in both of Plater's schools, Mazurek, "Działalność oświatowo-wychowawcza," 53, 56.

³³² *Une grande Ame*, 390.

³³³ Mazurek, "Działalność oświatowo-wychowawcza," 34-35

³³⁴ Wójcik, "Zgromadzenie Sióstr Służek NMP Niepokalanej," 163.

approximately 2,600 children and young women in all their educational projects together. Next to these activities, they also provided religious classes to an additional 3,100 children in and around Warsaw.³³⁵

Since the early-twentieth century the development of the hidden women's congregations in the Polish Kingdom was systematically hampered by the attitudes of both the local Catholic hierarchy and Rome. On the one hand, being only moderately interested in social issues, the episcopate in the Polish Kingdom was hardly supportive of Koźmiński's projects.³³⁶ In addition, the Polish hierarchy was anxious about the fact that some prominent members of these hidden convents were sympathetic to the so-called modernist faction, which Pius X condemned at the beginning of the twentieth century (Chapter 2). On the other hand, there was a general, transnational tendency of centralizing and homogenizing Catholic projects imposed by the Vatican during the papacy of Pius X that aimed at bringing more control over local Catholic initiatives (Chapter 2). The structure of the Honorat hidden convents allowed their members a degree of autonomy unknown in other religious congregations, which run counter to papal efforts in the period. In 1908, the Polish episcopate began taking control over the Honorat sisters of the first category, while the women in the second and third categories were supposed to become regular Third Order associations in their respective parish churches. In response, most of the *united* and *associated* sisters in concealment, who perceived the episcopate's decision as ruining the founding principles of the hidden convents' social apostolate, left the Honorat congregations. This ended many of their social activities.³³⁷

Although the Church's attitude hampered the further development of the Messenger Sisters' activism, the 1906 liberalization of law with respect to forming associations³³⁸ enabled Plater to broaden the scope of her individual social engagement. In 1907 she co-founded *Katolicki Związek Kobiet Polskich* (Catholic Association of Polish Women – KZKP) in Warsaw (Chapter 6). Additionally, Plater launched *Towarzystwo "Wiedza"* (Society "Knowledge") and, through KZKP, she opened *Wyższe Kursy Pedagogiczno-Naukowe* (Higher Pedagogical-Scientific Courses), an

³³⁵ Mazurek, "Działalność oświatowa-wychowawcza Zgromadzenia Sióstr Posłanniczek," 73.

³³⁶ Jabłońska-Deptuła, "'Boży organicznik,'" 62-63.

³³⁷ *Ibid.*, 63-64.

³³⁸ Chwalba, *Historia Polski*, 377.

institution offering university-level education for women in accordance with the teaching of the Church (Chapter 6).³³⁹ Also under different pennames,³⁴⁰ Plater published numerous books addressed to a wide spectrum of readers. The books *Na progu małżeństwa* (Before marriage), *Kobieta ogniskiem* (Woman-center of the family), and *Kobieta obywatelka* (Woman citizen) addressed girls and young women brought up in accordance with the Catholic doctrine.³⁴¹ Besides Plater regularly published articles in numerous journals.³⁴² As argued by several historians, the magazine *Prąd* (Current), which Plater co-founded, contributed to the emergence of the Catholic intelligentsia and this group's social thought in the Polish Kingdom. *Prąd* advocated the rebirth of Catholicism on the basis of the Gospel, but using the achievements of science and culture.³⁴³ The group connected with or inspired by *Prąd*, was, according to Daniel Olszewski, the modernist faction on the Polish grounds and for this reason its members, including Cecylia Plater-Zyberkówna, were accused by the Polish Church's establishment of corrupting the Catholic doctrine.³⁴⁴

Cecylia Plater-Zyberkówna, who took vows and was a member of a hidden convent, appears to diverge from this thesis's focus of examining the social activism of Catholic laywomen.³⁴⁵ However, there are several reasons for Plater's inclusion into my research. First, Plater-Zyberk as a sister in concealment represents a large group of

³³⁹ Plater, *Życiorys*, 10-11.

³⁴⁰ C.P.Z., Wrzos, X. Bogusław, Przyjaciółka Młodzieży, Wrzos, W imię Postępu i Prawdy, Z cyklu Odrodzenia. Jerzy Duchniewski, "Cecylia Plater-Zyberkówna," in *Słownik biograficzny katolicyzmu społecznego w Polsce*, 194.

³⁴¹ Plater-Zyberkówna, *O trzech drogach życia czyli o powołaniu* (About the three paths of life, that is, about the calling) (Warszawa: Druk „Gazety rolniczej,” 1903); *Kobieta-obywatelka* (Woman-citizen) (Warszawa: Druk Piotr Laskauer i S-ki, 1913); *Kobieta ogniskiem w rodzinie* (Woman-center of the family) (Warszawa: Druk Piotra Laskauera, 1914); *Na progu małżeństwa* (Before marriage) (Warszawa: Druk Piotra Laskauera, 1918).

³⁴² *Kronika Rodzinna* (The Family Chronicle), *Przebudzenie* (Awakening), *Przegląd Powszechny* (The General Overview), *Prąd* (The Current), see Duchniewski, "Cecylia Plater-Zyberkówna," in *Słownik biograficzny katolicyzmu społecznego w Polsce*, 194.

³⁴³ For details about *Prąd* and Plater's involvement in it, see Skrobicki, "Geneza i dzieje czasopisma 'Prąd'," 38-49; Turowski, "Cecylia Plater-Zyberkówna (1853-1920) – twórczyni ruchu prądowego," 31-48.

³⁴⁴ My conversation with Daniel Olszewski took place on June 16, 2004 in Rzeszów during the conference "Polish women's religiosity" organized by the *Uniwersytet Rzeszowski* (the Rzeszów University). Also see Bender, *Spoleczne inicjatywy chrześcijańskie*, 120. In addition to the above mentioned projects, Plater also founded *Dom Opieki nad Ubogą Działwą*, (The House for the Poor children, 1906), *Warszawawski Dom Sierot po Robotnikach* (The Varsovian House for Working Class Orphanages, 1906), *Ochrona Studencka na Czystem* (The Student Shelter on Czystem, 1906), *Towarzystwo Młodzieży Męskiej* (The Society of Male Youth, 1906). Plater, *Życiorys*, 11; also Jerzy Duchniewski, "Cecylia Plater-Zyberkówna," 194-196.

³⁴⁵ Duchniewski, "Cecylia Plater-Zyberkówna," 194-196; Mazurek, "Działalność oświatowo-wychowawcza," 48-49.

women-activists who were part of convent life but who passed as laywomen in public.³⁴⁶ The phenomenon of the hidden convents opens up a discussion about the possible empowerment of sisters in concealment who, due to the untypical structure of their congregations, likely exercised more autonomy than nuns and sisters in regular convents. For this reason, the Honorat orders could have attracted women who were neither interested in assuming marital and maternal obligations nor were attracted by regular congregational life. The hidden convents offered them a structure through which they could fulfill their ambitions of entering the public sphere as social workers, activists, teachers, nurses, writers, etc. Moreover, their way of presenting themselves to their contemporaries in public – as single, professional, financially independent laywomen, renowned for their activism in the educational sector – could serve as a model for other women in the period, who were not satisfied with the roles of a wife/mother or a nun; models popularized in sermons, literature, women’s and Catholic press (developed in Chapter 4).

The second reason for Plater’s inclusion into my research goes along the line of the theoretical argument about the incorporation of religion into historical research as another possible historical force capable of shaping processes in the modern period. The social activism of the hidden convents offers an interesting counterargument to the secularization thesis’s claim about religion’s decline towards the end of the nineteenth century. Despite the Russian authorities’ repression of Polish Catholicism and the difficulty the male clergy had in addressing the growing working masses, the sisters in concealment demonstrated that nineteenth-century Catholicism was capable of reinventing itself and adapting to the local conditions so as to respond to modern challenges, whether those posed by the state, anti-clerical discourses, or socio-economic changes.

³⁴⁶ Along with Plater-Zyberkówna, there were other Messenger Sisters known for their educational activism: Józefa Chudzyńska, Stefania Marciszewska, Zofia Wołoska, Kazimiera Proczek, Zofia Wyczółkowska or Waleria Zalewska, see Mazurek, “Działalność oświatowo-wychowawcza,” 35-69.

3.4 Maria Kleniewska (1863-1947)

Born in 1863 to a family of landowners, Maria Kleniewska nee Jarocińska, the fourth of the figures introduced in this chapter, focused specifically on mobilizing landowning women into social activism and creating educational opportunities for peasant women. In her *Wspomnienia*, Kleniewska recalled the impact her mother and grandmother, a member of the Third Order, had had on the development of her religious, social and political views.³⁴⁷ Since the beginning of the 1880s Kleniewska had been undertaking various social projects in rural areas of the Polish Kingdom, but she is best known for her involvement in launching and running an organization for landowners and peasant women, *Zjednoczone Koło Ziemianek* (The United Circle of Women-Landowners, hereafter ZKZ), which was the largest Polish women's association in the territories of the three zones before WWI.

In 1894, inspired by women's social activism in the cities, Kleniewska decided to launch an organization to involve women-landowners in provincial areas. In 1895 Kleniewska and a few other landowning women set up the first clandestine group called *Kółko "Praca"* (Work Circle) in Kluczkowice. Rapidly, further branches followed.³⁴⁸ Initially, the members gathered to sew for the poor, yet soon they widened their agenda with an educational program. During monthly meetings the women listened to lectures on bringing up children, gardening, breeding animals, and broadly defined social issues, which showed that the overall aim of the members was the general improvement of the moral and material conditions in the provincial areas. Until 1906 the vast part of the work done through the circles remained clandestine.³⁴⁹

In 1906, when Poles could legally organize, the landowning women founded *Zjednoczone Koło Ziemianek*. According to its statute, ZKZ aimed at unifying all Polish women's projects of pedagogical, social and economic character in the national spirit, at uplifting women's educational and ethical level as well as at advocating for a wide range of civil rights for them. Also, the organization was to be a place, in which

³⁴⁷ BN, Maria z Jarocińskich Kleniewska, *Wspomnienia* (Memoirs), akc 10245, bruljon 1 (book 1, hereafter BN, akc. 10245, b. 1), handwritten, 3-8;

³⁴⁸ Kleniewska travelled around the country to encourage women to set up similar circles. BN, akc. 10245, b. 1, 144, 52-54.

³⁴⁹ Zakrzewska, *Ruch organizacyjny ziemianek*, 18-19, 27.

its members would have an opportunity to acquire skills and experience needed to carry out social activism in the public sphere.³⁵⁰ In her memoirs, Kleniewska wrote that the organization's statute was patterned after the statutes of similar organizations abroad.³⁵¹ The ZKZ's headquarter was based in Warsaw with a right to establish provincial branches of two types: so-called *rzeczywiste* (actual) for landowning women and *czynne* (active) for the peasant women. In theory, both landowning and peasant women had the same active and passive rights within the organization. However, Ewelina Zakrzewska, author of a monograph about the ZKZ, claims that although the organization emphasized its democratic character, privileged women played a leading role in it. In 1906 ZKZ reported 598 members. In 1914, the peak of the ZKZ's development, the organization had 452 branches with 5,111 members.³⁵²

The ZKZ's members met regularly during the monthly meetings in their respective branches. The branches' social projects responded to needs of their local environments. The most frequently raised issues were the improvement of health care, especially among infants and children, the introduction of new hygienic standards in the peasants' households as well as the popularization of basic medical knowledge. Also, the ZKZ women attempted to deal with the lack of professional midwives, the scarcity of nurseries, daycare facilities, and schools for peasant children in rural areas. Furthermore, landowning women promoted the idea of turning household production (e.g. breeding poultry, honey making, broidery) into a profitable part of their manor estates. To this end, they pointed to the necessity of introducing new technologies and understanding market mechanisms. The women could pick up know-how during the frequent educational courses organized by ZKZ. Also, selected members traveled abroad to visit various institutions and became familiar with the new agriculture trends.³⁵³ According to Zakrzewska, the abundance of ZKZ's projects resulted from the

³⁵⁰ Zakrzewska, *Ruch organizacyjny ziemianek*, 41.

³⁵¹ BN, akc. 10245, b. 1, 46.

³⁵² In 1906 there were 42 branches (34 actual and 8 active) with 598 members (398 landowners and 200 peasants). In 1914 there were 452 branches (256 actual and 196 active) with 5,111 members (1,603 landowners and 3,508 peasants). After the war in 1918 the organizations consisted of 176 branches (73 actual and 103 active) with 4,079 members (1,521 landowners and 2,558 peasants women). Kostrzewska, *Ruch organizacyjny ziemianek*, 68, 78, 84, 86-88.

³⁵³ Kostrzewska, *Ruch organizacyjny ziemianek*, 152. For this reason, Maria Kleniewska travelled to several countries and shared her impressions during the ZKZ's meeting. BN, akc 10245, b. 1, 59, 62-63, 72-74, 163, 176.

fact that the rural regions of the Polish Kingdom were in need of improvement in numerous areas.³⁵⁴

In June 2006, I had a brief exchange with Ewelina Zakrzewska on the role of religion in the history and program of ZKZ.³⁵⁵ Zakrzewska argued that ZKZ should not be viewed as a religious association, for although most of its members believed that the landowning women's movement should be Catholic, compared to other confessionally motivated women's organizations in the period, ZKZ operated without the clergy's supervision or obligatory devotional activities in its program. Although I agree with Zakrzewska's reflection that ZKZ was not a religious organization strictly speaking, I do think that confessionally motivated factors and circumstances may have informed its origins, development, and agenda. My suggestions may further the discussion about the manifold ways in which religion informed various supposedly secular developments in the modern period and, as a result, call into question the clear division between "religious" and "secular" phenomena.

The first observation is that ZKZ's leading women were women with openly voiced religious worldviews. Beside Maria Kleniewska, other examples are Irena Kosmowska – a former student of the Kuźnicki Institute, Julia Kisielewska (pennname J. Oksza) – a popular Catholic journalist in the period, and Maria Karczewska, whose social views were rooted in *Rerum Novarum*. The Catholic doctrine on social order these women believed in influenced the program of ZKZ, for example, by insisting on perpetuating the paternal relations between landowners and peasants and rejecting the idea of the latter's social upward mobility.³⁵⁶

The second observation rests on the connections between Kleniewska and the Honorat movement. In 1880 Maria Jarocińska married the well-known social activist

³⁵⁴ Kostrzewska, *Ruch organizacyjny ziemianek*, 123. Between 1905 and 1921 ZKZ published three journals: *Świat Kobiety* (1905-1906), *Polski Łan* (1907) and *Ziemiańska* (1908-1921). The latter had two parallel versions for the landowning women and for peasant women (from 1911). These were the main sources of the information for ZKS's members about the internal activities, developments and projects of the organization, which also offered a fairly good account of the women's projects in the three zones of Partitioned Poland and abroad, as well as insights into the various social debates of the period. Kostrzewska, *Ruch organizacyjny ziemianek*, especially the chapter "Organy prasowe kobiecego ruchu ziemiańskiego" (The journals of the women's landowners' movement), 91-120.

³⁵⁵ During the conference dedicated to organized forms of Polish women's activism in Partitioned Poland, held June 16, 2006, in Mądralin (Poland).

³⁵⁶ Maria Kretkowska, "Pogląd na stosunek kobiet polskich do obecnych prądów politycznych" (Overview of Polish women's attitudes towards contemporary political ideologies), *Świat Kobiety* 2, 7 (1906), 68-69.

Jan Kleniewski. During his youth Jan Kleniewski was strongly influenced by the Varsovian Positivism (Section 3.3). Thus his life-long activism can be interpreted as the result of secular socio-political belief in the resurgence of the nation through organized, thoroughly thought-out work rooted in the scientific methods that aimed at improving the material conditions of a population deprived from its own state. Although Maria Kleniewska was uneasy about her husband's atheism, in their social work the couple combined the Catholic new social teaching with Positivist ideas. From the 1880s the Kleniewski's estates witnessed numerous initiatives, economic and educational that aimed at uplifting the lower classes and improving economic conditions in the provincial areas (e.g. clandestine educational and artisans programs for peasant children, nurseries).³⁵⁷ Important for my investigations of Catholicism "infiltrating" into secularized areas of the public sphere, in her memoirs Maria Kleniewska mentioned that during the period of mourning after two of their daughters died in the same year, she and her husband turned to Honorat Koźmiński for relief. At Koźmiński's suggestion, Jan Kleniewski burned all the "improper books" in their home library and started to lead a pious life. Kleniewski's conversion and meeting with Koźmiński had immediate consequences.³⁵⁸ From 1897, in several manor estates of the Kleniewski family (in Kluczkowice, Szczekarków, Wilków, Łaziska, Wrzelowcu) members of the hidden Congregation of the Holy Virgin Mary's Sisters moved in and began to run clandestine schools for local people, artisan schools, a shop, and bookbinders' workshop. They also founded an institution that was officially named a boarding school but functioned as a house of the Congregation.³⁵⁹ In this way, the Kleniewski family became part of the Honorat movement, not as members in concealment, but as part of the wide network of lay people cooperating with the hidden orders.

Since members of the hidden orders as well as those collaborating with them were obliged to conceal their activism, it is a challenge for historians to evaluate the size and influence of the Honorat movement in the Polish Kingdom. Making it more

³⁵⁷ BN, akc. 10245, b. 1, 26, 43-44, 48-49, 82, 84, 100, 110-115, 140.

³⁵⁸ BN, akc. 10245, bruljon 2, 33-34, 91.

³⁵⁹ Halina Irena Szumił, "Źródła i stan badań nad życiem i działalnością Marii i Jana Kleniewskich" (The sources and state of research on the lives and activism of Maria and Jan Kleniewski), *Archiwa, Biblioteki i Muzea Kościelne* 81-82 (2004): 302-303.

complicated for the researchers, the agendas and practical work of the Positivist school and the religious Honorat movement were not in fact dissimilar. Abandoning the idea of any abrupt social change, both factions postulated the imperative of persistent and thoroughly planned social work on the ground, performed by committed altruistic individuals, which would bring about long-lasting improvement in various socio-economic domains. In their programs, the Positivist school and the Honorat movement prioritized the material, educational and moral elevation of the masses.³⁶⁰ According to the historian Andrzej Szwarc, the discoveries about the Honorat movement force scholars to re-think the roots of numerous social and economic initiatives – once assumed entirely secular in their spirit – founded and run in the Polish Kingdom between the 1880s and the early-twentieth century.³⁶¹ Further, these similarities between the two factions call for a reassessment of earlier interpretations that posited the secular, dynamic and “modern” in its spirit Polish Positivist faction against conservative, static, anti-modern Catholic forces in this period.³⁶²

The Kleniewski`s close relations with the Honorat movement as well as the fact that ZKZ was occasionally used as a platform to spread the Honorat movement`s projects in rural areas³⁶³ created an opportunity for Maria Kleniewska and Cecylia Plater-Zyberkówna, both of landowning backgrounds, to meet and develop a cooperation. Although Maria Kleniewska did not mention it in her memoirs nor did Zakrzewska highlight it in her research on ZKZ, Cecylia Plater-Zyberkówna, a member of the Honorat movement, regarded herself as ZKZ`s co-founder.³⁶⁴ Moreover, ZKZ`s concept of “social activism” was formulated by Kazimiera Proczkówna, one of the closest co-workers of Plater-Zyberkówna and a member of the Honorat movement: “We call social engagement an activity that aims at improving the living conditions not

³⁶⁰ For discussions on the parallels between Positivism and Polish social Catholicism and the Honorat movement, see Jan Kracik, “Pozytywizm i katolicyzm polski” (Positivism and Polish Catholicism); Michał Heller, “Chrześcijański pozytywizm” (Christian positivism); Stefan Bratkowski, “Powrót do von Kettelera” (Return to von Ketteler), *Znak* 48, 3 (1996): 39-50, 65-73 and 78-85.

³⁶¹ Statement formulated during the public discussion at the above mentioned conference held in June 16, 2006 in Mądralin (Poland).

³⁶² Andrzej Szwarc, conversation June 16, 2006, in Mądralin (Poland).

³⁶³ Honorat Koźmiński, “Listy do sióstr ze zgromadzeń. Do siostry Anieli Godeckiej. Nowe Miasto, 1906” (Letters to the sisters from the congregations. To the Sister Aniela Godecka. Nowe Miasto, 1906), *Nasza Przeszłość* 28 (1968): 169.

³⁶⁴ See her autobiographical note, Plater, *Życiorys*, 11.

of an individual, family or a bunch of people, but of the whole social group.”³⁶⁵

In the early twentieth century, ZKZ took on the idea of establishing a school for peasant women turning to the model of the school of Christian life worked out in Kuźnice. In 1905, Zamoyska sent a letter with her suggestions regarding the organization of such an educational institute. The program would combine theory with practice, as well as elements of a general upbringing for students without raising their ambitions for upward social mobility.³⁶⁶ In 1906, ZKZ opened the school in Mirosławice. The first director of the school was a former student of the Institute in Kuźnice. The school in Mirosławice accepted girls older than fifteen years old for a period of eleven months.³⁶⁷ The ZKZ's school similarly to the schools on Piękna street, Chyliczki, Marianów, and the Dormitory in Lviv, shared many similarities with the Kuźnicki Institute they were modeled after.³⁶⁸ Also, like other schools of this type, it in turn served as a model for establishing other educational institutions: in Kionczyn, Nałeczów, Nieszków, Marysisiń, Śniadów i Szwajcaria.³⁶⁹ In 1922, ZKZ nominated Jadwiga Zamoyska as honorable member.³⁷⁰

In 1913 Polish women activists of various factions from the three zones gathered in Cracow to compare their experiences and the results of their social work as well as discuss women-related issues. During the meeting Maria Kleniewska shared the idea of setting up a bureau that would provide detailed information about the various projects and initiatives of Polish women across the zones.³⁷¹ Her proposal was taken up and the office *Gościna* (Inn) was launched in 1913, based in Cracow. Antonina Machczyńska participated in one of the preparatory meetings of *Gościna*,³⁷² which

³⁶⁵ Quoted after Zakrzewska, *Ruch organizacyjny ziemianek*, 121.

³⁶⁶ "Zebranie ogólne" (The general meeting), *Świat Kobiety* 2, 24 (1906), 273.

³⁶⁷ Zakrzewska, *Ruch organizacyjny ziemianek*, 149.

³⁶⁸ "Zebranie ogólne," 273-274. It was a boarding school, combining education, work and prayer, which taught the students the basic norms of group life. The living conditions were supposed to match those, which the peasants girls had in their usual environments. The students learned how to read and write, history, literature, botanic, chemistry, pedagogy, and household work and management skills. Similar to the Institute in Kuźnice, the ZKZ's school deepened the religious knowledge and religiosity of its students focusing on masses, regular confession, communion and daily prayers, along with developing vocational skills for the household. The program also attempted to develop patriotism among the students. The girls were expected to pass the ideas to others once back home.

³⁶⁹ Kostrzewska, *Ruch organizacyjny ziemianek*, 150.

³⁷⁰ BK, Dyplom Jadwigi Zamoyskiej na członka honorowego Stowarzyszenia Ziemianek (Jadwiga Zamoyska's diploma as honorary member of the United Circle of Women-Landowners), 7547.

³⁷¹ BN, akc. 10245, b. 1, 1116-117, 163, 176.

³⁷² BN, II 9816, t. (vol.) 4, zeszyt (book), 27, 4. Also BN, IV 9830, t.1, 112.

concludes my investigation into the ways in which these four Catholic-women activists' paths intersected in various moments from the 1860s until 1922, beginning with the meeting of Antonina Machczyńska and Jadwiga Zamoyska in Paris and ending with Zamoyska's acceptance as an honorary member of ZKZ.

3.5 Conclusions

Chapter 3 has discussed the emergence of Polish Catholic laywomen's projects and networks since the 1880s. The described social projects' initiators in the 1880s and 1890s were Catholic women from particularly privileged social strata – the aristocracy, landowners – and from the emerging intelligentsia. Like other Polish women's groups in the period, concern over either the scarcity of educational opportunities for girls and young women of all classes or criticism of the curriculums in existing schools for girls in the context of rapidly changing socio-economic realities were the main factors behind the development of Catholic laywomen's activism in the 1880s. At the same time, these concerns served as a way of legitimizing these women's increasing involvement in the public sphere, understood as engagement in the realm of social activism on behalf of other women.

Zamoyska's Institute proposed a scheme for an educational institution for young women that offered, among other things, professional training that enhanced students' chances on the labor market, giving them an opportunity to get general knowledge in various subjects, or to pick up skills to enhance the efficiency of an individual household economy. I explained the popularity of the project by pointing to Zamoyska's ability to connect her educational initiative with several contemporary large-scale processes: the conflict between secular and religious factions, Catholicism's rebirth, growing Polish nationalism, and/or the "woman question". As shown, the model proposed in the Kuźnicki Institute was re-created and appropriated across the lands of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. This happened due to personal connections between the founders (same social background, common travelling, correspondence) and/or widespread knowledge of the Christian school of life, available, for example, in the press or spread by various visitors to the place. The schools patterned on the one in Kuźnice triggered further establishments of similar educational initiatives. The forms and developments of the particular Catholic women's

educational projects were shaped by legal restrictions imposed on Poles, the attitude of the Polish Churches in the three zones towards social problems, tensions between the various national groups inhabiting the lands of the former Polish Lithuanian Commonwealth, secular-religious conflicts, and/or the uneven distribution of broadly defined modernizing processes in the region. My findings about the personal and conceptual links between the Catholic laywomen`s activists demonstrate that their projects were not unconnected, isolated events, but were collectively thought-out efforts to approach contemporary women`s issues, particularly their education, in accordance with the Catholic doctrine.

With respect to the field of Polish women`s history, the findings of this chapter widen our knowledge about the activism and the networks of Polish women from the 1880s until 1918. It demonstrates that the projects of the Polish Catholic laywomen emerged for similar reasons (broadly defined projects of educational reforms for girls and women) and in precisely the same period (the beginning of the 1880s) as the projects of other Polish women`s groups in the period. It suggests that, at least in the Polish context, Catholic laywomen did not engage in social work later than other (secular) women`s factions nor embraced any particularly dissimilar (“divergent”) path towards their social activism. At the same time this chapter has drawn attention to the phenomenon of the Christian school of life as a distinctive form of women`s education proposed by the milieu of Polish Catholic women`s activists.

Regarding Catholic women`s history in the long nineteenth century in general, based on my findings here, I propose to trace the beginnings of modern Catholic laywomen`s activism at least two decades prior to 1900, that is back to the turn of the 1870s and 1880s. In order to excavate Catholic women`s activism prior to the twentieth century, I have shifted my focus from discussing the undertakings occurring within the framework of women`s organizations at the beginning of the twentieth century to individual Catholic laywomen`s projects and later on the emergence of their networks. I suggest that a similar research strategy may be productive when applied to other Catholic contexts.

Finally, Chapter 3 contributed to the body of scholarship on the re-emergence of Catholicism in the nineteenth century by providing examples of how this denomination reinvented itself in reaction to the challenges of the modern period. First,

in the context of an increasingly secularized public sphere, the educational sector included, it proposed a form of religious education for laywomen provided by lay employees yet in accordance with the Catholic doctrine (Zamoyska's Institute). Further, in order to penetrate environments difficult for the clergy to access due to religious indifference, strong anti-clerical discourses and/or legal restrictions, Polish Catholicism suggested the innovative form of moral and material assistance for the disadvantaged by sisters who concealed their convent's identities (the Honorat movement). Finally, the chapter's findings have also shown how enterprises seemingly secular in their character sometimes were infiltrated by religious ideas as with the United Circle of Women-Landowners set up by Maria Kleniewska.

Chapter 4: The project of a Catholic modern pious womanhood

As demonstrated in the previous chapter, four prominent Polish Catholic female activists – Zamoyska, Machczyńska, Plater and Kleniewska – were involved from the 1880s onwards as the founders and leaders of a wide range of social projects in various locations of Partitioned Poland. These pious laywomen’s first-hand managerial experience, contacts with numerous religious and secular authorities in the public sphere, and knowledge about the difficulties women of all social strata faced – be it within familial circles or as part of the paid labor force resulting from legal or customary barriers – forced the Catholic activists to think about the woman’s place in a modern society in a more rigorous manner and share their observations with wider circles of audiences in the form of books and articles and during public lectures.

In Chapter 4, I explore how Catholic women’s concerns over the lack of women’s educational opportunities and their practical engagement in creating new schools for girls and young women (as outlined in Chapter 3) had further consequences: it triggered a broader project of Catholic laywomen proposing a reformulated model of womanhood and constructing a Catholic modern female citizen who took on her duties in the private and public spheres. Specifically, this chapter will discuss, firstly, Catholic lay female activists’ observations about women’s disadvantageous condition; secondly, from whom they sought support for advancing their project of creating a “new woman”; and, thirdly, what kind of arguments they employed to achieve their ends. I argue that in order to promote their project of a Catholic modern civic womanhood, the laywomen sought support from a wide range of audiences: their fellow Catholics, followers of the nationalism movement, secular factions that aimed at carrying out various social reforms, of women as well as members of their own social privileged groups. While proposing a Catholic version of a reformed, modern, active and pious womanhood, Catholic women aimed both to reorganize the private and public spheres so as to accommodate new meanings of “femininity” and at the same time to accommodate a new understanding of (female) religiosity. With their project of, what I call, “modernizing” female piety, the activists

contested both the masculine/secular conceptualizations of the public sphere as well as the Roman Catholic Church's authority over female followers.

For source material, I rely primarily on printed materials, books, and articles that were published by the four women introduced in the previous chapter. When I refer to unpublished archival material, as is the case with Machczyńska, I rely on drafts of her lectures and speeches intended for the public. This choice of primary sources is based on one of the goals of this chapter, which is to identify strategies employed by the activists in the public realm.³⁷³ As stated in Chapter 3, these four women's biographies and projects should be understood as a lens into the larger communities of which these Catholic laywomen-activists were a part. Similarly in this chapter I assume that the opinions expressed in the materials left by the four authors represent not only their individual views but also convey the broader standpoint shared by Polish Roman Catholic laywomen-activists from the last years of the nineteenth century until the outbreak of the First World War.

4.1 Recognition of women's situation and criticism of the available models of femininity

In 1909, in her seminal book addressed to young women *Kobieta ogniskiem w rodzinie* (Woman-center of the family), Plater-Zyberk gave a poignant summary of contemporary women's burdens experienced in familial, social, economic and political contexts:

The old ways do not give her bread, and moreover she felt economically hurt by them. The old ways do not reach out to her spiritual resources: the richness of her intelligence, the courage of her will, the immensity of her initiative. Furthermore, the old ways do not satisfy her demand and need of knowledge and social work, but most of all they do not prepare her to live (...). Today it is not enough to be a woman, but it is necessary to have women's rights. She feels she is a human being and wishes to obtain the rights entitled to human

³⁷³ While Antonina Machczyńska was publishing from the turn of the 1850s and 1860s, Jadwiga Zamoyska, Cecylia Plater-Zyberk and, to a less extent, Maria Kleniewska, began writing only by the end of the nineteenth century, that is, only after gaining at least a two-decades-long experience of social activism. As opposed to Machczyńska who expressed herself in shorter forms, Zamoyska and Plater presented their thoughts on women's situation in extensively elaborated and lengthy books. Because the latter two published only in the later stages of their lives, their work does not allow us trace developments or shifts in their reasoning on women's situation, but rather offers a sort of "concluding," "mature" version of the authors' position on the "woman question" from the early years of the twentieth century until IWW. Plater's and Zamoyska's books often consisted of lectures they had given to their students in their respective schools.

beings. She is permanently limited to needle work, to managing a household, to caring, she feels burdened by these duties. Among other things either needle work or factory work are not enough to keep her and her family alive. To make matters worse, for the same work her remuneration is not the same as a man's. This is what is currently disturbing her, occasionally even revolting her, and pushing her towards emancipation. She has finally achieved self-awareness of her own value and rights, [and] she cannot stand her maltreatment any longer either in private or public life. Also she cannot stand the limitations she has been fettered by, she cannot listen to axioms about her passive role in the society any longer (...). She can see the injustice in all of this that outrages her (...) [and] she begins to rebel against it.³⁷⁴

Plater demonstrated a comprehensive knowledge of women's detrimental socio-economic situation in the period, acknowledged the right of women to express their dissatisfaction, and supported their drive to change the unsatisfying status quo. She also denounced the contemporary patterns of upbringing and socializing women as the chief factors that negatively affected their situation:

The old type of a woman, recommended by the moralists, praised by the poets, set as an example by many, is the type of a passive, silent, meek, naïve, submissive, exemplary mother, wife and housekeeper (...) virtuous, but not stalwart, hardworking, but not educated.³⁷⁵

The writings of the Catholic activists conveyed their sharp understanding that various narratives (what today we would call discourses) which emphasized physical, emotional and intellectual differences between men and women were not merely descriptive, but worked to establish a relationship in which women were inferior to men – socially, legally and economically disempowered. Women were perceived and constructed as “either a doll capable of being a decoration of his living room, or a goose entraining him, or a coquette who arouses his senses or, in the best case, as only a worthy housekeeper and a mother of his children.”³⁷⁶ Plater maintained that the contemporary models of femininity, understood as “weakness, incapability, timidity, shallowness, lack of criticism, lack of logic, ruled by the heart”, were a complete negation of the “picture of a woman the Holy Scripture gives us!”, and therefore failed to meet the Bible's teaching and requirements on the same subject.³⁷⁷ More

³⁷⁴ Plater, *Kobieta ogniskiem*, 18.

³⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 9.

³⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 334.

³⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 23.

importantly, the author of *Kobieta ogniskiem* pointed out that these models were the products of various socio-historical developments. Because “weakness, timidity, and the other faults” had been “sculptured in her [woman] by hundreds of years of mistreatment,”³⁷⁸ Plater proposed a radical reform of female educational patterns: “let us alter her conditions, let us create healthy family environment for her, and it will be the first step for her towards the desirable emancipation.”³⁷⁹ Plater also recognized that the common definition of “a woman” was a serious obstacle for women-activists seeking to eliminate socio-economic injustices, as they were not perceived as equal partners with men in carrying on social reforms,

if a man is used to appreciate a woman only in terms of her charms, sometimes stupidity and courtship, perfectness of her female body, or at best her frugality and passive virtues, how on earth can such a man possibly believe that such a woman is capable of sharing his burdens with him in the wider social realm.³⁸⁰

Next to the “old” type of femininity, Plater observed that there were at least two emerging “models” of womanhood. The author acknowledged the presence of various women’s groups on the Polish lands and abroad, as well as the significance of their efforts for proposing and carrying out reforms of female education and for advancing women’s rights that they “justly deserve.”³⁸¹ However, gathering these various secular women’s efforts under the term of “feminism”, Plater disapproved of the model of “femininity”, that in her view, these factions proposed:

[There are] various female freaks of nature who bring shame on the important issue. [Feminism] has given us a female student running blindly after education, because of her vanity, for recognition and flirt, a woman who mimics man, a woman who cynically breaks with faith and morality, rejects any ties, aspiring to rights, but unfamiliar with her duties.³⁸²

According to Plater, the second model of womanhood, increasingly popular especially in the literature of “the fin de siècle artists,” described women in purely sexual terms and functions,

at first sight they demand rights for her, but in fact they put her on the same level as cattle. They talk about her dignity, but they make a being out of her

³⁷⁸ Ibid., 9.

³⁷⁹ Ibid., 338.

³⁸⁰ Ibid., 334.

³⁸¹ Ibid., 10.

³⁸² Ibid., 10.

capable of carnal ecstasies, whose chief aim is to arouse men with new impressions. Taking into account such picture of a woman, what respect a man can have for a woman and what distrust he has for the institution of marriage!³⁸³

As I show in subsequent sections, knowledge about women`s socio-economic situation, the realization that the available models of femininity had been historically and socially constructed by both women`s upbringing and images endorsed in the public and private sphere, and critical engagement with different meanings of “woman” laid the foundation for the Catholic lay activists` arguments for introducing new principles of female education.³⁸⁴

4.2 Polish Catholic laywomen`s claims vis-à-vis the Church authorities

In Section 2.1, I pointed out how from the 1880s onwards the Vatican attempted to bring the Catholic laity closer to the Church`s agenda by means of establishing various pious associations and by also encouraging lay people to engage in contemporary social issues through initiating projects and/or founding institutions that aimed at bringing material and moral assistance to those in need. At first glance, the Vatican`s new politics should have facilitated women`s entrance into the public sphere – or at least into the realm of social work in the areas in which the state was believed to have failed its citizens. However, not only did Rome not formulate any explicit endorsement of lay female activism, but according to various documents, it re-stated its opinion that the primary realm of female activism was in the family, the private sphere, where a woman was subordinated to her father`s or husband`s authority.³⁸⁵

Historians of the Church and Catholicism on the Polish lands commonly agree that until the early twentieth century the Polish religious authorities only occasionally expressed their opinion – either in public or internally – about broadly defined women`s issues. In the Polish Kingdom, in the 1870s in the Catholic press the Church

³⁸³ Ibid., 11-12.

³⁸⁴ See also Karen Offen`s article “Was Mary Wollstonecraft a Feminist? A Contextual Re-reading of *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman, 1792-1992*,” in *Quilting A New Canon. Stitching Women`s Words*, ed. Uma Parameswaran (Toronto : Sister Vision, 1996), 3-24. Offen argues that a reformulation of late-eighteenth century models of femininity was one of Mary Wollstonecraft`s main proposals.

³⁸⁵ For example see Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum*, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/leo_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_15051891_rerum-novarum_en.html.

opposed women's suffrage as irreconcilable with Christian principles and teaching of the Bible that envisioned the role of a woman as chiefly a wife and mother and designated the home as the area of her fulfillment. The Catholic establishment assumed that a woman involved in public matters, especially in political activities, would inevitably fulfill them at the expense of her familial and maternal duties. It was only shortly before WWI that the Church in the Polish Kingdom began to express a mild endorsement of women's emancipatory ambitions and of their involvement in the social realm or as part of the paid labor force. However, the clergymen repeatedly warned that these newly embraced activities should not collide with or undermine the prestige of women's primary, "natural" roles as wives and mothers.³⁸⁶

My investigation of Polish Catholic women's engagement into the social realm (presented in Chapters 3, 5 and 6) shows that despite the quietness of the Church authorities on the issue, in Galicia and the Grand Duchy of Posen the clergy began to reach out to laywomen of privileged social backgrounds as potential social activists. Especially in Galicia, from the end of the nineteenth century laywomen of the aristocracy, middle-class, and intelligentsia became involved in numerous social projects. These women's considerable social engagement contrasts with the scarcity of women-activists related documents in the Church's archives and the small number of articles about female social initiatives in contemporary Catholic journals compared to those projects undertaken by men.³⁸⁷ This raises the important question of whether the Church in this region perceived lay women's social activism to be of secondary importance, whether it was just taken for granted – based on the assumption about women's "natural" religiosity and caring predispositions – or whether this indicates that the Church failed to recognize women's ambitions and their drive for change.

In the Grand Duchy of Posen the Church's interest in women's social activism was primarily fueled by its concern about lower-class women in the paid labor force. In 1908, it organized a course for women from privileged groups interested in taking on work on behalf of the disadvantaged (developed further in Chapter 6). This was also the period in which articles on women's emancipation, their rights and their activism as

³⁸⁶ Stegner "Miejsce kobiety w społeczeństwie w opinii środowisk katolickich i ewangelickich w Królestwie Polskim," 467; Olszewski, "Postawy społeczno-religijne kobiet w Królestwie Polskim," 11-12.

³⁸⁷ For example see the two journals specifically dedicated to tracing, describing, and coordinating the Christian social initiatives in Galicia: *Miłosierdzie Chrześcijańskie* and *Sodalis Marianus*.

a desirable part of the social landscape (as long as it did not clash with their primary familial obligations) began to appear in the Catholic press.³⁸⁸

The ambiguous position of the (Polish) Catholic Church with respect to women's presence in the public sphere – either as founders and/or members of social projects, part of the paid labor force, not to mention as fighters for political rights – forced (Polish) Catholic laywomen activists to develop arguments and strategies to legitimize their growing activism in the eyes of contemporary Catholics. In her book *O miłości Ojczyzny* (On Love of the Fatherland, 1899), Zamoyska re-stated that, according to the Catholic doctrine, the ultimate aim of each individual's life was salvation obtained through earthly behaviors.³⁸⁹ God's will was expressed primarily in the Decalogue, yet also, Zamoyska continued, through the particular circumstances in which individuals found themselves, e.g. of class, profession, age, nationality, education, wealth, or specific talents. An individual belonged primarily to God, however, this dependency combined a set of smaller dependencies like belonging to a family, society and fatherland. These areas provided an individual with a specific set of duties, which he or she must fulfill in his or her temporal journey. How she/he performed these duties conditioned his/her eternity. For this reason, Zamoyska argued, it was crucial for an individual to recognize and fully comprehend what God exactly expected from him or her.³⁹⁰ The consciousness of one's temporal obligations, given by God himself, was not just there, but had to be obtained through a laborious process of recognition that an individual developed unceasingly in the course of life. For this reason, Plater urged that a woman must “educate herself indefinitely.”³⁹¹

According to Zamoyska, the importance of education in this process was

³⁸⁸ Piotr Adamek, “O potrzebie pracy społeczno-charytatywnej kobiet katolickich ze sfer wyższych i średnich” (About the necessity of work of Catholic women of the upper and middle classes), *Ruch chrześcijańsko-społeczny* 7 (1909): 616; A. Ziemski, “O konieczności pracy społecznej kobiet warstw inteligentnych i środkach nabycia potrzebnej wiedzy” (About the necessity of social work performed by women from the intelligentsia and about the means to acquire the necessary knowledge), *Ruch chrześcijańsko-społeczny* 8 (1910): 249.

³⁸⁹ Zamoyska, *O miłości Ojczyzny*, 3. Also the same proposal in Zamoyska, *Wspomnienia*, 48 and also *O wychowaniu*, 39.

³⁹⁰ Zamoyska, *O miłości Ojczyzny*, 6-8. Also Zamoyska, *O wychowaniu*, 12-13; 55-56; *O pracy*, 88. Also Cecylia Plater-Zyberkówna, *Praca źródłem szczęścia* (Work as a source of happiness) (Warszawa: 1899), 142-145; *Cywilizacja w świetle Chrystianizmu* (Warszawa: Druk Piotr Lauskauer i S-ki, 1905), 7; also *O trzech drogach życia czyli o powołaniu* (On the three paths of life, that is, about the calling) (Warszawa: Druk Gazety Rolniczej, 1903), 29-41.

³⁹¹ Plater, *Cywilizacja w świetle Chrystianizmu*, 30.

twofold. First, a properly designed education enhanced individuals' chances to recognize their specific callings appropriately, which essentially conditioned their salvation. Secondly, when God's plan for an individual was correctly recognized, education should provide him or her with the necessary skills to perform the obligations in the best possible way. Zamoyska sharpened the very general supposition about the obedience of individuals to the divine plan by contextualizing it within the contemporary socio-political situation of Catholicism during the period. In *O miłości Ojczyzny*, she argued that because of the deteriorating position of religion and the Church in modern times, an individual, regardless of sex, must fulfill God's will to re-establish the divine order. This would be achieved through committed, well-informed work in all the areas – family, society, and fatherland.³⁹²

Zamoyska thus sought to legitimize her demand for creating new schooling possibilities for women as well as for general reform in the patterns of their upbringing by referring to the Roman Catholic doctrine. Connecting the issue of women's education with the problem of individual women's salvation, God's will and the re-establishment of the divine order in the earthly world, Zamoyska challenged those Catholic factions of the period that still opted for limited education for women, preferably in the form of homeschooling.³⁹³ If a woman's redemption depended on the proper recognition and fulfillment of her calling, then anyone who put obstacles in the way of this process would deprive her of the means needed to obtain eternal life. Furthermore, with this argument the refusal of women's education not only meant denying their salvation but also implied opposing God's will to restore his law in the temporal world by depriving women the tools needed in the fight in the name of the Church. Plater-Zyberk argued that in the current situation, in which humanity was heading towards calamity, not only should women join the "rescue work," but they should be given "the primary initiative" in this task.³⁹⁴

This strategy of critical engagement with religious doctrines embraced by Polish Catholic laywomen-activists shares many striking similarities with the reasoning

³⁹² Zamoyska, *O miłości Ojczyzny*, 3; also *O pracy*, 101; *Szkola domowej pracy w Zakopanem*, 4. For the same opinion see Plater, *Kobieta ogniskiem*, 288-289, 292-310; *Cywilizacja w świetle Chrystianizmu*, 20. For Antonina Machczyńska's opinion on the same issue in a similar manner, see BN, 9816, t. 2, z. 9, 24-32; t. 3, z. 20, 2-3.

³⁹³ Żarnowska, "Family and Public Life," 479.

³⁹⁴ Plater, *Kobieta ogniskiem*, 13.

of other pious, but by no means Catholic only, women's groups in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Such critical rethinking of religious dogma so as to appropriate them for women's specific needs has grasped the attention of numerous scholars. In her article "Rethinking Religion in Gender History" (2005), British historian Sue Morgan states:

one of the most prevalent themes emerging, then, in the current historicization of religion and gender, is the way in which women subverted the traditional patriarchal language of religion and piety into a political arsenal for the self-advancement of themselves, for their own sex. (...) Essentially this meant the transformation of the orthodox Christian emphasis upon feminine self-sacrifice into a powerful claim for the regenerative mission of women where, critically, women's self-designated roles as saviours of humanity were sanctioned by a divine calling from God. Such spiritual legitimation could take several forms but (...) was an irrefutable and unquestionable source of power for Victorian women, which enabled them to circumvent patriarchal ecclesiastical conventions in a myriad of ways.³⁹⁵

One of the most significant outcomes of the scholarly focus on pious women's critical engagement in theological debate with their respective religious authorities or doctrines was the discovery of, as put by the Swedish researcher Inger Hammar, "the contradictions inherent in the fact that from the middle of the nineteenth century" numerous women's emancipatory claims were born in contexts once "labeled [by historians] as hostile to emancipation" (see Chapter 1).³⁹⁶

In principle I agree with Morgan's and Hammar's observations on both the strategies embraced by, in this case predominantly Protestant women, as well as the state of the current historical research on the subject of women and religion and the illuminating results of the above mentioned scholarly approach. However, I would argue that narrowing the research focus to studying women-activists' encounters with religious arguments poses the risk of assuming that these pious women's primary concern was how to legitimize their public activism for their respective religious authorities or *vis-à-vis* respective religious doctrines. This supposition, I acknowledge, may be accurate when applied to the situation of devoted Christian women in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when the religious authorities were far more

³⁹⁵ Morgan, "Rethinking Religion in Gender History," 118-119.

³⁹⁶ Inger Hammar, "From Fredrika Bremer to Ellen Key. Calling, Gender and the Emancipation Debate in Sweden, c. 1830-1900," in *Globalizing Feminisms*, 95.

powerful. However, in the late nineteenth century pious women operated in a different context, that is, one in which the unfolding secularizing processes significantly challenged the position of religion in the public sphere. For this reason, centering scholarly investigation specifically on the relation between women and their religious authorities/doctrines, first, indirectly positions religion as the chief obstacle for pious women's social activism or emancipatory ambitions, and, secondly, understates the existence of other, secular, discourses and/or processes that were not conducive for women's claims. Thirdly, it may lead to overlooking the instances when the pious laywomen themselves were seeking acceptance and/or alliances outside of their religious milieus.

Without negating the Polish laywomen's respect for the Church in the nineteenth century and their seeking its support, they were likely aware of the fact the Church was not the institution to direct their demands to regarding, for example, educational reforms for women or changing labor legislation, since the Church did not have administrative power to do so. Therefore, it was a variety of entirely secular municipal or state authorities the Catholic laywomen targeted with their appeals (developed in Chapter 6). Similar to their contacts with ecclesiastical powers, how successful these women were in challenging and/or gaining the support of the secular establishments depended on a skillful appropriation/subversion of anti-women discourses, in addition to the material and immaterial resources at these women disposal, to which I will return later. Although secular and religious factions' arguments against (Catholic) women's ambitions of entering the public sphere often overlapped, they were not identical; as such, neither were the strategies employed by the Catholic activists in confronting them.

Further, even if in the second half of the nineteenth century the (Polish) Church was hostile to the idea of women's emancipation, in the early years of the twentieth century the Catholic hierarchy and milieu in general were no longer unanimous regarding women's emancipatory ambitions. In the second edition of *Kobieta ogniskiem* (1914), Plater quoted an article published in the progressive Catholic journal *Prąd* (Section 3.3) in order to acquaint female readers with the contemporary attitude of the Church with respect to the "woman question." The article she quoted, originally published in 1912 and written by a priest, began with a general observation on the

variety of contemporary, and often contradictory opinions on women's suffrage both within and outside of the Catholic milieu. The 1912 article's author claimed that not only did the Church allow a pluralism of opinions among its believers with respect to women's emancipation and political suffrage, but also that their ideas could not be disassociated from the particular contexts they emerged in.³⁹⁷ The strong emphasis in the quoted by Plater article on the importance of circumstances that informed ideas about women means that in the early twentieth century some Catholic factions argued that part of the Church's teaching was less an expression of an infallible divine wisdom than a product of specific socio-historical processes. This line of reasoning had two immediate consequences. It pointed to the fact that the opinions formulated in other contexts did not necessarily match the contemporary circumstances – for example, the idea of a woman's role as primarily confined to the domestic sphere did not appear to match the contemporary situation, in which women were forced to seek paid employment outside of their homes. The second implication was the possibility of further reinterpretations. The conviction that even religious teachings were to some extent the artifacts of historically conditioned human reasoning opened the way for further maneuverings around concepts that blocked women's access to the public sphere.

There is another issue worth considering in the context of the discussion about the ways pious women positioned themselves *vis-à-vis* the religious authorities during the nineteenth century. Scholars investigating the history of Catholicism point to the dramatic social change with respect to which strata became interested in pursuing priesthood; specifically they indicate that a significant number of peasant men took vows in this period. The election of a village cobbler's son, Giuseppe Melchiorre Sarto, to pope – Pius X (1903-1914) – proved that the priesthood did create genuine opportunities upward social mobility for lower-class men.³⁹⁸ At the same time, numerous Catholic lay women-leaders, by no means only in the Polish context, came from particularly privileged social groups; they belonged to the most prominent aristocratic families and held titles of countesses, princesses, and duchess.³⁹⁹ Also, in a

³⁹⁷ Plater, *Kobieta ogniskiem*, 364-365.

³⁹⁸ Kłoczowski, *A History of Polish Christianity*, 242-243.

³⁹⁹ For example, see the participants and speakers from various Catholic settings in the earlier mentioned

period in which the economic basis of the Church was severely undermined by the various measures applied by state authorities, the Ladies's financial support was often essential to social projects, not necessarily women-related, the clergy launched. Taking into account the confidence one may derive from one's social background and financial horizons on the one hand, and the insecurities and/or complexes resulting from one's birth in underprivileged strata on the other, one can wonder who actually dictated the conditions of various Catholic social projects either on the parish or higher levels. My question about the possible implications resulting from social-economic/class inequalities between some laywomen-activists and clergymen is important for the discussion about pious laywomen's agency within the supposedly male-dominated and run institutions in this era.

4.3 Being part of the public sphere without leaving home

The Catholic laywomen never questioned that their marital and maternal duties within the family were the core of women's earthly obligations.⁴⁰⁰ However, they insisted that although women were "naturally" better equipped for family life, these "natural" predispositions needed elaborate and systematic development.⁴⁰¹ The consensus among these Catholic activists was that the contemporary educational opportunities for women did not prepare them for their future obligations.⁴⁰² They highlighted the crucial importance of education as a factor enhancing women's chances to fulfill their duties as mothers and wives by pointing at the connection between the well-being of the family with that of the community.⁴⁰³ The latter was understood interchangeably as the nation, society, or the entire civilization/humanity,⁴⁰⁴ which indicates that Polish Catholic laywomen activists targeted not only the Catholic milieu, but simultaneously

reports from the FILCW's international annual meetings in 1910, 1911, and 1912.

⁴⁰⁰ Zamoyska, *Wspomnienia*, 319 and *O pracy*, 158; Cecylia Plater-Zyberkówna, *O potrzebie reformy szkoły średniej dla dziewcząt* (About the need to reform secondary schools for girls) (Warszawa, Lublin, Łódź, Kraków: Nakład Gebethera i Wolffa, 1917), 7; *Na progu małżeństwa*, 35, *O trzech drogach życia czyli o powołaniu*, 10-16.

⁴⁰¹ Plater, *Kobieta ogniskiem w rodzinie*, 9.

⁴⁰² Zamoyska, *Zakład Kórnicki*, 28; Plater, *O potrzebie reformy szkoły średniej dla dziewcząt*, 7.

⁴⁰³ Plater, *Na progu małżeństwa*, 448-449, 452-453; *O trzech drogach*, 13; BN, Antonina Machczyńska, *Mienie duchowe i materialne* (Spiritual and material sources), IV 9831 (hereafter BN IV 9831), handwritten, 24-29, 56-58 also BN, Antonina Machczyńska, "Zarysy gospodarstwa domowego" (Outline of the household economy), II 9823 (hereafter BN II 9823), handwritten, 54-57.

⁴⁰⁴ Plater, *Kobieta ogniskiem*, 9-14.

addressed the rising nationalist Polish movements and various secular/social reformers.⁴⁰⁵

Regardless of the audience, the activists regarded in-depth religious knowledge as the core of women`s education.⁴⁰⁶ Women`s informed faith was the prerequisite for introducing truly Christian patterns of familial life and, further, for building a new modern Polish society in which Christian values and a high moral spirit would be moderating the injustices resulting from reckless material development.⁴⁰⁷ Besides, though appropriate to their respective social background, women should have had a good command of what was called “general knowledge”, which was understood as fluency in Polish language and history, geography, pedagogy, biology, hygiene, law, mathematics, economy, law, knowledge about contemporary social issues, and household management.⁴⁰⁸

Next to formal schooling available for all women, the Catholic activists insisted on self-development in the form of individually designed education, undertaken by each woman as a long-life project. This was aimed at furthering “the cultivation of [her] reasoning and inner disposition before a woman begins to act in the public sphere and earn social respect.”⁴⁰⁹ The Catholic activists also encouraged women to acquire the habit of regular, preferably daily, reading “with a pencil in hand” of historical, pedagogical, sociological, religious or scientific books.⁴¹⁰

As a separate subject, children`s upbringing occupied a privileged position in the Catholic curriculums for women. The Catholic laywomen-activists produced elaborated manuals for mothers and/or women who were in charge of children`s nurturing. Along with the insistence on religious education for children, they were particularly concerned with improving children`s physical condition and maximizing their intellectual capacities. In various guidebooks written for mothers, the Catholic

⁴⁰⁵ Compare with, for example, Leo XIII, *Quod Apostolici Muneris* (On Socialism), in Libreria Editrice Vaticana, accessed June 2, 2011, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/leo_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_28121878_quod-apostolici-muneris_en.html.

⁴⁰⁶ Zamoyska, *O wychowaniu*, 18-22, 24-37. Also Machczyńska in BN II 9816, t. 2, z. 9, 24-32.

⁴⁰⁷ Plater, *Cywilizacja w świetle Chrystianizmu*; 15-16.

⁴⁰⁸ Zamoyska, *O miłości Ojczyzny*, 4; *O pracy*, 47-87; *Zakład Kórnicki*, 30-34. Plater, *Kobieta ogniskiem*, 38-47. Machczyńska`s opinion on the same issue, see BN, II 9813, t. (vol.) 1, 19; BN, IV 9830, t. (vol.) 1, 114-120.

⁴⁰⁹ Plater, *Kobieta ogniskiem*, 332. Also Machczyńska in BN II 9816, t. 2, z. 9, 24-32.

⁴¹⁰ Plater, *Kobieta ogniskiem*, 60.

activists gave detailed instructions on nutrition, hygienic routines (body, clothes, housing's standards) and physical exercises mothers should apply in raising their children.⁴¹¹ Women of poor health were advised to restrain from reproduction so as not to pass on their illness to offspring.⁴¹² Plater also proposed that men who wanted to enter a marital relation should be obliged by law to provide a medical certificate that they did not suffer from any venereal disease.⁴¹³ With their detailed instructions to mothers, the Catholic laywomen were openly calling for a radical change in the contemporary patterns of upbringing within the familial environment so as to enhance youth's educational and physical state.

Their proposals did not emerge in a historical vacuum. Across Europe, abrupt industrialization and urbanization in the nineteenth century had increased poverty in working-class districts – along with the attending problems of alcoholism, prostitution, suicides and a generally very low-level of health among urban populations. Discussions about the solutions to these problems occurred at the intersection of at least three major inter-related processes: the rapid advancement of medical and hygienic sciences; the development of discourses on “improving” the physical and intellectual capacities of human bodies; and the growing nationalisms, which were preoccupied, among other things, by the issue of generating healthy national bodies as part of the competition between nations (empires, races) during the period.⁴¹⁴ By expressing an interest in the intellectual and physical condition of children and women/mothers, Polish Catholic laywomen participated and intervened in broader developments unfolding on the Polish lands. At the same time, by tapping into the nationalist ambitions and contemporary secular eugenics discourses, Catholic activists attempted to make their specific women-related concerns relevant to broader audiences.

⁴¹¹ Machczyńska in BN II 9816, t. 1, z 1, 2-19. Also Plater's book specifically dedicated to this issue, see Cecylia Plater-Zyberkówna, *Kilka słów o wychowaniu w rodzinie* (A few words about upbringing in the family) (Warszawa: Druk Piotra Laskauerai S-ki, 1903).

⁴¹² Plater, *O trzech drogach życia*, 29.

⁴¹³ Plater, *Na progu małżeństwa*, 39. For Machczyńska's opinion see BN II 9816, t. 1, z. 1, 2-19.

⁴¹⁴ For an overview of these transnational developments on the Polish lands, see Magdalena Gawin, *Rasa i nowoczesność. Historia polskiego ruchu eugenicznego* (Race and modernity. The history of Polish eugenics movement) (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Neriton, 2003), 22-26. Elżbieta Mazur, “Ruch dbałości o kulturę fizyczną kobiet w XIX wieku i na początku XX wieku” (The concern over women's physical condition in the nineteenth century and at the beginning of the twentieth century), in *Kobieta i czas wolny*, 373-374; Jan Snopko, “Dziewczęta w “Sokole” galicyjskim” (Girls in the Galician “Sokol”), in *Kobieta i edukacja*, 383-391.

One of the outcomes of the debates on women's education orchestrated by the Catholic laywomen was a redefinition of the notion of what is called today, "labor of love" and, consequently, an implicit questioning of the conceptualizations of private and public as well as the mutual relations and boundaries between these two spheres. Catholic laywomen's claim that women needed formal education to properly perform their assumed female duties defined reproduction (biological and cultural) and management of the household not in terms of natural qualities but in terms of a set of skills that had to be acquired through professional training.⁴¹⁵ In order to properly perform their duties in the private sphere, young women and their parents had to seek knowledge and skills outside of it, in the carefully planned new public schooling system. In other words, Catholic laywomen's arguments for improvements in the management of domestic environments, understood as *the* responsibility of women, chiefly depended on and required thorough changes in the public sphere.

Further, the Catholic lay activists pointed at the link between the micro-economy of an individual household and the macro-economy of society. In her unpublished "Zarysy gospodarstwa domowego" (Outline of the household management, written around 1884), Machczyńska tried to estimate the market value of women's work as mothers and housekeepers. She suggested that women at home and men employed outside of the home brought a comparable income to the household and, therefore, the same must be true on the level of the national economy. The radical character of Machczyńska's argument lies in the fact that she challenged the binary division between the female/private/unproductive/unpaid and male/public/productive/paid spheres, claiming that housewives, employed women and employed men were profit-making laborers, albeit in different ways.⁴¹⁶

The four women I focus on here did not aim to challenge the sexual division of labor as such, but they did question the devaluation of female work performed in the household *vis-à-vis* the work men performed in the public sphere. By defining women as nurturers of offspring/future citizens and contributors to the economic prosperity of

⁴¹⁵ Plater, *Kobieta ogniskiem*, 9.

⁴¹⁶ Antonina Machczyńska: "Materiały do zarysów edukacji narodowej" Paryż 1862-1863 i "Zarysy gospodarstwa domowego" Lwów 1884 (Antonina Machczyńska: "Materials for national education" Paris 1862-1863 and "Outline of the household management" Lviv 1884), II 9823, handwritten, especially pages 54-72. Also Plater, *Kobieta ogniskiem*, 52-57.

the community/nation – by connecting female obligations with the well-being of the nation/society – women were becoming part of the public domain without leaving their households.⁴¹⁷

In addition to introducing the concept of women's familial work as a profession in itself, the Catholic laywomen-activists proposed to perceive women's household activities as a tool of their religious development and service to God. In Catholic activists' writings, household work, which was often assumed to consist of the most mundane, trivial daily activities, became instrumental for women's spiritual self-perfection.⁴¹⁸ By defining women's household activities as another form of praying, the Catholic laywomen countered arguments against Catholicism as a passive, unproductive part of the social landscape, presenting it as capable of reformulating itself so as to contribute to general earthly prosperity.

Depending on the audience, Catholic laywomen emphasized a different set of duties and skills their sex should obtain through a newly designed educational system, for which their own schools were to be the precursors. When addressing the Catholic factions, women's "primary" obligations encompassed the religious, intellectual and physical development of children as well as sustaining men's religiosity, since men were supposedly more exposed to secularizing forces than women. For this reason, the curriculum of the girls' schools, the Catholic activists argued, should accentuate the religious upbringing and knowledge of their students.⁴¹⁹ When building alliances with the Polish nationalist movement, the Catholic laywomen pointed at "safeguarding" Polishness and managing individual households so as to enhance both individual families' budget and the national economy as the core of female duties. Accordingly, women were asked to be fluent in the Polish language, knowledgeable about Polish history as well as to become familiar with "modern" ways of efficiently organizing household labor.⁴²⁰ When seeking support of the privileged groups, that is their own social strata, Catholic laywomen activists strongly stated that, although everybody was entitled to education, the schooling system should assure rather than challenge the prevalent social status quo. Consequently, the educational opportunities for women

⁴¹⁷ Plater, *Kobieta ogniskiem*, 20-21.

⁴¹⁸ *Une grande Ame*, 61.

⁴¹⁹ Zamoyska, *Zakład Kórnicki. Szkoła downowej pracy w Zakopanem*, 4.

⁴²⁰ Zamoyska, *O trzech oddziałach*, 6-7.

should match their social background.⁴²¹ Finally, when addressing other women, the Catholic activists tapped into the shared experience of motherhood and matrimony. Plater warned women that only as educated mothers and wives could they count on the respect of their children and husband:

An always fondling and indulging mother is enough only for very small children. A bigger child, who begins to reflect, disdains such a mother.⁴²² (...) The marital harmony, the one as envisioned by Christianity, may exist only there where there is spiritual unity, accordance of views, and intellectual equality. A woman can be a man`s companion only if at least to a certain extent she is equal to him on the intellectual level. Otherwise instead of being a companion, let us speak frankly, she will be someone who feeds his children, manages his household, and until a certain moment is a pleasant toy for him. What a humiliation!⁴²³

The last quote introduces another issue taken up by the Catholic women in their effort to introduce a new type of womanhood. Along with re-evaluating women`s work as mothers and housekeepers, the Catholic activists also scrutinized the contemporary concept of “marriage,” specifically what type of relation between men and women it presupposed. Contrary to numerous Catholic and secular authors who defined matrimony as a hierarchical relation in which the male, as head of the family, held the superior position over the woman, the Catholic women proposed a concept of marriage as a harmonious companionship of a woman and man. Not questioning the notion of the differences between the two sexes nor their divine provenience (God`s plan), the Catholic laywomen called for an equal appreciation of “female” and “male” qualities and argued that the collaboration of both components on the family level was a prerequisite for establishing a harmoniously functioning society/nation. They anchored their ideas of equality-in-difference as well as complementarity of the sexes in religious teachings, for as Plater argued, “it was not God`s intention to humiliate a woman” by creating dissimilarities between the two sexes.⁴²⁴

Biographical information about Zamoyska and Kleniewska offers interesting material for further explorations of their focus on women`s maternal qualities. In her memoirs, Zamoyska described that her mother, being (voluntarily) over-burdened with

⁴²¹ Ibid., 3-5; Plater, *Cywilizacya w świetle Chrystianyzmu*, 7-8.

⁴²² Plater, *Kobieta ogniskiem*, 32.

⁴²³ Ibid., 33-34.

⁴²⁴ Ibid., 136, also 33-34.

social activism and patriotic obligations, passed on the upbringing of her six children to various tutors who permanently resided in the Zamoyski family estates. Zamoyska recalled she experienced psychological and physical abuse from several of her tutors that passed entirely unnoticed.⁴²⁵ Moreover, being married to one of the most prominent Polish politicians, Zamoyska herself was forced to leave her newborn son with her parents to accompany her husband in his political activism in Turkey. Zamoyska could never express criticism of either her mother's or husband's behavior explicitly, however she urged that mothers should be genuinely and personally involved in their children's upbringing.⁴²⁶ Kleniewska's memoirs offer another example of contemporary problems related to motherhood. The founder of ZKZ recalled the difficult relations she had with her mother-in-law, who did not accept Kleniewska's devotion to her children over dedication to her husband and matters of their land estate.⁴²⁷

As opposed to historical research that emphasizes bourgeois women's confinement to the domestic sphere during the nineteenth century,⁴²⁸ Zamoyska's mother, Zamoyska herself, Kleniewska's mother-in-law and Kleniewska together represent three generations of Polish aristocratic and/or landowning women who either did not perceive maternal duties as women's primary obligation, were excluded from this experience, or faced difficulties while fulfilling the maternal duties due to their extra maternal obligations in the public sphere, not excluding the realm of traditionally defined politics (Zamoyska).⁴²⁹ Furthermore, in addition to criticizing women who were active outside of the familial environment due to their patriotic or philanthropic obligations, the Polish Catholic women activists frequently condemned women of privileged background (aristocracy, the emerging middle-class) who voluntarily resigned from their maternal care, engaging in broadly defined social life.⁴³⁰ Finally, the Polish Catholic laywomen activists raised concerns about the lack of proper care in various daycare centers and/or nurseries, to which workingwomen – even if willing to fulfill their maternal obligations – were forced to give their children due to economic

⁴²⁵ Zamoyska, *Wspomnienia*, 15-16, 19, 27-32.

⁴²⁶ *Ibid.*, 181-182. Plater formulated a similar proposal in *Kilka słów o wychowaniu w rodzinie*, 55, 60.

⁴²⁷ BN, akc. 10245, b. 1, 124.

⁴²⁸ For example see Smith, *Ladies of the Leisure Class*; Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*.

⁴²⁹ Czachowska, "W kręgu 'Hotelu Lambert'. Działalność polityczna Jadwigi Zamoyskiej," 2-28.

⁴³⁰ Plater, *Kobieta ogniskiem*, 244-246, 248.

pressures and/or exploitive labor conditions.⁴³¹ In this context, the Catholic lay activists` celebration of women`s maternal commitments can be interpreted as a rather radical move. For women from privileged groups, this called for changing patterns of social life or social expectations so as to create an opportunity for these women to be with their children. In the case of the lower-class women, it indirectly involved the idea of bringing about changes in the socio-economic system that would enable them to perform their maternal obligations.

4.4 Towards women`s actual presence in the public sphere

Pointing at the links between women`s familial obligations and their belonging in and contribution to the larger nation/community was merely the first step the Catholic activists took to legitimize women`s presence in various forms in the public realm. Analogous to other, both secular and confessionally motivated, women`s groups in the period, Polish Catholic laywomen developed a maternalist discourse to argue for their entrance into the public sphere. In the case of the Polish lay activists, the maternalist approach primarily involved making certain general assumptions about woman`s nature. With few exceptions, this idea was not employed to suggest any specific political strategies to assure state protection that would enable women to fulfill their maternal responsibilities.⁴³² The Catholic activists argued that once educated through a proper schooling system, the female “natural” caring and loving ability should extend beyond the immediate familial environment and reach out to those in need. They paralleled the Christian ideal of charity with the concept of “spreading civilization”, which Plater described as “the very first duty of a woman for the nation.”⁴³³ Whereas the postulate of creating educational possibilities that would help to fulfill the marital and familial duties applied to women of all classes, the duty of “spreading civilization”, and acquiring the education necessary to fulfill this task, only applied to upper- and middle-class, landowning, and intelligentsia women. They were expected to direct their energy towards servants, employees of the landed estates, the poor, ill, lower-class

⁴³¹ Plater, *Kilka słów o wychowaniu w rodzinie*, 55

⁴³² For various definition of maternalism and ways of employing the concept, see *Maternity and Gender Policies: Women and the Rise of the European Welfare States, 1880s-1950s*, ed. Gisela Bock and Pat Thane (London: Routledge, 1991).

⁴³³ Plater, *Cywilizacja w świetle Chrystianizmu*, 29-31; Plater, *Kobieta ogniskiem*, 58.

mothers, workers, peasants, or any disadvantaged group requiring moral and material assistance.⁴³⁴ Catholic laywomen, acutely aware of the dissimilarities in women's situation resulting from their social backgrounds, endorsed the Thomist doctrine of the social order and were invested in the preservation of these social differences, albeit in modified, less drastic forms. For this reason, although they assumed "natural" maternal, caring qualities as common to all women, the Catholic activists positioned themselves as those who were "spreading" civilization to lower-class people, whereas the latter were primarily portrayed as objects of civilizational refinement. This class-based demarcation was instrumental for legitimizing elite women entering into the realm of public social activism while still maintaining the social-economic status quo.⁴³⁵

Plater-Zyberkówna emphasized that, because Polish women of privileged background were lacking civic education, they were not aware of their duties as citizens toward society:

Once upon a time when we – today the elderly generation – were young, we were being educated carefully, nobody can deny it. (...) yet, cannot you observe, my dears, that (...) something is noticeably missing in this education, which affects commonsensically your, younger, generation's upbringing too. It is that we have been brought up very one-sidedly – either for the familial environment, and of course!... for worldly success! omitting entirely what we own to our society. Because we have never been taught about social duties (...). Nobody posited any ideals to love and strive for in front of us. (...) For this reason we have unconsciously developed egoism, entirely unchristian, incapable of going beyond personal interest..., [this] egoism is even more abhorrent for it is often disguised as (...) pretentious religiosity. Who has ever taught us there are some social, civic duties for us women too? (...) Our patriotism was overstated, for it was forgotten that the love of the motherland should be rooted in acting (...). Who has ever told us about the responsibilities we have, about the solidarity we should share, finally about other civic virtues? We knew what to expect from others, from subordinates, but what did we know about the duties of the privileged classes [her word, D.G.]⁴³⁶

Catholic activists regarded the notion of the public utility of specifically female values and qualities, which could be used to enrich the public sphere, as intertwined

⁴³⁴ Plater, *Kobieta obywatelka*, 4-13.

⁴³⁵ Polish Catholic laywomen's strategy of differentiating between civilizers and those in need of refinement was by no means unique. For example, Antoinette M. Burton demonstrates how British privileged women employed a similar strategy in the context of colonial India in her *Burdens of History: British Feminists, Indian Women and Imperial Culture 1865-1915* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1994).

⁴³⁶ Plater, *Kobieta obywatelka*, III-IV.

with the notion of women's indispensability in the process of creating the modern nation. As Plater argued:

It is necessary to educate a woman properly. (...) it is a chronic mistake, that while wanting a nation to rebirth culturally, we educate men, but women's education is omitted. (...) if nations had a clear awareness of women's strengths for the [national] well-being, undoubtedly they would pay even attention to women's as well as to men's education. [For] it is women who could spread education in their families and among the lower strata.⁴³⁷

Although the Catholic women did promote the notion of their sex's special aptitude for developing a loving, caring attitude, they strongly objected to "a male monopoly on reasoning, knowledge, courage, an entrepreneurial spirit, stamina, fortitude, the right to work in the social realm, man's monopoly to sport (...) and practical clothing."⁴³⁸ Thus while advocating for educational reforms, these Catholic women emphasized the need for creating a curriculum that would allow women to compete with men in the labor market and the public sphere. They also opposed the claim that,

there should be a radical division of duties: a husband rules with his reason and a wife with her heart. Does the contemporary period not provide us with examples of women who have shown extraordinary intellectual talents? Such strict separation leads to misunderstandings and fight, in which a woman is most often the casualty. All strict divisions and separations (also unjust towards men) are absurd, and what most is important, they are not confirmed by life experience.⁴³⁹

Another reason for women's social engagement outside of the domicile was the conviction that individuals who benefited from their environment, culture, or civilization should reciprocate for their fortune. The idea of women from privileged groups serving the community was therefore perceived as a form of "paying their dues" to society.⁴⁴⁰ A woman was supposed to repay proportionally to the received provision as well as "according to her talents and possibilities."⁴⁴¹ At the same time, the Catholic laywomen argued that individuals could not fully develop their potential unless they were part of society – that is exposed to a variety of opinions, worldviews, or

⁴³⁷ Plater, *Cywilizacja w świetle Chrystianizmu*, 14-15

⁴³⁸ *Ibid.*, 24-25.

⁴³⁹ Plater, *Kobieta ogniskiem*, 138-139.

⁴⁴⁰ Plater, *Praca społeczna z 1905 roku*, 10-11, 15, 18.

⁴⁴¹ Plater, *Cywilizacja w świetle Chrystianizmu*, 24-25, 29-30.

behaviors. Only by subjecting himself/herself to the contradictions brought about by modern times could a Catholic strengthen his/her faith and facilitate genuine spiritual and intellectual development.⁴⁴²

Also, the idea of women working as social activists along with men in the public sphere aimed to de-sexualize women in male eyes. Plater argued that the practice of separating young women and men in particular led to a situation in which once together they perceived one another principally as potential candidates for matrimonial and/or mating purposes. Plater advocated for creating possibilities of common work for women and men, which would alter misconceptions about the female sex and allow men to learn about women in other than entertainment circumstances.⁴⁴³

In the Polish Catholic milieu, the most desirable roles for a woman were that of a wife and mother, or a nun.⁴⁴⁴ Polish Catholic activists introduced the novel concept – interchangeably called “the third way,” “the third cross” or “the third calling” – in which a single woman could be legitimately active in the public sphere, as an alternative for those women who did not feel a calling either for marriage, motherhood or the convent.⁴⁴⁵ Zamoyska observed:

For various reasons (...) nowadays there is a continuously growing number of women who cannot get married and as a result they have become a strength that should be used for the sake of the common good as well as for the good of individuals who wish to serve the society. But unfortunately! it does not happen this way (...) Not being (...) engaged in any concrete, obligatory work that aims at the common well-being is a painful thing. However it frequently happens that single women who do not marry and neither have to earn their living nor have a calling for the convent life are not engaged in any serious work. (...) moreover no one dares to engage them for there is consensus that financially independent single women may stay as if in a juvenile age until their old age. It supposes to relieve them from any useful and broader work. In America, England, but also slowly in France, a single woman close to her 25th birthday and with some property feels obligated to fulfill social duties that are hers as they are man`s.⁴⁴⁶

⁴⁴² Plater, *Kobieta ogniskiem*, 71, 100.

⁴⁴³ *Ibid.*, 97.

⁴⁴⁴ Stegner, “Miejsce kobiety w społeczeństwie w opinii środowisk katolickich i ewangelickich w Królestwie Polskim,” 468-469; Olszewski, “Postawy społeczno-religijne kobiet w Królestwie Polskim,” 13-15.

⁴⁴⁵ Plater, *O trzech drogach*, 9,

⁴⁴⁶ Zamoyska, *Zakład Kórnicki*, 17-18.

Zamoyska, the strongest propagator of this idea, argued that neither family nor clergy should convince girls to abandon “the third way” if they so chose. She maintained also that a girl who stayed unmarried should not be limited to family circles, but on the contrary, she should be encouraged to enter various forms of social activism. The Christian school of life, described in the previous chapter, was also envisioned as an institution in which women of “the third calling” could prepare themselves for the duties awaiting them. After completing their education the young women were encouraged by Zamoyska to initiate various projects in their local environments, for example,

to launch nurseries for small children in villages and small towns and care about the elder children during the afternoon hours; serve and taking care of the ill (...); to found reading rooms for all social strata; to open shops and inns in the villages; to pursue every opportunity to elevate national industry, commerce, agriculture, gardening (...); to arrange Sunday and afternoon lectures for the lower classes with the purpose of teaching national language and history; to spread knowledge of arithmetic to spare the underprivileged from usury; (...) to prepare children to the First Communion (...); to introduce faith into the entire social realm so as to base on it personal sanctification, family life, elevation of the nation and the spreading of God’s Kingdom. (...) it is a service for God, service for the nation and service for the society.⁴⁴⁷

While launching their projects and advocating women’s inclusion into the public sphere, the Catholic laywomen used to soften “radical” character or novelty of their demands. The Catholic activists maintained that Polish women – while remaining excellent wives and mothers – had always been active outside of their families. In order to support their claims, the activists made efforts to retrieve women’s presence and involvement in the public sphere in Polish history.⁴⁴⁸

Further, the Catholic laywomen were vigilant in responding to criticism that their proposals might bring about “threatening” social changes. Opponents of Catholic women’s projects` feared that by introducing educational reforms and reformulating the meaning of “femininity,” women would abandon their “natural” duties in order to seek

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid., 24-25. Almost in the same words Plater, *O trzech drogach*, 25-29.

⁴⁴⁸ Machczyńska was a particularly devoted historian of Polish women’s history and women’s activism. Antonina Machczyńska, *Kobieta Polska. Szkic historyczny* (Polish woman. Historical Introduction) (Lwów: Nakładem Komitetu Lwowskiego Wystawy Praskiej, 1912). Also her unpublished overview of Galician women’s activism in the period, BN, Antonina Machczyńska, *Drobny przyczynek do dziejów działalności kobiecej w Galicji, 1868-1914* (The brief introduction to the history of Galician women’s activism, 1868-1914), IV 9830, handwritten.

careers outside of the family. I will show two strategies that Catholic activists developed to counter this criticism. Machczyńska argued for the introduction of such a curriculum into the educational institutions for girls that would develop women's wide range of intellectual capacities. The Galician activist encouraged female students to challenge the traditional division of labor by taking on scientific professions. Machczyńska believed that women could be as successful as men as doctors, politicians, and scientists and that a carefully educated "woman would not face obstacles to work in male professions other than the hostility of men."⁴⁴⁹ However, she always emphasized that women could never be replaced by men in performing their "female" duties.⁴⁵⁰

While demanding reforms in women's education, Plater employed a somewhat opposite strategy than Machczyńska, opting to emphasize the development of women's "natural" abilities. She proposed that due to the fact the women had "weaker minds and bodies," they should be taught less mathematics, which was above their learning capacity. Instead she recommended focusing on teaching them law.⁴⁵¹ What might look like a conservative standpoint on women's intellectual capacities, however, can also be interpreted as a sober calculation of what an average woman could do with her life, given the structural constraints. Plater argued that because in the Polish Kingdom universities were closed to women, the requirement to learn complicated mathematical subjects in the secondary schools was not an efficient use of time. Contrary to abstract arithmetical calculations, she continued, knowledge of law was of crucial importance for women (and men) of all classes in their struggle with employers and/or foreign authorities.⁴⁵²

The second type of criticism the Catholic lay activists faced pertained to the issue of the impact of a reformed women's education as a potential means of upward social mobility. In response, Plater contextualized the matter within the general framework of the contemporary Catholic doctrine on social differences. Although she did not exclude the possibility that the most talented women might advance on the social ladder due to their education, she strongly discouraged such moves on a bigger

⁴⁴⁹ BN, IV 9830 t. (vol.) 2, 359.

⁴⁵⁰ BN, IV 9831, 99.

⁴⁵¹ Plater, *O potrzebie reformy szkoły średniej dla dziewcząt*, 13-14, 43.

⁴⁵² Plater, *Na progu małżeństwa*, 13; *Kobieta ogniskiem*, 24-25, 35.

scale:

Social differences in the view of Christianity, are wonderful social harmony, variety in unity, for the common good and satisfaction of human needs. [Social differences] only indicate a direction of occupation and work, do not hamper any genius individual from moving from one social group to another. For this reason we can see these peculiar jumps in the Christian culture which were unknown to pagan cultures. There are the Church's dignitaries who browsed a flock in their childhood. (...) If on the one hand it would be a tyranny to keep everybody in their own social group, on the other hand it would be great impudence to push everybody towards the highest levels of the social ladder. The Christian civilization is capable of keeping a balance in this respect.⁴⁵³

As opposed to the socialist faction in the period that perceived class inequalities as inevitably leading to tensions and further conflicts, Plater envisioned society as a system based on the harmonious exchange of services between individuals. Such a harmoniously functioning society, often compared to the human body in which each family was a separate cell, was to be based on an agreement between individuals aware of their duties and position within the system.⁴⁵⁴

To this point, I have been reviewing the discourses of women's duties towards their families, servants, folk people, nation and the Church. However, turning to the new Catholic social teaching as well as to arguments of secular social reformers and appropriating them to their specific ends, the Polish Catholic laywomen believed that communities – society, nation, state, civilization – had specific mandatory duties towards those individuals that belonged to them.

The civilization is bringing up a collective human being. Its principle: justice and love. It goes without saying, resulting from the most rudimentary ethics, that each human being – as a member of the human collective – has a right to demand from his/her community everything that is necessary to sustain his/her existence and to develop his/her spiritual essence. Consisting of the soul and flesh he/she has a right to demand both spiritual and material *bread* that is education and existence without which he or she would perish.⁴⁵⁵ (...) The most civilized country is the one in which the poorest child is provided with a suitable education, knows God and the aim of his/her life, in which a good command flourishes, in which vice and poverty are a rarity...in which the social differences are the least blatant, in which there is equality between

⁴⁵³ Plater, *Cywilizacja w świetle Chrystianizmu*, 28-29. For further examples of opposition to upward social mobility, see Plater, *Kobieta obywatelka*, 7, 18; *O trzech drogach życia*, 36-38; Zamoyska, *Wspomnienia*, 18, 43-44, 71; *O trzech oddziałach*, 1-8.

⁴⁵⁴ Plater, *Kobieta ogniskiem*, 22.

⁴⁵⁵ Plater, *Cywilizacja w świetle Chrystianizmu*, 5.

people.⁴⁵⁶ [This civilization is] the light diffused across the entire country.⁴⁵⁷

The Catholic women-activists argued that all individuals in their respective states should be provided with education, according to their social background, with work, health care, legal protection, and honest wage and living conditions that would assure their proper physical, mental and spiritual development.⁴⁵⁸ Education for women and the lower classes was thus perceived as a necessary precondition to realizing the truly Christian spirit of modern civilization.⁴⁵⁹ Consequently, Plater argued that “keeping women in intellectual immaturity” was an embarrassing indication of the backwardness of Polish society.⁴⁶⁰ She also maintained: “Only can any nation say about itself that is ‘civilized’ that includes the widest social circles into its material well-being and education.”⁴⁶¹ In a similar tone, Machczyńska argued that “the bigger half of humanity should not stop the progressive spirit of the world due to their educational underdevelopment.”⁴⁶² In the eyes of the laywomen-activists, the lack of proper educational opportunities for women made Poles out-dated and distant from contemporary modernizing tendencies across Europe.

The latter arguments offer an insight into Polish Catholic laywomen`s attitudes towards the notions of “modernization,” “development,” “progress” or “industrialization.” On the one hand, they criticized these phenomena for not paying enough attention to human beings` spiritual needs and for exaggerating class differences. On the other hand, however, they took for granted that the technical and scientific developments, urban growth, the mechanization of labor, increasing efficiency of agriculture, and other emblems of “progress” were the only trajectories of the future development of the Polish nation-state as long as these phenomena were moderated by the Christian doctrine.⁴⁶³ Catholic activists also expressed their

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid., 13.

⁴⁵⁷ Ibid., 13, 15.

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid. 5, 7,9, 26-27. Bn, ii 9816, z 1, 2-19.

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid., 17-18, 63-67, 134-151: Zamoyska, *O pracy*, 31-36; Machczyńska in BN, IV 9816, 1-26; BN, II 9816, t. 2., z. 7, 12-13.

⁴⁶⁰ Plater, *Cywilizacja w świetle Chrystianizmu*, 47; Zamoyska, *O pracy*, 17, 29; BN, 9830 t. (vol.) 2, 24-30, 42, 34.

⁴⁶¹ Plater, *Cywilizacja w świetle Chrystianizmu*, 56.

⁴⁶² BN, II 9816, t. 2, z. 7, 28-31.

⁴⁶³ Plater, *Cywilizacja w świetle Chrystianizmu*, 1-3; *Kobieta obywatelka*, 26; Zamoyska, *O pracy*, 13-14, Machczyńska, BN, II 9816, t. 2, z. 9, 8-9.

conviction that women must not only not jeopardize progress by their intellectual incompetence but should add to these developments.⁴⁶⁴

4.5 The “modernization” of female piety

In Section 1.2 I have argued that a critical employment of the feminization of religion thesis and the privatization of religion thesis has allowed to expose the emergence of the social construction of women’s “natural” inclination towards faith across the nineteenth-century Western world. Described by secular discourses/factions as “naturally religious,” which could mean “spiritual” and “morally superior to men,” but more often meant “psychologically fragile,” “irrational,” “driven by emotions,” or “bigoted,” women had to face criticism that their inclusion into the public sphere, understood explicitly as men’s domain and shaped on male terms, was impossible due to women’s inability to follow the male principle of reason. Furthermore, the public sphere supposedly required the ability of independent judgment, which women were again denied as those who were manipulated by religious authorities or misinformed by unfounded religious doctrines. Women’s presupposed religiosity was posited as the main obstacle preventing women from developing as citizens with social, civil and political rights. To make the situation even more complicated for women, rejecting faith was perceived as impossible for them since religiosity allegedly was as an intrinsic, indispensable part of the female gender – the denial of which turned women into creatures with no gender identity at all.⁴⁶⁵

Women had to challenge and overcome the socially devised assumption about the “natural” connection between religion and “the weaker sex” on their way to, especially political, emancipation, regardless of their personal worldviews. In this section I wish to focus on the strategies pious laywomen employed in challenging the assumption about the incompatibility of the female sex and religion with the rules of the public sphere. I will show how Polish Catholic laywomen attempted to enter the public sphere without concealing their religious beliefs by means of, what I call,

⁴⁶⁴ Plater, *Praca społeczna*, 11. Almost in the same words Machczyńska BN, II 9816, t. 2, z. 7, 7, 12-13.

⁴⁶⁵ For an investigation of this issue in the French context, see for example Ford, *Divided houses*, especially the chapter “Fanatiques et Devotes Imbeciles,” 17-36; in the German context Gross, *The War Against Catholicism*, especially the chapter “The Women’s Question, Anti-Catholicism, and the Kulturkampf,” 185-235. See further *The Pious Sex. Essays on Women and Religion in the History of Political Thought*, ed. Andrea Radasanu (Lanham, Md, Lexington Books, 2010).

“modernizing” individual and collective female piety.

The Polish Catholic laywomen never doubted the special capacity of their sex for developing religious feelings, that women were better suited to “defend” Catholicism and that religiosity was a constitutive feature that distinguished women from men.⁴⁶⁶ What the Catholic lay female activists were concerned about was rather the fact that contemporary women, in their view, misused their special gift. Catholic activists pointed primarily to the serious negligence in religious education that translated into women of all classes having only a shallow knowledge on religious issues, albeit to different degrees.⁴⁶⁷ In the increasing presence of various secular liberal, radical, feminist, and/or socialist movements, the pious laywomen were unprepared to address the criticisms of Catholicism, the Church or religious faith more generally.⁴⁶⁸ This forced Catholic laywomen activists to re-think the “quality” of female devotion and to present their criticism in the form of concern about the future of an institution supported by “low-quality” followers.

Since by and large Polish women of the upper and middle classes, as opposed to men in general and women of the lower classes, were assumed to preserve their strong religious beliefs, the Catholic activists believed it was these women who would begin proselytizing first in their immediate familial environments and later on beyond them.⁴⁶⁹ Due to men’s presence in the public sphere, the Catholic female activists assumed that men were more exposed to secularizing discourses and therefore in need of spiritual guidance. Yet, women could engage in a dialog with men only if their faith was supported by in-depth knowledge of the religious subject.⁴⁷⁰ For this reason a common goal the Catholic activists shared was the promotion of religious education and the introduction of new methodology into the teaching of religious courses for women, so as to provide them with an informed knowledge and the skills to pass on their faith to children, men and the lower classes. In order to achieve a satisfactory comprehension of religious matters among women, Machczyńska proposed innovative

⁴⁶⁶ Plater, *Kobieta ogniskiem*, 13, 51, 132-133; Zamoyska, *O pracy*, 48.

⁴⁶⁷ BN, II 9816, t.2, z.9, 24-32

⁴⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 24.

⁴⁶⁹ BN, II 9816, t. 3, z. 20, 2-3.

⁴⁷⁰ BN, II 9816, t.2, z.9, 24.

methods of teaching religious courses to women and children.⁴⁷¹ Zamoyska introduced the habit of regular Bible's reading among the girls who studied in her school so as to prepare them to fulfill their "female duties" of evangelizing. She used to challenge her students' religious knowledge, asking them to confront the anti-religious arguments by citing and discussing the suitable parts of the Bible.⁴⁷²

Next to their criticism of the level of women's religious knowledge, the Catholic activists also scrutinized women's ways of expressing their piety. Admittedly, the most emblematic manifestation of female religious beliefs in the period was their regular involvement in official Church life, which was understood as frequent participation in collective religious ceremonies (masses, pilgrimages, retreats, adorations of the Holy Sacrament etc.) and regularly going to confession and communion. Yet, despite their frequent engagement in church-based religion, the women examined here stated explicitly that regular participation in parish life did not make someone religious and instead encouraged involvement in collective religious ceremonies in a more reflective and informed manner. In her *Wspomnienia*, Zamoyska revealed with surprising honesty that as a young woman she resisted expressing religiosity through participating in various collective pious rituals since she found them completely useless for her personal spiritual development.⁴⁷³ She also condemned religiosity that relied solely on "performing external acts of piety."⁴⁷⁴ Similarly, Machczyńska questioned the spiritual usefulness of participating in Sunday masses for those who did not have sufficient knowledge about their religion.⁴⁷⁵

Automatism, non-reflectiveness, emotionality and belief in supernatural miraculous interferences were often repeated objections to female Catholic religiosity, serving as an argument about women's incapability to develop capacity for rational thinking. Because of this, the Polish Catholic laywomen made further conceptual interventions by promoting a form of piety that would be based on intellectual

⁴⁷¹ BN, 9813, t. 1, 19-26. About children's religious education, see also Zamoyska, *O wychowaniu*, 24-33.

⁴⁷² Nowak, *Historia Zakładu Kornickiego*, Cz. 1, 56.

⁴⁷³ Zamoyska, *Wspomnienia*, 32, 35-37, 67.

⁴⁷⁴ Zamoyska, *O pracy*, 4; 98, 114, 120-122, 126. Also Plater, *Życie katolickie*, 22-26.

⁴⁷⁵ BN, Varia dot. różnych spraw społecznych z papierów Antoniny Machczyńskiej (Social activism-related documents from the collection of Antonina Machczyńska), IV 9845, O potrzebie nauki religii wśród kobiet (About the need for the religious teaching among women), 34-36; also Plater, *Kobieta ogniskiem*, 310-311 and *O pobożności*, 8-9, 151-152.

reflection rather than an emotional attitude towards the sacred. According to Zamoyska, continuous self-reflection and intellectual effort were the preconditions of establishing oneself as a believer.⁴⁷⁶ Zamoyska, Machczyńska and Kleniewska wrote diaries in which they documented long periods of praying and meditations, which contradicts the view about the repetitive manner in which women were supposed to conduct their religiosity.⁴⁷⁷ In her *Kobieta ogniskiem*, Plater argued: “The period of an unaware, uncritical, blind faith has ended and the period of a conscious faith (...) begins, (...) a faith that believes not because ‘mother has taught so’, but because the biggest act of reasoning is to believe.”⁴⁷⁸

This reformulated female Catholic “stripped down religiosity,”⁴⁷⁹ which discouraged emotion-based faith and mechanical participation in ornamental religious ceremonious and endorsed reflective and individualized pious practices, according to the Catholic activists should be also acted out through rationally planned Catholic actions for the common good in the social realm. Successful confessionally motivated public activism required “initiative” and “reason.”⁴⁸⁰ Being engaged in social work through pious associations, charities, or lay women-only organizations, the Polish Catholic laywomen activists urged other pious women to scrutinize the level of their individual preparation to carry out social work. They also urged women to examine the “efficiency” of their planning and the long-term usefulness of their actions – in other words, I argue, to display the compatibility of their confessionally motivated initiatives with “modern” benchmarks of “rationally” designed utilitarian social work (developed in Chapters 5 and 6). Although each individual laywoman’s social initiative was strongly supported, the Catholic lay activists added that scattered female projects should be unified and coordinated to maximize the effectiveness of pious women’s efforts.⁴⁸¹ The latter argument facilitated organized official social activism of Catholic laywomen at the beginning of the twentieth century (described in Chapter 6).

Despite openly manifesting their personal religious convictions, Zamoyska,

⁴⁷⁶ Zamoyska, *O pracy*, 120-122, 126; Plater, *O pobożności*, 46-47; also *Życie Katolickie*, 31-36.

⁴⁷⁷ BK, *Teksty rekolekcyjne Jadwigi Zamoyskiej* (Religious retreats’s texts of Jadwiga Zamosyka), 07549, handwritten; *O pracy*, 124-136; BN II 9816, vol. 1-5; KUL, Maria Kleniewska, *Teksty rekolekcyjne* (The retreats` notes), 1304, handwritten.

⁴⁷⁸ Plater, *Kobieta ogniskiem*, 327.

⁴⁷⁹ Mack, “Religion, Feminism, and the Problem of Agency,” 150.

⁴⁸⁰ Plater, *Kobieta obywatelka*, IV.

⁴⁸¹ Plater, *Kobieta Obywtaelka*, III-V.

Plater, Machczyńska and Kleniewska did manage to act successfully in the public sphere and their various efforts were appreciated beyond Catholic circles (Chapter 3). Thus, they attempted to redefine the public sphere so as to enter it as pious yet respected female individuals. Further, as the previous chapter has shown, despite conflicts with and pressure from the Catholic Church, these devout laywomen managed to keep the lay character and management of most of their projects and institutions. I therefore argue that with the project of “modernizing” female piety, the Catholic women were challenging both the masculine/secular notion of the public sphere and the Roman Catholic Church’s influence over female believers.

4.6 Conclusions

In the early twentieth century, Polish Catholic laywomen began sharing their observations of societal conditions, which limited women’s role in both the private and public sphere. They criticized the available models of femininity and patterns of women’s upbringing, the undervaluation of women’s marital and maternal duties *vis-à-vis* paid employment, the ambiguous position of women in the public sphere and resulting limited access to the benefits of membership in the public community, the perception of women in primarily sexual terms by the opposite sex, and the devaluation of female piety as incompatible with the modern age. These Catholic laywomen proposed a new understanding of “woman” as an individual educated according to standards that matched the contemporary challenges, socially conscious and taking on her duties in the private and public sphere, entering into voluntary chosen matrimony assumed as a relation of two different but equal human beings and/or capable of being financially independent if necessary. These proposals for an alternative women’s upbringing as a primary tool for re-constructing the definition of woman should be perceived as the Catholic laywomen’s attempt at making radical interventions in the social construction of the female gender undertaken from a confessional perspective.

While advocating for a new model of femininity and legitimizing women’s participation in the public sphere, Polish Catholic laywomen employed several interrelated arguments in seeking support from various religious and secular groups. In persuading fellow Catholics and religious authorities, the pious laywomen engaged in critical discussions of contemporary Catholic doctrines, arguing that changing women’s

education would enhance the chances of their personal salvation and enable them to become competent fighters on behalf of the Church, whose position was undermined by the rise of competing secular world views. While addressing nationalist and secular groups, the Catholic activists embraced a maternalist approach and pointed to the benefits of women`s contribution to the collective well-being once their “natural” caring capacities would be refined through an improved social upbringing and civic education.

The privileged background of the Catholic activists influenced the program of their educational and social reforms. The Catholic female leaders struggled to create educational opportunities for all women, providing them with tools for achieving financial independence, while simultaneously opposing upward social mobility of the lower classes. The Catholic laywomen activists insisted that state authorities should provide education, health care and employment for all its male and female citizens, emphasizing, however, that the provisions should fit the receivers` social positions. What they aimed to achieve, I argue, was a balance between competitive discourses on women`s roles in this period – between the ideal of woman as a mother and wife and woman as a needed labor force in the modernizing society, gender solidarity on the one hand and class solidarity on the other hand, and their own drive for independence, self-fulfillment and authority in the public sphere.

In the process of constructing a modern Catholic civic womanhood, Catholic laywomen attempted to “modernize” female piety – on the public/collective and private levels. They insisted on transforming the forms through which (female) believers collectively manifested their religiosity by advocating for an informed participation in religious practices or promoting rationally organized social work. They also aimed at altering women`s personal religious experience by promoting an intellectual instead of an emotional approach to faith, urging women to undertake independent Bible studies instead of unreflective repetition of prayers. Such modernized Catholic female believers were supposed to be an answer or at least a first important step towards resolving the discursively constructed difficulties that pious women experienced while struggling for acceptance in the public sphere. This alternative to “old” female religiosity was meant to match the ongoing processes occurring in Polish society since the second half of the nineteenth century and was based on the conviction that women

were capable of acting according to the rules of the public sphere while still preserving the religious faith that was constitutive of their gender.

During Leo XIII's papacy the Church began to adjust itself to the challenges of modern times without compromising the basic principles of the Catholic doctrine. The (Polish) Catholic laywomen's efforts to enter the public sphere without concealing their religious convictions should be understood as a particular realization of this broader Catholic Church's project. Catholic women's efforts to "modernize" their piety so as to meet the criteria of modern political practices can also enrich our understanding of the ways in which Catholicism re-emerged in the nineteenth century. This chapter's findings also add to our understanding of the "culture wars" by showing that during the conflict between secular and religious factions some Catholic laywomen participated, to a certain extent, in advancing the process of societal secularization by concealing the parts of their religiosity that were perceived as incongruent with modernity and emphasizing or developing those that corresponded with the modern changes and could be grasped in secular terms (e.g. public utility of the pious actions). The modern character of those women's activities becomes visible in their ability to think about their religion in a critical manner, and as a consequence, to differentiate between those parts that could not be altered and those ones that could be adapted to the historical moment.

Chapter 5: Pious associations for Polish Catholic laywomen, from the 1880s to 1918

After retrieving Polish Catholic female activism in independently launched women's projects in Chapter 3, this chapter explores another form of women's entering into the social realm, that is, through membership in various pious associations founded by the Church. Specifically, this chapter deals with the Ladies of Charity (Section 5.1), the Confraternities of Christian Mothers (5.2), and the Sodalties of Mary's Children (5.3) on the lands of Partitioned Poland. Although some of these appeared in various Polish locations already in the middle of the nineteenth century, their intensive development did not begin before the 1880s.

I have selected the Ladies of Charity, the Confraternities of Christian Mothers and the Sodalties of Mary's Children because contrary to the vast majority of contemporary pious associations with solely religious purposes, in the second half of the nineteenth century these three belonged to a group of associations that the Vatican equipped with a new social message. This meant that along with religious practices for spiritual self-improvement their members were also obliged to undertake social efforts in the public sphere. Further, based on my readings of the historical material (mainly the Catholic press), the Ladies of Charity, the Confraternities of Christian Mothers and the Sodalties of Mary's Children were the most common women's pious associations with a social agenda on the lands of Partitioned Poland.

This chapter explores the foundation and growth of these associations in the three zones; secondly, their programs, the forms of social engagement and educational possibilities they created for women so as to broaden their knowledge about contemporary socio-economic problems; thirdly, how these associations reacted to the presence of secular discourses and/or forms of social activism; and finally, how pious women tried to make the step from membership in pious associations towards the foundation of and activism in lay Catholic organizations.

Although their basic scheme was the same – a combination of members' devotional practices with social activism – I also see important differences between the three organizations. Both the Church and the laywomen experienced, tested and criticized the possibilities and limits of the distinct modes of operation that each pious association offered. As far as I know the histories of the Polish female pious

associations examined in this chapter have not been the subject of any scholarly inquiry. Pious laywomen's associations also form the least researched aspect of New Catholicism.

In resurrecting the three pious associations' histories, I rely predominantly on the various reports produced by these collective bodies as well as articles from the Catholic press, and the correspondence of one of the leading Galician Catholic women-activists, Maria Harsdorfowa. When researching pious associations, it is difficult to find out their members' motivations, their approach to social issues and/or internal debates. This difficulty results from the fact that pious associations were rarely obliged to produce extensive written records of their internal lives apart from brief obligatory reports sent to the religious authorities or published concise information about recent events in the press. For this reason, Maria Harsdorfowa's letters are of particular importance because they offer a unique insight into the creation of one of the pious associations from the personal perspective of its founder.

5.1 The Ladies of Charity

The Ladies of Charity were the oldest association of pious laywomen who engaged in social work on the Polish lands. They existed in the three zones of Partitioned Poland. The Ladies of Charity are also most likely the oldest voluntary associations of laywomen in the Catholic world, originally set up in Chatillon (France) in 1617 by the priest Vincent de Paul. Based on the conviction that charity should not be the duty of religious orders only, the associations aimed at gathering laywomen of privileged social background with the purpose of offering material assistance to the sick poor provided in a structured and planned way. The acts of charity were to be performed out of love for one's neighbor and for the Ladies' own salvation.⁴⁸²

As early as 1629 Vincent de Paul set up a supervising body to oversee various efforts around France that were performed in his spirit. After de Paul's death the headquarter in Paris began to coordinate the associations spread around Catholic Europe. The French Revolution interrupted the development of the Vincentian idea of social work. The so-called Societies of St. Vincent de Paul, female and male,

⁴⁸² Andrzej Gretkowski, *Dobroczynno-społeczna działalność Zgromadzenia Sióstr oraz Stowarzyszenia Pań Miłosierdzia św. Wincentego a Paulo na terenie diecezji płockiej w latach 1727-2000* (The charity and social activity of the Congregation of Sisters and the Ladies of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul in the region of the Płock diocese in the years 1727-2000) (Płock: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Novum, 2002), 245-249; Antoine Dégert, "St. Vincent de Paul," in *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1912), accessed July 12, 2011, <<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15434c.htm>>.

reappeared first in France, then elsewhere in the 1830s and 1840s. International cooperation was reestablished in the 1840s.⁴⁸³ At the beginning of the twentieth century the supervising body in Paris received annual reports from numerous Ladies of Charity, known also as the conferences of St. Vincent de Paul, in Italy, Belgium, England, Ireland, the lands of former Poland, but also from, what the *Catholic Encyclopedia* of 1912 labeled as “the East”, Istanbul, Smyrna, Alexandria, and from several South American locations.⁴⁸⁴

The Vincentian initiatives, including the Ladies of Charity, had a comparable structure and means of work regardless of their geographical location. In Catholic Europe the Ladies of Charity grouped women of the upper classes, mainly the aristocracy, nobility, landowners, and later the rich bourgeoisie. A chairwoman, with the help of a few elected women, managed the association’s internal and external affairs, yet each society had its own spiritual supervisor: a priest. The society differentiated between non-active and active members. The non-active members limited themselves to payment of their membership fees, which constituted the financial base for charity work performed in the associations. Besides members’ generosity, the Ladies collected money during charity events and/or from individual donors. The active members paid an annual fee, held regular obligatory meetings and participated in social work on the ground, visiting the underprivileged with material (food, food coupons, money, coal, clothes, etc.) and moral assistance. As far as the latter was concerned, besides proselytizing among the poor, the Ladies of Charity tried to make sure that the recipients of their aid lived in sacramental marriages, baptized their children, confessed and received Holy Communion or anointing of the sick. The two types of aid – material and moral – were considered to be of equal importance. For this reason in their annual reports the societies accounted for their revenues and expenses, the numbers of visits paid to those in need but also listed the so-called “spiritual fruits,” which were the

⁴⁸³ Gretkowski, *Dobroczytno-społeczna działalność Zgromadzenia Sióstr*, 251-252. In parallel to the Ladies of Charity, there were similar male associations possibly from 1620, yet in the seventeenth century the Vincentian idea was far more appealing to women than men; for details see Gretkowski, *Dobroczytno-społeczna*, 249. Regarding the involvement of laymen into the Vincentian projects in the nineteenth century, see Thomas Mulry, “Society of Saint Vincent de Paul,” in *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1912), accessed March 9, 2011, <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13389a.htm>; J. CH., “Początki Towarzystwa św. Wincentego a Paulo” (The beginnings of the Association of St. Vincent de Paul), *Miłosierdzie chrześcijańskie* (The Christian Charity) 1 (1905): 6-18.

⁴⁸⁴ Mulry, “Society of Saint Vincent de Paul,” <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13389a.htm>; J.R. “Towarzystwo Pań Miłosierdzia w Galicji. Sprawozdanie ogólne za rok 1906” (The Association of the Ladies of Charity in Galicia. The general report for the year 1906), *Miłosierdzie Chrześcijańskie* 3 (1907): 102-103, 106-111.

numbers of conversions, Catholic marriages, confessions, etc. performed under the Ladies' influence.⁴⁸⁵ Whenever that was possible, the Ladies of Charity cooperated very closely with the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, a congregation of women with simple vows (set up in 1633 in France, since 1652 also present in Poland).⁴⁸⁶

The growing number of Ladies of Charity's associations across the nineteenth-century Catholic world cannot be understood separately from the broader socio-economic and political context of the period. On the one hand, the Vincentian conferences responded to at least some women's aspiration to act outside of home by creating for them an opportunity of legitimized and lawful engagement in the social realm. On the other hand, in this period of anti-Church legislation (e.g. in Germany, France, the Polish Kingdom) and rapidly growing populations that were out of clerical control, the Ladies of Charity's evangelization among the underprivileged (beside material assistance) in the public sphere was vital for the Church's agenda of preserving and expanding its influence. Embracing the idea of an active apostolate among the poor, the Ladies of Charity to some extent undertook duties once performed exclusively by clergymen. In this way, these women were enhancing not only the visibility of their own sex in the public sphere, but also helping Catholicism to reestablish itself in the modern period. Moreover, through the Ladies of Charity's personal assistance of the lower strata, the privileged social groups also made interventions about what constituted acceptable individual and familial behaviors (ensuring the "proper" model of a family,

⁴⁸⁵ For a description of the inner organization and social work carried out by the Ladies of Charity, see for example J.R. "Towarzystwo Pań Miłosierdzia w Galicji. Sprawozdanie ogólne za rok 1906"; *Sprawozdanie z czynności Towarzystwa Pań Miłosierdzia św. Wincentego a Paulo dla ubogich chorych w Krakowie od dnia 1 stycznia 1889 do 1 stycznia 1890* (Annual report on the activities of the Ladies of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul for the poor sick in Cracow from January 1, 1889 until January 1, 1890) (Kraków: Drukarnia "Czasu," 1890); *Sprawozdanie z czynności Towarzystwa Pań Miłosierdzia św. Wincentego a Paulo dla ubogich chorych w Krakowie od dnia 1 stycznia 1904 do 1 stycznia 1905* (Annual report on the activities of the Ladies of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul for the poor sick in Cracow from January 1, 1904 until January 1, 1905) (Kraków: Drukarnia "Czasu," 1905); *Sprawozdanie z czynności Towarzystwa Pań Miłosierdzia św. Wincentego a Paulo dla ubogich chorych w Krakowie od dnia 1 stycznia do 31 grudnia 1910* (Annual report on the activities of the Ladies of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul for the sick poor in Cracow from January 1, to December 31, 1910) (Kraków: Drukarnia "Czasu," 1911); *Rocznik Towarzystwa św. Wincentego a Paulo i Pań Miłosierdzia w Wielkim Księstwie Poznańskim. Rok 1912* (Yearbook of the Association of St. Vincent de Paul and the Ladies of Charity in the Grand Duchy of Posen, 1912) (Poznań: Drukarnia i Księgarnia św. Wojciecha, 1912); *Rocznik Towarzystwa Pań Miłosierdzia św. Wincentego a Paulo w Wielkim Księstwie Poznańskim. Rok 1914* (Yearbook of the Association of the Ladies of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul in the Grand Duchy of Posen, 1914) (Poznań: Drukarnia Dziennika Polskiego, 1915).

⁴⁸⁶ Bartholomew Randolph, "Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul," in *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1908), accessed July 12, 2011, <<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03605a.htm>>.

emphasizing adequate ways of bringing up offspring, sobriety) as well as social relations (peaceful coexistence of the social classes).

On the lands of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the oldest Polish female association of St. Vincent de Paul was set up in Posen in 1853. From then until 1918, the Polish Church founded 70 female Vincentian societies in the entire Grand Duchy of Posen. This process unfolded slowly until the end of the 1870s due to the anti-Catholic legislation of the *Kulturkampf* area (1871-1878). Forty-five associations out of the 70 were set up after 1900. A particularly rapid growth took place between the years 1912 and 1918, when 30 new conferences were founded.⁴⁸⁷ This was part of the general expansion of the Church's activities enabled by legislative changes of 1908 with respect to public gatherings introduced by the Prussian authorities.

In the Grand Duchy of Posen there was usually only one association of the Ladies of Charity per town. The Ladies held their meetings either weekly or, especially in provincial areas, once a month.⁴⁸⁸ In 1907 all female conferences of St. Vincent de Paul in the Grand Duchy were gathered under the supervision of *Rada Wyższa Pań Miłosierdzia Towarzystwa św. Wincentego a Paulo na archidiecezję Gnieźnieńsko-Poznańską* (Higher Council of the Ladies of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul in the Gniezno-Posen archdiocese) that reported on the achievements of the Polish Ladies to the above-mentioned supervising body in Paris. The Higher Council in Posen consisted of laywomen and one priest as the director, typically the current bishop.⁴⁸⁹ In 1918 there were around 1,100 active and 7,200 non-active Ladies in the entire Gniezno-Posen archdiocese.⁴⁹⁰

In the Polish Kingdom the first Ladies of Charity were set up in 1854 in Warsaw. The chief aim of the Varsovian association was to support families that had

⁴⁸⁷ *Rocznik Towarzystwa Pań Miłosierdzia św. Wincentego a Paulo w Wielkim Księstwie Poznańskim. Rok 1918*, 96-97.

⁴⁸⁸ *Rocznik Towarzystwa Pań Miłosierdzia św. Wincentego a Paulo w Wielkim Księstwie Poznańskim. Rok 1918*, 96-97. For examples of the social work's results in this region see "Sprawozdanie z działalności Towarzystwa Pań św. Wincentego w Wielkim Księstwie Poznańskim" (The report on the activities of the Ladies of Charity in the Grand Duchy of Posen), *Miłosierdzie Chrześcijańskie* 2 (1906): 68-70; *Rocznik Towarzystwa św. Wincentego a Paulo i Pań Miłosierdzia w Wielkim Księstwie Poznańskim. Rok 1912*; *Rocznik Towarzystwa św. Wincentego a Paulo i Pań Miłosierdzia w Wielkim Księstwie Poznańskim. Rok 1913* (The yearbook of the Association of St. Vincent de Paul and the Ladies of Charity in the Grand Duchy of Posen. 1913) (Poznań: Drukarnia i Księgarnia św. Wojciecha, 1913); *Rocznik Towarzystwa Pań Miłosierdzia św. Wincentego a Paulo w Wielkim Księstwie Poznańskim. Rok 1914*.

⁴⁸⁹ *Rocznik Towarzystwa św. Wincentego a Paulo i Pań Miłosierdzia w Wielkim Księstwie Poznańskim. Rok 1911*, 5-9.

⁴⁹⁰ *Rocznik Towarzystwa Pań Miłosierdzia św. Wincentego a Paulo w Wielkim Księstwie Poznańskim. Rok 1918*, 96-97.

become poor due to illness or death of the family provider. On average, the Varsovian society had around 100 members and supervised between 700 and 1000 families.⁴⁹¹ Until the end of the nineteenth century the society regularly published its annual reports; in subsequent years it occupied a marginal position in the public sphere and almost disappeared from the Varsovian press.

Around 1911 *Towarzystwo Niewiast Chrześcijańskich św. Wincentego a Paulo* (The Society of Christian Women of St. Vincent de Paul) was set up in Warsaw, a body that most probably aimed at fulfilling a role similar to that of the Higher Council of female associations in the Gniezno-Posen archdiocese. In the 1916 the Society reported 10 female Vincentian conferences (in Warsaw, Radom, Siedlce, Płock, Pułtusk, Tarczyn and Pruszków) in the Polish Kingdom, but only 5 of them sent their reports to the headquarter. The Society's management consisted of eight laywomen and one priest as the spiritual adviser.⁴⁹² The limited number of the Ladies of Charity and the low profile of their activities in the Polish Kingdom likely resulted from the legislation that until 1906 forbid or hampered launching new social initiatives, especially religious ones, and secondly from the presence of strong anti-clerical and secular discourses in the region.⁴⁹³

The oldest Galician female conference was the one in Cracow set up in 1855.⁴⁹⁴ According to the Cracowian Ladies of Charity's statute of 1867, the aim of the association was to bring help to all those who did not receive it from the public sector (the municipal authorities), mainly the sick poor, by providing medicine, food and clothes.⁴⁹⁵ The Cracowian conference consisted of three types of members: non-active membership fee payers, visiting Ladies and the so-called *Ekonomki* Ladies – young unmarried women of the upper classes who contributed with sewing for the sick poor. The emergence of the *Ekonomki* section signaled a diversification of the association's

⁴⁹¹ Elżbieta Mazur, *Dobroczynność w Warszawie w XIX wieku* (Charity in Warsaw in the 19th century) (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Instytutu Archeologii i Etnologii PAN, 1999), 9, 28, 50, 55, 100, 139-140.

⁴⁹² BN, Sprawozdanie z działalności Towarzystwa Niewiast Chrześcijańskich św. Wincentego a Paulo w Królestwie Polskim za rok 1916 w Warszawie (Report on the activities of the Society of Christian Women of St. Vincent de Paul in the Polish Kingdom in 1916 in Warsaw), II 9843.

⁴⁹³ Maryan Bartynowski, "O powstaniu Towarzystwa św. Wincentego a Paulo i jego rozwoju w XIX wieku" (The origins and growth of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul in the nineteenth century), *Sodalis Marianus* 1 (1902): 50.

⁴⁹⁴ "Sprawozdanie jubileuszowe Towarzystwa Pań Miłosierdzia św. Wincentego a Paulo dla ubogich chorych w Krakowie," *Miłosierdzie chrześcijańskie* 6 (1910): 6.

⁴⁹⁵ *Sprawozdanie z czynności Towarzystwa Pań Miłosierdzia św. Wincentego a Paulo dla ubogich chorych w Krakowie od dnia 1 stycznia 1866 do 1 stycznia 1867* (The annual report on the activities of the Ladies of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul for the poor sick in Cracow from January 1, 1866 until January 1, 1867) (Kraków: Czeionkami Karola Budweisera, 1867), 2.

inner organization and was particularly important for the development of the Cracowian Ladies of Charity by launching several new projects (for example a small hospital for the poor). In 1913 the Cracowian Ladies of Charity reported 43 active and 98 non-active Ladies and 75 Ekonomki Ladies.⁴⁹⁶ The two biggest Galician female conferences, the Cracowian and Lvivian ones, specialized in taking care of the sick poor, leaving the provision of charity to other poor families to analogous male Vincientian associations. In 1908 there were 18 female conferences in the entire Galicia.⁴⁹⁷

In order to popularize social work in accordance with St. Vincent's teaching, in 1905 the Galician Church began to publish, first quarterly later monthly, *Miłosierdzie Chrześcijańskie* (The Christian Charity), which functioned as the main journal for sharing experiences and establishing connections between the various conferences, especially in the provincial areas. Beside articles about the sense of charity work in general and providing a global overview of the achievements of St. Vincent's associations, the periodical published annual reports of male and female conferences mainly from Galicia as well as information about their internal life.⁴⁹⁸ Despite some attempts, the Church did not set up any institution to coordinate the efforts of the Ladies of Charity in Galicia before 1918.⁴⁹⁹

⁴⁹⁶ *Sprawozdanie z czynności Towarzystwa Pań Miłosierdzia św. Wincentego a Paulo dla ubogich chorych w Krakowie od dnia 1 stycznia 1870 do 1 stycznia 1871* (Annual report on the activities of the Ladies of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul for the sick poor in Cracow from January 1, 1870 to January 1, 1871) (Kraków: Drukarnia Czasu, 1871), 5; *Sprawozdanie z czynności Towarzystwa Pań Miłosierdzia św. Wincentego a Paulo dla ubogich chorych w Krakowie od dnia 1 stycznia 1879 do 1 stycznia 1880* (Annual report on the activities of the Ladies of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul for the sick poor in Cracow from January 1, 1879 to January 1, 1880) (Kraków: Drukarnia "Czasu," 1880), 3-4; *Sprawozdanie z czynności Towarzystwa Pań Miłosierdzia św. Wincentego a Paulo dla ubogich chorych w Krakowie od dnia 1 stycznia do 31 grudnia 1910*, 6, 8, 11; *Sprawozdanie z czynności Towarzystwa Pań Miłosierdzia św. Wincentego a Paulo dla ubogich chorych w Krakowie od dnia 1 stycznia do 31 grudnia 1913* (Annual report on the activities of the Ladies of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul for the sick poor in Cracow from January 1, to December 31, 1913) (Kraków: Drukarnia "Czasu," 1914), 3, 7, 10; "Sprawozdanie jubileuszowe Towarzystwa Pań Miłosierdzia św. Wincentego a Paulo dla ubogich chorych w Krakowie" (Commemorative report of the Ladies of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul for the sick poor in Cracow), *Miłosierdzie Chrześcijańskie* 6 (1910): 6-25.

⁴⁹⁷ J.R., "Towarzystwo Pań Miłosierdzia w Galicji. Sprawozdanie ogólne za rok 1907" (The Ladies of Charity in Galicia. General report on the activities in 1907), *Miłosierdzie Chrześcijańskie* 4 (1908): 112.

⁴⁹⁸ "Słowo wstępne" (Introductory word), *Miłosierdzie Chrześcijańskie* 1 (1905): 1.

⁴⁹⁹ The Galician Higher Council of Male Societies of St. Vincent de Paul, which coordinated the work of male conferences from the end of nineteenth century, was set as an example to the Ladies of Charity. J.R., "Towarzystwo Pań Miłosierdzia w Galicji. Sprawozdanie ogólne za rok 1907," 112, 120, 122. Concerning the cooperation between the Ladies of Charity across the zones, there were only few events of this kind, and with no meaning for the lives of these associations. For example the Higher Council in Posen reported that it participated in the 50th anniversary of launching the Ladies of Charity in Cracow. They also received the Cracowian Ladies' annual report. *Rocznik Towarzystwa św. Wincentego a Paulo i Pań Miłosierdzia w Wielkim Księstwie Poznańskim. Rok 1911*, 6. In 1918 the Higher Council in Posen reported difficulties in establishing the number of female conferences in the Polish Kingdom and in

In parallel to the Ladies of Charity, there were other female associations with similar programs, that is, personally served moral and material assistance to selected disadvantaged groups. For example, in Posen existed the Society of Our Lady Mary, operating in several parishes,⁵⁰⁰ and the Societies of St. Elisabeth.⁵⁰¹ In Galicia an association with a similar agenda to that of the Ladies of Charity was the Society of St. Salomea in Lviv and Zakopane.⁵⁰²

Elżbieta Mazur, a historian of poor relief in the Polish Kingdom, observes how in the nineteenth century those interested in social problems began differentiating between “old fashioned” and “modern” philanthropy. Secular activists defined “modern” philanthropy as an “up-to-date” approach to the socio-economic conditions of the underprivileged based not on alms giving but on bringing about systemic long-lasting improvements. This “modern” philanthropy became an example to follow for Polish social reformers.⁵⁰³ Below I will explore how the Church and pious laity reacted to this development by attempts of altering the Catholic charities’ forms of social work.

Chronologically, secular criticism of the Ladies of Charity’s methods of work and that of similar associations appeared in the 1880s, first in the Polish Kingdom (the Russian zone). Primarily, Varsovian journalists made sardonic observations of structural problems in the organization of the poor relief, mainly hinting at the disproportion between the labor invested and the results of the various charity events, but also at the Ladies’ limited comprehension of the actual needs of the poor. Soon criticism of a more general nature appeared, namely that “old fashioned” *caritas* was incompatible with the contemporary conditions because it did not provide long-term

Galicia. *Rocznik Towarzystwa Pań Miłosierdzia św. Wincentego a Paulo w Wielkim Księstwie Poznańskim. Rok 1918*, 10.

⁵⁰⁰ *Rocznik Towarzystwa Pań Miłosierdzia św. Wincentego a Paulo w Wielkim Księstwie Poznańskim. Rok 1918*, 9; *Rocznik Towarzystwa św. Wincentego a Paulo i Pań Miłosierdzia w Wielkim Księstwie Poznańskim. Rok 1911*, 7.

⁵⁰¹ Piotr Adamek, “O potrzebie pracy społeczno-charytatywnej kobiet katolickich ze sfer wyższych i średnich” (About the necessity of work for Catholic women of the upper and middle classes, *Ruch chrześcijańsko-społeczny* (The Christian-social movement) 8 (1909): 616.

⁵⁰² *Sprawozdanie z VII roku istnienia Towarzystwa od dnia 1 listopada 1894 do 31 października 1895* (Report from the seventh year of the Society of St Salomea’s existence from November 1, 1894 to October 31, 1895) (Lviv: 1895); *Sprawozdanie roczne Towarzystwa Św. Salomei w Zakopanem za czas od 17 grudnia 1903 do 31 grudnia 1903* (Annual report of St. Salome’s Society in Zakopane from December, 17, 1903 to December 31, 1903) (Kraków: Druk W.L. Anczyca i Spółki, 1905); *Sprawozdanie roczne Towarzystwa Św. Salomei w Zakopanem za czas od 1 stycznia 1906 do 31 grudnia 1906 r.* (The annual report of St. Salome’s Society in Zakopane from January 1, 1906 until December, 31, 1906) (Kraków: Druk W.L. Anczyca i Spółki, 1907).

⁵⁰³ Elżbieta Mazur, “Działalność dobroczynna kobiet z warszawskich elit społecznych w drugiej połowie XIX wieku. Wariant tradycyjny i nowoczesny” (Varsovian elite women’s charity work in the second half of the nineteenth century. The traditional and modern versions), in *Kobieta i kultura życia codziennego*, 309, 314.

solutions to burning problems.⁵⁰⁴

In the late-nineteenth century the pious women engaged in Christian charity acknowledged the growing difficulties they faced in the public secular sphere. In 1895 the Lvivian Society of St. Salomea complained that its members “met with criticism” and “the works of the society were ridiculed.”⁵⁰⁵ In 1910 the Cracowian Ladies of Charity complained that “the activity of the Society has been difficult for a dozen or so years due to the disappearance of support the association once had.”⁵⁰⁶ The Cracowian Ladies also noticed the increasing competition of secular forms of assistance provision to the poor. They reported that:

Nowadays, almost everybody thinks that the new situation and needs require associations of a different type. (...) [and moreover] that it is not recommendable to give a clear Catholic character to the new initiatives, but to accommodate to current times and notions, which do not like associations with saints in their names and do not believe in the success of any action organized by a saint centuries ago.⁵⁰⁷

In 1907, in *Miłosierdzie Chrześcijańskie*, the main journal of the Vincentian initiatives in Galicia, “J.R.” commented that an increasing number of Catholic women decided to take part in newly launched philanthropic societies and avoided the Ladies of Charity. J.R. disapproved of this tendency because the members of these new organizations performed their acts of charity “ostentatiously”; therefore these acts were lacking “the features of Christian modesty and humility.”⁵⁰⁸ J.R. argued that the new, secular type of associations proposed merely mechanical assistance to only the material needs of the alms` recipients and provided a sort of entertainment to the alms givers. For this reason he perceived secular philanthropy as inferior to Christian charity since the former neglected the spiritual self-refinement of both providers and recipients of the assistance.⁵⁰⁹ In *Ruch Chrześcijańsko-społeczny* (The Christian-social movement) of 1903, the main Catholic social journal in the Grand Duchy of Posen, an anonymous journalist defended Christian charity, especially the Societies of St. Vincent de Paul, as

⁵⁰⁴ Ibid., 312-314.

⁵⁰⁵ *Sprawozdanie z VII roku istnienia Towarzystwa od dnia 1 listopada 1894 do 31 października 1895* (Report from the seventh year of the Society of St Salomea’s existence from November 1, 1894 to October 31, 1895) (Lviv: 1895), 1.

⁵⁰⁶ “Sprawozdanie jubileuszowe Towarzystwa Pań Miłosierdzia św. Wincentego a Paulo dla ubogich chorych w Krakowie,” 23.

⁵⁰⁷ Ibid., 24.

⁵⁰⁸ J.R., “Towarzystwo Pań Miłosierdzia w Galicji. Sprawozdanie ogólne za rok 1906” (The Ladies of Charity in Galicia. General report on the activities in 1906), *Miłosierdzie Chrześcijańskie* 3 (1907): 52-53.

⁵⁰⁹ Ibid., 55.

an excellent remedy for social tensions, for it urged the upper classes to meet the lower classes so as to “show the latter their feelings of love”.⁵¹⁰ The author also pointed out that “the experience gained through the participation in charity organizations made many enter the realm of social activism.”⁵¹¹

Because they were deeply convinced of confessional charities` vital contribution to the social realm, at first Catholic activists focused on assuring the successful growth of the Ladies of Charity in the context of the growing competition of secular social projects. Regardless of the zone, the clergymen and/or the most active members of the Ladies of Charity alarmed about the slow increase of (especially active) membership within the Vincentian female associations⁵¹² and about the difficulties in keeping in touch with conferences in provincial areas.⁵¹³ Also, as a Galician priest-activist observed, numerous conferences of the Ladies of Charity were active due to an individual`s determination, which meant that after his (a priest) or her (a member) death or relocation the given branch dissolved.⁵¹⁴ Further, some Catholic activists also expressed concern about the possible corruption of the basic principles that informed the Ladies of Charity, which differentiated their efforts from similar secular social actions. The main idea of St. Vincent de Paul`s teaching was that a member of a conference became personally involved in assistance to the poor so as to improve the temporal conditions of the latter, but also, and equally importantly, to become engaged in a project of moral self-improvement. Contrary to St. Vincent`s recommendations, the Polish female conferences` annual reports showed considerable numerical disproportions between active and non-active members. They also showed that most of the charity work on the ground, that is visiting the sick and poor, was performed by the Sisters of St. Vincent de Paul rather than the Ladies.⁵¹⁵ In addition, the latter used to

⁵¹⁰ “Miłosierdzie a działalność socjalna” (Charity and social activism), *Ruch chrześcijańsko-społeczny* 1 (1903): 359.

⁵¹¹ *Ibid.*, 361.

⁵¹² In the annual report on the female conferences in Galicia for the year 1907, the author juxtaposed 18 associations of the Ladies of Charity in Galicia with the number of 198 female conferences in the neighboring Wrocławian diocese (the Prussian zone). J.R., “Towarzystwo Pań Miłosierdzia w Galicji. Sprawozdanie ogólne za rok 1907,” 112-113; *Rocznik Towarzystwa św. Wincentego a Paulo i Pań Miłosierdzia w Wielkim Księstwie Poznańskim. Rok 1911*, 5.

⁵¹³ For example, in 1907 it was possible to establish the number of Galician female conferences only after laborious correspondence. Moreover, numerous annual reports did not account for the spiritual fruits of the Ladies of the Charity. J.R., “Towarzystwo Pań Miłosierdzia w Galicji. Sprawozdanie ogólne za rok 1906,” 55.

⁵¹⁴ J.R., “Towarzystwo Pań Miłosierdzia w Galicji. Sprawozdanie ogólne za rok 1907,” 112-113, 120.

⁵¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 111.

suspend their activities for the entire summer.⁵¹⁶ Moreover, as for example the annual report of a Posen conference of 1911 testified, the Ladies would miss obligatory meetings without giving a reason or were late for them; therefore fees were introduced to prevent such behavior in the future. In the same conference the “reading [of religious literature] and sewing [for the poor] during the weekly meetings almost ceased due to the impatience of members, who are always in a hurry to leave the room.”⁵¹⁷ The author of the summary of the activities of the Galician female conferences in 1906 bitterly observed: “Some annual reports give the impression as if the whole work began with collecting alms and ended with giving them away.”⁵¹⁸

The secular criticism of the Ladies of Charity’s social relevance triggered further internal discussion within the Catholic milieu. Those critics did not disapprove of the Vincentian idea of social work, but wanted to reorganize it to increase its efficiency. Galician clergymen encouraged the Ladies of Charity to choose specific areas of involvement in social problems, to prevent repeating or competing with male Vincentian conferences’ efforts active in the same towns.⁵¹⁹ The Ladies were advised to widen their social program by launching various institutions like day-care facilities for children, dispensaries, or courses for midwives, yet apart from a few exceptions, neither in Galicia nor the Grand Duchy of Posen the Ladies followed this recommendation.⁵²⁰

⁵¹⁶ J.R., “Towarzystwo Pań Miłosierdzia w Galicji. Sprawozdanie ogólne za rok 1906,” 56-57; *Rocznik Towarzystwa św. Wincentego a Paulo i Pań Miłosierdzia w Wielkim Księstwie Poznańskim. Rok 1913*, 4, 10. In its annual report of 1911, the Higher Council for the Ladies of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul in the Gniezno-Posen archdiocese complained that neither the number of women in the existing female conferences nor the number of new conferences grew as fast as expected, due to the lack of understanding of the general idea of charity on the side of many women in that region. *Rocznik Towarzystwa św. Wincentego a Paulo i Pań Miłosierdzia w Wielkim Księstwie Poznańskim. Rok 1911*, 5.

⁵¹⁷ *Rocznik Towarzystwa św. Wincentego a Paulo i Pań Miłosierdzia w Wielkim Księstwie Poznańskim. Rok 1911*, 16.

⁵¹⁸ J.R., “Towarzystwo Pań Miłosierdzia w Galicji. Sprawozdanie ogólne za rok 1906,” 58, 60.

⁵¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 54.

⁵²⁰ *Ibid.*, 58 and J.R., “Towarzystwo Pań Miłosierdzia w Galicji. Sprawozdanie ogólne za rok 1907,” 112, 120. Some conferences did widen their social programs. Besides the above mentioned Cracowian Ladies, who ran a dispensary and the school for nurses, the Ladies of Charity in Tarnów set up the Association of the Catholic female servants under the invocation of St. Zyta in 1895. *Sprawozdanie Rady Towarzystwa Sług Katolickich za rok 1898* (Annual report of the Society of the Female Servants’ Council for the year 1898) (Tarnów: Drukarnia J. Styrny, 1899), 1. For examples of the standard scope of social activities of the Ladies, see “Sprawozdanie Tow. Pań Miłosierdzia św. Wincentego a Paulo dla ubogich chorych we Lwowie od dnia 1 stycznia 1904 do 1 stycznia 1905” (Annual report on the activities of the Ladies of Charity for the sick poor in Lviv from January 1, 1904 to January 1, 1905), *Miłosierdzie Chrześcijańskie 1* (1905): 36-39; “Sprawozdanie Towarzystwa Dobroczyńności Pań pod wezwaniem Św. Wincentego a Paulo w Tarnowie za czas od 1 stycznia do 31 grudnia 1904 roku” (Annual report on the activities in the Society of the Ladies of Charity under the invocation of St. Vincent de Paul from January 1 to December 31, 1904), *Miłosierdzie Chrześcijańskie 1* (1905): 40-42; “Sprawozdanie z działalności ‘Towarzystwa Pań dobroczynności św. Wincentego a Paulo’ w Sanoku” (Annual report on the activities of ‘The Ladies of Charity of St Vincent de Paul’ in Sanok), *Miłosierdzie Chrześcijańskie 1* (1905): 42-44; *Sprawozdanie z działalności Towarzystwa Pań św. Wincentego a Paulo w Pleszewie za rok 1905* (Annual report on the

In 1906 Maria Harsdorfowa, a leading Galician pious social activist, published an article in *Miłosierdzie Chrześcijańskie*, in which she listed the reasons why the Ladies of Charity's work was inefficient. Harsdorfowa's piece illustrates a significant turn in thinking about the role of Christian charity in the modern period but also in conceptualizing the role of women in the social realm, which took place at the beginning of the twentieth century among the Catholics on the Polish lands. Besides the observations already noted on the Ladies' general lack of genuine engagement, if not passivity, Harsdorfowa pointed out the "caste-like" character of the pious associations. Theoretically, Vincientian female conferences were open to women from all social groups, but in practice "the Ladies [did] not welcome women from groups other than their own."⁵²¹ Harsdorfowa argued that especially in the provincial conferences accepting women from the intelligentsia and the wives of clerks and artisans would greatly benefit these associations.⁵²² The third problem, Harsdorfowa continued, was the lack of "wider spiritual, and most of all intellectual horizons" among the Ladies of Charity. Fluent knowledge about social issues the author found a precondition for proper social work. "Would you tell me please," Harsdorfowa asked,

who more helped the sick and poor families of the night guards living in the humid Cracowian basements – those who rushed to them with one-day charity or those few intellectuals who launched the law that forbids to put these families into cellars in the first place? To grasp a problem in detail one must have an educated mind: one must read, learn from others to work better. (...) Each association should have at least a few books and brochures on the subject of social movements, on the activities of the associations in France or Germany. Each association should know the meaning of, for example, *L'Oeuvre de Protection de la Jeune Fille* in Catholic Fribourg or the *Marienverein* in Germany.⁵²³

activities of the Ladies of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul in Pleszew in 1905), *Miłosierdzie Chrześcijańskie* 2 (1906) 33-36; *Sprawozdanie z działalności Towarzystwa Pań św. Wincentego a Paulo w Sanoku* (Annual report on the activities of the Ladies of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul in Sanok), *Miłosierdzie Chrześcijańskie* 2 (1906): 21-23.

⁵²¹ Maria Harsdorfowa, "Kilka uwag o Towarzystwach Pań Miłosierdzia" (A few remarks about the Ladies of Charity), *Miłosierdzie Chrześcijańskie* 2 (1906): 82.

⁵²² Ibid., 83. The same was recommended by J.R., "Towarzystwo Pań Miłosierdzia w Galicji. Sprawozdanie ogólne za rok 1906," 60. The author suggested reaching out to new members from other classes so as to "avoid the accusation of passivity or of inadequate social action." As an example, he gave the Posen confraternities, which accepted middle-class women, a move that had a "positive impact on their [conferences'] development".

⁵²³ Harsdorfowa, "Kilka uwag o Towarzystwach Pań Miłosierdzia," 85. Also see "Odpowiedź na zarzuty czynione instytucjom miłosiernym o religijnym charakterze" (Answer to the reproach against religious charity institutions), "Filantropia na praktycznych zasadach" (Philanthropy based on practical principles), "Konieczność i pożytki samodzielnej organizacji miłosiernej na gruncie religijnym" (The necessity and advantages of the independent organization of religious charity), *Miłosierdzie Chrześcijańskie* 9 (1910): 202-223, 224-228; 229-236.

In a similar tone, in 1907 *Miłosierdzie Chrześcijańskie* remarked bitterly on the condition of Christian charity, which was, “mindless, without any program (...) Acts of charity gain a higher value only if there is permanency, relation, consequence.”⁵²⁴ Such discussions also occurred in the other two zones. Comparing “charity work” with the “social work” of Catholic laywomen, a Posen journalist concluded that “social work”,

will be a longer and bumpier road than when we only give food and medicines, yet it [social work] will be a more useful activity because not only an individual will profit, but a whole social group, hundreds, thousands of male and female workers. We will achieve similar results if instead of better employment and better work conditions for one female worker, we enlighten and mobilize female workers to set up a union, to have their social representation and mechanism through which hundreds and thousands of female workers will receive better payment and better working conditions. It will be social work, the work for the elevation of a certain community.⁵²⁵

In addition, there was growing awareness within the Catholic milieu that the lower social strata’s alarming poverty resulted from general unjust economic conditions rather than from individuals’ misbehaviors (sins). This made at least some privileged Catholics reflect on the patronizing attitude toward the alms’ recipients, which frequently characterized the charity organizations’ work, as well as on their self-congratulatory boldness about their own moral and material condition.⁵²⁶

The debates around the Ladies of Charity’s activism illustrate that the secular factions’ criticism of the Catholic social work forced the Catholic environment to reflect on its assumptions about the underprivileged’ needs as well as on the compatibility of its modes of social help with contemporary challenges. As a result, some Catholic activists proposed to replace the concept of day-to-day provision with long-term solutions to the problem of poverty. Further, from the secular discourses on the same issue, the Catholic milieu gradually adapted the concepts of efficient, planned,

⁵²⁴ “Uwagi o naszym miłosierdziu” (The comments about our charity), *Miłosierdzie Chrześcijańskie* 3 (1907): 190-191. For examples of similar remarks, see Maria Sosnowska, “Dawanie jałmużny i jej skutki” (The giving away of alms and its results), *Przebudzenie*, 1, 7 (1909): 5-7; Maria Horsdorfowa, “Idealy Miłosierdzia” (The ideals of charity), *Przebudzenie*, 1, 24 (1909): 3-5.

⁵²⁵ A. Ziemiński, “O konieczności pracy społecznej kobiet warstw inteligentnych i środkach nabycia potrzebnej wiedzy” (About the necessity of the intelligentsia women’s social work and about the means to acquire the necessary knowledge), *Ruch chrześcijańsko-społeczny* 8 (1910): 249. Also see Piotr Adamek, “O potrzebie pracy społeczno-charytatywnej kobiet katolickich ze sfer wyższych i średnich” (About the necessity of work of Catholic women of the upper and middle classes), *Ruch chrześcijańsko-społeczny* 7 (1909): 616.

⁵²⁶ J. Viollet, “Jakie powinno być nasze miłosierdzie?” (What should our charity be like?), Cardinal Mercier “Czego nas uczą ubodzy, których odwiedzamy?” (What do the poor teach us when we visit them?), “Oświecające miłosierdzie” (Illuminating charity), *Miłosierdzie Chrześcijańskie* 6 (1910): 147-153, 154-160, 177-183.

well-informed and systematic approaches to social work. Also, the recognition of the socio-economic realities promoted a less judgmental delivery of help. Finally, Catholic activists observed that although the framework of the Ladies of Charity facilitated laywomen's involvement into the public sphere and provided them with first-hand experience in social work, it created few possibilities to equip members with a broader knowledge about contemporary social problems and possible solutions. Despite the criticism, the Ladies of Charity resisted the idea of broadening the scope of their activism or opening themselves to women from other than the most privileged groups to enhance the efficiency of their projects. This likely resulted from their low level of social awareness as well as their investment into preserving the existing socio-economic status quo.

5.2 The Confraternities of Christian Mothers

In 1850 in Lille (France) a few pious women set up a confraternity "having for its object the development of truly Christian mothers, who will bring up their children according to the will of God and under the direction of the Church."⁵²⁷ From Lille the Confraternity of Christian Mothers was moved to Paris, its popularity grew and it became an archconfraternity in 1856. Soon the clergy began launching Confraternities of Christian Mothers in numerous Catholic locations outside of France.⁵²⁸

In Germany it was bishop Emmanuel Ketteler who popularized the Confraternities of Christian Mothers. Due to the close connections between the Polish and German Catholic Churches, the Confraternities of Christian Mothers became widespread in the Grand Duchy of Posen.⁵²⁹ The first ones were set up in Posen in 1879. At the turn of the 1880s and 1890s the priests in the archdiocese were ordered to launch this particular confraternity in all their parishes. In 1902 the Confraternities of Christian Mothers functioned in 520 parishes.⁵³⁰ In 1913 *Sodalis Marianus*, the Galician journal dedicated to Catholic social initiatives, reported that the Confraternities of Christian Mothers existed in almost all towns and villages of the Grand Duchy of

⁵²⁷ Hilgers, "Sodality," <<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14120a.htm>>.

⁵²⁸ Hilgers, "Sodality," <<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14120a.htm>>.

⁵²⁹ From 1815 until 1918 the Polish Roman Catholic Church in the Grand Duchy of Posen found itself within the borders of the Prussian, later on German, state. In 1821 the pope ordered the inclusion of the Polish clergy in the Prussian zone under the supervision of the German Roman Catholic Church, Rogala, "Źródła do dziejów Związku Towarzystw Robotników Polskich," 301.

⁵³⁰ "Bractwo Matek Chrześcijańskich w Poznaniu" (The Confraternity of Christian Mothers in Posen), *Ruch chrześcijańsko-społeczny* (The Christian-social movement) 1 (1902): 113-115, 133.

Posen, while in Galicia they were still rather few, with the Confraternity of Christian Mothers in Cracow as the most prominent one.⁵³¹

With respect to the Polish Kingdom, there was definitely one Confraternity of Christian Mothers in Warsaw, founded by the priest Marcei Godlewski,⁵³² however I was unable to establish any further details about this association. According to Ryszard Bender, a historian of the Church's social activism in the Polish Kingdom, the confraternities in that region functioned as relics from the past.⁵³³ For this reason and due to the lack of information about them in the Catholic and women's press, I assume that the confraternities generally and the Confraternities of Christian Mothers specifically had little importance in the landscape of female social Catholic activism and for women's religiosity in the Polish Kingdom. In the case of Partitioned Poland's lands therefore, the Confraternities of Christian Mothers for Polish laywomen predominantly existed in the Grand Duchy of Posen, so the information provided in the subsequent paragraphs refers to that region.

The Confraternities of Christian Mothers were open to women of all social groups, regardless of marital status, which meant that the experience of motherhood was not a precondition for enrollment. As a rule they were parish-based without ambitions to instigate activities beyond these immediate borders. The associations' aims were the "sanctification of mothers, bringing up children according to God's heart, and cultivation of Christian life in the family."⁵³⁴ Women were to achieve these by: "prayers, individually and during the meetings (...) [talking] collective and frequent Holy Communion (...), participation in monthly meetings conducted by the local priest and utilization of the teachings heard during these meetings" to themselves and to their

⁵³¹ "Bractwo matek w Krakowie" (The Confraternity of Mothers in Cracow), *Sodalis Marianus* 12 (1913): 241. The Confraternity of Christian Mothers in Cracow was one of the most active laywomen's pious associations in the city. In cooperation with *Związek Katolickich Kobiet Polskich* (The Association of Polish Catholic Women), the Confraternity set up the *Biuro Porady* (The Advisory Office). Through the Office, the women of the upper classes aimed at "the moral and material strengthening of the family" by giving examples to mothers from the lower classes to help them understand their obligations towards the family and society. In practical terms, the Office offered material assistance to poor families, helped with finding employment, offered unpaid medical care, meals, clothes, stipends for children for continuing their education. The Office tried to establish itself as distinctive from other charity organizations claiming to appeal to people's minds and make them understand the value of work instead of simply offering them alms, see "*Biuro Porady*" *Matek Chrześcijańskich* (The Christian Mothers' advisory office) (Kraków: W.L. Anczyca i Sp.), 1-4; Żuk-Skarszewska and Marya Estrecheirówna, "Praca społeczna w miastach Galicji" (The social work in the Galician cities), in *Pamiętnik Zjazdu Kobiet Polskich*, 148;

⁵³² Bender, *Spoleczne inicjatywy Chrześcijańskie w Królestwie Polskim 1905-1918*, 127.

⁵³³ *Ibid.*, 40.

⁵³⁴ "Bractwo Matek Chrześcijańskich w Poznaniu," *Ruch chrześcijańsko-społeczny* (The Christian-social movement) 1 (1902): 135.

families.⁵³⁵ As far as the confraternities' educational agenda was concerned, their members learned about the ways of self-sanctification, wives' behavior towards their husbands, bringing up children with special emphasis on religious education, privileged women' duties towards servants and the lower classes in general, issues connected with household work, hygiene, looking after the sick at home and outside, as well as general social problems. Women were asked to prevent men from enrolling in socialist organizations, to exercise a general positive impact on the religious life of their parish, and also to undertake some social work.⁵³⁶

Being open to women of all classes, the Confraternities were to remedy social tensions. It is a question, however, how this worked in practice. Women of the upper classes seem not to have taken their membership in the associations seriously. In 1902 *Ruch chrześcijańsko-społeczny* commented: "It is understandable that upper-class women find it difficult to participate in the monthly meetings of the Confraternity, however, it is possible to find time a few times a year for this beautiful gesture of social solidarity, the opportunity of expressing ideas of equality and Christian love."⁵³⁷

On the one hand, I could point at the Confraternities of Christian Mothers' widespread presence in the region, a consequence of the formal and close cooperation of the Polish Church with the German Catholic hierarchy, which strongly endorsed this form of laywomen's mobilization. On the other hand, as *Ruch chrześcijańsko-społeczny* commented in 1902: "The activities of the Confraternity are silent like the life of a woman. Among all the associations, it is the one that is the least visible in the public sphere."⁵³⁸ The general invisibility of the Confraternities of Christian Mothers' social work, as one can see when examining the contemporary press, provokes the question what kind of, if any, social efforts the Mothers undertook. In other words, I do not question that the Confraternities did gather women, but suggest that contrary to their founding idea, the Confraternities remained by and large devotional and, perhaps also educational in their character, but dropped or neglected the social aspect of their

⁵³⁵ Ibid., 135.

⁵³⁶ Ibid., 137.

⁵³⁷ Ibid., 138-139.

⁵³⁸ Ibid., 139. In his book *Bractwa i stowarzyszenie kościelne diecezji krakowskiej w latach 1795-1939* (The Confraternities and religious associations in the Cracovian diocese 1795-1939) (Kraków: Poligrafia Inspektoratu Towarzystwa Salzejańskiego, 1995) Piotr Natanek did not mention the Confraternities of Christian Mothers in 1888-1914. He noticed that there were 41 types of confraternities in the region, of which 34 had a devotional character. According to Natanek, in 1914 753 out of the existing 888 had exclusively devotional purposes. Natanek did not mention women's sodalities in the same region either, 64-66.

program. It is likely that, whereas the devotional life and religious education of the Confraternities' members were realized through a certain pre-established structure (meetings, lectures, masses), the call for social work was less specified and therefore required an amount of initiative and experience from the women that they lacked. Contrary to the Confraternities of Christian Mothers, the Ladies of Charity, described above, did provide women with a concrete scheme of social efforts (collecting and giving away alms, visiting the poor or sick, etc.) the members could rely on, whereas the Christian Mothers were short of such directions.

5.3 The Sodalities of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Between the 1880s and 1918 the Sodalities of the Blessed Virgin Mary became a significant part of pious laywomen's social activism predominantly in Galicia.

Historically, the sodalities date back to the early Middle Ages. *The Catholic Encyclopedia* of 1912 defined them as pious associations and included them among the confraternities and archconfraternities. The words "sodality" and "confraternity" were/are often used interchangeably.⁵³⁹ The first Sodality of the Blessed Virgin Mary for men was set up in 1563 in Rome. In 1751 the Church allowed to launch sodalities for laywomen, which were often referred to as the Sodalities of Mary's Children or the Congregations of Mary's Children. Through the centuries the Marian sodalities' development was tightly connected with the history of the Jesuit order, which was strongly invested in propagating the foundation of these associations across the Catholic world.⁵⁴⁰

In the nineteenth century the Marian sodalities had a twofold mission. The principle one was molding their members minds' so as to make them devoted Catholics. The second principle was turning the sodalists into dedicated social activists who took on various projects in all aspects of public life so that the Church doctrine would spread as much as possible in an increasingly secularized world.⁵⁴¹ In other words, the

⁵³⁹ Hilgers, "Sodality," <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14120a.htm>.

⁵⁴⁰ Henryk Haduch, "O istocie i zadaniach Kongregacji Maryańskiej" (About the principle and goals of the Marian Sodalities), *Sodalis Marianus* 7 (1908): 123-126; Jan Rostworowski, "Zasadnicze ustawy kogregacji Maryańskiej w systematycznym opracowaniu" (The systematized principles of the Marian Sodality), *Sodalis Marianus* 1 (1909): 7.

⁵⁴¹ Henryk Haduch, "O istocie i zadaniach Kongregacji Maryańskiej," 123-126; "Statut Związku Kongregacji Mariańskiej" (The statute of the Marian Congregations' Union), *Sodalis Marianus* 1 (1902): 63; Jan Rostworowski, "Zasadnicze ustawy kogregacji Maryańskiej w systematycznym opracowaniu," 78-79; 237-249. Also Zofia Waškowska "Sodaliczja w swej historii i w swej działalności" (The Sodality: its history and activity), *Sodalis Marianus* 12 (1913): 5-19. In the modern period the priest-moderators

sodalities' goal was to provide theoretical and practical training for future Catholic lay citizens active *outside* of a sodality's framework. Leo XIII expressed particular endorsement of this form of mobilizing believers around his agenda and described the Sodalities of the Blessed Virgin Mary as one of the most powerful tools in the Church's fight against its enemies.⁵⁴²

As opposed to the Confraternities of Christian Mothers, which theoretically were open to laywomen of all social backgrounds and marital statuses, and to the Ladies of Charity, who resisted the idea of including women from the middle classes and/or the intelligentsia in their ranks, the Sodalities of the Blessed Virgin Mary epitomized the deep commitment of the Church to Thomism as *the* main theological dogma on the earthly social order. Professing that worldly social inequalities were an indispensable part of the divine plan and, if properly comprehended, were in fact the guarantee of a harmonious co-existence of the various social groups, the Church argued that all human beings hold responsibilities towards one another, yet individuals' duties were defined strictly by their social location, that is by their class, sex, marital status, but also profession, nationality or language. An accurate understanding of one's earthly obligations was the remedy for the increasing class tensions in the nineteenth century.⁵⁴³ All over the Catholic world, Marian sodalities recruited their members in accordance with this theological doctrine so as to teach them about the kind and scope of their social obligations resulting from the very particular social milieu they occupied. Accordingly, there were separate sodalities of upper-class married women in selected urban areas, women-landowners, female teachers working in provincial areas, female teachers working in urban areas, female students of secondary schools, female students at universities, wives of artisans in provincial areas, female clerks, female workers of selected professions, etc.⁵⁴⁴ The detailed statuses of individual congregations were expected to mirror their members' comprehension of the particular situations these

were asked to manage their respective sodalities in a way that in due course the lay members rather than a clergyman should be responsible for the successful development of a sodality in general, and for local social projects in particular. A priest-moderator was supposed to confine himself strictly to religious education of the members. Rostworowski, "Zasadnicze ustawy kogregacji Maryańskiej w systematycznym opracowaniu," 7, 10, 17, 131.

⁵⁴²Filip Löffler, "Kogregacja Mariańska, jej istota, rzut oka na dzieje" (The Marian Congregation, its aim, a historical overview), *Sodalis Marianus* 9 (1910): 131.

⁵⁴³Józef Brzeziński, "Kilka słów o charakterze zawodowym sodalicji Maryańskich" (A few words about the professional character of the sodalities), *Sodalis Marianus* 6 (1907): 121-123.

⁵⁴⁴Jan Rostworowski, "Zasadnicze ustawy kogregacji Maryańskiej w systematycznym opracowaniu" (The systematized principles of the Marian sodality), *Sodalis Marianus* 8 (1909): 74; Waškowska, "Sodaliczja w swej historii i w swej działalności," 8-9.

people operated in.⁵⁴⁵

The process of recruitment to sodalities aimed at selecting members “of the best quality, the flowers among the local Catholics, for only out of such ones could they build the superb army.” If there were not enough fine candidates, the Jesuits discouraged lay believers from setting up a sodality, for they argued “it is better to have 10 good ones than 500 hundred mediocre members.”⁵⁴⁶ Members took part in regular mandatory gatherings of the sodalities so as to perform religious rituals collectively (Holy Communion, retreats, prayers, the masses, etc.),⁵⁴⁷ exchange social ideas, launch new projects, and deepen their knowledge of contemporary social problems. The collective aspect of the sodalities` lives was often emphasized for the importance of “the impact of one on another. The work of an individual is in danger of burning out. (...) The sodalist takes her strength for social work from a group.”⁵⁴⁸ The priest-moderators as a rule supervised all events in the internal life of the sodalities.⁵⁴⁹ In addition, the sodalists performed individual spiritual work so as not to slip into mechanical and empty devotion.⁵⁵⁰

On the Polish lands the sodalities appeared at the end of the sixteenth century, first in Vilno, but soon they spread across the entire Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Similarly to other European contexts, the growth of the Polish sodalities was hampered

⁵⁴⁵ Rostworowki, “Zasadnicze ustawy kogregacji Maryańskiej w systematycznym opracowaniu,” 249. For examples of the female sodalities` social programs, see *Sprawozdanie z rozwoju czynności Kongregacji Maryańskiej Nauczycielek w Krakowie 1898-1908* (Report on the activities of the Female Teachers` Marian Congregation 1898-1908) (Kraków: Czas, 1909); *Sprawozdanie z działalności sodalicji Marjańskiej Pań Urzędniczek w Krakowie. Dwudziestopięciolecie 1905-1930* (Report on the activities of the Sodality of Female Office Workers in Cracow) (Kraków: Przegląd Powszechny, 1930); *Sodalicia Marjańska Akademiczek Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego w Krakowie. Dwudziestopięciolecie 1906-1931* (Marian Sodality of Female Students at the Jagielonian University in Cracow. The twenty-fifth anniversary 1906-1931) (Kraków: Przegląd Powszechny, 193).

⁵⁴⁶ Jan Rostworowski, “Choroby Kogregacji” (The illnesses of the Congregation), *Sodalis Marianus* 7 (1908): 256-258. Admission to a confraternity required that a member should recommend the candidate. When her recommendation was positively received by other sodalists, the applicant began a probation period that ended with the ceremony of accepting her as a full member.

⁵⁴⁷ For an example of the detailed list of the strictly devotional duties of the sodalists in one of the Cracowian congregations, see *Póhwiecz Krakowskiej sodalicji Pań Dzieci Marji 1886-1936*. (The fiftieth anniversary of the Cracowian Sodality of Mary`s Children 1886-1936) (Kraków: Powściągliwość i Praca, 1936), 5-6.

⁵⁴⁸ Haduch, “O istocie i zadaniach Kongregacji Maryańskiej,” 126; also Waškowska “Sodalicia w swej historii i w swej działalności,” 8-9.

⁵⁴⁹ Rostworowki, “Zasadnicze ustawy kogregacji Maryańskiej w systematycznym opracowaniu,” 299-300; also “Sprawozdanie z czynności Kongregacji Maryańskiej Nauczycielek w Krakowie za czas od 29 czerwca 1901 do 26 października 1902 roku” (The report on the activities of the Female Teachers` Marian Congregation in Cracow from June 29, 1901 to October 26, 1902), *Sodalis Marianus* 2 (1903): 244-246.

⁵⁵⁰ Rostworowki, “Zasadnicze ustawy kogregacji Maryańskiej w systematycznym opracowaniu,” 10, 17; Jan Rostworowski, “O doskonałej i niedoskonałej pobożności” (About perfect and imperfect piety), *Sodalis Marianus* 7 (1908): 276-278.

by the suppression of the Jesuits in 1773.⁵⁵¹ After the order's restoration in 1814, the sodalities reappeared mainly in Galicia, where in the second half of the nineteenth century the Jesuits could operate without any difficulties.⁵⁵² As a matter of fact, due to the Habsburg Empire's welcoming attitude to the Jesuits, the development of the sodalities there was unparalleled in the period and set as an example to Catholics in other countries.⁵⁵³ In the last two decades of the nineteenth century the sodality movement in Galicia grew so intensively that there were attempts of consolidating their work on the regional level. To this end the *Zarząd Centralny Kongregacji Mariańskich* (The Main Board of the Marian Congregations) began to publish the journal *Sodalis Marianus* that focused primarily on the life of the Galician congregations but also informed its readers in detail about the international Catholic congresses, jubilees, and commemorations in veneration of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which was to develop a feeling of unity of Galician sodalists with general developments in the Church. *Sodalis Marianus* primarily targeted male congregations, but in time it started to pitch articles also about female sodalities.⁵⁵⁴

As far as the sodalities for Polish women are concerned, in 1902 there were 14 female units in 10 Galician cities with a total number of members around a thousand. The oldest sodalities for women were the Congregations of the Ladies in Lviv set up in 1877 and in Cracow founded in 1886.⁵⁵⁵ In 1912, there were 60 female congregations

⁵⁵¹ Haduch, "O istocie i zadaniach Kongregacji Maryańskiej," 126. For further details about the sodalities on the Polish lands, see "Kongregacje Najświętszej Panny Maryi w Polsce" (The Congregations of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Poland), *Sodalis Marianus* 2 (1903): 33-38. At the beginning of the twentieth century there were only two male congregations in the Grand Duchy of Posen, see "Kongregacje Najświętszej Panny Maryi w Polsce," 38. In 1909 in a Posen journal *Gazeta dla Kobiet* (Journal for Women) an anonymous author claimed that there were several sodalities for women in the bigger cities of the Grand Duchy of Posen, for example, for landowning women, female servants, women-merchants, female teachers. However, I did not find archival materials making a link between the internal lives of these sodalities and social activism undertaken outside, "Stowarzyszenia świeckie a Bractwa kościelne" (The lay associations and religious confraternities), *Gazeta dla Kobiet* 1 (1909): 153-154. Also in the same journal, *Gazeta dla Kobiet*, when explaining the principles that laid the ground for the work of the sodalities in the Grand Duchy of Posen, the spiritual development was emphasized and social work was not mentioned, see Franciszek Ruciński, "Sodalicya Maryańska" (The Marian Sodality), *Gazeta dla Kobiet* 3 (1911): 114-115.

⁵⁵² This was opposed to the Prussian and Russian zones, in which the order was banned as part of the general repression of Polish Catholicism and where sodalities played little role until WWI.

⁵⁵³ "Prasa zagraniczna o kogregacjach naszych" (The foreign press about our congregations), *Sodalis Marianus* 2 (1903): 271.

⁵⁵⁴ *Sodalis Marianus* was published first in Lviv (February 1896-April 1897), afterwards in Cracow (1902-1918), see "Sodalis Marianus i jego program" (*Sodalis Marianus* and its program), *Sodalis Marianus* 1 (1902): 1.

⁵⁵⁵ "Przegląd statystyczny Kongregacji Dzieci Maryi i ich dzieł w Krakowie i Galicyi" (Statistical overview of the Congregations of Mary's Children and their activities in Cracow and Galicia), *Sodalis Marianus* 2 (1903): 252-253.

that gathered around 5000 laywomen in total, located in 18 Galician towns.⁵⁵⁶ The Jesuits were the power engine behind launching new sodalities, often relying on the help of a local pious woman, usually from the upper classes.⁵⁵⁷ Although from the early years of the twentieth century, the female sodalities, especially those with similar social agendas, frequently met to exchange their experience, it was only in 1917 that they unified in the national organization *Związek Krajowy Sodalicyj* (National Union of Sodalities), originally established for male sodalities in 1914.⁵⁵⁸

In the second half of the nineteenth century, besides the veneration of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Jesuits promoted the sodalities' foundation in Galicia as a way towards moral rebirth of the Polish nation. In this way the transnational project of revitalizing Catholicism tapped into the local endeavor of (re)creating the Polish nation and also possibly a future independent Polish nation-state, in which Catholicism would be *the* confession.⁵⁵⁹ This combined agenda of Catholic and national rebirth had direct consequences for defining the social obligations of the female sodalists, for they were asked to fulfill their duties as pious mothers, housekeepers and Polish citizens. Primarily, women-sodalists were expected to save the Catholic family from the calamities of contemporary times by educating their immediate environments (children, domestic servants) in the Catholic doctrine, but also, and equally important, in accordance with Polish traditions. However, the proper fulfillment of familial obligations was a program minimum, for the Jesuits-moderators repeatedly encouraged sodalists to transgress the private sphere and to take on social work in all areas of public life available to them.⁵⁶⁰ Another frequently evoked reason for the women-sodalists to

⁵⁵⁶ "Statystyka sodalicyj polskich w roku 1912" (Statistics on the Polish sodalities in 1912), *Sodalis Marianus* 12 (1913), 92-93 and 237-238. Cracow hosted 15 sodalities for women.

⁵⁵⁷ "Sprawozdanie Kongregacji Dzieci Marii nauczycielek w Starej Wsi" (Report of the Congregation of Female Teachers of Mary's Children in Stara Wieś), *Sodalis Marianus* 2 (1903): 171; "Kongregacja Dzieci Maryi w Kochawinie" (The Congregation of Mary's Children in Kochawina), *Sodalis Marianus* 2 (1903): 190.

⁵⁵⁸ In 1901 the women-sodalists met in order to get to know each other, stay in touch, and discuss actions against "bad" books and journals, see "Dzieci Maryi w Polsce od 1860 do 1901 roku" (The Mary's Children in Poland from 1860-1901), *Sodalis Marianus* 1 (1902): 73-74; "Związek Sodalicyj w Polsce" (The Union of Sodalities in Poland), *Sodalis Marianus* 17 (1918): 1.

⁵⁵⁹ "Kongregacje Najświętszej Maryji Panny w Polsce" (The congregations of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Poland), *Sodalis Marianus* 2 (1903): 33-38.

⁵⁶⁰ Henryk Haduch, "Praca wewnętrzna: program pracy sodaliski i praca nad udoskonaleniem siebie" (The inner work: the program of the female sodalist's work and self-development work), *Sodalis Marianus* 7 (1908): 153-160; Krystyna Zaleska, "Sodalicya a praca społeczna" (The sodality and social work), *Sodalis Marianus* 10 (1911): 140-143; Wanda Drużbacka, "Na jakich polach pracować mogą Dzieci Maryi? (Where should the female sodalists work?)" *Sodalis Marianus* 7 (1908): 182-186; "Uchwały Koła Delegatów Kongregacji Maryjańskich" (The resolutions of the Marian Congregations' Delegates), *Sodalis Marianus* 1 (1902): 68-69.

engage in social activism was the perceived threat of the already existing socialist and Jewish networks of assistance to the disadvantaged. In order to overthrow the socialist and Jewish “domination” in the region, the Jesuits urged the female sodalists, often called “the soldiers of the Church”, to get closer to the lower classes in a way that would not humiliate the latter, but create circumstances and possibilities the underprivileged would profit from.⁵⁶¹

Galician female sodalists took the postulate of social activism in the public sphere very seriously. Upper- and middle-class women-sodalists organized vocational courses for the working classes and peasants, taught them the catechism, encouraged innovations in gardening or farming, organized religious retreats, set up libraries, a temperance movement, launched orphanages or day-care nurseries in their manor houses, gathered lower-class mothers into pious associations, introduced new ways of making a living for women, or set up cooperatives, etc.⁵⁶² As early as 1902 *Sodalis Marianus* reported: “almost every sodalist belonged to one or more Catholic institutions.”⁵⁶³ The annual reports of the sodalities show that numerous female sodalists were active in for example the Ladies of Charity, in the management of Associations of the Female Servants under the invocation of St. Zyta, in the management of public libraries, local charity organizations or of labor associations for the workingwomen. In Cracow and Lviv, female sodalists dominated the management and structures of *Związek Katolickich Kobiet Polskich* (Associations of Catholic Polish Women, developed in Chapter 6). In time some sodalities replaced ad-hoc initiatives with long-term projects. For example, in 1897 the Cracowian Sodality of the Ladies founded *Opieka nad Robotnicami* (The Care of Female Workers) dedicated to assisting young female workers, which in 1912 evolved into the labor association *Związek Katolickich Robotnic* (The Union of Catholic Female Workers) independent from the sodality, yet upper-class sodalists managed the organization. To its members, *Związek*

⁵⁶¹ “Katolickie stowarzyszenia przemysłowe, robotnicze i handlowe w roku 1905 w porównaniu ze socjalistycznymi i żydowskimi” (The Catholic industrial, working-class and commerce associations in comparison with socialist and Jewish ones in 1905), *Sodalis Marianus* 4 (1905): 364-375 and 402-411.

⁵⁶² Antonina Munkaczy, “Sodalicya w pracy nad ludem wiejskim” (The sodality in its work on the folk people), *Sodalis Marianus* 7 (1908): 128-133; “Sprawozdanie z czynności Kongregacji Maryańskiej Nauczycielek w Krakowie za czas od 29 czerwca 1901 do 26 października 1902 roku,” 244-246; “Sprawozdanie ze stanu Kongregacji Dzieci Maryi nauczycielek lwowskich z końcem roku 1902/1903” (Report on the activities of the Mary’s Children Congregation of Lvivian Female Teachers 1902/1903), *Sodalis Marianus* 3 (1904): 32-34.

⁵⁶³ “*Sodalis Marianus* i jego program” (*Sodalis Marianus* and its program), *Sodalis Marianus* 1 (1902): 2.

offered, among other things, free medical care, legal advice and cultural activities.⁵⁶⁴

Regarding the social engagement of women-sodalists who were part of the paid labor force (e.g. teachers, clerks) and due to their employment had limited time for other activities, they were asked to spread the Kingdom of God in their work. For example, the teacher-sodalists received suggestions on how they might incorporate religious ideas as well as the Polish national tradition into the state educational system.⁵⁶⁵ In Eastern Galicia the female congregationists were reminded of the delicate Polish-Ukrainian relations there (Section 3.2). In an article dedicated to the apostolate of a female sodalist in her workplace, its author Wanda Seńskowska warned that a Polish female teacher-sodalist, in doing her religious and patriotic teaching,

should not Polonize the Ukrainian youths, she should not get involved in any political agitation that would create antagonisms. Instead, she should make every effort that only the Polish young people she taught would feel Polish, felt connected to their own Church and ceremonies, to their land and people, to their language and customs.⁵⁶⁶

Despite the Marian sodalities' strong emphasis on the importance of female believers' social engagement in the public sphere, as Galician activist Maria Harsdorfowa's letters to her friend Helena Mycielska below will illustrate, already at the end of the nineteenth century Catholic laywomen began seeking a new form of channeling their social activist energy.

Maria Harsdorfowa née Gniewosz (1870-1910), originally from the Eastern part of Galicia, and Helena Mycielska, originally from the Grand Duchy of Posen, met in

⁵⁶⁴ "Sprawozdania. Kraków. Sodalicja Pań Dzieci Maryi" (The reports. Cracow. The Sodality of Mary's Children), *Sodalis Marianus* 12 (1913): 250-251; Żuk-Skarszewska, Marya Estrecheirówna, "Praca społeczna w miastach Galicji" (Social work in the Galician cities), 148. The Lvivian Sodality of the Ladies also founded *Opieka* (Care), the organization entirely dedicated to assisting young women travelling in search for employment. The sodality initiated this project, but realized it through *Związek Katolickich Kobiet Polskich* (The Association of Catholic Polish Women) in Lviv, whose members were sodalists as well. The Lvivian *Opieka* stayed in close touch with related associations abroad. In addition, the women-sodalists from the Lvivian Congregation of the Ladies were in the board of the Association of Female Servants under the invocation of St. Zyta and in the organization of female workers employed in the clothing industry. The Lvivian Children of Mary founded the latter. In 1904 it reported 400 members. "Opieka nad młodymi kobietami we Lwowie" (Assistance to the young women in Lviv), *Sodalis Marianus* 9 (1910): 84; "Z dziejów Kongregacji Pań Dzieci Maryi we Lwowie" (The Ladies' Congregation of Mary's Children), *Sodalis Marianus* 3 (1904): 158-160.

⁵⁶⁵ Wanda Seńkowska, "Nauczycielka-Sodaliska w stosunku do dzieci" (A female sodalist-teacher towards the children), *Sodalis Marianus* 7 (1908): 89-94. *Sodalis Marianus* published series of the articles in which it helped to define the scope of social work for particular groups of women. Zofia Popielówna, "Dwór i chata. Kilka uwag do Sodalicji pań wiejskich" (The manor house and hut. A few remarks to the Sodality of the lady-landowners), *Sodalis Marianus* 8 (1909): 110-115; Munkaczy, "Sodalicya w pracy nad ludem wiejskim," 128-133.

⁵⁶⁶ Seńkowska, "Nauczycielka-Sodaliska w stosunku do dzieci," 94.

the middle of the 1880s in Cracow (Western Galicia) while temporarily residing there for educational purposes.⁵⁶⁷ The two women developed a long-lasting mainly pen-friendship that was based on their shared upper-class background as daughters from landowning families, deep religiosity, and belief in the importance of social work.⁵⁶⁸ As far as the latter is concerned, Harsdorfowa and Mycielska showed a special interest in Jadwiga Zamoyska's school in Kuźnice and her philosophy of bringing up girls.⁵⁶⁹ In time both Harsdorfowa and Mycielska became fairly recognizable figures in the landscape of Catholic laywomen's activism in Galicia and the Grand Duchy of Posen respectively. They published in the Catholic and women's press, where they expressed their interest in and/or criticism of various social projects.⁵⁷⁰ As shown in the section dedicated to the Ladies of Charity, Maria Harsdorfowa wrote one of the first critical articles on female Christian charity on the Polish lands. The penfriends also shared the conviction that Polish Catholic women should unite across the zones' borders similar to Polish women from secular organizations.⁵⁷¹

Among the values of Harsdorfowa's letters are her literary talent, her acute awareness of the context she operated in and her great eye for social and political detail. Most of her life Harsdorfowa lived in Eastern Galicia, one of the economically least developed regions, with a particularly high percentage of illiteracy, and dominated by the Ukrainian Greco Catholics.⁵⁷² She was aware of and knowledgeable about the existence of various organizations for women both abroad and in the three zones of

⁵⁶⁷ "Listy Marii z Gniewoszków Harsdorfowej do Heleny Mycielskiej. Cz. 1" (The letters of Maria Harsdorfowa née Gniewosz to Helena Mycielska. Part 1), 153.

⁵⁶⁸ About the social work of Harsdorfowa, see "Listy Marii z Gniewoszków Harsdorfowej. Cz. 1", 9 September 1890, 174; 31 January 1892, 184; 25 March 1892, 185; "Listy Marii z Gniewoszków Harsdorfowej. Cz. 2," 29 December 1896, 175; 29 March 1898, 277-278; 29 March 29 1898, 185.

⁵⁶⁹ "Listy Marii z Gniewoszków Harsdorfowej. Cz. 1", 24 November 1892, 187. She kept recommending the school in Kuźnice to her friends' daughters, "Listy Marii z Gniewoszków Harsdorfowej. Cz. 2," 17 August 1893, 252-253; 20 September 1893, 255; 5 April 1894, 265; 18 August 1894, 267. Helena Mycielska stayed for several months in Kuźnice not as a student, but for a religious retreat. She came back delighted by the level of the religious and general education there, "Listy Marii z Gniewoszków Harsdorfowej. Cz. 1," 20 September 1893, 255.

⁵⁷⁰ Mycielska was one of the most active socialists first in Galicia and later in the Grand Duchy of Posen. For examples of her activism, see Maryan Bartynowski, "Sprawozdanie z drugiego Kongresu Międzynarodowy ku Czcii Matki Boskiej we Fryburgu szwajcarskim od 18 do 21 sierpnia 1902 roku" (The overview of the second International Eucharistic Congress in Fribourg from August 18 to 21, 1902), *Sodalis Marianus* 2 (1903): 19, 21. Harsdorfowa published in the Catholic press in Galicia and outside, for example "Z ruchu kobiecego" (From the women's movements), *Przebudzenie*, 1, 24 (1909): 4-5; "Ideały Miłosierdzia" (The ideals of the charity), *Przebudzenie*, 1, 23, (1909): 3-5.

⁵⁷¹ "Listy Marii z Gniewoszków Harsdorfowej. Cz. 3", 29 May 1899, 208-209.

⁵⁷² On the relations between Poles and Rusins, the dominance of the Greco-Catholic Church, political competition between the two nations in Harsdorfowa's letters see "Listy Marii z Gniewoszków Harsdorfowej. Cz. 1," 21 January 1890, 169; 25 February 1893, 250; 20 September 1893, 256; 12 February 1894, 260-261.

Partitioned Poland. Her overall attitude to women's activism was decisively supportive. However, she either pointed at the incompatibility of the foreign women's organizations' structure and/or agenda with the local Polish conditions or was concerned that irreligious activists dominated the contemporary landscape of female social work. "In Galicia especially" – Harsdorfowa wrote to her friend – "(...) the efforts of Christian women are jammed by peripatetic and energetic feminists, who while doing good things (...) entirely support indifferentism and are driven towards aberrant social ideas." Hence, she urged the launching of a new organization that would answer the needs of Polish Roman Catholic women scattered around Eastern Galicia and would counterbalance the monopoly of "the feminists'" efforts.⁵⁷³ However, the shape of that organization was the object of heavy debates, as testified by her letters to Mycielska.

In the early years of their correspondence, Harsdorfowa consulted Mycielska about the possibility of enrollment in the Sodality of the Ladies, of which Mycielska was a member herself. When her penfriend sent the brochures and necessary clarifications, Maria Harsdorfowa's main concern was the distance between her place of residence and Lviv, which meant she would be unable to fully participate in the sodality's life.⁵⁷⁴ Also, she quoted a comment on the Congregations of Mary's Children that likely conveyed a more general perception of these pious associations, as "a society for embroideries and small talk in French, good for the maidens in the city."⁵⁷⁵ As a matter of fact, Harsdorfowa initially rejected the idea of founding another sodality in her region, for "against pagan feminism one must put something stronger, new, (...) something that would meet the needs of our times, and [can include] Catholic women from all social groups." Interestingly, Harsdorfowa mentioned that Marian sodalities were accused of having a "foreign" character, i.e. were perceived as alien and as if "forced" onto the Polish lands. Further, Harsdorfowa wrote that sodalities "as they are now – unite people of the same background, so the accusation of having a caste like character makes the women of other [lower groups] suspicious. For example in Lviv, the professional female clerks were so put off by this fact that despite the efforts of the

⁵⁷³ "Listy Marii z Gniewoszów Harsdorfowej. Cz. 3," 29 May 1899, 208; also 5-7 September 1899, 211; 29 March 1900, 222; 28 March 1900, 224.

⁵⁷⁴ "Listy Marii z Gniewoszów Harsdorfowej. Cz. 1," 26 May 1888, 158; 9 July 1888, 159; 31 July 1888, 160; "Listy Marii z Gniewoszów Harsdorfowej. Cz. 3," 17 February, 1899, 213.

⁵⁷⁵ "Listy Marii z Gniewoszów Harsdorfowej. Cz. 3," 17 February 1899, 213.

Jesuits, it was impossible to set up such a congregation.”⁵⁷⁶ The new organization was supposed to be, according to Harsdorfowa, “a child of its age” and should act in accordance with the teaching of *Rerum Novarum*, meeting not only the religious, but also the contemporary social needs.⁵⁷⁷

Having taken on the project of founding a new kind of organization, Harsdorfowa soon found a powerful partner: the Ormian Catholic archbishop Teodorowicz. She described him as “dedicated to social activism”, who “supports the right of women to intellectual work, the profits of progress, but he wants to root them in God.”⁵⁷⁸ Using his authority of a clergyman-activist and his connections, Teodorowicz put Harsdorfowa in touch with other Catholic laywomen in the region.

In February 1900 several activists from various Lvivian women’s associations met to discuss the foundation of the organization in question. In her letters to Mycielska, Harsdorfowa gave detailed descriptions of the preparation. Due to her comprehensive account, we have a glimpse of the diversity of opinions and attitudes within Catholic female laity’s milieu, otherwise missing from the official accounts produced by religious authorities or for the Catholic press. First, Harsdorfowa, who herself expressed doubts whether the form of a sodality would be attractive for women otherwise ready to take on social work, was annoyed by Catholic women-activists, like the prominent sodalist Zofia Popiel, who could not imagine carrying out any social project outside of the Congregation of Mary’s Children or cooperating with Catholic women who did not belong to any. On the other hand, Harsdorfowa was concerned by the faction of devout women who would be glad to avoid the Catholic banner in launching a new organization, because they were unable, in her view, to “see that the faith should direct us not only in the private sphere, but also in public.”⁵⁷⁹ Harsdorfowa also noticed the resistance towards any form of systematic collaboration expressed by aristocratic women. She described tension between the faction of women who planned a new organization as mainly charity-oriented and women who aimed at something bigger than that. Archbishop Teodorowicz emphasized the need for creating an organization to counterbalance the socialists’ influence in Galicia. Yet at the same time, he recommended caution regarding the relations with non-Catholic women’s organizations, including feminist ones. Fighting feminism aggressively, according to

⁵⁷⁶ “Listy Marii z Gniewoszków Harsdorfowej. Cz. 3,” 19 December 1899, 215.

⁵⁷⁷ “Listy Marii z Gniewoszków Harsdorfowej. Cz. 3,” 16 January 1900, 216.

⁵⁷⁸ “Listy Marii z Gniewoszków Harsdorfowej. Cz. 3,” 29 May 1899, 209.

⁵⁷⁹ “Listy Marii z Gniewoszków Harsdorfowej. Cz. 3,” 16 May 1900, 227.

bishop Teodorowicz, was unnecessary since among the feminists there were “many women with religious hearts, but pagan heads (...) [nevertheless] worthy, full of noble love to [their] fellowman, and performing good acts.”⁵⁸⁰

The first plans envisioned an umbrella-association open to women of all social groups, both nationalities, Polish and Ukrainian, and both religious denominations, Roman Catholic and Greek Catholic, as well as Polish women from the other two zones.⁵⁸¹ However, after long debates, in 1902 the parties decided to return to the framework of a sodality and set up the Sodality of Landowning Women in Kochawina, of which Maria Harsdorfowa was a devoted member and president. The sodality was known for its strong social program. Beside organizing religious retreats for female teachers from provincial areas and summer camps for poor lower-class girls, the sodality organized educational trainings for landowning women, which eventually evolved into an educational institution patterned on Jadwiga Zamoyska’s school in Kuźnice. Also, the sodality started to publish its own journal sent to members located far from Kochawina to provide them with an update on the social work, summaries of the archbishop’s teaching or materials for deepening their religiosity.⁵⁸² Archbishop Teodorowicz argued that even if the women chose to unify themselves as a sodality, it should be considered as a transitory form only, for they should strive for a religiously motivated organization, yet lay in its character.⁵⁸³ Encouraged by the Ormian archbishop, in the next years the sodality in Kochawina initiated numerous so-called Circles of Women-landowners (*Kółka Ziemianek*), inspired by the spirit of the Marian congregations but independent from them and open to laywomen without ties to any sodality. In 1913 there were seven circles in Eastern Galicia. Each of them drafted a separate social program for themselves, corresponding to the contexts they worked in.⁵⁸⁴

However, the umbrella organization as planned in Harsdorfowa’s letters from 1899 to 1901 was never founded; it is not fully clear why not. It is most likely that after the initial enthusiasm the parties lost their interest in launching a project with no

⁵⁸⁰ “Listy Marii z Gniewoszów Harsdorfowej. Cz. 3,” 29 March 1900, 221-222.

⁵⁸¹ “Listy Marii z Gniewoszów Harsdorfowej. Cz. 3,” 2 February 1900, 218-220.

⁵⁸² M. Berezowska, “Praca społeczna kobiet na wsi w Galicji” (Women’s social activism in rural areas in Galicia), in *Pamiętnik Zjazdu Kobiet Polskich odbytego w dniach 11 i 12 maja 1913* (Memoir of the Polish women’s convention in Cracow, held on May 11-12, 1913) (Kraków: Nakładem Biura Porady Kobiet “Gościna,” 1913), 105.

⁵⁸³ *Ibid.*, 106.

⁵⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 105-108.

precedence and turned to the already known “safe” form of female activism, that is, a sodality.

Harsdorfowa`s correspondence suggests that already at the end of the nineteenth century not only laywomen but also some members of the Catholic establishment perceived the framework of pious associations as restraining the social energy of female activists, not sufficiently matching contemporary challenges or even as conflicting with the new social teaching of the Vatican. For these reasons they advocated launching other forms of social activism than those the Church proposed. At least some Polish Catholic laywomen were debating the idea of founding an organization that would cut across national and religious differences as well as across the borders of the zones of Partitioned Poland and would be open to cooperation with non-confessionally motivated women`s organizations. The latter characteristic, that is readiness to work with non-confessionally motivated factions, enriches our knowledge about the transnational “culture wars” between Catholicism and secularism by showing that in various contexts the conflict unfolded according to different patterns and had different temperatures. Finally, Harsdorfowa`s letters convey the doubts, hesitations, and insecurity of pious women who wished to be more active in the public sphere about the scope of their work, the means of their activism, or the degree of their independence from Church authority.

Harsdorfowa`s correspondence freezes a particular moment in the history of Polish Roman Catholic women`s activism, namely the moment just before they made the leap from social activism carried out through various kinds of pious associations to lay organizations of Catholic women. For this reason the content of Harsdorfowa`s letters serves as a good starting point into the history of Polish Roman Catholic laywomen`s organizations that appeared at the beginning of the twentieth century and will be described in the next chapter. However, it must be emphasized that the pious associations explored in this chapter were neither replaced by nor became less popular once other lay organizations for devout women were founded. Until the outbreak of WWI the pious associations and lay organizations coexisted, cooperated and often women shared their energies to work in both types of collective bodies.

5.4 Conclusions

This chapter has explored the least-researched aspect of Catholic laywomen`s activism, that is, their social engagement realized through pious associations, with a focus on the Ladies of Charity, the Confraternities of Christian Mothers, and the Sodalities of Mary`s Children on the lands of Partitioned Poland between the 1880s until WWI. In my view, female social activism in the pious associations described here was an expression of women`s increasing willingness to participate and shape processes in the public sphere. Simultaneously, these women`s activism also reflected a broader process undertaken by the national Catholic Churches to activate the Catholic laity by means of endorsing forms of female social engagement that were both transnationally available and accepted by the Vatican. Due to membership in the three associations – the Ladies of Charity, the Confraternities of Christian Mothers, and the Sodalities of Mary`s Children – laywomen could familiarize themselves with distinct modes of social activism.

While the Confraternities of Christian Mothers aimed at increasing their influence within the parish borders, the Ladies of Charity crossed the immediate boundaries of the local community organized around a church and targeted both their members and help receivers from entire cities. Both organizations aimed at gathering members from different social groups in order to minimize class tensions. However, as my research showed, both had rather poor results in this respect, for the privileged women resisted the idea of sharing membership with women of other classes. Unlike the Christian Mothers and Ladies of Charity, the sodalities a priori rejected the idea of cooperation between various social groups within the framework of the same pious association. They aimed instead to assemble sodalists with the most alike background possible in order to undertake social activism from these members` particular social locus. Those different approaches to the issue of class may indicate the Catholic Church and female laity`s uncertainty about how to reconcile between the Thomist doctrines of social order dating back to the Middle Ages and increasingly popular discourses that demanded democratization of the public sphere.

The three pious associations also had different approaches of introducing women to the idea of social work. In the case of the Confraternities of the Christian Mothers, the fact that the demand to engage into social issues was not supported by either theoretical preparation or practical structure was, I suggest, a decisive factor in its

members' poor performance. Although the Ladies of Charity proposed their members a pre-established structure of social activism, which did enhance laywomen's presence in the public sphere, the framework proved difficult to accommodate new social projects. This may have happened because there was little place for women's social development through educational activities to raise their consciousness about social issues.

As opposed to the Confraternities and Ladies of Charity, the Sodalities of Mary's Children emphasized the importance of their members' theoretical preparation for social work. To this end they launched an educational program that helped laywomen to recognize the possible areas of their influence and forms of their social activism. Further, the sodalities encouraged women to launch social projects not through the framework of a sodality but outside of it, which enhanced both Catholic laywomen's and the Church's visibility and areas of authority. In order to boost the sodalities' growth in Galicia the Polish Church intertwined the project of strengthening the Roman Catholic religion in the region with the project of Polish national rebirth.

Exposed to the contemporary (secular) discourses on the need to develop modes of social assistance matching the contemporary challenges, at least some Catholic women began to reflect critically on the organization of social activism provided by the pious associations and attempted to introduce forms of social assistance that would bring about long-term results. Women's membership in the pious associations, their increased social awareness and activist experience became a platform for advocating the foundation of women-only organizations lay in character that would work in the Catholic spirit, but more independently from the religious authorities. These initiatives will be explored in Chapter 6.

Chapter 6: Polish Catholic women`s lay organizations, 1900-1918

The previous chapters have discussed Catholic laywomen`s social activism realized either through independently propelled projects or through pious associations launched by the Church. Chapter 6 introduces and interprets another way in which Polish women became engaged in the social realm, that is, in confessionally motivated lay organizations, or, to lesser extent, as co-founders and managers of labor associations for workingwomen.

A considerable number of regional and national organizations of Catholic laywomen of privileged backgrounds appeared in various national contexts in the early years of the twentieth century. Below I will first sketch the main ones in order to provide the broader context for similar events in the Polish lands. Between the years 1900 and 1918 three organizations of this kind for Polish Catholic laywomen operated on the lands of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth: *Polski Związek Niewiast Katolickich* in Cracow (Polish Association of Catholic Women, hereafter PZNK-Cracow), *Polski Związek Niewiast Katolickich* in Lviv (Polish Association of Catholic Women, hereafter PZNK-Lviv) and *Katolicki Związek Kobiet Polskich* (Catholic Association of Polish Women, hereafter KZKP) in Warsaw.

The specific objectives of Chapter 6 are to explore the circumstances under which these Polish three organizations were founded, as well as their agenda and means of work; secondly, to identify the factors and processes that conditioned these organizations` recruitment strategies, forms of social engagement, and their cooperation with other organizations on the Polish lands and/or with Catholic women`s associations in other inter/national contexts; and thirdly, to explain the puzzling absence of a women-only organization for Polish Catholic female lay activists in the Grand Duchy of Posen.

The research in this chapter is based predominantly on reports from the Polish organizations in question and the contemporary press.

6.1 Laywomen's organizations across the Catholic world at the beginning of the twentieth century

In Chapter 2, I pointed to the process of mobilizing Catholic forces around the papal agenda, which in fact consisted of two developments (intertwined, yet not alike): that is, motivating the national Churches and local clergy on the one hand, and activating the Catholic laity, on the other. As far as the latter is concerned, the encyclicals, pastoral letters, and other papal documents imagined a Catholic layman as the Vatican message's addressee. I have not come across any explicit official document issued by Rome to the public in which laywomen were specifically considered actors in the secular-religious conflicts of the period. For this reason, the entry "Woman" by Augustin Rössler and William Fanning in *The Catholic Encyclopedia* of 1912, a project blessed and supervised by the Vatican, seems an important source, in which one can see Rome openly calling for the support of its female believers to counterbalance the activism of women of other factions.

Rössler and Fanning's article aimed to give a comprehensive picture of the Roman Catholic Church's position regarding the "woman question". Among other things, the article touched upon laywomen's activism in the public sphere.

Of late years the position of women in human society has given rise to a discussion which, as part of social unrest, is known as the 'woman question,' and for which a solution is sought in the movement for women's emancipation. In theory as in practice the answer to the question varies with the view one takes of life. (...) Three main parties may be distinguished in the movement for women's emancipation in the present day: 1) the radical emancipation which is divided into a middle-class and a Social-Democratic party; 2) the moderate or inter-confessional conciliatory party; 3) the Christian party.⁵⁸⁵

Similarly to other entries in *The Catholic Encyclopedia* of 1912, the authors of "Woman" provided their readers with a brief description of the actions undertaken by the Church's competitors. Rössler and Fanning found the emancipatory claims of both the "radical" socialist and middle-class women perfectly consistent with the systems they originated and operated within.

It is (...) a logical consequence of the one-sided principle of individualism, which, without regard for God, came into vogue in what is called the 'Rights of Man'. If a woman is to submit to laws the authoritative determination of which is assigned to man, she has the right to demand a guarantee that man as

⁵⁸⁵ Augustin Rössler and William Fanning, "Woman," in *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1912), accessed August 18, 2011, <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15687b.htm>.

legislator will not misuse his right. (...) On the basis of the so-called autonomous morality (...) a woman cannot be denied the right to claim this autonomy for herself.⁵⁸⁶

The names of, as Rössler and Fanning categorized them, moderate liberal women's activists⁵⁸⁷ were listed with "grateful respect" for their "efforts for women's economic elevation, for reforming women's education and for the protection of morality."⁵⁸⁸ However, despite the positive impact of these women's actions, the article pointed out that moderate liberal activism centered on "the temporal prosperity of women," neglecting the religious dimensions of social reforms.⁵⁸⁹ The omission of religion resulted from ignorance of the fact that "it was the teaching of Christ which first brought freedom to the female sex, wherever his teaching was seriously taken as the guide to life."⁵⁹⁰ For that reason the Protestant women's efforts seemed to be the closest to the Catholic Church's plan of "the Christian reform of society," specifically of bringing "a successful solution to the woman question" through "a reorganization of modern conditions in accordance with the principles of Christianity."⁵⁹¹ However, what bothered the authors in case of the latter women was that as Protestants they belonged to "a mutilated kind of Christianity," which, to make it even worse, happened to be in "constantly increasing decay."⁵⁹²

Taking into consideration the inadequacies of the existing women's movements on the one hand and women's burning problems due to the modern socio-economic realities on the other hand, Rössler and Fanning found Catholic women's involvement necessary. They acknowledged that in comparison with other women's groups, "Catholic women were the last to take up agitation." However,

on account of the movement's international character and the causes which produced it, Catholic women would not finally hold back from co-operation in solving the question, especially as the attack of revolutionary ideas on the Church today is most severe in Catholic countries. For a long time Christian charity has not sufficed for the needs of the present day. Social aid must

⁵⁸⁶ Ibid., <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15687b.htm>.

⁵⁸⁷ Ibid., <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15687b.htm>. As moderate liberal women-activists they listed Jessie Boucherett, Mary Carpenter, Florence Nightingale, Lady Aberdeen, Mrs. Paterson, Octavia Hill, Elizabeth Blackwell, Josephine Butler, Luise Otto, Luise Büchner, Maria Calm, Jeannette Schwerin, Auguste Schmidt, Helene Lange and Katharina Scheven.

⁵⁸⁸ Ibid., <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15687b.htm>.

⁵⁸⁹ Ibid., <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15687b.htm>.

⁵⁹⁰ Ibid., <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15687b.htm>.

⁵⁹¹ Ibid., <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15687b.htm>.

⁵⁹² Ibid., <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15687b.htm>. With respect to the Protestant activists, Rössler and Fanning referred to the *Evangelisch-sozialer Kongress* (founded by Elizabeth Gnauck-Kühne) and the *Deutsch-evangelisches Frauenbund*.

supplement legal ordinances for women's justifiable demands.⁵⁹³

Although the Catholic women's societies would have to compete with internationally organized socialist and liberal women's movements, Rössler and Fanning argued that Catholic activists would benefit from the experience acquired from already existing secular women's projects.⁵⁹⁴

The article "Woman" in the *Catholic Encyclopedia* of 1912 shows that at the beginning of the twentieth century the Roman Catholic Church's establishment acknowledged the heterogeneous character of the public sphere, more specifically, the presence of a variety of systems that addressed the contemporary socio-economic problems, and also recognized the logic of their solutions in terms of the systems they originated in. Moreover, the Church was prepared to acknowledge its rivals' efficiency in social work and, furthermore, to accept the validity of its competitors' social criticism, which meant withholding from a position of claiming a monopoly on the truth. Finally, the Church admitted that, as opposed to earlier periods when its position in the public sphere was far stronger, in the modern period Catholicism had no choice but to join the fierce competition between the multiple factions struggling for recognition and supporters. While doing it, Catholics, the Church advised, should not withhold from adjusting their modes of work to the challenges of modern times, including attentively following the rival parties' agenda and patterns of social engagement.

One of the early attempts of organizing Catholic laywomen within the framework of an independent association, yet under the Catholic banner, on a considerable scale took place in Belgium. In 1893 the Jesuit Van Langermeersch founded the *Ligue des Femmes Chrétiennes de Bruxelles* as a response to the alleged moral and material misery of working-class women living in Brussels and its surroundings. In 1909 the organization, managed by laywomen, reported 6,000 members.⁵⁹⁵

Historical research usually portrays the foundation of the *Ligue Patriotique des Françaises* (Patriotic League of Frenchwomen, hereafter LPF) as Catholic laywomen's

⁵⁹³ Ibid., <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15687b.htm>.

⁵⁹⁴ Ibid., <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15687b.htm>.

⁵⁹⁵ *Fédération Internationale des Ligues Catholiques Féminines. 1er Conseil International tenu à Bruxelles les 26-27 août 1910* (The International Federation of Catholic Women's Leagues. The first international meeting in Brussels, August 26-27, 1910) (Paris: Service Central International 1910), 30, 34.

reaction against the perceived increasing secularization of French society and the growing importance of socialist and masonic factions. Between the years 1902 and 1914, with more than 850 local committees in all regions of France and 545,000 members, the LPF became one of the most influential organizations of Catholic laywomen in the world. Although managed by women, similar to other associations for Catholic female laity across the world, the LPF had clergymen on its board and in branches so as to assure the Catholic spirit of its social projects. The association aimed at fostering its members' spiritual development, which meant providing them with thorough religious knowledge so that later on they could proselytize in their families and immediate communities. Further, the Ligue focused on the moral and spiritual support of the disadvantaged, launching initiatives for children mainly (e.g. founding nurseries, teaching catechism and organizing holidays) and women (e.g. providing educational activities, assistance for mothers and help with seeking employment). The LPF maintained it was a laywoman's Christian duty to bring relief to those in poor material conditions, yet it was not her obligation to provide long-lasting solutions.⁵⁹⁶

The *Ligue Patriotique des Françaises* contributed to the foundation of the *Liga da Acção Social Christã* (League of Christian Social Action) in Portugal in 1902. The Portuguese League's main goal was to promote the involvement of the upper classes in doing social work for the lower classes, which would bring the two groups closer. The League also promoted the Catholic press, religious teaching in schools, and the boycotting of shops that did not respect religious principles (e.g. were open on Sundays).⁵⁹⁷ In 1906 the LPF helped to create the *Ligas de Damas Catolicas del Uruguay* (League of the Catholic Ladies of Uruguay), initially as a protest against a law that banned the crucifix in hospitals and charity houses.⁵⁹⁸

German laywomen-activists united their various efforts in *Der Katholische Frauenbund* (Catholic Women's League, DKF), founded in 1903. The organization was a federation with its central committee in Cologne, but affiliated associations enjoyed autonomy with respect to their agenda and means of action. In 1911 the DKF had 30,000 members from all social strata, affiliated in 281 organizations. As its members explained, the DKF was an answer to the foundation of numerous liberal associations

⁵⁹⁶ Sarti, *The Ligue Patriotique des Françaises, 1902-1933*; Cova, *Au service de l'église, de la patrie et de la famille*, 77-87. *Fédération Internationale des Ligues Catholiques Féminines. 1er Conseil International*, 46-51.

⁵⁹⁷ *Fédération Internationale des Ligues Catholiques Féminines. 1er Conseil International*, 56-58.

⁵⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 66-72;

for women with “very seductive” programs that focused on women’s material conditions, but neglected their spiritual needs.⁵⁹⁹ As established by the American historian Deirdre Moloney, the DKF served as an important reference point for American Catholic women of German origin when they set up and developed the areas of activism of the Catholic Women’s Union (CWU) in 1916. The German American laywomen-activists referred to the DKF members as “our sister members across the sea.”⁶⁰⁰

After consultation with archbishop Bourne, Margaret Fletcher set up the Catholic Women’s League (CWL) in England in 1906. Like other similar organizations, the League had its spiritual adviser to assure Catholic orthodoxy. In 1910 the CWL reported having 2,300 members. In case of the English organization, it was not so much the fight with socialist, liberal or feminist movements, but the competition with Protestantism that informed the organization’s agenda.⁶⁰¹ The English CWL prompted the launching of similar organizations in other countries of the British Commonwealth. In 1912 all the associations of Catholic women in Edmonton were formally affiliated as the Canadian Federation of the English CWL. In subsequent years, the Canadian Federation organized various forms of help for immigrants, the homeless, the sick, and poor around the country.⁶⁰² The Catholic Women’s League in Australia, set up in 1914 in Adelaide “to demonstrate the loyalty of Catholic women to the war effort,” was also affiliated with the English CWL.⁶⁰³ Beside the association in Adelaide, there were another two regional organizations for Catholic Australian laywomen: the Catholic Women’s Association, founded in 1913 operating in New South Wales, and the Catholic Women’s Social Guild set up in 1916 in Melbourne.⁶⁰⁴

In 1906 Hungarian women gathered together into the *Országos Katolikus Nővédő Egyesület* (National Catholic League for the Protection of Women).⁶⁰⁵ In 1911

⁵⁹⁹ *Fédération Internationale des Ligues Catholiques Féminines. 1er Conseil International*, 15; also *Fédération Internationale des Ligues Catholiques Féminines. 2e Conseil International*, 44-46.

⁶⁰⁰ Moloney, *American Catholic Lay Groups*, 182.

⁶⁰¹ *Fédération Internationale des Ligues Catholiques Féminines. 1er Conseil International*, 12-14; The Catholic Women’s League of England and Wales, accessed March, 23, 2013, http://www.catholicwomensleague.org/margaret_fletcher.html.

⁶⁰² The Catholic Women’s League of Canada. The Hamilton Diocesan Council, accessed July 12, 2010, <http://www.hamilton.cwl.on.ca/History.html>.

⁶⁰³ Anne O’Brien, *God’s Willing Workers. Women and Religion in Australia* (Sydney: University of South Wales 2005), 83.

⁶⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 83-84.

⁶⁰⁵ Margit Balogh and Illona Mona, “Slachta Margit (1884-1974),” in *A Biographical Dictionary of Women’s Movements and Feminisms. Central, Eastern, and South Eastern Europe, 19th and 20th Centuries*, ed. Francisca de Haan, Krassimira Daskalova and Anna Loutfi (Budapest, New York: CEU

Hungarian Catholic lay female activists united into the *Katolikus Női Tanács* (Catholic Women's Council) to collaborate and share experience, establishing regular communication between twenty already existing Hungarian Catholic women's associations.⁶⁰⁶ The countess Zichy set up *Die Katholischer Reich Frauenorganisation* (Organization of Catholic Women in the Empire) in Austria in 1907, which functioned as a central body for various, mainly charity-oriented, organizations spread around the Habsburg monarchy.⁶⁰⁷ Similarly to the Austrian organization, the *Union des Dames Espagnoles del Sagrado Corazon de Jesus* (Union of Spanish Women of the Sacred Heart of Jesus), founded in 1908, functioned as an umbrella organization for individual actions and already existing associations in Spain. It had been formed in reaction to an announcement of measures against the religious associations by the Spanish government.⁶⁰⁸ Also in 1908 the *Lietuviu Katalikiu Moteru Draugija* (Lithuanian Catholic Women's Organization, hereafter LKMD) was founded.⁶⁰⁹ In 1909 Catholic women in Barcelona set up the *Liga de Señoras para la Acción Católica* (League of the Ladies for Catholic Action), with the explicit purpose of supporting Catholic candidates during the upcoming elections and the long-term goals of fighting freemasonry and restoring religion to its right place.⁶¹⁰ Swiss Catholic laywomen did not form a separate organization, but functioned as a subsection of a federation of Catholic associations, the *Volkverein*. The women's subsection called *Frauenbund* affiliated both women's societies and individuals.⁶¹¹ *L'association Catholiques des Femmes Lorraines* (Catholic Association of Women in Lorraine), founded in 1907, aimed at giving material and moral help and was open only to French-speaking Catholic women. Besides socialist and freemasons' movements, this Catholic society competed with various Protestant organizations.⁶¹²

The development of relations between national and/or regional Catholic laywomen's social efforts propelled the idea of founding an international body to unite local and national organizations across borders. Catholic laywomen pointed to the existence of parallel international organizations that gathered women-activists.⁶¹³

Press, 2006), 521-522.

⁶⁰⁶ *Fédération Internationale des Ligues Catholiques Féminines. 2e Conseil International*, 28-29.

⁶⁰⁷ *Fédération Internationale des Ligues Catholiques Féminines. 1er Conseil International*, 22-29.

⁶⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 36-39, 42-43.

⁶⁰⁹ Indrė Karčiauskaitė, "For Women's Rights, Church, and Fatherland," 133.

⁶¹⁰ *Fédération Internationale des Ligues Catholiques Féminines. 1er Conseil International*, 44-45.

⁶¹¹ *Ibid.*, 59-65.

⁶¹² *Ibid.*, 52-55.

⁶¹³ *Ibid.*, 5.

Before 1910 there were at least four well-known international women's organizations operating in Europe and the US: the International Abolitionist Federation (from 1875),⁶¹⁴ the World's Woman's Christian Temperance Union (from 1883),⁶¹⁵ the International Council of Women (from 1888),⁶¹⁶ and the International Woman Suffrage Alliance (from 1904).⁶¹⁷ However, as Catholic laywomen argued, these organizations' agendas did not correspond with the goals of Catholic women.⁶¹⁸

The *Fédération Internationale des Ligues Catholiques Féminines* (International Federation of Catholic Women's League, hereafter FILCF) was founded in France in 1910. The *Ligue Patriotique des Françaises* contributed significantly to its creation. In the report about the FILCF's first international meeting, held in Brussels in 1910, the organizers stated that the *Fédération's* ambition was "to associate leagues that resemble" the *Ligue Patriotique des Françaises*, whose social program represented a "general character". The subsequent speeches explained that the general character meant defending the Church against increasing secularization, atheism, and masonry.⁶¹⁹

From its beginnings, the Federation enjoyed the Catholic authorities' support, including that of the Pope, who saw it as an effective tool of fighting the enemies of the Church to achieve the ultimate goal, namely "the reestablishment of Jesus Christ's reign on earth".⁶²⁰ The reports on the FILCF's international meetings give details about numerous Catholic women's organizations and projects, but more importantly they show the existence of strong links and vivid networks of Catholic women's activists on the transnational level. The Catholic women who gathered in 1910 acknowledged the

⁶¹⁴ Anne Summers, "Introduction: the International Abolitionist Federation," in *Women's History Review* 17 (2008): 149-152.

⁶¹⁵ Ruth Birgitta Anderson Bordin, *Woman and Temperance: The Quest for Power and Liberty, 1873-1900* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1981); Ian Tyrrell, *Woman's World/Woman's Empire: The Woman's Christian Temperance Union in International Perspective, 1880-1930* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1991).

⁶¹⁶ *Women in a Changing World: The Dynamic Story of the International Council of Women since 1888*, ed. International Council of Women (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1966); Leila J. Rupp, *Worlds of Women: The Making of an International Women's Movement* (Princeton University Press: Princeton, NJ, 1997). Also see Margaret H. McFadden, *Golden Cables of Sympathy: The Transatlantic Sources of Nineteenth-Century Feminism* (Lexington: KY, 1999). *Crossing Boundaries: Women's Organizing in Europe and the Americas, 1880s-1940s*, ed. Permillia Jonsson et al. (Uppsala: Uppsala Universitet, 2007).

⁶¹⁷ The International Alliance of Women for Suffrage and Equal Citizenship from 1926, and finally the International Alliance of Women (IAW) from 1946.

⁶¹⁸ *Fédération Internationale des Ligues Catholiques Féminines. 1er Conseil International*, 5.

⁶¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 6-7

⁶²⁰ *Ibid.*, 2, 6. Also see the letters of greetings and/or blessing from various high rank clergymen sent on occasion of the international meetings of the League in *Fédération Internationale des Ligues Catholiques Féminines. 1er Conseil International*, 4-5; *Fédération Internationale des Ligues Catholiques Féminines. 2e Conseil International*, 1-5; *Fédération Internationale des Ligues Catholiques Féminines. 3e Conseil International*, 1-3.

benefits of international cooperation that offered the possibility of comparison between the goals and means different women's associations used.⁶²¹ At the first FILCF's meeting in Brussels in 1910 organizations from France, England, Germany, Austria and Belgium were represented.⁶²² In 1912 in Vienna there were organizations from Germany (two), England, Austria, Belgium, USA, Brazil, Canada, Spain (two), France (two), Hungary, Lorraine, Luxemburg, "Pologne-Cracovie", Portugal, Switzerland, Argentine, and Uruguay.⁶²³ This international cooperation was suspended during WWI.

Based on the existing research and my reading of the FILCF's conference reports, I would like to make several observations on the transnational emergence of Catholic women's associations in the early-twentieth century. First, there were numerous successful attempts at setting up associations for Catholic laywomen – either from scratch, as auxiliary to men's organizations, or to unite already operating projects – on regional, national and finally international levels. The clergy were involved in most endeavors, albeit in different degrees, yet the laywomen managed the organizations on their own, to the extent that legal codes in the respective countries allowed them to. By and large, members of these associations belonged to the privileged social strata of the aristocracy, landowners, bourgeoisie or the intelligentsia, yet their proportions varied from country to country.

Secondly, in their reports prepared for the international meetings of the FILCF, the Catholic women's activists showed an awareness that the agenda and means of the federated organizations depended on the local conditions they operated within. Nevertheless, there were a few common themes in their programs. In very general terms, the associations proposed an educational scheme for the enrolled women, trying to facilitate their religious knowledge and preparing them for work in the public sphere. Further, numerous associations defined the social work carried out in the public sphere broadly as a fight in the name of the Church against its enemies, which in practical terms meant that they launched a wide range of social projects.

Thirdly, because the available research on Catholic lay women privileges national histories as the explanatory framework, scholars have overlooked an important shared characteristic of these organizations, namely that they were founded in reaction to state measures that aimed at the relegation of religion from the modern polity and an

⁶²¹ *Fédération Internationale des Ligues Catholiques Féminines. 1er Conseil International*, 8-9.

⁶²² *Ibid.*, 11.

⁶²³ *Fédération Internationale des Ligues Catholiques Féminines. 3e Conseil International*, 2-3.

increasing secularization of the public sphere. This characteristic, however, situates the organizations of Catholic laywomen and their social projects in the context of the transnational conflict between competing systems, the religious and the secular, in the second half of the nineteenth century – a conflict that some scholars see as fundamental for the modern period.⁶²⁴

6.2 Catholic laywomen`s associations on the Polish lands: their aims, inner organization, and relation with the Church

By the beginning of the twentieth century Polish women of privileged groups were already well-represented in the public sphere: either as participants in a broadly defined social life (e.g. balls, tourism, sport, clubs), as members of various – lawfully or clandestinely run – educational, cultural, social and political projects and/or organizations, or as part of the paid labor force.⁶²⁵ Regarding women`s activism within associations specifically, from the beginning of the twentieth century until the outbreak of the First World War there were thirty legally operating Polish women`s organizations in the entire Russian zone. Most of them were founded or legalized after 1906, that is, after the laws against forming associations were liberalized. Nineteen out of these thirty organizations were headquartered in Warsaw. Among them the most active were *Związek Równouprawnienia Kobiet Polskich* (Union for Polish Women`s Equality, legalized in 1907, 500 members in 1913, hereafter ZRKP), *Polskie Stowarzyszenie Równouprawnienia Kobiet* (Polish Association for Women`s Equality, founded in 1907, 300 members in 1913), *Katolicki Związek Kobiet Polskich* (Catholic Association of Polish Women, legalized in 1907, 412 members in 1913), *Zjednoczone Koło Ziemianek* (legalized in 1907, 5,020 members in 1913), *Chrześcijańskie Towarzystwo Ochrony Kobiet* (Christian Association of Women`s Protection, founded in 1901, 376

⁶²⁴ The findings presented here on the cooperation between Catholic laywomen`s organizations are, as far as I know, the first contribution to our knowledge about Catholic laywomen`s internationalism before 1918. For example one cannot find information about the FILCF in the recently published *Globalizing Feminism*, in which its editor Karren Offen listed the major international events, conferences and women`s organizations until 1945, see *Globalizing Feminisms, 1789-1945*, ed. Karen Offen, xxiii-xxviii. Neither is there any information on the Catholic laywomen`s internationalism, including the FILCF, in Bonnie Smith`s *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Women in World History* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2008).

⁶²⁵ For scholarly research about Polish women`s participation in various organizations before 1918, see the earlier mentioned collection of essays *Działaczki społeczne, feministki, obywatelki*, ed. Agnieszka Jasińska-Janiak, Katarzyna Sierakowska, and Andrzej Szwarz; about Polish women`s involvement in political activism see the volume *Kobieta i świat polityki*, ed. Anna Żarnowska and Andrzej Szwarz ; about Polish women`s leisure activities, see *Kobieta i kultura czasu wolnego*, ed. Anna Żarnowska and Andrzej Szwarz ; about Polish women as part of the paid labor force, see *Kobieta i praca*, ed. Anna Żarnowska and Andrzej Szwarz.

members in 1913), *Stowarzyszenie Służących* (Association of Female Servants, founded in 1901, 1,600 members in 1913), and *Kasa przezorności i pomocy dla kobiet pracujących fizycznie* (Office of Precaution and Help for Workingwomen, founded in 1902, 650 members in 1913).⁶²⁶ Only ZRKP, the first one mentioned above, openly embraced a feminist agenda and prioritized the idea of women's emancipation and political suffrage. Since 1907 ZRKP activists published *Ster* (Rudder) – one of the most influential women's journals on the lands of Partitioned Poland before WWI.

In Galicia, Polish women begun to unify as early as the 1870s, due to more advantageous legal possibilities with respect to associational life.⁶²⁷ Until WWI the Polish women's associations in this region predominantly had an educational, self-help, patriotic and/or professional character. Aside from a few attempts, Galician women did not form any long-lasting feminist organization, similar to the Varsovian ZRKP. However, there were a few journals that aimed at familiarizing a female audience with women's emancipation and suffrage issues (the Lvivian *Ster* [Rudder] and *Przedświt* [Dawn], and the Cracowian *Nowe Słowo* [New Word]).⁶²⁸ One of the first Galician women's organizations was *Stowarzyszenie Nauczycielek* (The Association of Female Teachers, 1873), based in Cracow. Also in Cracow, Polish women set up *Koło Pań Towarzystwo Szkoły Ludowej* (The Women's Circle in the Society of Folk Schools, set up in 1892), which soon operated in the entire region of Galicia. Also educational in character were *Stowarzyszenie Pomocy Naukowej dla Polek* (Association of Educational Help for Polish Girls) and *Czytelnia dla Kobiet* (Reading Hall for Women, founded in 1894). The latter launched numerous reading rooms and libraries for women across Galicia.⁶²⁹ In Lviv, one of the first organizations was *Stowarzyszenie Pracy Kobiet* (The Association of Women's Work, hereafter SPK), founded by privileged women in 1874 with the aim of improving the economic situation of women who were part of the paid labor force.⁶³⁰ According to Antonina Machczyńska's unpublished

⁶²⁶ Justyna Budzińska-Tylicka, "Społeczna praca kobiet w Królestwie Polskiem" (The social work of women in the Polish Kingdom), in *Pamiętnik Zjazdu Kobiet Polskich odbytego w dniach 11 i 12 maja 1913*, 125-131; *Rocznik Katolickiego Związku Kobiet Polskich w Warszawie 1912-1913* (Annual report of the Catholic Union of Polish Women's in Warsaw. 1912-1913) (Warszawa: Nakładem Katolickiego Związku Kobiet Polskich, 1913), 30.

⁶²⁷ Chwalba, "Kobiety w życiu politycznym Galicji," 127.

⁶²⁸ Katarzyna Dormus, "Galicyjskie stowarzyszenia i organizacje kobiece doby autonomicznej jako wyraz kobiecych dążeń do samoorganizacji" (Galician women's societies and organizations during the autonomy as a sign of women's aspirations for independent associational life), in *Działaczki społeczne, feministki, obywatelki*, 334-335.

⁶²⁹ Żuk-Skarszewska and Estreicherówna, "Praca społeczna w miastach Galicji," 132-153.

⁶³⁰ *Czterdziestolecie Stowarzyszenia Pracy Kobiet 1874-1914* (Forty years of the Women's Work's

manuscript, before 1914 there were “more than thirty [Polish] women`s organizations in Lviv” – SPK, *Czytelnia dla Kobiet* (Reading-Room for Women, founded in 1885) and PZNK-Lviv were among the most active there.⁶³¹

According to their statutes PZNK-Cracow, PZNK-Lviv and KZKP were exclusively female organizations for women of all social backgrounds, but in practice they attracted members from the aristocracy, the landowners, the intelligentsia, and the middle classes. Like similar organizations in other national contexts (Section 6.1), these Polish associations` fundamental aim was to provide an opportunity for collective, organized activism for Catholic laywomen. Like the others, the Polish organizations also had a two-fold mission. The first was internal, relating to their members` need to “enlighten themselves” about contemporary social problems and, later, “to motivate themselves and others to work” efficiently in accordance with the Catholic principles in various social projects.⁶³² The second goal was to offer various types of assistance to lower-class people – predominantly women, then children, and as the associations were growing, also young males.

Chronologically the first of these Polish Catholic laywomen`s organizations was *Polski Związek Niewiast Katolickich* in Cracow (PZNK-Cracow), founded in 1900 by a well-known Cracowian Catholic activist, Adela Dziewicka, and a Jesuit, Władysław Ledóchowski.⁶³³ The organization reported 281 members in 1906, 400 in 1912, and

Association) (Lwów: Drukarnia i litografia Filler-Neumanna, 1914), 4, 11.

⁶³¹ BN, IV 9830, 88-112.

⁶³² *Polski Związek Niewiast Katolickich w Krakowie. Pierwsze sprawozdanie z czynności w roku 1906* (The Polish Association of Catholic Women in Cracow. The first account on the activities in 1906) (Kraków: Drukarnia „Czas,” 1907), 8.

⁶³³ Between 1900 and 1918 there were following chairwomen in the Cracowian association: Adela Dziewicka (1900-1905), Maria Turska (1906-1907), Marya Woźniakowska (1908), Maria Wodzicka (1909-1918), see *Polski Związek Niewiast Katolickich w Krakowie. Pierwsze sprawozdanie z czynności w roku 1906*, 3; *Polski Związek Niewiast Katolickich w Krakowie. II sprawozdanie z czynności za rok 1907* (Polish Association of Catholic Women in Cracow. Account on the activities in 1907) (Kraków: Druk Aleksandra Rippera, 1908), 3; *Polski Związek Niewiast Katolickich w Krakowie. III sprawozdanie z czynności za rok 1908* (The Polish Association of Catholic Women in Cracow. Account on the activities in 1908) (Kraków: Druk Aleksandra Rippera, 1909), 3; *Polski Związek Niewiast Katolickich w Krakowie. IV sprawozdanie z czynności w roku 1909* (Polish Association of Catholic Women in Cracow. Account on the activities in 1909) (Kraków: Drukarnia Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego pod zarządem J. Filipowskiego, 1910), 3; *Polski Związek Niewiast Katolickich w Krakowie. X sprawozdanie z czynności za rok 1917* (The Polish Association of Catholic Women in Cracow. Account on the activities in 1917) (Drukiem Eugeniusza i Dra. Kazimierza Kozińskich, 1918), 3. According to its statute, the first aim was “to assist its members with becoming familiar with contemporary social currents and needs, putting special emphasis on local conditions.” In parallel, the mission of the PZNK-Cracow was “to gather all Polish women for common work on social resurgence of the fatherland in accordance with the Catholic principles.” The aims formulated in the statute were to be achieved through: “1. [F]ounding reading rooms and libraries whose contents consist predominantly of works on social issues. 2. [O]rganizing readings, lectures, [educational] courses. 3 [F]ounding and supporting economic and social associations and co-partnerships (...). 4. [E]xchanging information on burning social needs, above all on economic

1,000 in 1917.⁶³⁴ Between 1907 and 1917 PZNK-Cracow set up 21 branches in various Galician locations.⁶³⁵ In 1914, the Cracowian PZNK changed its statute to accept not only individuals but also entire organizations as members; in 1917 it had 10 member-associations from various Galician locations.⁶³⁶

Polski Związek Niewiast Katolickich in Lviv was founded in 1906.⁶³⁷ The very first work of the newly established association was to organize the “catechism station” (*stacje katechizmowe*). This came in response to archbishop Bilczewski’s pastoral letter “O nauczaniu katechizmu” (About teaching the catechism), in which he urged those capable of doing so to embark on the project of teaching the Catholic doctrine among the lower classes.⁶³⁸ In 1918, PZNK-Lviv reported around 440 members.⁶³⁹ The Lvivian and Cracowian PZNKs were dominated by women-sodalists and often relied on help of other Mary’s Children in their social projects, which presumably had a

situation and needs of the working classes (...). 5. [S]etting up branches of the Association in other places on the territory of the Austrian monarchy.” Archiwum Archidiecezji Warszawskiej. Archiwum Akt Dawnych. (The Varsovian Archdiocese’s Archive. The Archive of the Old Documents, hereafter AAW, AKD), *Statut Katolickiego Związku Kobiet Polskich* (The Statute of the Catholic Association of Polish Women), C.I.2.219/485, typed, 1-2.

⁶³⁴ *Polski Związek Niewiast Katolickich w Krakowie. Pierwsze sprawozdanie z czynności w roku 1906*, 5; *Polski Związek Niewiast Katolickich w Krakowie. VII sprawozdanie z czynności w roku 1912* (Polish Association of Catholic Women in Cracow. Account on the activities in 1912) (Kraków: Drukarnia Literacka, 1913), 82-86; *Polski Związek Niewiast Katolickich w Krakowie. X sprawozdanie z czynności za rok 1917*, 108-116.

⁶³⁵ *Polski Związek Niewiast Katolickich. II sprawozdanie z czynności za rok 1907*, 5. In 1911 there were six branches, *Polski Związek Niewiast Katolickich w Krakowie. VI sprawozdanie z czynności w roku 1911* (The Polish Association of Catholic Women in Cracow. Account on the activities in 1911) (Kraków: Drukarnia Eugeniusza i Dra. Kazimierza Kozińskich, 1912), 4; *Polski Związek Niewiast Katolickich. X sprawozdanie z czynności za rok 1917*, 4. The social activities each particular branch undertook were shaped by local conditions. To give an example, the branch in Mielec began its activism from educating three midwives as the most burning need of the local community. *Polski Związek Niewiast Katolickich w Krakowie. III Sprawozdanie z czynności za rok 1908*, 43.

⁶³⁶ *Polski Związek Niewiast Katolickich. IX sprawozdanie z czynności za rok 1914-1916*, 5; *Polski Związek Niewiast Katolickich. X sprawozdanie z czynności za rok 1917*, 4.

⁶³⁷ Between the years 1906-1918 there were the following chairwomen: Kazimiera Niezabitowska (1906-?), Celina Przetocka (?-1913), Wanda Ustyanowska 1914-1915, Helena Czapelska (1916-1918). *Sprawozdanie z czynności Polskiego Związku Niewiast Katolickich we Lwowie za rok 1912* (Report on the activities of the Polish Association of Catholic Women in Lviv in 1912) (Lwów; Drukarnia E. Winiarza, 1913), 2; *Sprawozdanie z czynności Polskiego Związku Niewiast Katolickich we Lwowie za rok 1913* (Report on the activities of the Polish Association of Catholic Women in Lviv in 1913) (Lwów; Drukarnia W.A. Szyjkowskiego, 1914), 2; *Sprawozdanie z czynności Polskiego Związku Niewiast Katolickich we Lwowie za okres dwuletni 1914-15* (Report on the activities of the Polish Association of Catholic Women in Lviv 1914-1915) (Lwów: Drukarnia Zakładu Narodowego imienia Ossolińskich, 1916), 2; *Sprawozdanie z czynności Polskiego Związku Niewiast Katolickich we Lwowie za rok 1916* (Report on the activities of the Polish Association of Catholic Women in Lviv in 1916) (Lwów; Drukarnia - Litografia Piller-Neumanna, 1917), 2; *Sprawozdanie z czynności Polskiego Związku Niewiast Katolickich we Lwowie za rok 1918* (Report on the activities of the Polish Association of Catholic Women in Lviv in 1918) (Lwów: Drukarnia W.A. Szyjkowskiego, 1919), 2.

⁶³⁸ *Początki katolickiego ruchu kobiecego w Polsce* (The beginnings of the Catholic women’s movements in Poland) (Poznań: Księgarnia św. Wojciecha, 1930), 95.

⁶³⁹ *Sprawozdanie z czynności Polskiego Związku Niewiast Katolickich we Lwowie za rok 1918*, 43-47.

significant impact on how these organizations approached various social issues, such as the role of privileged women in civilizing the masses, mobilizing society, and educating the lower classes.⁶⁴⁰

In 1907, a year after the law on creating associations was liberalized in the Polish Kingdom, Cecylia Plater-Zyberkówna, Kazimiera Proczkówna, and Józefa Chudzyńska founded *Katolicki Związek Kobiet Polskich* in Warsaw.⁶⁴¹ The names of the KZKP founders indicate that it was another social project initiated by the Honorat sisters in concealment. KZKP reported 300 members in 1910, 435 in 1914, and around 1,000 in 1917.⁶⁴²

Regarding the relations between the Church and the associations for Polish laywomen, each organization had its own priest-curator, whose role was “to assure the association’s Catholic character.” In practical terms, a priest-curator “could offer his advice” to the Board at the annual gatherings, but he was absent during the regular associations’ meetings that were dedicated to planning the social projects.⁶⁴³ As a rule, the priests-curators as well as high-ranked clergy (e.g. bishops) participated in the ceremonial events organized by the associations (e.g. anniversaries, Christmas or Easter celebrations). During such formal occasions, the laywomen-activists routinely but courteously expressed their gratefulness for the moral and material support received from the Church’s establishment.⁶⁴⁴

The Church seems to have had less impact on the development of the Polish organizations than in similar cases elsewhere. Polish delegates’ reports from the international meetings of Catholic laywomen show that they were rather surprised by

⁶⁴⁰ *Sprawozdanie z czynności Polskiego Związku Niewiast Katolickich we Lwowie za rok 1912*, 34; *Sprawozdanie z czynności Polskiego Związku Niewiast Katolickich we Lwowie za rok 1914-1915*, 8; *Polski Związek Niewiast Katolickich w Krakowie, III sprawozdanie z czynności za rok 1908*, 26.

⁶⁴¹ Plater, Życiorys, 11. KZKP’s chairwomen were Kazimiera Proczkówna (1907-1910), and Gustawowa Łubińska (1911-1914). *Rocznik Katolickiego Związku Kobiet Polskich w Warszawie 1910-1911* (Annual report of the Catholic Union of Polish Women’s in Warsaw. 1910-1911) (Warszawa: Nakładem Katolickiego Związku Kobiet Polskich, 1911), 23; *Rocznik Katolickiego Związku Kobiet Polskich w Warszawie 1913-1914* (Annual report of the Catholic Union of Polish Women in Warsaw. 1913-1914) (Warszawa: Nakładem Katolickiego Związku Kobiet Polskich, 1914), 44. According to the statute, the aims of this association were: “1) To unite all Polish women of the Catholic denomination to the common cultural-social work so as to uplift women’s education, morality and material well-being; 2) To look for solutions for woman’s issues in accordance with the Catholic principles.” *Statut Polskiego Związku Niewiast Katolickich* (Statute of the Polish Association of Catholic Women) (Kraków: Drukarnia „Czas,” 1908), 3-4.

⁶⁴² *Rocznik Katolickiego Związku Kobiet Polskich w Warszawie 1910-1911*, 24; *Rocznik Katolickiego Związku Kobiet Polskich w Warszawie 1913-1914*, 44; Budzińska-Tylicka, “Społeczna praca kobiet w Królestwie Polskiem,” 128.

⁶⁴³ *Statut Polskiego Związku Niewiast Katolickich*, 6-7.

⁶⁴⁴ *Sprawozdanie z czynności Polskiego Związku Niewiast Katolickich we Lwowie za okres dwuletni 1914-15*, 74.

the high number of clergyman actively involved in the German or Austrian Catholic women's organizations. In 1910, at a meeting of laywomen-activists in Vienna, the Cracowian women expressed their regret that an important speech on the situation of female servants in the region was given by a priest. In their view, a woman would be better able to convey the issues.⁶⁴⁵ Reporting on the DKF's meeting in Munich in 1906, the Galician activists observed that the German women listened "particularly attentively" to the priests during the public gatherings; a remark made in the context of listing differences between German and Polish laywomen's organized activism.⁶⁴⁶ While investigating the *Lietuviu Katalikiu Moteru Draugija*, Karčiauskaitė described the Catholic clergy's involvement, first, in founding a separate association of pious laywomen and, second, into the internal affairs of the LKMD after it was established.⁶⁴⁷ Luddy argues that due to the Irish Catholic Church's politics during the nineteenth century, Catholic female congregations replaced Irish laywomen in various social projects and the latter's role was mostly limited to fund-raising.⁶⁴⁸ Finally, Moloney has described how American female lay activists encountered criticism of the Church hierarchy when expressing their readiness to work with other, non-confessional, or Protestant women's organizations.⁶⁴⁹ In my research, I have not come across similar difficulties faced by the Polish lay associations in question. This may indicate that Polish Catholic women's activism enjoyed a greater autonomy from the Church's control when compared with some similar associations elsewhere.

Concerning the time when the Polish lay organizations of Catholic women emerged, there is a tacit agreement among historians that due to the Partitions – more specifically because of various restrictions imposed on the Polish population – there was a delay in the development of formally structured political and social movements. In this view, the legal changes that made it possible for Poles to unite lawfully, in 1906 in the Russian zone and 1908 in the Prussian zone, caused a breakthrough for organized activism of all types. This interpretation is also well-represented in the field of Polish women's history.⁶⁵⁰ The validity of the impact of the Partitions on other phenomena notwithstanding, my research shows that it is less definitive in the case of Polish

⁶⁴⁵ *Sprawozdanie ze zjazdu Katolickich Niewiast w Wiedniu w r. 1910*, 12.

⁶⁴⁶ Marya Woźniakowska, "Zjazd Związku Niewiast Katolickich w Monachium w roku 1906" (The Catholic Women's Union's meeting in Munich in 1906), *Sodalis Marianus* 6 (1907), 87.

⁶⁴⁷ Karčiauskaitė, "For Women's Rights, Church, and Fatherland," 133-134.

⁶⁴⁸ Luddy, *Women and Philanthropy*, 45.

⁶⁴⁹ Moloney, *American Catholic Lay Groups*, 192, 195, 196.

⁶⁵⁰ For example Żarnowska, "Family and Public Life," 400.

Catholic laywomen's organizations. As Section 6.1 showed, in various European locations associations of Catholic laywomen were set up in the first decade of the twentieth century, regardless of the political and legislative situation in the respective states. Moreover, in comparison to similar associations elsewhere, PZNK-Cracow founded in 1900, PZNK-Lviv launched in 1906, and KZKP set up in 1907 were actually among the first organizations of this type in the Catholic world. I suggest that the emergence of the Polish Catholic women's organizations at the beginning of the twentieth century should be attributed to the transnational politics of Rome, during the papacy of Leo XIII and Pius X, with respect to organized activism of laywomen under the Catholic banner rather than to liberalization of the local legal restrictions with respect to associational life imposed on Poles, men and women, by the foreign powers.

6.3 The mobilization to the Catholic women's organizations

In the period when various socio-political factions vigorously mobilized their ranks, the Catholic women-activists encountered two issues. First, with respect to Polish women already present in the public realm, the question was how to "redirect" these women toward associations that waved the Catholic flag. The second issue was how to reach those women who were still confined to their immediate marital and maternal duties.

While addressing women enrolled in various organizations, the Catholic lay activists argued that although all types of social work were desirable given the socio-economic situation of Poles, women who perceived themselves as Catholics should realize that the agendas of organizations of an irreligious character did not necessarily correspond with the Catholic Church's directives. The Catholic organizations were acutely aware of their competitors' presence. KZKP repeatedly warned that the activism of irreligious women had already infiltrated the contemporary public sphere, which was explained by their skills and advanced understanding of modern problems as opposed to Catholic women's "bottomless lack of comprehension of social issues [sic]."⁶⁵¹ Frequently pointing to the efficiency of irreligious (feminist and/or socialist) women's organizations' social projects, the Catholic faction called for unification of forces to counterbalance the existing under-representation of Catholic principles in the public sphere. Similar to the rhetorical arsenal used by the pontiffs, the Polish Catholic

⁶⁵¹ Cecylia Plater-Zyberkówna, *Istota i cel związków oraz treściwa informacja o Katolickim Związku Kobiet Polskich*. (The essence and aim of the associations and brief information about the Catholic Association of Polish Women) (Warszawa: Druk Piotra Laskauera i S-ki, 1908), 24.

laywomen often embraced an alarming tone when recruiting women to their confessionally motivated organizations:

No matter how we perceive the value of contemporary times, either with optimism or pessimism, there is one thing that becomes clear (...) in our country the present times are the moment of common awaking, (...) during which various places call for workers. The significance of this moment lays in the fact that those who take these places will have an influence on our country`s future. Either to the right or to the left – the present moment will inform the subsequent years. (...) Oh! If you, Dear Ladies, only knew, how jealous the French women would be for the posts we have an opportunity to act in! Because although they go to lower-class people with a loving heart and open hand, the lower classes refuse them (...). They accept donations, but reject the influence for they already trust someone else!⁶⁵²

While Catholic women active in non-Catholic organizations were called on to examine the compatibility of these associations` agenda with the Church`s doctrine, women who were part of a broadly defined social life were scrutinized by the Catholic activists for their irresponsible and “egoistic” usage of energy, position and resources. Often labeled as “dolls” engaged in unproductive activities, e.g. saloons, tea parties, balls, traveling abroad, and gambling,⁶⁵³ these women, as the Catholic lay activists argued, were products of an unfit upbringing of women from the privileged groups who “exist[ed] as if separated [from the world] by a Chinese Wall,” unaware of the important problems around them.⁶⁵⁴

Finally, the Catholic lay activists aimed to persuade females who still were hesitant about their social engagement by arguing that no woman should limit herself exclusively to familial duties:

It is worth dealing with another argument women frequently mention against the activism in associations. [They] excuse themselves from any associational work because of household duties: “I have my husband and children” – they say – “who take all my time. I have a land estate (...) plenty of work on the farm, etc.” Who – I ask – does not have household obligations? Almost all the Ladies have a husband and children, so if (...) having a husband, children or household duties was enough to exempt us from any organized activism, who would take it on? Although without the burden of caring for children and managing a household, men also have their vital duties – in the offices and administration. If everyone starts excusing himself or herself from social engagement, the social work (...) would be taken on by these ones who have

⁶⁵² Ibid., 5, 41.

⁶⁵³ Ibid., 24.

⁶⁵⁴ Ibid., 8-9.

time for everything, but are the least wanted for this task.⁶⁵⁵

In the three organizations' documents, the interest of Catholicism was often blurred with the national projects – as for example with the slogan: “The Catholic rebirth of the nation through the rebirth of the individual” or with the statement: “The real servant of God – servant of the Fatherland – should be on her last legs each evening [sic].”⁶⁵⁶ As the quotes here illustrate, while encouraging women to enroll into Catholic laywomen's associations, their members exploited believers' anxiety about the condition of the Church and religion, the nationalistic ambitions of a population without a sovereign state, but also the resentment towards women's groups that openly embraced a feminist or socialist agenda.

The Catholic organizations for women positioned themselves as places for educating the “proper” workers needed for the social work carried out in the right patriotic and religious spirit. They provided their members with religious knowledge and social consciousness, giving them an opportunity to unify individually-run projects and offering the skills required to perform social work.⁶⁵⁷ The organizations aimed not only to educate future Catholic social activists but also responsible citizens. They aimed to instill in their members a “civic spirit” required to make “a citizen out of an inhabitant of a country,” a citizen aware of her rights and duties and willing to work in the name of the common good.⁶⁵⁸

During the educational trainings, lectures and meetings, women familiarized themselves with a wide range of social issues: “the deprivation of workers, the miners' lot, children's poverty, the hideousness of prostitution, (...) various harms done to women.”⁶⁵⁹ Occasionally the associations organized several days-long educational courses on various social issues for their members.⁶⁶⁰ In order to deepen their knowledge on religious subjects, the women also participated in retreats.⁶⁶¹

To enhance the efficiency of Catholic women's work in the public sphere, the

⁶⁵⁵ Ibid., 19-20, 24. Also see “Kronika chwili bieżącej. ‘Słowo programowe Generalnej sekretarki KZKP pani J. Waszkiewicz’” (The chronicle of the current moment. Words about the agenda from the KZKP's general secretary J. Waszkiewicz), *Przebudzenie* 1, 5 (1909): 12-14.

⁶⁵⁶ Plater, *Istota i cel związków*, 29, 9.

⁶⁵⁷ Ibid., 7-9, 23.

⁶⁵⁸ Ibid., 26-28.

⁶⁵⁹ Ibid., 44.

⁶⁶⁰ For example, PZNK-Lviv organized a course on the various branches of civil law in 1913. *Sprawozdanie z czynności Polskiego Związku Niewiast Katolickich we Lwowie za rok 1913*, 5.

⁶⁶¹ *Rocznik Katolickiego Związku Kobiet Polskich w Warszawie 1911-1912*, 3; *Rocznik Katolickiego Związku Kobiet Polskich w Warszawie 1912-1913*, 6.

members were supposed to learn how to preside over public gatherings, chair collective bodies, run discussions, give logical summaries of “complicated matters,” and speak in public.⁶⁶² All three organizations attempted to develop a “modern” type of women’s organization that aimed at efficient use of human and financial sources, replacing charity with such forms of help that would empower their recipients and preparing members for taking managerial positions outside the organizations in all posts available to women in the public sphere.⁶⁶³ Other women activists, Polish and abroad, were often set as examples to follow. On behalf of the Polish Catholic women, Plater commented: “We admire the utterances, bravery, and lucid replies of the Swedish, Finish, or American women who (...) gained these skills in various associations since their earliest years.”⁶⁶⁴

The Catholic women’s organizations also attentively monitored the activities of national and transnational women’s movements, regardless of their political affiliation. It seems the most advanced work in this respect was done by PZNK-Cracow. The organization obliged its members to follow other women’s social projects, to participate in relevant meetings and rallies, to read foreign and Polish relevant publications, to gather material on other women’s activism and then present the findings during PZNK-Cracow’s meetings.⁶⁶⁵ Furthermore, the Cracowian members were asked to establish connections with women from the other two zones of Partitioned Poland.⁶⁶⁶

The organizations’ members did not always fully embrace the educational or social mission. The Boards occasionally complained about the low attendance at lectures and/or courses and about the associates’ general social passivity. In 1907, PZNK-Cracow bemoaned that one could launch additional projects if only there were more women willing to work.⁶⁶⁷ The annual report of KZKP in 1911-1912 announced that two sections, pedagogical and social, were to be combined into one due to women’s

⁶⁶² *Rocznik Katolickiego Związku Kobiet Polskich w Warszawie 1910-1911*, 16. To ensure that Varsovian Catholic women were ready for the work within the framework of the association, KZKP prearranged a special course before the inaugural meeting to inform future members about the basic principles of the organizational life. J. Oksza, “Oświatowa i społeczna działalność kobiet w Warszawie” (The educational and social activism of the women in Warsaw), *Ruch chrześcijańsko-społeczny* 6 (1907): 27-28.

⁶⁶³ Plater, *Kobieta obywatelka*, 5.

⁶⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁶⁶⁵ *Polski Związek Niewiast Katolickich w Krakowie. II sprawozdanie z czynności w roku 1907*, 11, 13.

⁶⁶⁶ *Polski Związek Niewiast Katolickich w Krakowie. Pierwsze sprawozdanie z czynności w roku 1906*, 10. Similar attempts were undertaken to gather information about the developments regarding the education of women locally and abroad. *Polski Związek Niewiast Katolickich w Krakowie, IV sprawozdanie z czynności za rok 1909*, 5.

⁶⁶⁷ *Polski Związek Niewiast Katolickich w Krakowie. II sprawozdanie z czynności w roku 1907*, 4.

lack of interest in the programs.⁶⁶⁸ KZKP also reminded its members that social activism was not a duty of the Board alone but a matter of common concern.⁶⁶⁹ The Lvivian PZNK's board urged its members to attend the regularly scheduled meetings without waiting for a written invitation.⁶⁷⁰ The lack of young women in the Catholic organizations was another concern.⁶⁷¹ For this reason in 1909 PZNK-Cracow opened a separate section specifically to recruit and train young females.⁶⁷²

6.4 The social projects of the Catholic laywomen's associations

As stated by the Varsovian KZKP secretary, Janina Waszkiewicz, Catholic women should work everywhere where the laws of God were missing: in hospitals, schools, salons, families, court rooms, basements, and in all social institutions.⁶⁷³ The types of social projects run by PZNK-Cracow, PZNK-Lviv and KZKP ranged from charity to founding professional associations, shelters, legal and medical consultations free of charge, organizing educational and vocational opportunities, dormitories, shelters, poor kitchens, or nurseries. While launching their projects Polish laywomen often relied on transnationally available models of Catholic social activism, appropriating them to their local needs. Such was the case with the Workers' Gardens, Railway Missions, or *patronage*. These were the commonalities one finds in the three organizations' programs although the emphases varied.

In comparison with the other two organizations in Lviv and Warsaw, the Cracowian association was the most advanced with regards to the provision of social assistance. Based on the PZNK-Cracow's annual reports' content for 1906 and 1917, the organization managed to develop and run on a permanent basis the following impressive initiatives for the lower classes: a reading room and library, a food-supply point, two dormitories for male students, a dormitory for women-students, a shelter for women and an employment office, a shop with discounted goods, an infant nursery, between three and seven (depending on the year) poor kitchens run by the organization

⁶⁶⁸ *Rocznik Katolickiego Związku Kobiet Polskich w Warszawie 1910-1911*, 10-11. In 1913, KZKP closed its library and reading room, "with only good books," because it did not gain popularity. *Rocznik Katolickiego Związku Kobiet Polskich w Warszawie 1912-1913*, 18-19.

⁶⁶⁹ Plater, *Istota i cel związków*, 18. Also *Rocznik Katolickiego Związku Kobiet Polskich w Warszawie 1910-1911*, 6; *Rocznik Katolickiego Związku Kobiet Polskich w Warszawie 1911-1912*, 3, *Rocznik Katolickiego Związku Kobiet Polskich w Warszawie 1912-1913*, 18-19; *Sprawozdanie z czynności Polskiego Związku Niewiast Katolickich we Lwowie za okres dwuletni 1914-15*, 3-4.

⁶⁷⁰ *Sprawozdanie z czynności Polskiego Związku Niewiast Katolickich we Lwowie za rok 1913*, 7.

⁶⁷¹ *Polski Związek Niewiast Katolickich w Krakowie. II sprawozdanie z czynności w roku 1907*, 4.

⁶⁷² *Polski Związek Niewiast Katolickich w Krakowie, IV sprawozdanie z czynności za rok 1909*, 31.

⁶⁷³ "Kronika chwili bieżącej. 'Słowo programowe Generalnej sekretarki KZKP pani J. Waszkiewicz'," 13.

and another three municipal poor kitchens supervised by PZNK, two afternoon shelters for young girls, eight shelters for girls, two knitting schools for girls, four schools of vocational trainings for boys, one shelter for boys, a kindergarten, courses for kindergarten teachers, a Railway Mission, and two teashops.⁶⁷⁴ It also ran three Catholic labor organizations for workingwomen, among the first vocational associations for women in Galicia.⁶⁷⁵ Finally, PZNK-Cracow`s members published several journals addressing the lower classes: *Przyjaciel Sług* (The Friend of Female Servants, 1899-1904), *Młodzież* (Youth) for male youth, *Niewiasta Polska* (The Polish Woman) for lower-class women in general, and *Anioł Stróż* (The Guardian Angel) for children.

Regarding KZKP, because its founders were the Honorat Messenger Sisters in concealment dedicated primarily to creating educational opportunities for women, this aspect of the Varsovian association`s activism was particularly well developed.⁶⁷⁶ Since the congregation was already running several schools that offered education for girls on the primary and secondary levels (Sections 3.3 and 3.4), through KZKP the sisters in concealment began to organize a Catholic alternative for female education at the university level. In her 1908 lecture “The essence and aim of the associations and brief information about the Catholic Association of Polish Women” Plater hinted at two controversies born out of the issue of “proper” female university education. The first one was a tension between the traditionally defined requirements of education for young women with the need to prove the Catholic model of women`s education`s compatibility with the principles of a modern schooling system. The second issue pertained to the fact that some Catholic factions still opposed the idea of university education for women, for they perceived this demand as a sign of “emancipation” and therefore “dangerous.” Plater reacted to the two concerns by saying:

Taking into consideration the situation abroad: Italy, Belgium, Germany, France, I can see that whole ranks of women are present both as doctors in various sciences, philosophy, nature, medicine, law economy, mathematics, as well as in the field of the social work. I met them while they were speaking and dominating various meetings and international congresses offering their

⁶⁷⁴ *Polski Związek Niewiast Katolickich w Krakowie. Pierwsze sprawozdanie z czynności w roku 1906; Polski Związek Niewiast Katolickich. X sprawozdanie z czynności za rok 1917.*

⁶⁷⁵ *Stowarzyszenie Sług Katolickich pod wezwaniem Św. Zyty* (Association of the Catholic Female Servants under the Invocation of St. Zyta, founded in 1899), *Stowarzyszenie Katolickich Pracownic c.k. fabryki cygar w Krakowie pod wezwaniem św. Józefa* (Association of Catholic Women Workers in the Cigar Factory in Cracow under the Invocation of St. Joseph, founded in 1900), and *Katolickie Stowarzyszenie Pracownic Konfekcji Damskiej pod wezwaniem św. Antoniego* (Catholic Association of Women Workers in the Clothing Industry under the Invocation of St. Anthony). *Polski Związek Niewiast Katolickich w Krakowie. Pierwsze sprawozdanie z czynności w roku 1906*, 18-30.

⁶⁷⁶ *Rocznik Katolickiego Związku Kobiet Polskich w Warszawie 1912-1913*, 9.

opinions on the most important issues of life: morality, religious ethics, education, charity, legal codes, marriage etc. But all these women are irreligious! What a forecast for the future! (...) For this reason, if we, Christian women, do not understand the situation and won't energetically support it [higher education of women], if we do not stop boycotting the movement of women who run towards knowledge, then inevitably we stay in our shells, unaware of the realities, separated from any activities, and all influence will go to those women who obtained higher education. In such case, deprived from the Christian element, the world would head more and more towards paganism.

⁶⁷⁷

In 1907 KZKP opened the *Wyższe Kursy Pedagogiczno-Naukowe* (Higher Pedagogical-Scientific Courses, hereafter WKPN). Set up by Kazimiera Proczkówna with the help of Cecylia Plater-Zyberk, the school was patterned after a similar Academy in Freiburg, Germany. WKPN was a three-year long, post-secondary school for women offering degrees in two specializations: history/literature and mathematical/natural sciences. Starting in 1913, *Wyższe Kursy Pedagogiczno-Naukowe* offered one year of general studies followed by two years of specialization, which were equal to four semesters of university studies in Geneva.⁶⁷⁸ WKPN defined itself as a “progressive institution with a Catholic character,” which offered a variety of courses taught by prominent professors (men and women).⁶⁷⁹ The courses for women were a crucial part of KZKP's agenda of restoring God's law into the public space. This required, as the general secretary of the organization explained, persistent, collective and planned work to educate “its own professional forces through making it possible for young talented women to obtain higher education, and further, as a result of it, influential posts.”⁶⁸⁰

KZKP also founded *Sekcja terminatorów* (The Section for male apprentices) to reach out to young workingmen,⁶⁸¹ and launched the so-called Workers' Garden. The latter was a transnational social movement originally started in France in 1889 and spreading to other European countries. The principal idea of the Workers' Garden was to offer small agricultural parcels to poor working-class families. In 1909, KZKP

⁶⁷⁷ Plater, *Istota i cel związków*, 37-38.

⁶⁷⁸ Ibid., 29. In the 1913 academic year there was 103 enrolled students, of whom 13 graduated, *Rocznik Katolickiego Związku Kobiet Polskich w Warszawie 1912-1913*, 9-10.

⁶⁷⁹ J. Oksza, “Oświatowa i społeczna działalność kobiet w Warszawie” (The educational and social activism of the women in Warsaw), 30-31.

⁶⁸⁰ “Kronika chwili bieżącej,” 12-14.

⁶⁸¹ It organized religious classes, summer opportunities, and teaching of Polish language and history. *Rocznik Katolickiego Związku Kobiet Polskich w Warszawie 1913-1914*, 23.

monitored around 500 such gardens.⁶⁸²

In the years before WWI, PZNK-Lviv focused on teaching catechism to children, running kitchens for the poor, and managing the Workers` Gardens and charities. However it was most renowned for its organized assistance to lower-class young women through its separately founded section *Opieka* (Care), which since 1910 ran a shelter, the Railway Mission and *patronage*. The shelter, open for women of all nationalities and religions who were seeking employment, offered them accommodation, free medical and legal advice, and a reading room.⁶⁸³ In 1912 Lvivian *Opieka* became a member of the Catholic project *L'oeuvres de protection de la jeune fille*, launched in Fribourg, Switzerland, in 1897. Observing the massive migration of lower-class females, the main aim of *L'oeuvres* was to create means of protection for these women from “white slavery” by setting up a network of “safe” houses – shelters and travelers’ aid societies, to which traveling women could turn for help. The locally launched organizations concerned with the same issue began to affiliate with *L'oeuvres*. In the early-twentieth century *L'oeuvres* launched the so-called International Railroad Missions, which aimed at organizing safe passage for women between countries and towns by sending women-guides with a yellow-white badge to patrol the train stations, displaying leaflets with “safe addresses” and directing women seeking occupation to temporary shelters and employment offices.⁶⁸⁴ In 1912 the Lvivian Railway Mission, open day and night, made 364 interventions and cooperated with similar missions in Breslau, Prague, Vienna, Lic, Budapest, Trieste, Geneva, Basil, Zurich, Berlin, Dresden, Munich, Strasburg, Paris, and Warsaw.⁶⁸⁵

⁶⁸² “Statut Towarzystwa Ogrodów Robotniczych” (Statute of ‘The workers` Gardens’”), *Przebudzenie* 1, 12 (1909), 10-16. In 1903 there were already 6,502 gardens in France that provided food for approximately 40,000 people. Soon the Workers` Gardens appeared in Belgium, Switzerland, Germany, USA, and the Netherlands. Adam Woroniecki, “Ogrody Robotnicze,” *Przebudzenie* 1, 1-2 (1909), 11-12.

⁶⁸³ In 1912 *Opieka* reported that within a period of one year the shelter hosted 1,100 occupants: “869 Roman Catholics, 219 Greek Catholics, 1 Ormian Catholic, 2 Orthodoxies, 9 Jewish.” With respect to their national affiliation, 993 Polish women were inhabitants of Galicia, 55 were women were Polish nationality from “other Polish lands,” 2 Russians, 23 Germans, 19 French, 9 Swiss, 2 English. *Sprawozdanie z czynności Polskiego Związku Niewiast Katolickich we Lwowie za rok 1912*, 32-33.

⁶⁸⁴ “Katolicka opieka dworcowa” (The Catholic Railway Care), *Gazeta dla Kobiet* 3 (1911): 97-98; “Praktyczne przeprowadzenie opieki dworcowej” (Practical guidance for the Railway Care), *Gazeta dla Kobiet* 3 (1911): 124-125, 140-141, 148-149, 150.

⁶⁸⁵ *Sprawozdanie z czynności Polskiego Związku Niewiast Katolickich we Lwowie za rok 1912*, 30. At the same time *Opieka* reported a drop in interest in the Catholic Railway Mission, which was attributed to the fact that Lvivian Jewish women organized a similar enterprise. The confessional differentiation between the travellers was a transnational pattern, however, in both the Cracowian and Lvivian reports there are instances of accepting Protestant and Jewish women to their shelters. *Sprawozdanie z czynności Polskiego Związku Niewiast Katolickich we Lwowie za rok 1912*, 26; *Sprawozdanie z czynności Polskiego Związku Niewiast Katolickich we Lwowie za rok 1914-15*, 3.

In the nineteenth century, the Church proposed another form of engaging upper, middle-class, and intelligentsia women into social issues, known as *patronage*. Assuming the privileged women's positive impact on women from lower classes during personal meetings, *patronage*, first popular in France, began to be accepted in other Catholic settings as well.⁶⁸⁶ In the Lvivian *Opieka* it took the form of Sunday meetings during which female teachers-sodalists lectured to workingwomen, "the most neglected group in terms of national consciousness and intellectual development."⁶⁸⁷ At least another two similar bodies in Cracow and Przemyśl were patterned on *Opieka*.⁶⁸⁸

6.5 Cooperation between Polish Catholic laywomen's associations and other Polish organizations

In order to widen their spheres of influence, the three organizations collaborated with various Polish Catholic institutions. The Cracowian PZNK cooperated on a regular basis with the Confraternity of Christian Mothers, bringing help to lower-class mothers, and with the Sodality of the Female Teachers with respect to various educational projects.⁶⁸⁹ In 1912, PZNK-Cracow joined so-called *Rada Katolicka* (Catholic Council) that consisted of all Cracowian Catholic organizations.⁶⁹⁰ KZKP collaborated with the Catholic professional association for workingwomen "Dźwignia" ("Lever").⁶⁹¹ In 1913, Cracowian and Lvivian PZNKs as well as KZKP joined "*Gościna*" (Inn) the first organization on the Polish lands that aimed to provide information on and coordinate women's projects of various factions across the zones.⁶⁹² The same year PZNK-Lviv became a member of the umbrella organization *Zjednoczenie Polskich Chrześcijańskich Towarzystw Kobietych* (Union of Polish Christian Associations for Women), which operated in the Eastern part of Galicia.⁶⁹³

Further, their persistence in delineating themselves as confessionally motivated associations did not prevent Catholic women from forming alliances with secular

⁶⁸⁶ "Związki kobiet pracujących" (Associations of WorkingWomen), *Gazeta dla kobiet* 1 (1909): 51.

⁶⁸⁷ *Sprawozdanie z czynności Polskiego Związku Niewiast Katolickich we Lwowie za rok 1912*, 34; *Sprawozdanie z czynności Polskiego Związku Niewiast Katolickich we Lwowie za rok 1914-15*, 6, 47.

⁶⁸⁸ *Sprawozdanie z czynności Polskiego Związku Niewiast Katolickich we Lwowie za rok 1912*, 29-30.

⁶⁸⁹ *Polski Związek Niewiast Katolickich. IV sprawozdanie z czynności za rok 1909*, 13-14; *Polski Związek Niewiast Katolickich w Krakowie, III sprawozdanie z czynności za rok 1908*, 26.

⁶⁹⁰ *Polski Związek Niewiast Katolickich. VII sprawozdanie z czynności za rok 1912*, 5.

⁶⁹¹ Treła, "Działalność społeczno-charytatywna Zgromadzenia Sióstr Imienia Jezus," 43.

⁶⁹² *Polski Związek Niewiast Katolickich. VII sprawozdanie z czynności za rok 1912*, 6-7, 11-12. *Sprawozdanie z czynności Polskiego Związku Niewiast Katolickich we Lwowie za rok 1912*, 4;

Sprawozdanie z czynności Polskiego Związku Niewiast Katolickich we Lwowie za rok 1913, 5.

⁶⁹³ *Sprawozdanie z czynności Polskiego Związku Niewiast Katolickich we Lwowie za rok 1913*, 3.

women's organizations and/or institutions. In 1907 PZNK-Cracow participated in a two-day rally organized by the editors of *Przodownica* (Leader), a publication aimed at mobilizing peasant women into the radical folk's people movement. That same year Cracowian PZNK invited delegates of other women's organizations for common meetings twice a year in order to discuss and reach agreement on national and social issues.⁶⁹⁴ Also between 1907 and 1912 the biggest part of PZNK-Cracow's social activism on behalf of lower-class children was carried out within the framework of the entirely secular municipal body, *Trzecia Sekcja Rady Opiekuńczej Krakowskiej* (Third Section of the Cracowian Caring Council), which aimed to care for the youth of both sexes by setting up shelters and afternoon vocational schools. The Third Section mainly consisted of women, the vast majority of whom were members of PZNK-Cracow. In 1912 the Third Section of the Cracowian Caring Council was fully embedded into Cracowian PZNK.⁶⁹⁵

The attitude of KZKP, PZNK-Cracow and PZNK-Lviv towards non-Catholic women's movements was not one-dimensional. Although the Catholic laywomen consistently emphasized their Catholic background to differentiate themselves from the concurrent projects of other women's organizations, they also wanted to be perceived as participants in the broadly defined "woman question." In 1905, during a meeting of Polish women-activists from the three zones held in Cracow,⁶⁹⁶ Przewóska, a Catholic lay activist from the Polish Kingdom, complained that its participants persistently attempted to define the Polish women's movement as irreligious and/or socialist. Przewóska claimed that because of her Catholic worldview she had been marginalized during the discussions, especially when she objected to the elimination of religion from the educational system.⁶⁹⁷

Polish Catholic lay activists acknowledged their competitors' achievements. Kazimiera Proczkówna, for example, KZKP's first chairwoman, noted that the broadly defined women's movements had radically changed public opinion about organized

⁶⁹⁴ *Polski Związek Niewiast Katolickich w Krakowie. II sprawozdanie z czynności za rok 1907*, 7.

⁶⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 7; *Polski Związek Niewiast Katolickich. VI sprawozdanie z czynności za rok 1911*, 8-10; *Polski Związek Niewiast Katolickich. VII sprawozdanie z czynności za rok 1912*, 9-11.

⁶⁹⁶ Before WWI, several gatherings of Polish women-activists of various factions from the three zones took place: 1891 in Warsaw, 1894 in Lviv, 1899 in Zakopane, 1905 in Cracow, 1907 in Warsaw, 1913 and 1914 in Cracow, 1917 in Warsaw, see Jolanta Sikorska-Kulesza, "Trójzaborowe zjazdy kobiet na ziemiach polskich na przełomie XIX i XX wieku" (The conventions of Polish women from the three zones on the Polish lands at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth century), in *Działaczki społeczne, feministki, obywatelki*, 273-274.

⁶⁹⁷ "W sprawie krakowskiego zjazdu kobiet polskich" (About the Cracowian meeting of the Polish women), *Ruch chrześcijańsko-społeczny* 4 (1906): 307.

women`s activism – from condemnation to the view that social activism was in fact a woman`s duty. According to Proczkówna, feminist ideas had initially dominated the women`s movement. Although they had “many exaggerated features,” Proczkówna conceded feminist ideas had led to the recognition that “women`s situation [was] not as it should be,” which prompted the rise of the “woman question.” The KZKP chairwoman acknowledged that contemporary secular (feminist, socialist) women`s movements fought to improve women`s situation and supported women in their struggle for the right to education as well as financial and intellectual independence. Proczkówna noticed that at first Catholic women were unresponsive to the secular women`s movement`s justifiable claims, to join various organizations only later on. Unfortunately, in Proczkówna`s view, pious laywomen too often enrolled in irreligious or mixed religious associations. For this reason, the KZKP urged Catholic women to unite in a specifically Catholic charitable, national or any women`s organization because these associations aimed to solve the “woman question” as well as other societal questions specifically from the Catholic point of view, just as the Austrian *Katholische Reich Frauenorganisation* and German *Katholische Frauenbund* did.⁶⁹⁸ In other words, the Catholic laywomen-activists drew a line between themselves and other women-activists not on the level of the recognition of women`s situation, for example, regarding their discrimination on the job market or by law, but regarding the perceived solutions to the problem. They aimed to introduce Catholic principles into the women`s movement as well as into all aspects of social life.⁶⁹⁹

To further complicate the picture of the Catholic women`s organizations` attitude towards their competitors, privileging the interests of Catholicism above those of women was not always the rule. In Section 3.3, I mentioned *Związek Katolicki* (The Catholic Union) founded in 1905, the main organization that united and coordinated Catholic social projects in the Polish Kingdom, launched and promoted by the Church hierarchy. Plater declared that *Związek`s* agenda and means of work were not compatible with those of KZKP and insisted on the need of a separate women-only organization.⁷⁰⁰ KZKP also supported the establishment of relations with similar associations specifically for Catholic women on the Polish lands and abroad, instead of

⁶⁹⁸ Kazimiera Proczkówna, “Katolickie Związki Kobiet. Ich istota i zadania” (Catholic Unions of Women. Their essence and role), *Ruch chrześcijańsko-społeczny* 6 (1908): 297.

⁶⁹⁹ Plater, *Istota i cel związków*, 33.

⁷⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 33.

entering *Związek*.⁷⁰¹

In practical terms, PZNK-Cracow, PZNK-Lviv and KZKP cooperated and made alliances with non-Catholic women's organizations when they saw a chance to bring about change in women's situation. In 1912 PZNK-Cracow, *Liga Pomocy Przemysłowej* (The Ligue of Industrial Help), *Panie Straży Polskiej* (The Ladies of the Polish Guard), and *Stowarzyszenie Artystek Polskich* (Association of Polish Female Artists) petitioned together for women's right to be elected to the Municipal Council.⁷⁰² In 1917, together with nine other women's associations, PZNK-Cracow demanded granting women with political rights, opening public secondary and professional schools for girls, allowing women to obtain an MA degree at the Law departments and to enter other departments of the Jagiellonian University in Cracow. The petition was addressed to the Polish representatives at the parliament in Vienna. In the same year PZNK and other Cracowian women's associations demanded women's right to enter political parties.⁷⁰³ Their readiness to disregard the religious affiliation to advance women's issues was particularly visible at the meeting of Polish women from various factions in Warsaw in 1917. Although the gathering was organized and dominated by feminist activists whose overall aims were not fully supported by KZKP, its delegates signed the proposed resolution to increase women's civil and political rights.⁷⁰⁴

Although cooperation between Polish Catholic and peasant, socialist and/or feminist organizations did not occur as a rule, it did happen. It is worth mentioning that similar alliances were unthinkable for the *Ligue Patriotique des Françaises*, *Der Katholische Frauenbund* or *Lietuviu Katalikiu Moteru Draugija*, due to the negative attitude towards non-Catholic women's factions of either the respective national Churches or these associations' members.⁷⁰⁵ There are several interrelated factors that, in my view, informed Polish Catholic women's readiness to cooperate with secular organizations despite the societal polarization in the context of the culture wars.

First, the cooperation of the Catholic women's organizations with secular associations may indicate that in comparison with other Catholic settings, the conflict

⁷⁰¹ Ibid., 32-33; Proczkówna, "Katolickie Związki Kobiet," 298-299.

⁷⁰² Dormus, "Galicyjskie stowarzyszenia i organizacje kobiece doby autonomicznej," 342.

⁷⁰³ *Polski Związek Niewiast Katolickich. X sprawozdanie z czynności za rok 1917*, 9-10,

⁷⁰⁴ *Pamiętnik Zjazdu Kobiet Polskich w Warszawie w roku 1917* (Memoir of the Polish women's convention in Warsaw in 1917), ed. Justyna Budzińska-Tylicka (Warszawa: Składnica Główna, 1918), 8, 164-165.

⁷⁰⁵ *Fédération Internationale des Ligues Catholiques Féminines. 1er Conseil International*, 15; Karčiauskaitė, "For Women's Rights, Church, and Fatherland," 133-134.

between religious and secular forces on the Polish lands was not as intense or radical. This may be explained by the generally mild anticlericalism in this region and the strong position of the Church as a perceived defender of national values, but also by the fact that, due to the specific political situation that scattered Poles around the three empires, the Polish Catholic women did not want to instigate disagreements that could further divide the Polish population. Plater explicitly expressed this latter concern: “In the current moment, we, Polish men and Polish women, (...) are not unified by genuine spiritual harmony. The presence of so many factions among us ruins our unity. (...) instead of helping, we often (...) fight one another in our social work.”⁷⁰⁶

Secondly, the Polish Catholic associations’ flexibility to cooperate with other, non-religious organizations likely resulted from their strong stance with respect to women’s civil and political rights and, further, from these associations’ awareness that the public support for Polish women’s efforts regardless of their socio-political worldview was rather whimsical. At the beginning of 1912 the Lvivian PZNK’s Board reported that at the party for the opening of the New Year: “There were many ladies from the organization as well as invited guests. The friendly atmosphere of the meeting proves that the Association is popular among a wider audience and enjoys its support and acknowledgement.”⁷⁰⁷ However, only a few years later, the Board of the same Lvivian organization made a bitter observation about the fragility of women’s position in the public sphere: “It would seem that after the men left to fight [WWI], after the deregulation of the city’s machine, it would be necessary to turn to the women’s forces. (...) This has not happened.”⁷⁰⁸ In *Przebudzenie* (Awakening) the journal edited by KZKP members, Zofia Kreczmarówna commented on women’s suffrage: “The reforms that supposedly will ruin the entire social order will have to be introduced sooner or later. And later generations will be surprised that we did not understand something so obvious.” She added promptly that women would have to demand for their rights in an organized fight, “for rights are not to be received but to be fought for.”⁷⁰⁹ Therefore, KZKP was prepared to form alliances with women who did not represent the Catholic

⁷⁰⁶ Plater, *Istota i cel związków*, 10.

⁷⁰⁷ *Sprawozdanie z czynności Polskiego Związku Niewiast Katolickich we Lwowie za rok 1912*, 3.

⁷⁰⁸ *Sprawozdanie z czynności Polskiego Związku Niewiast Katolickich we Lwowie za rok 1914-15*, 9.

⁷⁰⁹ Zofia Kreczmarówna, “W sprawie kobiet” (About Women’s issues), *Przebudzenie* 1, 11 (1909): 6-8. In order to advance women’s claims for the right to be elected to the municipalities as well as other social institutions KZKP cooperated with the Varsovian Towarzystwo Prawnicze (The Association of Lawyers, see Pochwist, “Pokłosie” (Results), *Przebudzenie*, 3, 11 (1911): 22-27; *Rocznik Katolickiego Związku Kobiet Polskich w Warszawie 1910-1911*, 4.

point of view, and were even occasionally perceived as enemies of the Church.

The third possible explanation for the cooperation of Catholic with non-Catholic women's organizations pertains to shared commonalities in both these associations' social position and their programs of social reform. The Polish Catholic and feminist organizations were elitist associations led by well-informed, strong figures who were capable of formulating coherent social programs. However, none of these associations managed to attract a significant number of supporters. In 1913 KZKP reported around 421 members while *Związek Równouprawnienia Kobiet Polskich*, the best known and influential feminist organization on the Polish lands before WWI, had 500 members.⁷¹⁰ Further, the women in both factions shared similar privileged backgrounds. Although the feminist movement did not attract countesses to its ranks, most of its members were women from the landowning, intelligentsia, and middle classes, which shaped their program of social reform. Finally, although ZRKP championed the issue of women's political rights more vocally than Catholic organizations and often pointed at Catholicism as a factor that constrained rather than emancipated women,⁷¹¹ the two factions proposed similar programs with respect to changes in women's situation before 1914.

If we compare the Catholic model of womanhood designed by the Polish pious activists, examined in Chapter 4, and the feminist model of womanhood as reconstructed by Polish historian Katarzyna Dormus (based on her reading of articles published in the most important Varsovian feminist journal, *Ster*), one notices similarities rather than differences between these proposals.⁷¹² Both factions rejected the "old" models of femininity that valued a woman in terms of her charms and chances of entering into financially and socially successful matrimony rather than paying attention to her personality and achievements. The Catholic and feminist activists proposed to reform the passive, opportunistic, uneducated, dependent, a-social Polish woman through new patterns of social upbringing that aimed at a harmonious development of her intellect, character, physical health, civil spirit and

⁷¹⁰ Budzińska-Tylicka, "Społeczna praca kobiet w Królestwie Polskiem," 129; *Rocznik Katolickiego Związku Kobiet Polskich w Warszawie 1912-1913*, 30.

⁷¹¹ Andrzej Chwalba, "Spór o wartości: sympatyczki ruchu emancypacyjnego wobec religii i Kościoła katolickiego" (A controversy over principles: the supporters of the emancipatory movement about religion and the Catholic Church), in *Kobieta i kultura*, 272-273.

⁷¹² Katarzyna Dormus, "Warszawski „Ster” (1907-1914) i jego program wychowawczy (The Varsovian ‘Ster’ and its educational program), *Rozprawy z dziejów oświaty* 40 (2003), 94. Prior to the Varsovian edition, between 1895-1897 *Ster* was published in Lviv. In both cases Paulina Kuczalska-Reinschmit was the editor, 89.

professional/vocational skills that would allow her to become economically self-sufficient when needing to take on paid employment. They emphasized the importance of maternal qualities for the familial environment and social/national well-being, but at the same time encouraged women to take on matrimony and motherhood only when they were mature enough to make informed decisions. They postulated a woman's choice for self-development and self-realization in the public sphere in case she did not choose the role of a wife and mother. The Catholic laywomen and feminists advocated for an educational system that would develop women as independent and critical thinkers and equip them with knowledge to match contemporary challenges. Both factions supported the creation of co-educative schooling opportunities that would allow men and women to learn about each other in a "healthy," not-flirtatious atmosphere, and also raised concern about female university graduates who could not utilize their professional knowledge due to the lack of employment opportunities for women with higher education. Further, the Catholic and feminist activists shared a belief in education as a precondition for establishing a harmonious partnership in marriage and for achieving satisfactory results in the process of upbringing offspring. Catholic women-activists and feminists alike understood learning as a long-life project that added to women's continuous self-development and contributed to the collective well-being. Finally, both Polish Catholic and feminist factions insisted that reformed women-citizens should take on social activism to act on behalf of the Polish nation.⁷¹³

In her 1996 article "Was Mary Wollstonecraft a Feminist?" Karen Offen proposed that regardless of geographical location, historical context, and independently "of specific issues and approaches" feminism can be defined as a *process* during which individuals, male or female,

- 1) (...) recognize the validity of women's own interpretations of their lived experience and needs and acknowledge the values women claim publicly as their own (as distinct from an aesthetic ideal of womanhood invented by men) in assessing their status in society relative to men;
- 2) (...) exhibit consciousness of, discomfort at, or even anger over institutionalized injustice (or inequity) toward women as a group by men as a group in a given society; and
- 3) (...) advocate the elimination of that injustice by challenging, through efforts

⁷¹³Also compare Katarzyna Dormus's findings on the Polish feminist concept of womanhood with the observations of Katarzyna Czajkowska, "Wzorce roli społecznej kobiety propagowane przez Związek Równouprawnienia Kobiet w Królestwie Polskim na początku XX wieku" (The patterns of women's social activism promoted by the Union of Women's Suffrage in the Polish Kingdom at the beginning the twentieth century), in *Kobieta i edukacja*, 245-252.

to alter prevailing ideas and/or social institutions and practices, the coercive power, force, or authority that upholds male prerogatives in that particular culture.⁷¹⁴

Based on the findings and interpretations of this thesis, the Polish Catholic laywomen seemed to fulfill all three criteria of Offen's definition of feminism. They did recognize the legitimacy of women's interpretations of their lived experience, expressed their discomfort about women's disadvantageous position in various spheres of life and finally they did propose a program to eliminate practices that positioned women as inferior to men. Although I am not invested in proving here that the Polish Catholic laywomen were, paraphrasing Denis Riley, "that name," nevertheless I believe that "checking up" the Polish female laity's social activism against Offen's criteria may help in understanding why they were ready to cooperate with non-Catholic organizations, including feminist ones, but rejected calling themselves feminists. Most likely they were not prepared to accept that label chiefly for three reasons. First, feminism as part of the contemporary women's movement was strongly disapproved by the Church. Second, the secular Polish public opinion was by and large not supportive of feminist ideas either. Thirdly, the contemporary Polish feminists, those who did call themselves that, opposed the interference of the Church and the presence of religious ideas in the public sphere, whereas the reinstatement of religion into the public sphere was one of the main drives/arguments informing the (Polish) Catholic laywomen's increasing presence in the social realm.

6.6 The Polish Catholic organizations in the international forum

In the last decades of the nineteenth century women of various factions had begun to organize themselves on the transnational level. According to the research of Leila Rupp, from 1888 until 1945 leaders of the three largest international women's organizations – the International Council of Women, the International Alliance of Women (earlier the International Woman Suffrage Alliance) and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom – "struggled to define a group identity in a period marked by two global conflagrations," that is, "murderous nationalist conflicts" and "the ideal of internationalism."⁷¹⁵ Rupp also observed that "[t]he process of constructing an international collective identity reproduced global power relations," which manifested

⁷¹⁴ Offen, "Was Mary Wollstonecraft a Feminist?", 17-18.

⁷¹⁵ Leila J. Rupp, "Constructing Internationalism: The Case of Transnational Women's Organizations, 1888-1945," in *Globalizing Feminism 1789-1914*, 139.

itself, for example, through “an assumption about the superiority and natural leadership of Euro-American societies.”⁷¹⁶ In her article “The Challenge of Multinational Empire for the International Women’s Movement,” about the International Council of Women and the International Woman Suffrage Alliance prior to WWI, the historian Susan Zimmermann argues:

The organized international women’s movement was built on the idea that self-governing nation states or federal states formed the main foundation of any organization operating at an international level. In a global perspective, however, serious political ambiguities and struggles over the construction of the inter/national plagued the late-nineteenth century and early-twentieth century wave of their inter/national feminism from the outset. Affiliation in the international women’s organizations of this period was largely confined to those parts of the world that were not formally colonies, and to countries and regions considered as part of ‘occidental civilization’. The organizational relation to those other large world regions subject to some form of colonialism or imperialism, or else ruled through multinational empires, posed a serious challenge to the politics of women’s internationalism. Women’s international organizations frequently confronted the question of how to deal with political entities that did not conform to the western notion of the nation state. In the period before 1918, organizational and political tension and overt struggle over this problem focused largely on some of the non-core regions of Europe.⁷¹⁷

According to Zimmermann, understanding “the international as a multiplication of the national” derived from “western experience” and was rooted in “a belief in the progressive nature of western models of state-building.”⁷¹⁸ For this reason “aspirations to introduce additional forms of representation not based on the national met with considerable resistance and were postponed or diluted time and again.”⁷¹⁹ The inclusion of women from the territories of the Habsburg monarchy in constructing female internationalism, the specific example of Zimmermann’s study, instigated “a critical conflict between ideal nation and real existing constructions” that forced the international women’s organizations “to re-negotiate this ideal *vis-a-vis* the complex relation between empires, statehood, nation and nation-building.”⁷²⁰ As this section will show, Rupp and Zimmermann’s observations regarding the ICW, IWSA/IAW and WILPF’s approaches to “non-core” territories may be also illuminating when applied to

⁷¹⁶ Ibid.,141, 147, 139.

⁷¹⁷ Susan Zimmermann, “The Challenge of Multinational Empire for the International Women’s Movement. The Habsburg Monarchy and the Developemnt of Feminist Inter/national Politics,” in *Globalizing Feminism 1789-1914*, 153.

⁷¹⁸ Ibid.,168

⁷¹⁹ Ibid., 154.

⁷²⁰ Ibid., 168.

the histories of relations between the Polish Catholic laywomen's associations with confessionally motivated organizations in other national contexts as well on the international level.

Since 1907 the Varsovian KZKP, and the Lvivian and Cracowian PZNKs attempted to stay in touch across the zones' borders. Yet this effort was more a matter of providing updates about their internal developments than organizing actual events or systematic cooperation between them. Because of the difficulties of traveling across the zones, these activities appeared more frequently between the two Galician associations. However, KZKP in Warsaw was perceived by PZNK-Cracow and PZNK-Lviv as a "sister-organization" in the Polish Kingdom.⁷²¹

Although the three organizations for Polish Catholic laywomen did not manage to launch common projects across the Austrian and Russian zones, they united with respect to their participation in the transnationally developing organized activism of Catholic laywomen. In the early twentieth century, Polish Catholic laywomen's organizations began exploring the possibilities of cooperation with similar associations elsewhere during various international Catholic laywomen's meetings. In 1906 delegates of the Cracowian PZNK and Varsovian KZKP participated in a four-day meeting of DKF in Munich. While listening to various lectures, the Polish women familiarized themselves with the general work scheme of the German organization, along with the idea of *patronage* as realized by the Catholic laywomen in Munich and the strengths of the German socialist women's movement.⁷²² However, the overall comments of the Cracowian delegates at the meeting were ambiguous and gave away the deep national tensions between Poles and Germans. The meeting in Munich in 1906 took place at a time when the Prussian authorities launched another salvo of anti-Polish laws in the Prussian zone leading to protests and eventually violent confrontations between Poles and Germans in the region. The events, widely commented on by both nations, likely had an impact on the relations between Polish and German women at the

⁷²¹ For examples of such events see *Polski Związek Niewiast Katolickich. II sprawozdanie z czynności za rok 1907*, 6; *Polski Związek Niewiast Katolickich. X sprawozdanie z czynności za rok 1917*, 4; *Polski Związek Niewiast Katolickich. III sprawozdanie z czynności za rok 1908*, 7, 9; *Polski Związek Niewiast Katolickich. X sprawozdanie z czynności za rok 1917*, 4; *Polski Związek Niewiast Katolickich. X sprawozdanie z czynności za rok 1912*, 11; *Rocznik Katolickiego Związku Kobiet Polskich w Warszawie 1911-1912* (Annual report of the Catholic Union of Polish Women in Warsaw. 1911-1912) (Warszawa: Nakładem Katolickiego Związku Kobiet Polskich, 1912), 4; "Związek Niewiast Katolickich w Krakowie" (Association of Catholic Women in Cracow), *Przebudzenie* 1, 9 (1909): 12-13.

⁷²² Woźniakowska, "Zjazd Związku Niewiast Katolickich w Monachium w roku 1906," 42-43 and 80-81.

Munich meeting.⁷²³ As the Cracowian delegates reported:

We deal here [in Munich] with Catholics, whose first thought is that of nationality, so us, Poles, they do not want to know. (...) Nobody asked why we travelled such a long distance or whether we liked the gathering. But they [the German women] are certain of one thing, that is, that we [Polish women] learn many things from them. They are wrong. We find their understanding of social issues very limited.⁷²⁴

The Polish-German tensions in this period were likely responsible for the Cracowian women's mixed opinions with respect to the DKF's achievements. On the one hand, they pointed to the democratic spirit among the members of the German organization and the well-mannered way in which they participated in discussions. The Polish women found the German women-activists vocal and prepared for public activism.⁷²⁵ On the other hand, the Cracowian women criticized the general level of the presentations during the meeting as "shallow," claiming the topics did not address the key social issues and revealed the presenters' lack of social awareness.⁷²⁶ Moreover, they pointed out that the only few women had leadership charisma and skills. Although the Polish women praised their German counterparts for their devoted and scrupulous work for the DKF, at the same time they pointed to their lack of critical approach to social problems. The Cracowian women described the German women's minds as "logical" but "not open" and "not bright."⁷²⁷ The Cracowian delegates ended their report by saying that "in all the speeches, the national spirit, narrowly national (...) was [placed] above the religious one." Although the German women frequently repeated the expression "the Catholic Association", "one could not feel real comprehension of its meaning."⁷²⁸ For these reasons, regarding the possible cooperation between the Cracowian and German associations, the Cracowian women expressed concern that Polish women and their problems would not be listened to within the DKF framework and advocated activism within a more internationally oriented scheme.⁷²⁹ Despite their objections to join forces with German laywomen, KZKP and PZNK-Cracow accepted the DKF's invitation for its meeting in October 1910 in Dusseldorf.⁷³⁰

⁷²³ For a general introduction to these events, see Chwalba, *Historia Polski 1795-1918*, 457-465.

⁷²⁴ Woźniakowska, "Zjazd Związku Niewiast Katolickich w Monachium w roku 1906," 45.

⁷²⁵ *Ibid.*, 82.

⁷²⁶ *Ibid.*, 46 and 86.

⁷²⁷ *Ibid.*, 86, 87, 88.

⁷²⁸ *Ibid.*, 44.

⁷²⁹ *Ibid.*, 51 and 88.

⁷³⁰ *Rocznik Katolickiego Związku Kobiet Polskich w Warszawie 1910-1911*, 4.

In 1909 PZNK-Cracow was invited to become a member of the Austrian *Katholischer Reich Frauenorganisation*. PZNK refused the membership, explaining that the KRF's statute was exceptionally "Austrian oriented" and that the Austrian organization allowed men to have a decisive voice at general meetings. According to the Polish women these KRF's policies were incompatible with PZNK-Cracow's principles.⁷³¹ Nevertheless, in 1910 PZNK-Cracow accepted an invitation to a meeting of the Austrian KRF in Vienna. The gathering aimed to assemble already associated organizations, but the organizers also invited non-associated societies of Catholic women from the Habsburg monarchy, like PZNK-Cracow, or from abroad, like German DKF, with the intention of widening the KRF's influence within the Austrian empire and developing international relations with foreign societies.⁷³² The Cracowian representatives commented gladly that in comparison to the achievements of the social work for female servants done by Austrian women, the Galician organizations were very well developed. At the same time, the German women's approach, specifically their idea of launching schools for servants, was seen as the right direction for Galician women-activists involved in similar issues.⁷³³ In their report on the meeting, the PZNK-Cracow's delegates noted that the Austrian KRF was led predominantly by aristocratic women who invested their energy and authority into the work of the society while the organization was lacking input of "privates." Particularly striking for the Polish delegates was the lack of women from the intelligentsia.⁷³⁴ However, the Cracowian women concluded with delight that the meeting of the Catholic women-activists in Vienna "gave the picture (...) of an army that fights against the enemies of Catholicism in numerous areas of the social realm."⁷³⁵

In 1911 PZNK-Cracow consulted about possible participation in the meeting of the International Council of Women in Stockholm with the *Ligue Patriotique des Françaises*. Since none of the Catholic organizations were supposed to be present in Sweden, as "the spirit of the congress did not correspond with religious principles," the Cracowian PZNK declined to send delegates. However, this exchange led to PZNK-Cracow receiving an invitation from the LPF and DKF to the international meeting of the *Federation Internationale des Ligues Catholiques Feminines* in the same year. Prior

⁷³¹ *Polski Związek Niewiast Katolickich. IV sprawozdanie z czynności za rok 1909*, 6.

⁷³² *Sprawozdanie ze zjazdu Katolickich Niewiast w Wiedniu w r. 1910* (Report of the meeting of the Catholic women in Vienna) (Kraków: Drukarnia "Czas," 1910), 6.

⁷³³ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁷³⁴ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁷³⁵ *Ibid.*, 12-13.

to the Federation`s meeting the Cracowian PZNK contacted the Lvivian organization to prepare a report that was read during the conference of the FILCF in June 1911 in Madrid.⁷³⁶ PZNK-Cracow and PZNK-Lviv were accepted as FILCF members. However, the newly admitted Polish faction immediately called for changes in the Federation`s statute. While the FILCF attributed nationalities based on the formal affiliation of their members, the women from PZNK-Cracow and PZNK-Lviv, belonging to a nation without a sovereign state, insisted on being recognized as specifically Polish associations rather than as organizations from the Habsburg monarchy.⁷³⁷ The Polish laywomen-activists portrayed their membership in the FILCF as primary “another opportunity to demonstrate the vigor of our nation abroad.”⁷³⁸ They argued that if the Federation would not acknowledge their need to advance their national project – securing a sovereign Polish nation-state – the Polish associations would resign:

Our Polish Associations want to be named Polish. No matter that we live in the Posen Duchy, Russia or Austria, we desire to keep our Polish character! If the Ligue does not want to accept us as a separate nation, we will withdraw from it because we don`t see any advantage of the membership for our Association.⁷³⁹

During the FILCF`s meeting in Vienna in September 1912, PZNK-Cracow and PZNK-Lviv were recognized as Polish organizations despite their formal Austrian political affiliation.⁷⁴⁰ Nonetheless, the Polish associations` acceptance caused further controversy over the FILCF`s statute and practices. According to the Federation`s founding document, each national delegation was entitled to four votes. However, the FILCF decided that due to their specific political situation, the Cracowian and Lvivian PZNKs as well as KZKP, by then also accepted to the Federation, as representatives of the “annexed” state would receive one vote only to share among them. PZNK-Cracow proposed changes in the FILCF`s statute according to which each member organization would have one vote regardless of nationality, implicitly pointing out that the Federation privileged women`s organizations from self-governing nations and

⁷³⁶ *Polski Związek Niewiast Katolickich w Krakowie, VI sprawozdanie z czynności za rok 1911*, 6;

Polski Związek Niewiast Katolickich. VII sprawozdanie z czynności za rok 1912, 8-10.

⁷³⁷ *Sprawozdanie z czynności Polskiego Związku Niewiast Katolickich we Lwowie za rok 1912*, 3-4.

⁷³⁸ *Sprawozdanie z czynności Polskiego Związku Niewiast Katolickich we Lwowie za rok 1912* (Report on the activities of the Polish Association of Catholic Women in Lviv in 1912) (Lwów: Drukarnia W.A. Szyjkowskiego, 1913), 4.

⁷³⁹ *Sprawozdanie z czynności Polskiego Związku Niewiast Katolickich we Lwowie za rok 1912*, 4.

⁷⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 3-4.

countries.⁷⁴¹ In 1913 in London, the statute was changed according to the Polish proposal. One year later, Countess Maria Wodzicka, the chairwoman of PZNK-Cracow, was elected as the FILCF's president, a function she fulfilled from 1914 to 1921.⁷⁴² The Polish organizations perceived both the change in the FILCF's statute and Wodzicka's election as genuine successes on the international forum.⁷⁴³

The Polish Catholic laywomen attempts at altering the FILCW's operating principles show that, while attempting to join Catholic laywomen's social efforts on the international level, the Polish Catholic women's organizations united, which contributed to the "nationalization" of the Polish Catholic laywomen's group identity across Partitioned Poland's zones' borders. Furthermore, along with illustrating the conflict between constructing the "national" and the "international" in the period, the Polish associations' readiness to break from the FILCW if the latter would not show an understanding for their national ambitions also shows that, despite the Vatican's efforts to unite its followers across borders, at least some of them were ready to prioritize the ideal of the nation-state to the interest of Catholicism. Finally, Polish women's objections to the Federation's practices that advantaged women whose national sympathies corresponded with the interest of their respective countries was an implicit criticism of broader Western-born transnational political conceptualizations and practices regarding the ideal of the nation-state.

6.7. The involvement of privileged Catholic laywomen in confessional labor organizations for workingwomen

The new social teaching of the Roman Catholic Church obliged the clergy and laity from privileged social groups to carry on reforms so as to bring relief to the working masses. One of the most efficient ways to achieve this, according to the papal teaching, was through establishing labor associations. Although Catholicism's new social teaching first targeted male workers, in the rapidly changing political, economic and socio-cultural situation the Catholic Church began seeking solutions to the growing

⁷⁴¹ *Polski Związek Niewiast Katolickich w Krakowie, VI sprawozdanie z czynności za rok 1911*, 7; *Polski Związek Niewiast Katolickich. VII sprawozdanie z czynności za rok 1912*, 8-10; *Sprawozdanie z czynności Polskiego Związku Niewiast Katolickich we Lwowie za rok 1912*, 3-4; *Rocznik Katolickiego Związku Kobiet Polskich w Warszawie 1910-1911*, *Rocznik Katolickiego Związku Kobiet Polskich w Warszawie 1911-1912*, 4; *Rocznik Katolickiego Związku Kobiet Polskich w Warszawie 1912-1913*, 4-5.

⁷⁴² *Początki Katolickiego Ruchu Kobiecego w Polsce*, 27-34; *Sprawozdanie z czynności Polskiego Związku Niewiast Katolickich we Lwowie za rok 1912*, 3-4.

⁷⁴³ *Rocznik Katolickiego Związku Kobiet Polskich w Warszawie 1912-1913*, 7-8; *Polski Związek Niewiast Katolickich. IX sprawozdanie z czynności za rok 1914-1916*, 6.

number of single workingwomen who could not meet the ideal of the domestic wife and mother supported by her bread-winning husband – the model actively promoted by the Church during the entire period. The emergence of Catholic labor associations for workingwomen, from the turn of the centuries, created another opportunity for Polish laywomen of privileged background to engage into the social realm. However, as my findings show, the extent to which these women could use this opportunity was primarily conditioned by the Church's attitude towards social activism in general and laywomen's activism in particular.

It must be clarified that although this section does provide new information on the confessionally motivated vocational organizations for lower-class women, its main focus is on answering these questions: what led to privileged laywomen's involvement in the foundation of labor organizations; could their presence in these organizations increase women's visibility in the public sphere; and finally, what informed the nonexistence of any Catholic laywomen's organization in the Grand Duchy of Posen. Thus, this section does not focus on the internal lives of and activities carried out within these associations.

6.7.1 Catholic labor associations for working women in Galicia, the Polish Kingdom and the Grand Duchy of Posen

6.7.1.1 Galicia

As noted above, the Roman Catholic Church in Galicia, especially in its Western part, had the best political and social conditions for the development of various forms of social action. First, as part of the Habsburg monarchy, both Polish men and women enjoyed a level of political autonomy that allowed them to launch initiatives impossible in the other two zones. Second, the monarchy's favorable attitude towards Catholicism helped the Church to establish a large area of its influence. Third, the Galician Catholic Church accepted, widely disseminated, and introduced in practice the Vatican's new social teaching. Occasionally, Galician priests' proposals for social initiatives were more radical than what Rome had originally designed.⁷⁴⁴ In this predominantly rural

⁷⁴⁴ Such was the case, for example, with the Archbishop of Lviv Bilczewski, who argued for establishing a minimum wage for workers. The bishop of Przemyśl Pelczar went even further, arguing that along with their regular wages, workers should receive part of the profits from the capitalist enterprises they worked for. One of the most important figures among the low-ranking priest-activist was Stanisław Stojalowski (1845-1911), who tried to implement the methods of the Belgium Catholic Church in his work with Polish peasants. His radicalism in fighting for the rights of the uneducated peasants (*lud*) put him in open conflict with the Vatican. Another priest, Jan Badeni, was a vigorous founder of numerous working-class

and underdeveloped area, the social activism of the Polish Church centered mainly on the masses of uneducated peasants (*lud*), including the large numbers of those who emigrated to the cities seeking employment.⁷⁴⁵ In the 1890s, there were around 100 different associations for workingmen (around 5,000 members)⁷⁴⁶ united in several umbrella associations.⁷⁴⁷

Important for the developments examined in this chapter, in accordance with the directives of the papal encyclical *Graves Comumni re*, the large group of upper-, middle-class and intelligentsia Catholic laity, including the female laity, was invited to cooperate with the Church in its social activities. At the turn of the century Catholic laywomen of privileged social backgrounds played a crucial role in establishing and managing various labor associations for lower-class women, as was the case with the first labor organizations in Cracow and Lviv and in smaller cities in the region.⁷⁴⁸ The labor associations' boards consisted of "ladies" from privileged groups, lower-class members, and the priest-curator responsible for spiritual supervision.⁷⁴⁹ However, it

associations. Turowski, "Ruch chrześcijańsko-demokratyczny w Galicji. Część 1," 57-68; Kumor, *Historia Kościoła*, 399-405. For a general picture of the socio-economic and political situation in Galicia, see Chwalba, *Historia Polski 1795-1918*, 477-531.

⁷⁴⁵ Bender, "Katolicka myśl i działalność społeczna," 42-43.

⁷⁴⁶ Turowski, "Ruch chrześcijańsko-demokratyczny w Galicji. Część 2" (The Christian-democratic movement in Galicia. Part 2), 94-97.

⁷⁴⁷ Ryszard Bender, "Katolickie stowarzyszenia rzemieślnicze i robotnicze w Polsce w XIX i XX wieku" (Catholic artisan and working class associations in Poland in the nineteenth and twentieth century), *Zeszyty Społeczne KIK* 9 (2001): 180; Turowski, "Ruch chrześcijańsko-demokratyczny w Galicji. Część 2," 88-102.

⁷⁴⁸ In Cracow *Zakład św. Jadwigi* (The Institute under the Invocation of St. Jadwiga, 1890) was set up in 1890 by the priest Stanisław Spis and an upper-class laywoman Andrzejowa Potocka, see "Statut Stowarzyszenie pod nazwą "Zakład św. Jadwigi w Krakowie" (The Statute of the Association under the invocation of St. Jadwiga) (Kraków: „Czas”), 4. Further *Stowarzyszenie Sług Katolickich pod wezwaniem Św. Zyty* (The Association of the Catholic Female Servants under the Invocation of St. Zyta, founded in 1899), *Stowarzyszenie Katolickich Pracownic c.k. fabryki cygar w Krakowie pod wezwaniem św. Józefa* (The Association of Catholic Women Workers in the Cigar Factory in Cracow under the Invocation of St. Joseph, founded in 1900), and *Katolickie Stowarzyszenie Pracownic Konfekcji Damskiej pod wezwaniem św. Antoniego* (The Catholic Association for Female Workers in the Clothing Industry under the Invocation of St. Anthony, founded 1902) were set up by middle-class activist Adela Dziewicka and bishop Ledóchowski and functioned as auxiliary associations of PZNK in Cracow, see *Polski Związek Niewiast Katolickich w Krakowie. Pierwsze sprawozdanie z czynności w roku 1906*, 18, 22, 27. *Opieka nad Robotnicami* (The Care of Female Workers) was another example of Cracowian upper-class women-sodalists' initiative on behalf of the working class (see Section 5.3). In Lviv the upper-class women launched and managed *Stowarzyszenie Sług Św. Zyty* (The Association of the Female Servants under the Invocation of St Zyta), founded in 1901, and *Katolickie Stowarzyszenie Pracownic Konfekcji Damskiej pod wezwaniem św. Józefa* (The Association of Female Workers in the Clothing Industry under the Invocation of St Joseph), operating from 1904, see "Z lwowskiego stowarzyszenia im. św. Zyty" (From the Lvivian Association under the Invocation of St. Zyta), *Przyjaciel Sług* 8 (1905), 8-10; "Z dziejów Kongregacji Pań Dzieci Maryi we Lwowie," 158, 160.

⁷⁴⁹ For examples of this structure see *Statut Katolickiego Stowarzyszenia Pracownic Konfekcji Damskiej pod wezwaniem św. Antoniego* (The Statute of the Catholic Association of Women-Workers in the Clothing Industry) (Kraków: Druk A. Kozińskiego, 1902) or "Ze stowarzyszenia św. Zyty we Lwowie" (From the Association of St. Zyta in Lviv), *Przyjaciel Sług* 5 (1902): 45.

was the ladies who, as the contemporary press observed, were the “life and soul” of these organizations.⁷⁵⁰ The upper-class laywomen employed a predominantly maternalist approach towards workingwomen and often pointed at the privileged` moral obligations towards those in need. They emphasized the civilizing aspect of their activism but also that the work within the associations, in the ladies` view, created an opportunity of bringing together various social groups.⁷⁵¹

The Cracowian *Stowarzyszenie Slug Katolickich pod wezwaniem Św. Zyty* (Association of Catholic Female Servants under the Invocation of St. Zyta) was one of the strongest models of social work in Cracow and set as an example for other female servants` labor organizations.⁷⁵² The social significance of the association can be understood from the fact that between 1869 and 1904 there were around 185 female servants in Lviv and 164 in Cracow for every one thousand inhabitants. Almost exclusively illiterate and coming mainly from poverty-stricken rural areas, the girls entered the labor force at age 14 to 15.⁷⁵³ In these circumstances the wide range of assistance provided by the Association of St. Zyta – shelter, an employment office, a library, hospital, free legal advice, vocational training and basic education for the illiterate, Railway Mission, entertainment, religious teaching – was of particular importance. In 1900 the Association reported 1,070 members, in 1912 – 2,115.⁷⁵⁴ Soon Associations for Female Servants under the Invocation of St. Zyta, patterned on the one in Cracow, flourished in the region, and by 1912 they existed in almost all Galician cities.⁷⁵⁵ Similar to the Association of St. Zyta in Cracow, other Galician female

⁷⁵⁰ “Dwuletnia działalność Stowarzyszenia slug katolickich św. Zyty w Krakowie” (Two years of activism of the Association of Catholic female servants under the invocation of St. Zyta), *Przyjaciel Slug* 4 (1901): 73.

⁷⁵¹ “Do naszych Przyjaciółek” (To our Friends), *Przyjaciel Slug* 7 (1904): 83; “Ze Stowarzyszenia św. Zyty w Krakowie” (From the Association of St. Zyta in Cracow), *Przyjaciel Slug* 7 (1904): 5; “Nasze cele i zadania” (Our aims and tasks), *Kobieta Polska* 1, 2 (1916): 3.

⁷⁵² *Ze Stowarzyszenia Krakowskiego* (From the Cracovian association) (Kraków-Podgórze: Druk W. Poturalskiego, 1918), 6. The association`s chairwomen were Adela Dziewicka (1899-1904) and Stanisława Rychłowska (1904-1918).

⁷⁵³ Zofia Sokół, “Kobiece czasopisma Krakowa i Lwowa w XIX wieku,” in *Książki, czasopisma, biblioteki Krakowa i Lwowa XIX I XX wieku* (Books, journals and libraries of Cracow and Lviv in the nineteenth and twentieth century), ed. Jerzy Jarowiecki (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Naukowe WSP, 1993), 35.

⁷⁵⁴ Henrykowa Dziewicka, “Ze stowarzyszenia katolickich slug pod wezwaniem św. Zyty w Krakowie” (From the Association of Female Servants under the invocation of St. Zyta in Cracow), *Przyjaciel Slug* 3 (1900): 63; *Polski Związek Niewiast Katolickich w Krakowie, VII sprawozdanie z czynności za rok 1912*, 63. For examples of the forms of assistance offered by the three labor associations run by PZNK-Cracow, see *Polski Związek Niewiast Katolickich w Krakowie, II sprawozdanie z czynności za rok 1907*, 24-27 and 33-36; *Polski Związek Niewiast Katolickich w Krakowie, III sprawozdanie z czynności za rok 1908*, 38-41; *Polski Związek Niewiast Katolickich w Krakowie, IV sprawozdanie z czynności za rok 1911*, 60-62; *Polski Związek Niewiast Katolickich w Krakowie, VII sprawozdanie z czynności za rok 19012*, 63-65.

⁷⁵⁵ “Z ufnością do dzieła w Imię Bożę” (To act in the name of God), *Przyjaciel Slug* 3 (1900): 7.

servants' labor organizations were also managed by privileged laywomen. The Cracowian St. Zyta's association published its own journal *Przyjaciel Slug* (The Female Servant's Friend), functioning as a link between the other organizations targeting female servants. Adela Dziewicka, co-founder and first chairwoman of the Cracowian association and *Przyjaciel Slug*'s editor, was frequently invited to visit the organizations of St. Zyta across Galicia to offer her advice.⁷⁵⁶

Shortly before and during WWI, the Church in Galicia started to bring Catholic labor associations for female workers so far managed by privileged laywomen under the clergy's stricter supervision.⁷⁵⁷ To this end it founded *Związek Stowarzyszeń Katolickich Kobiet i Dziewcząt Pracujących diecezji krakowskiej* (Union of Associations for Catholic Workingwomen and Girls in the Cracowian diocese, hereafter ZSKKDP) in 1916.⁷⁵⁸ The organization was patterned on the similar *Związek Stowarzyszeń Kobiet Pracujących* (Union of Workingwomen's Associations) in the Grand Duchy of Posen (described below).⁷⁵⁹ The Galician ZSKKDP's aim was to connect existing Catholic lower-class workingwomen's associations and to found new ones of a similar structure so as to provide members with information and various forms of assistance (employment offices, legal advice, vocational and educational courses, etc.). The Union insisted that associations for workingwomen should be established in each parish and be supervised by the parish priest as the patron. In 1917, ZSKKDP reported around 6,000 members in 57 associations.⁷⁶⁰ The Union also issued its own journal, *Kobieta Polska* (Polish Woman).

With respect to the position of privileged women in ZSKKDP and the newly launched organizations attached to it, already during the preparatory meeting, the

⁷⁵⁶ Adela Dziewicka, "Do naszych Przyjaciółek" (To our Friends), *Przyjaciel Slug* 5 (1902): 54.

⁷⁵⁷ Zofia Kuźmówna, "Z naszych stowarzyszeń" (From our associations), *Kobieta Polska* 1, 2 (1916): 5.

⁷⁵⁸ "Założenie 'Związku Stowarzyszeń Katolickich kobiet i dziewcząt pracujących' w diecezji krakowskiej (The foundation of the Union of Associations for Workingwomen and Girls in the Cracowian diocese), *Kobieta Polska* 1, 1 (1916): 4-5.

⁷⁵⁹ "Z bratnich stowarzyszeń. Związek Kobiet Pracujących w Poznaniu" (From the brother associations. The Union of Working Women in Posen), *Kobieta Polska* 1, 3 (1916): 5; "Z bratnich stowarzyszeń," *Kobieta Polska* 1, 3 (1916): 4; "Zjazd ks. Patronów, wicepatronów i Pań Radnych" (The meeting of priest-patrons, vice-patrons and Ladies), *Kobieta Polska* 2, 1 (1917): 2-3. The Union published frequently articles about the developments in ZSKP in its journal, "Z bratnich stowarzyszeń," 5.

⁷⁶⁰ "Ze stowarzyszeń" (From the associations), *Kobieta Polska* 2, 7 (1917): 6; "Sprawozdanie Głównego Wydziału za rok 1917" (The report of the Board for 1917), *Kobieta Polska* 2, 6 (1917): 2-4; "Wiadomości związkowe. I zjazd delegowanych" (The Union's news. The first meeting of the delegates), *Kobieta Polska* 2, 6 (1917): 1-2. For details on ZSKKDP's structure see *Statut Związku Stowarzyszeń katolickich kobiet i dziewcząt pracujących w diecezji krakowskiej z siedzibą w Krakowie* (The Statute of The Union of Associations for Catholic Workingwomen and Girls in the Cracowian diocese) (Kraków: Głos Narodu, 1916).

Church invited women from the Cracowian PZNK to consult in shaping the Union. After the foundation of ZSKKDP, its Board, based in Cracow, consisted of eight members: four priests (one was the chairman) and four upper-class laywomen.⁷⁶¹ Besides the priest-patrons and workingwomen, there was also another type of Union's members: the women gathered in the so-called Ladies' Council consisted of upper, middle-class and intelligentsia females. In 1917 during the meeting of the priest-patrons and the Ladies' Council, it was agreed that the women from the privileged groups should be involved in the work of the labor organizations for female workers in a structured way and on a regular basis. Because, the participants of the meeting argued, it had been proven that the "ladies'" presence enhanced the development of the associations. For the "ladies" ZSKKDP proposed to organize preparatory courses during which they would receive the training needed for their work. Once prepared and willing to cooperate with a priest-patron, they were expected to manage the local associations by designing educational programs, proper entertainment, and introducing new social trends to the members.⁷⁶² It is quite likely that the Galician Catholic laywomen-activists' almost two-decades long experience of activism within various Catholic labor associations for lower-class women had decisive influence in including the privileged women into the work of ZSKKDP on the central level, as members of the Union's Board and the Ladies Council, and on the local level, involved in the work of the Union's branches giving a helping hand to the priest-patrons.

6.7.1.2 The Polish Kingdom

In Sections 3.3 and 3.4, I have pointed out that in comparison with the Grand Duchy of Posen and Galicia, the Church in the Polish Kingdom resisted the Vatican's new social teaching and as a result showed the least interest and engagement in social issues. However, a few exceptions of Catholic organized forms of moral and material assistance to the lower classes did exist here as well, specifically the Honorat Koźmiński's hidden convents and the activism of the sisters in concealment. In addition

⁷⁶¹ "Po zjeździe" (After the meeting), *Kobieta Polska* 7, (1917): 2; "Sprawozdanie ze zjazdu Delegowanych Związku katolickich stowarzyszeń kobiet i dziewcząt Pracujących" (The report on the meeting of the delegates of the Union of Associations for Catholic Workingwomen and Girls), *Kobieta Polska* 3, 7 (1918): 1-3.

⁷⁶² "Zjazd ks. Patronów, wicePatronów i Pań Radnych" (The meeting of the patrons, vice patrons and the Ladies' Council), *Kobieta Polska* 2, 1 (1917): 2-3; "W pracy nie ustawać" (Do not interrupt the work), *Kobieta Polska* 1, 8 (1916): 1. Regarding the presence and role of the upper and middle class women in those associations, see for example "Listy Czytelniczek" (The Readers' letters), *Kobieta Polska* 1, 4 (1916): 5; "Z naszych stowarzyszeń" (From our associations), *Kobieta Polska* 1, 4 (1916): 7.

to Honorat movement's initiatives, the priest Marcei Godlewski founded, among other things, *Stowarzyszenie Robotników Chrześcijańskich* (The Society of Christian Workers, hereafter SRCH), a centralized organization with numerous branches scattered throughout the Polish Kingdom that was open to Christian workers of all denominations and both sexes. The SRCH was a patronal organization, yet the members-workers enjoyed more independence from the clergy when compared with similar Catholic associations in the other two zones. The Catholic hierarchy in the Polish Kingdom did not accept what it perceived as Godlewski's social radicalism just as it did not support the Honorat hidden convents.⁷⁶³ It was mainly the milieu of the Honorat movement and of Godlewski's activism that prompted the foundation of the first Catholic labor organizations for workingwomen in the Polish Kingdom before the outbreak of WWI.

The first was *Stowarzyszenie Katolickie Służących* (Catholic Association of Female Servants, hereafter SKS), founded by Godlewski in 1906. The Board of the association consisted of 10 laywomen – from privileged groups and workingwomen – and one priest-curator.⁷⁶⁴ In 1910 SKS reported 1,373 enrolled women, in 1917 – 2,171.⁷⁶⁵ In its own journal, *Pracownica Polska* (Polish Workingwoman), since 1914 called *Pracownica Katolicka* (Catholic Workingwoman), SKS offered information about developments in the organization as well as about similar associations in other parts of the Polish Kingdom – Kielce, Łódź, Łomża, Płock, Sosnowiec and Dąbrowicza Górnicza.⁷⁶⁶

The second major professional organization for Catholic workingwomen in the Polish Kingdom was *Chrześcijański Związek Rękodzielniczek "Dźwignia"* (The

⁷⁶³ Bender, *Spoleczne inicjatywy*, 65-92; Lewalski, *Kościół rzymskokatolicki*, 151-152.

⁷⁶⁴ "Sprawozdanie Zarządu Stowarzyszenia Sług Katolickich w Warszawie za czas od d. 1 stycznia do 31 grudnia 1910 r." (Report of the Board of the Catholic Association of Female Servants in Warsaw, from January 1 until December 31, 1910), *Pracownica Polska* 5, 2 (1911), 14. The proportion of laywomen-activists and workingwomen in the Boards over the years remains unclear. In 1917 there were five laywomen and seven servants plus one curator. "Rok ubiegły w naszym Stowarzyszeniu i postanowienia na przyszłość" (The last year in our Association and resolutions for the future), *Pracownica Katolicka* 5, 5-8 (1918): 7.

⁷⁶⁵ "Sprawozdanie Zarządu Stowarzyszenia Sług Katolickich w Warszawie za czas od d. 1 stycznia do 31 grudnia 1910 r.," 15; "Rok ubiegły w naszym stowarzyszeniu i postanowienia przyszłość," 6.

⁷⁶⁶ "Z naszego Stowarzyszenia" (From our Association), *Pracownica Polska* 3, 2 (1909): 14; "Kieleckie Stowarzyszenie Służących Św. Zyty" (The Female Servants' Association of St Zyta in Kielce), *Pracownica Polska* 5, 3 (1911): 14-15; "Stowarzyszenie Sług Katolickich w Łodzi" (The Association of Female Servants in Łódź), *Pracownica Polska* 8, 5 (1913): 74-75; "Listy do czytelniczek" (Letters to the readers), *Pracownica Polska* 7, 4 (1912): 14; "Stowarzyszenie Służących" (The Association of Female Servants), *Pracownica Polska* 7, 4 (1912): 15; "Listy czytelniczek" (Readers' letters), *Pracownica Polska* 5, 2 (1910): 11-12.

Christian Union of the Female Artisans “Lever”, hereafter *Dźwignia*), founded in 1906 by the Sisters under the Invocation of Jesus’s Name, which was another Koźmiński’s hidden convent. According to Trela, a researcher of the Honorat hidden convents, the “radical” priest Marcei Godlewski was involved in designing *Dźwignia*’s statute. The organization’s main aim was to uplift artisan women’s religious and intellectual level, to protect their professional interests and to offer them material assistance. “*Dźwignia*” was based in Warsaw with branches in Częstochowa, Vilnius and St. Petersburg. The Varsovian organization reported 173 members in 1906 and 1,236 members in 1915. Before WWI, the sisters in concealment and upper-class women shared the management of the association.⁷⁶⁷

Based on the existing historical material, it is still unclear what role women from privileged social groups played in these particular organizations. However, taking into consideration the fact that there were only few confessionally motivated labor associations for workingwomen in the Polish Kingdom, my overall conclusion is they played little role in activating privileged laywomen into social activism and should not be considered as an effective mode of enhancing women’s visibility in the public sphere.

6.7.1.3 The Grand Duchy of Posen

Based on the papal bull *De salute animarum* of 1821, the Polish Church in the Grand Duchy of Posen became part of the German Roman Catholic Church. At the beginning of the *Kulturkampf* period, measures of the German state against the Polish and German Catholic Church were comparable. The experienced hardships united the Polish and German Catholic Churches against the newly emerged German state (1871) and its discourses, which perceived Catholicism as alien to German culture and favored Protestantism, which was supposedly entangled with German nationality (Section 3.1). As a result of frequent contacts with their German counterparts, the Polish Church in the Posen Duchy participated in one of the best-organized systems across the Catholic world of providing assistance to the working masses run by the clergy.⁷⁶⁸ One of the biggest achievements of the Polish Church in the Grand Duchy of Posen, in the eyes of

⁷⁶⁷ Trela, “Działalność społeczno-charytatywna Zgromadzenia Sióstr Imienia Jezus,” 84.

⁷⁶⁸ Rogala, “Źródła do dziejów,” 301-302, 306-307. For example, KZKP asked one of the leading Posen priest, Zimmermann, to comment on how social work should be organized properly. He answered with an article published in KZKP’s journal, see X. Dr. Zimmermann, “Na czym polega dobra i owocna praca społeczna?” (What makes the social work efficient?), *Przebudzenie* 1, 10 (1909): 1-4.

contemporaries including Polish clergy in the Austrian and Russian zones, was the development of Catholic labor associations for workingmen, and later on, for workingwomen.⁷⁶⁹

The first labor association for lower-class men in Posen was founded in 1893. In 1900, the Church established *Związek Katolickich Towarzystw Robotników Polskich* (The Union of Catholic Workers' Associations, hereafter ZKTRP), which aimed to centralize and coordinate the work already being carried out in 40 associations in the entire Gniezno-Posen archdiocese. In 1913 ZKTRP consisted of 276 organizations with 31,172 members.⁷⁷⁰

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the Posen Church started showing an interest in women's issues. In 1904, inspired by *Rerum Novarum*, bishop Stablewski ordered the establishment of labor organizations for lower-class women that would be managed by the clergy and stayed under strict Church supervision.⁷⁷¹ In 1906 the Posen Church launched the umbrella organization *Związek Stowarzyszeń Kobiet Pracujących* (Union of Workingwomen's Associations, hereafter ZSKP) to unite all existing labor organizations of female workers in the Gniezno-Posen archdiocese. In 1913 ZSKP comprised 29 associations with 5,357 members.⁷⁷² It was the largest labor umbrella organization for workingwomen in the Grand Duchy of Posen and served as an example for the clergy in the other two zones.⁷⁷³

6.7.2 The laywomen/Church tensions in the Grand Duchy of Posen and their consequences

According to the Prussian law of 1850, women were forbidden to participate in public gatherings of a political character. Polish women did however – although with great difficulties – exercise their right to organized apolitical activism by founding charities or self-help activities. More extensive development of women's organized activism occurred in the 1890s. In 1894 Polish women launched one of the best known organizations in the Grand Duchy of Posen, *Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Wzajemnego*

⁷⁶⁹ Rogala, "Źródła do dziejów," 307.

⁷⁷⁰ Ibid., 303-305.

⁷⁷¹ "Dlaczego zajmujemy się pracownicami?" (Why are we taking care about workingwomen?), *Pracownica* numer na okaz (The first issue) (1906): 2; "Historia Związku Kobiet Pracujących" (The history of The Union of Workingwomen's Associations), *Pracownica* 1 (1907): 75-76.

⁷⁷² Aniela Tułodziecka, "Praca społeczna kobiet w Poznaniu" (Women's social activism in Posen), in *Pamiętnik Zjazdu Kobiet Polskich odbytego w dniach 11 i 12 maja 1913*, 123.

⁷⁷³ Rogala, "Źródła do dziejów," 305. ZSKP published two journals: *Pracownica* (Female Worker, 1907-1908) and *Gazeta dla Kobiet* (Journal for Women, 1909-1918).

Pouczania się i Opieki nad Dziećmi "Warta" ("The Society of Friends with the purpose of mutual teaching and care for children 'Guard'," hereafter *Warta*). Officially *Warta* carried out various educational and charitable activities, but its unofficial purpose was to preserve, or "guard," Polishness among the youth. Other organizations for women included *Czytelnia dla Kobiet* (The Reading Hall for Women), *Promień* (Ray, founded in 1903), *Stowarzyszenie Personelu Żeńskiego w Handlu i Przemysle* (The Association of Female Workers in Commerce and Industry, hereafter SPŻHP, founded in 1903) and *Koła Ziemianek* (The Circles of Women-Landowners). SPŻHP prioritized its members' professional and economic interest, whereas in the other organizations women pursued educational and cultural activities. Until the liberalization of law with respect to women's public activism in 1908, the above-mentioned organizations ran numerous lawful as well as clandestine projects.⁷⁷⁴

Despite the liberalization of 1908, the Posen pious women did not organize themselves under the Catholic banner, that is, they did not establish a single organization for Polish Catholic laywomen in the region similar to PZNK in Cracow and Lviv, KZKP in Warsaw or *Der Katholische Frauenbund*. I wish to point out several factors that may explain this absence.

The first reason pertains to the Polish Church's strong position in the public sphere. In the absence of a sovereign state, Polish elites in the Grand Duchy of Posen adopted the idea of "self-modernization of the nation" as early as the 1830s. Polish priests, the largest part of the Duchy's intelligentsia, fulfilled a special role in this process. Lech Trzeciakowski, a historian of the Polish Church in this region, argues that in the Grand Duchy of Posen a new model of the "priest-activist" emerged, without counterpart in the other two zones. Priests-activists not only became involved in various social, educational, cultural, economic and political projects, which continued even during the worst period of the *Kulturkampf*, but they were often the power engines of these initiatives. As a result, the clergymen in this region were strongly embedded in secular life and often seen as symbols of resistance to the hostile foreign state.⁷⁷⁵

Whereas Polish laywomen-activists in the other two zones pointed at their obligation to

⁷⁷⁴ Jaworki, "Kilka refleksji nad dziejami Wielkopolanek," 24-25; also Natali Stegmann, "Wielkopolskie wzorce kobiecej aktywności społecznej w życiu codziennym na przełomie XIX i XX wieku" (The patterns of female everyday life social activism in the Grand Duchy of Posen at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth century), in *Kobieta i kultura życia codziennego*, 363-369.

⁷⁷⁵ Trzeciakowski, "Model księdza społecznika," 36-37, 42; also Kumor, *Historia Kościoła*, 388-395; Michalski, *Polskie duchowieństwo*, 21-34; Kowal, "Rola duchowieństwa w kształtowaniu więzi społecznych Wielkopolan," 43-51.

restate God's laws into temporal, increasingly secularized, matters while arguing for their presence in the public sphere (Section 6.2), the Posen women could not adapt this strategy since the Catholic faction, specifically the clergy, was very well-represented in the Grand Duchy's economic, educational, cultural, social and later political realms. Hence, there was little space left for establishing and carrying out independent women's activities under the Catholic banner since most of the "places of duties" in the public sphere had been already occupied by priests and nuns.

The second reason for the lack of Catholic laywomen's organization in the Grand Duchy of Posen specifically points to the Posen Church's vision of its role in mobilizing Catholic laywomen into the social realm and its attitude towards female laity's activism. While not opposing explicitly privileged women's entrance into the public realm, the Church hierarchy in the Grand Duchy of Posen seem to have had difficulties in proposing these women a scheme of social work that would match their activist ambition and by and large underestimated these women's drive to independent social activism. For example, while in the Galician ZSKKDP, as pointed out earlier, laywomen from privileged groups were embedded strongly in its management and in its affiliated associations, ZSKP offered laywomen-activists only a marginal role within its structure, that is, as organizers of *patronage* groups.⁷⁷⁶ Also, ZSKP employed a very wide definition of "a workingwoman" that practically encompassed all women in the paid work force, regardless of their social class and occupation. In this way, the clergy envisioned that existing organizations for lower-class women as well as any other women who earned their living (e.g. teachers) would become part of ZSKP, that is, became supervised by the Church. Moreover, as I describe below, the Church-led ZSKP

⁷⁷⁶ "Związki kobiet pracujących" (The Associations of Workingwomen), 51. According to ZSKP's authorities, *patronage* was "one of the most efficient and practical forms of social work within the organizations, because what was mentioned during the obligatory meetings maybe further discussed in detail within the patronage circles." In 1909 there were 32 *patronages* within ZSKP (educational, household training, choirs) comprising around 1,000 working class members. "Z ruchu kobiecego. Wydział społeczno-naukowy" (From the women's movement. The social department), *Gazeta dla Kobiet* 1 (1909): 19-20. In 1910 ZSKP had 5,371 members, see "Sprowozдание Związku Katolickich Stowarzyszeń Kobiet Pracujących" (The report of the Union of Working Women's Catholic Associations), *Gazeta dla Kobiet* 3 (1911): 17-18. However, at the same time, the management of ZSKP continuously repeated that the affiliated associations were obliged to "strive for independence," which meant that their boards should consist of only workingwomen and one priest-patron. The ultimate goal was to give the associations' full management to the hands of the members who were female workers. In case workingwomen did not have time to fulfill their duties, upper-, middle-class and intelligentsia women were replacing them, yet this was always considered as a temporary solution. "Drugi zjazd delegowanych Związku Katolickich Towarzystw Kobietych kobiet pracujących" (The second meeting of the delegates from the Union of the Associations of Working Women), *Dziennik Poznański* February 18, 1908; "Towarzystwo katolickiej służby żeńskiej w Poznaniu" (The Association of the Female Servants in Posen), *Kurier Poznański* 2, 201 (1907): 3.

expressed further ambition to coordinate all existing women`s social projects. This Church`s objective met with resistance among the Posen female activists – widely known for their strong Catholic beliefs – present in the public sphere in this region since the 1890s.

The tension between the two groups, the clergy and the women-activists in Posen, began with a discussion about the relation between *Stowarzyszenie Personelu Żeńskiego w Handlu i Przemysle* (SPŻHP) and *Towarzystwo Konfekcjonarek* (The Association of Women-Tailors, hereafter TK) – a member of the Posen umbrella organization ZSKP. In 1907 the growing pressure around the issue of possible cooperation between the two professional organizations prompted a member of SPŻHP`s Board, Zofia Tułodziecka, a known Posen activist, to write a letter that was published in several journals. She assured that “[o]n the very principle of Christian ethics, we should build our lives, our work, education and our social and economic issues.”⁷⁷⁷ However, Tułodziecka insisted there was no common agenda between SPŻHP and TK, because SPŻHP`s aim was “to advance the economic situation [of women] through professional development and education,”⁷⁷⁸ that is to bring about permanent change in women`s economic situation, whereas ZSKP`s aim, she suggested, was restricted to a limited improvement of workingwomen`s material condition. Specifically, SPŻHP strongly opposed that uneducated and under-aged girls had to work for very low wages, and instead advocated for developing obligatory schooling opportunities. In this way, I argue, Zofia Tułodziecka, representing a larger community of laywomen, questioned the very essence of the Catholic labor organizations` existence. In her reasoning, girls and very young women, who constituted a vast part of ZSKP`s membership, should not be in this organization, for they should not be part of the paid labor force in the first place. Their place was at school. Once vocationally prepared and mature, they might enter the labor market. Tułodziecka`s argument ran against Thomism as *the* social doctrine of the Church at the time, which was to maintain the social status quo, and questioned the social usefulness of methods employed by the Catholic laywomen in their work on behalf of the lower classes within ZSKP in the framework of *patronage*. The Posen activist`s critique revealed the existence the two competing proposals within the Catholic milieu about

⁷⁷⁷ Zofia Tułodziecka, “Odpowiedź p. Zofii Tułodzieckiej” (Zofia Tułodziecka`s response), *Pracownica* 1 (1907): 90.

⁷⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 90.

how to approach the problems of the growing working masses. Tułodziecka ended her article by stating: “We look to the future and want to work independently.”⁷⁷⁹ In its answer to her letter, ZSKP accused Tułodziecka of omitting the educational dimensions of the Catholic association’s work and acknowledging only its economic part.⁷⁸⁰ ZSKP also claimed that the attempt of opposing the presence of the clergy in the professional association or in any other social actions were against Rome’s teaching.⁷⁸¹ The conflict would reach its apogee a few months later.

In 1908 ZSKP’s management organized a “social course” addressed to all women from privileged groups willing to work in various associations.⁷⁸² The course was preceded by debates on the activism of privileged women in the Grand Duchy of Posen. Participants in this discussion agreed that the women in the region were in need of an organization to unify their various efforts. The question was whether to launch a new organization or to join the existing ZSKP, which in this case would become an organization with a broadly defined social agenda rather than merely focused on economic issues. The women also debated whether they should allow men on the board of the new organization or keep it a female-only collective body.⁷⁸³

The social course for elite women took place in December 1908 in Stanisławów and gathered around 200 women-activists from the entire region of the Grand Duchy of Posen. During the course, unexpectedly, Klara Paczkowska, another prominent Posen activist, representing the opinion of some members of the earlier mentioned four Posen women’s associations (*Warta, Czytelnia dla Kobiet, Promień and Stowarzyszenie Personelu Żeńskiego w Handlu i Przemysle*), announced that on November 24, 1908 a new organization had been founded: *Zjednoczenie Towarzystw Kobięcych* (The Union of Women’s Associations, hereafter *Zjednoczenie*). Paczkowska was encouraging delegates of various women’s associations to join *Zjednoczenie*. However, because *Zjednoczenie*’s project was a surprise for the participants of the social course in Stanisławów, it was agreed that further public consultations should be arranged before other women’s organizations would join the newly launched structure.⁷⁸⁴

⁷⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁸⁰ *Pracownica* 1 (1907): 90-91.

⁷⁸¹ “Kurs społeczny w Poznaniu” (The social course in Posen), *Pracownica* 1(1907): 98-99.

⁷⁸² “Kurs społeczny dla kobiet” (The social course for women), *Głos Wielkopolanek* 1, 28 (1908): 1.

⁷⁸³ Helena Rzepecka, “Przed kursem” (Before the social course), *Głos wielkopolanek* 1, 32 (1908): 3.

⁷⁸⁴ ”Pierwszy kurs społeczny dla kobiet” (The first social course for women), *Głos Wielkopolanek* 1, 36 (1908): 1-2. Also “Po kursie” (After the social course), *Głos Wielkopolanek* 1, 37 (1908): 1-2; “Przyszłe Zjednoczenie” (The future Union), *Głos Wielkopolanek* 1, 37 (1908): 2-3; “Kronika” (The Chronicle), *Głos Wielkopolanek* 1, 37 (1908): 6.

The draft of *Zjednoczenie*'s statute, published in several Posen journals, proposed that it would function as an umbrella organization to unify the associations that represented both the economic and educational interests of women. The clergy understood the fact that *Zjednoczenie* wanted to deal with women's economic issues as questioning its competence and/or the area of the Church's influence over workingwomen.⁷⁸⁵ The discussion over the statute revealed deep tensions between the Posen Church and laywomen activists as well as among laywomen activists themselves. In *Głos Wielkopolek* (The Voice of the Grand Duchy's Women), a journal for women with explicit Catholic sympathies, the four Posen associations that proposed *Zjednoczenie* were scrutinized in terms of their ideological background. The author of the article "Więcej światła" (More light) praised *Warta* for its national and Catholic character but doubted the other three organizations' intentions, which were labeled as "progressive," "democratic," and as representing the "platform of feminism."⁷⁸⁶ In the middle of the press debate on the future shape of *Zjednoczenie*, ZSKP announced that in addition to its economic goals, the organization decided to widen the areas of its activism by taking on broadly defined women's social and educational issues.⁷⁸⁷ Thus the Church explicitly expressed its intention to exercise control not only over women's labor associations, but also over those with a social and/or educational program. The extension of ZSKP's agenda further divided the women-activists into two factions: those willing to accept the Church's supervision (gathered around the periodical *Głos Wielkopolek*) and those who preferred preserving their independence (the supporters of *Zjednoczenie*).⁷⁸⁸

In February 1909, 91 Polish women from all over the German state, representing over 4,500 members of various Polish women's organizations, met in Posen to discuss the shape of *Zjednoczenie*.⁷⁸⁹ One of the proposed statute's most debated points was whether this new organization should accept only associations that were based on the Polish national and Catholic principles, which was rejected. At the

To this end, the designers of *Zjednoczenie* called a committee responsible for preparing the grounds for such discussion, a separate meeting of the women-activists, and announced the draft of the statute in various journals to give interested parties time to consider the proposed structure of the organization. "Projekt ustawy" (The project of the statute), *Głos Wielkopolek* 2, 3 (1909): 4.

⁷⁸⁵ "Projekt ustawy," 4.

⁷⁸⁶ "Więcej światła" (More light), *Głos Wielkopolek* 1, 38 (1908): 1-2.

⁷⁸⁷ "Z ruchu kobiecego. Wydział społeczno-naukowy," 19-20.

⁷⁸⁸ "Odezwa" (The appeal), *Głos Wielkopolek* 1, 38 (1908): 3; Klara Paczkowska, "Dwa czy trzy" (Two or three), *Głos Wielkopolek* 2, 1 (1909): 2-4; "Nie trzy, tylko dwa" (Not three but two), *Głos Wielkopolek* 2, 2 (1909): 1.

⁷⁸⁹ "Zjednoczenie" (The Union), *Gazeta dla Kobiet* 1 (1909): 27-28.

end of the February 1909 meeting, the women-activists launched *Zjednoczenie Stowarzyszeń Kobietych Oświatowych na Rzeszę Niemiecką w Poznaniu* (The Union of Women's Educational Associations on the Reich Territory in Posen, hereafter *Zjednoczenie*). According to its final statute, *Zjednoczenie* aimed to coordinate, represent and support the already existing women's organizations, which did not lose their independence when joining it.⁷⁹⁰ After the initial attempt to combine women's professional and educational interests, *Zjednoczenie* focused, at least officially, on broadly defined educational programs only. In this way, the two umbrella organizations, the Church led-ZSKP and *Zjednoczenie*, divided the areas of their social influence. ZSKP became the central Catholic labor organization representing economic interests of workingwomen in the region. In 1913 it reported 5,357 members affiliated through 29 associations. *Zjednoczenie* remained autonomous from Church control and privileged women's educational projects. In 1913, the latter consisted of 24 organizations with 2,721 members.⁷⁹¹

Based on my archival findings, the debate of 1909 over the foundation of *Zjednoczenie* was probably the only open conflict that involved the Church and laywomen-activists known for their strong religious, Roman Catholic beliefs. I argue that because of the strong position of the Posen Catholic Church in secular enterprises of various kinds, its attempt to impose strict supervision over the laywomen's projects and organizations as well as its social politics *vis-à-vis* the lower classes, the Catholic laywomen-activists in the Grand Duchy of Posen did not accept the Catholic banner for their activism. Fearing that they would have only limited control over their projects, they resigned from forming any confessionally motivated Polish Catholic women's organization and instead launched *Zjednoczenie*, which was entirely independent from the Church's influence and open to both confessionally and non-confessionally women's collective bodies.

The Posen women's refusal to work under the supervision of the Church was a radical and dangerous move. According to Jan Ziółek, a historian of the Polish Church in the nineteenth century, in the Russian and Prussian zones, there were strong attempts to assimilate Poles into the cultures of the foreign empires by oppressive measures (e.g. the ban on the usage of the Polish language, economic domination). In these regions,

⁷⁹⁰ "Zebranie delegatek towarzystw kobiecych" (The meeting of the delegates of women's organizations), *Kurier poznański* 4, 31 (1909): 2.

⁷⁹¹ Tułodziecka, "Praca społeczna kobiet w Poznaniu," 123.

the Polish Catholic Church and/or Catholicism were often believed to provide the only place where the development of a distinctive Polish culture was possible. In Ziółek's view, due to favorable political conditions in Galicia, which allowed for the development of a specifically Polish culture and religious freedom, the identification of Catholicism with Polishness did not take place there as it did happen in the Grand Duchy of Posen, and to lesser extent in the Polish Kingdom. For this reason in Galicia questioning or rejecting the position endorsed by the Catholic Church meant merely joining a faction not supported by the Church's establishment. In the Prussian zone, where anti-Catholic politics merged with anti-Polish measures, the "double discrimination" led to a strong interrelationship between Catholicism and Polishness, unparalleled in the other two zones. For this reason, Ziółek claims, in the Grand Duchy of Posen opposing the Polish Catholic Church could be interpreted as a departure from Polish national culture as well.⁷⁹²

However, *Zjednoczenie*'s members were not politically ostracized. Once *Zjednoczenie* was founded, its conflict with ZSKP was soothed and the organizations stayed on relatively good terms. In fact, the Church made several conciliatory gestures toward the new organization,⁷⁹³ and *Zjednoczenie* managed to establish relations with other Catholic women's associations of various kinds operating in the other two zones.⁷⁹⁴

⁷⁹² Ziółek, "Stosunki kościelno-państwowe," 41, 33.

⁷⁹³ The priest Adamski, a leading figure of ZSKP, wrote an article in which he assured Catholic readers that the fact that *Zjednoczenie* dropped "Catholic" and "national" from its statute did not imply that its members were irreligious women, see Stanisław Adamski, "Zjednoczenie Polskich Stowarzyszeń Oświatowych Kobiety" (The Union of the Women's Educational Associations), *Ruch chrześcijańsko-społeczny* 7 (1909): 275. The Posen Catholic press published information about *Zjednoczenie*. "Zjednoczenie" (The Union), *Gazeta dla kobiet* 1 (1909), 196. Moreover, *Gazeta dla Kobiet*, the ZSKP's journal, encouraged its readers to enroll in *Zjednoczenie*. However an employed woman, the editors advised, should enroll herself first in ZSKP, which was an economic association, and only then to *Zjednoczenie*, which focused on educational projects "Z ruchu kobiecego" (From the women's movement), *Gazeta dla kobiet* 1 (1909): 3.

⁷⁹⁴ For example, the editors of *Przebudzenie* sent their congratulations to *Zjednoczenie*, see "Kronika chwili bieżącej" (The chronicle of the current moment), *Przebudzenie* 1, 6 (1909): 12. However, ZSKP and *Zjednoczenie* remained sensitive to the division of their areas of influence, see for example *Rocznik Katolickiego Związku Kobiet Polskich w Warszawie 1910-1911*, 8-9.

6.8 Conclusions

At the beginning of the twentieth century various Catholic milieus on the Polish lands, be it establishment, local clergy or devout women themselves, pointed to the need for undertaking organized social activism within a framework of lay organizations. The purpose was to represent the “woman question” specifically from the Catholic perspective and to counterbalance the impact of irreligious women engaged on behalf of the Church’s rivals. To this end, three such organizations were founded on the lands of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth: *Polski Związek Niewiast Katolickich* in Cracow, *Polski Związek Niewiast Katolickich* in Lviv and *Katolicki Związek Kobiet Polskich* in Warsaw.

In a period when various socio-political factions fought for influence in the modern polity as well as for new supporters, Polish Catholic women’s organizations embraced a strategy of differentiating between the acceptable and unacceptable ways in which a Catholic woman could be involved in the public sphere. While pursuing their programs, the three organizations’ members shifted between their attachment to the Catholic religion, their affiliation to the Polish nationalism and their assumed obligations towards their own sex. The secular women’s movements and activism of various types in the three zones of Partitioned Poland and elsewhere as well as an emerging transnational network of religious female activists were of great importance for the development of Polish Catholic women’s organizations’ agendas, strategies and forms of activism. The Catholic women followed, discussed, and reacted to the programs of other women’s factions, participated in the meetings of Polish women of various worldviews and together with other organizations demanded civil and political rights for their own sex. If it was helpful for their projects, the Catholic activists made alliances with other associations, including non-confessional ones. The history of the Polish Catholic women’s presence on the international forum shows their readiness to form a common national front across Partitioned Poland’s borders even at the expense of the developing Catholic internationalism’s interest. These Catholic laywomen’s dilemma was another realization of the religious-secular conflict, that is, the efforts of the Catholic Church to unite its adherents across and despite national borders versus the efforts of nation-states to mobilize their citizens around the idea of national solidarity. In this particular case, Polish Catholic women’s unwillingness to prioritize the interest of the international Catholic women’s movement proved that their national solidarity

and conviction that the nation-state was the most desirable form of national political independence overwrote their religious affiliation.

Chapter 6 also explored the reasons for the absence of a Catholic laywomen's organization in the Grand Duchy of Posen. This issue I approached through investigating what informed the involvement of privileged Catholic laywomen in the process of launching labor organizations for female workers in the three zones of Partitioned Poland. The overall conclusion is that the Polish Catholic laywomen's engagement in the work on behalf of workingwomen within the framework of labor organizations depended primarily on the reception of the Vatican's new social teaching by the Polish Catholic Church in the respective zones, as well as its involvement in the social realm and ability to include the Polish Catholic female laity into its projects.

In the Polish Kingdom (the Russian zone), the Polish Catholic Church's hierarchy showed little understanding of the pressing socio-economic problems and consequently avoided involvement in or engaged minimal resources into social projects on behalf of the lower classes. As a result there were very few established Catholic labor organizations/projects for workingwomen and they played a marginal role in mobilizing Catholic upper-, middle-class and intelligentsia women to social activism and/or increasing their visibility in the public sphere.

In Galicia, the Polish Church not only recognized its social role, as stated in *Rerum Novarum*, but also acknowledged how crucial it was to cooperate with the Catholic laity, including large numbers of Catholic laywomen, as endorsed in *Graves de Communi re*. For this reason, at the turn of the century Galician laywomen of privileged social background undertook the task of working for and on behalf of lower-class women, serving as founders and managers of female labor associations in the region from the beginning of the twentieth century. Once the Galician Polish Church began to consolidate various projects for lower-class women in an umbrella organization, that is the ZSKKDP, the privileged laywomen-activists became a strong element of the new structure on the central and local levels.

The Church's approach in the Grand Duchy of Posen differed from its position in the two other zones. There was a great deal of understanding of the importance of the Church's involvement in social work, as formulated in *Rerum Novarum*, as well as knowledge of reliable patterns of social work for the lower classes that were appropriated from the German Catholic Church, to which the Polish Church was formally affiliated in this period. The combination of these factors informed the Polish

clergy's success with regard to its work for lower-class men and later women. At the same time, the Polish Church in this region succeeded modestly in recruiting women from privileged groups to its work on behalf of lower-class women. Its ambition of exercising control over confessionally motivated women's organizations of various types through one umbrella association, that is ZSKP, appears to have been a decisive factor in preventing Posen Catholic female activists of privileged backgrounds from launching and working in a Catholic lay organization of women.

Conclusions: On the Crossroads of New Catholicism and the “Woman Question”

This dissertation has introduced and interpreted a wide variety of social projects, initiatives, and associations launched by or available to Polish Catholic laywomen in the period between the 1880s and 1918 on the lands of Partitioned Poland: the Polish Kingdom (the Russian zone), the Grand Duchy of Posen (the Prussian zone) and Galicia (the Austrian zone). The current historiography on Polish women’s activism explores histories of Polish secular, socialist, liberal, and/or feminist movements but does not cover Catholic laywomen’s social engagement. The thesis’s major contributions are, firstly, retrieving part of Polish Catholic women’s history and depicting them as historical actors engaged in various contemporary processes; secondly, reopening of the discussion about the relation between Catholicism and the woman question; and thirdly, adding to the historical debates since the 1980s about the role of the religious and the secular in the modern period.

With respect to the first contribution, Polish Catholic women’s social activism in the long nineteenth century, I identify the following historical trajectory. In the 1880s, pious female laity began to participate in the social realm through their involvement in various educational initiatives for girls and women launched by charismatic, devout women. Simultaneously, Polish Catholic laywomen became engaged in social activism within the framework of Church-founded and supervised pious associations, which were equipped with a new Christian social message of moral and material assistance to the disadvantaged. Subsequently, since the early twentieth century, Catholic women unified in confessionally motivated nevertheless lay organizations that were supervised by female activists, but stayed in close touch with the Church hierarchy. These lay organizations had a twofold mission: to educate their members as religiously minded, skillful social workers capable of operating in the public realm in accordance with the Catholic doctrine and to permanently improve the conditions of the lower classes (especially women and children) through founding and running a variety of educational and social projects (schools, patronage, professional trainings, Railway missions, lectures, Workers` Gardens, nurseries, shelters, etc.). Through their membership in these collective bodies laywomen familiarized themselves with contemporary social problems and modes of social

engagement and gathered practical experience of social work, albeit with different degrees of success. Before 1918 all three forms of Polish Catholic females' social engagement mentioned above co-existed and some women were involved in more than one of the projects or organizations. Based on my thesis's findings I argue that between 1878 and 1918 a significant shift took place in the ways Polish Catholic laywomen engaged into the social realm. That is, I see a development from social projects that were inspired, sponsored, and launched by charismatic individuals (from the 1880s through the early twentieth century), to social action homogenized, coordinated, structured and more strictly supervised by the Church Catholic and performed by laywomen within various associations, from the beginning of the twentieth century until WWI. For this reason I perceive the 1880s until the early twentieth century as the most fruitful period for Polish Catholic laywomen's activism in terms of the originality of their projects, the variety of the initiatives and women's level of independence in running the endeavors.

My thesis argues that Polish Catholic laywomen's social projects chiefly appeared at the crossroads of two broader phenomena: the woman question and New Catholicism. The woman question was informed by concern over the lack of educational opportunities for Polish women and later over their general socio-economic and political underprivileged position when compared with men, as raised by various parties (secular, religious, feminist, liberal) across the lands of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. New Catholicism's emergence propelled the Church's new social teaching during the papacy of Leo XIII.

This thesis has portrayed Catholic laywomen as historical actors capable of formulating a coherent response to the Polish version of the woman question from a particular confessional perspective by making interventions into contemporary models and understandings of womanhood and designing a program of educational, social, civil and political reforms to alter women's situation. In all three zones Polish Catholic female laity's social activism on behalf of women endorsed initiatives that aimed at harmonious development of women's vocational, intellectual and spiritual capacities. A number of factors shaped the forms, developments and efficiency of the particular Catholic women's projects: local legal restrictions with respect to associational life, tensions between the various national groups inhabiting the lands of the former Polish Lithuanian Commonwealth, secular-religious conflicts, the uneven distribution of broadly defined modernizing processes across the three zones, local and

international presence of other, secular women`s social projects and/or the Polish Church`s involvement in social work and its ability to include Polish Catholic female laity into the Vatican`s new social politics. Having shown the accomplishments of Polish Catholic women`s social initiatives, I explain them by these women`s ability to appeal to and participate in various important contemporary processes and discourses such as the woman question, rising Polish nationalism, the emergence of a female paid labor force, the struggle between religious and secular factions, and/or the privileged groups` anxiety about possible social change. My tripartite historical perspective – on the woman question and New Catholicism in the context of the Polish Partitions – enabled me to uncover and analyze these women`s various responsibilities and loyalties to three intertwined, but at the same time competing projects: the improvement of women`s situation, the reestablishment of Catholicism in the public sphere and the desire for an independent nation state.

This thesis`s second main contribution is its reopening of the discussion about the impact of Catholicism and the Catholic Church on women`s emancipation in the nineteenth century. It has done so specifically by exploring how the Roman Catholic Church`s agenda could advance (Polish) Catholic laywomen`s projects to improve women`s social, civil, and economic situation and, conversely, how laywomen entangled their ambitions to boost their own sex`s interest with the Vatican`s agenda. The findings of the thesis show that in the process of re-establishing its influence, Catholicism reached out to women`s support, tapping into their unfolding ambition of acting outside of the home not only in the name of God, but also on behalf of their own sex. Thus I claim that, contrary to the still prevailing scholarly opinions about Catholicism`s unfavorable attitude towards women`s emancipation, there were instances in which the Church was willing/forced to give up some of its authority over female believers and to some extent could facilitate women`s emancipatory ambitions. This thesis does not argue to perceive Catholicism as “conducive for women`s emancipation too,” when compared with either Protestant or secular settings, since I do not find it fruitful to reproduce the Protestant-versus-Catholic comparative framework. Rather, based on my comparative analysis of the three zones, I have explored a variety of milieus and circumstances in which Catholicism enhanced or hindered women`s claims. Therefore I perceived Catholicism as not divorced from modern processes and its rebirth not as an aberration from “accurate” modern developments, but as one out several factions that fought for recognition, support, and

influence in the private and public spheres. Correspondingly, in contrast to still popular scholarly conceptualizations, the forms and scope of Polish Catholic women's social activism retrieved here enabled me to argue for these women's active and determined involvement in and contribution to a wide range of contemporary social phenomena: education, children's upbringing, conducting collective and personal religiosity, ways of using individual resources for public well-being, making radical interventions in the social construction of the female gender, and reformulating patterns of relations between the two sexes in the public and private spheres. Also, my research demonstrated that the Polish Catholic laywomen's projects emerged for similar reasons (proposals of educational reforms for girls and women and a redefinition of contemporary understandings of womanhood) and in precisely the same period (since the 1880s) as other Polish women's groups' initiatives. Hence, at least in the Polish context, Catholic laywomen did not take on social activism later than other (secular) women's factions nor did their involvement embrace any particularly "divergent" forms.

Thirdly, the thesis contributes to the ongoing discussions about the place of religion in modernity. Contrary to the views about religion as an irrelevant and/or passive part of the modern societal order, this thesis has highlighted instances when religious authorities, doctrines, and/or believers' patterns of behavior changed or were reformulated so as to respond to and shape contemporary social processes. Instead of portraying religious and secular worldviews as clashing, this thesis rather stressed how religion engaged in discussion with secular discourses and practices and, as a consequence, reinvented, readjusted, and strengthened itself in the course of the "culture wars" (Clark and Kaiser). In the context of growing anti-religious resistance, religion, more specifically Polish Catholicism, suggested innovative forms of moral and material assistance provided to the disadvantaged and thus mingled with seemingly secular processes. Hence, with its empirical findings and interpretations, the thesis adds to the discussions about the means religion employed to reestablish itself in the long nineteenth century that led to its spectacular reemergence as a global phenomenon, no less influential than the nation-state, liberalism, and socialism (Bayly).

Taking Catholic women as a specific example of this broader phenomenon, I pointed out how in reaction to secular factions' criticism of the incompatibility of confessionally motivated modes of social work with the challenges of the modern

period, pious females reflected critically on the agenda and forms of their social engagement. Moreover, the thesis showed that in order to enhance their specific aims Polish pious women were ready to form alliances with secular women's activists to bring about changes in women's situation. The Polish Catholic women's readiness to cooperate with non-Catholic women, including feminists, I explained by the shared privileged social background of both factions' members, their shared difficulties in mobilizing supporters to their ranks, and their strong stance with respect to the fight for women's rights. In addition, both groups, pious and secular activists, formulated similar observations regarding women's economic, social, and political condition and proposed similar reforms to improve it.

Polish laywomen's efforts of "modernizing" female piety were crucial both in challenging contemporary discourses about women's activism's incompatibility with the secular public sphere because of women's assumed connection to religious (irrational) worldviews *and* in proving that religion in general was not at odds with modern developments. Women's modernized religiosity was to be displayed through a more intellectual and informed attitude towards religion and devotional practices and be acted out through a form of well thought-out social activism that was utilitarian in its spirit. Women's altered religiosity was believed to correspond with the socio-economic changes occurring on the Polish lands since the second half of the nineteenth century and to prove that a female pious individual was capable of acting according to the rules of the, allegedly rational, public sphere - while preserving her faith, assumed as constitutive for the female gender.

Although I did stress Catholic women as historical actors invested in adjusting themselves to contemporary benchmarks of "modernity," at the same time the thesis showed how the Catholic laywomen altered the secular conceptualization of the public sphere by insisting on entering and being recognized as pious activists in the realm of social engagement. I perceive their efforts to modernize female piety and the subsequent public appreciation of Polish laywomen activists as socially active pious individuals in control over the projects they initiated as signs of these women's ability to successfully challenge both the masculine secular character of the public sphere and the religious authorities' attempt to exercise control over their ambition to participate in and shape processes outside of the domicile.

ANNEX: List of All Catholic Laywomen`s Projects and Organizations Discussed in the Thesis

On the Polish Lands:

A) Alphabetically (the years listed indicate the founding year):

Bractwa Matek Chrześcijańskich (The Confraternities of Christian Mothers, the first one in Posen in 1879)

Chrześcijański Związek Rękodzielniczek “Dźwignia” (The Christian Union of Female Artisans “Lever”, Warsaw 1906)

Damy Dobroczynności św. Wincentego a Paulo (The Ladies of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, the first one in Posen in 1853)

Gościna (Inn, Cracow 1913)

Internat dla Kandydatek Seminarium Nauczycielskiego Żeńskiego we Lwowie (The Lvivian Seminarium`s Dormitory for Future Female Teachers, 1892)

Katolicki Związek Kobiet Polskich (Catholic Association of Polish Women, Warsaw 1907)

Opieka nad Robotnicami (The Care of Female Workers, Cracow 1897)

Polski Związek Niewiast Katolickich in Cracow (Polish Association of Catholic Women in Cracow, 1900)

Polski Związek Niewiast Katolickich in Lviv (Polish Association of Catholic Women in Lviv, 1906)

Rada Wyższa Pań Miłosierdzia Towarzystwa św. Wincentego a Paulo na archidiecezję Gnieźnieńsko-Poznańską (Higher Council of the Ladies of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul in the Gniezno-Posen archdiocese, 1907)

Sodalicje Dzieci Marii (Sodalities of Mary`s Children, the first one in Posen in the 1870s)

Stowarzyszenie Katolickie Służących (Catholic Association of Female Servants, Warsaw 1906)

Stowarzyszenie Sług Katolickich pod wezwaniem Św. Zyty w Krakowie (Association of Catholic Female Servants under the Invocation of St. Zyta in Cracow, 1899)

Szkoła Gospodarcza w Chyliczkach (Agricultural School for Women in Chyliczki, 1891)

Szkoła na Pięknej (The School on Piękna street, Warsaw 1883)

Towarzystwo Opieki Obywatelskiej nad Internatem dla Kandydatek Seminarium Nauczycielskiego Żeńskiego we Lwowie (Society for Civic Protection of the Dormitory of the Lvivian Seminarium for Future Female Teachers, 1892)

Towarzystwo Oszczędności Kobiet w Lwowie (The Women's Savings Society in Lviv, 1887)

Wyższe Kursy Pedagogiczno-Naukowe (Higher Pedagogical-Scientific Courses, Warsaw 1907)

Zakłady Kórnickie (The Kórnicki Institute, 1882)

Zjednoczone Koło Ziemianek (United Circle of Women-Landowners, the Polish Kingdom 1895, legalized in 1906)

Zjednoczenie Polskich Chrześcijańskich Towarzystw Kobietych (Union of Polish Christian Women's Associations, Lviv 1912)

Zjednoczenie Stowarzyszeń Kobietych Oświatowych na Rzeszę Niemiecką w Poznaniu (Union of Women's Educational Associations on the Reich Territory in Posen, 1909)

Związek Katolickich Robotnic w Krakowie (Union of Catholic Female Workers in Cracow, 1912)

Związek Koleżeńki Byłych Seminarzystek i Nauczycielek Seminarium Nauczycielskiego we Lwowie (Union of Former Students and Teachers from the Lvivian Seminarium for Future Female Teachers, 1891)

Związek Stowarzyszeń Katolickich Kobiet i Dziewcząt Pracujących diecezji krakowskiej (Union of Associations for Catholic Workingwomen and Girls in the Cracowian diocese, 1916)

Związek Stowarzyszeń Kobiet Pracujących (Union of Workingwomen's Associations, Posen 1906)

B) Chronologically:

1853 – Damy Dobroczynności św. Vincentego a Paulo (The Ladies of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul)

the 1870s – Sodalitje Dzieci Marii (Sodalities of Mary's Children)

1879 – Bractwa Matek Chrześcijańskich (The Confraternities of Christian Mothers)

1882 – Zakłady Kórnickie (The Kórnicki Institute)

- 1883 – Szkoła na Pięknej (The School on Piękna street)
- 1887 – Towarzystwo Oszczędności Kobiet w Lwowie (The Women’s Savings Society in Lviv)
- 1891 – Szkoła Gospodarcza w Chyliczkach (Agricultural School for Women in Chyliczki)
- 1891 – Związek Koleżeński Byłych Seminarzystek i Nauczycielek Seminarium Nauczycielskiego we Lwowie (Union of Former Students and Teachers from the Lvivian Seminarium for Future Female Teachers)
- 1892 – Internat dla Kandydatek Seminarium Nauczycielskiego Żeńskiego we Lwowie (The Lvivian Seminarium’s Dormitory for Future Female Teachers)
- 1895, legalized in 1906 – Zjednoczone Koło Ziemianek (United Circle of Women-Landowners)
- 1897 – Opieka nad Robotnicami (The Care of Female Workers)
- 1899 – Stowarzyszenie Sług Katolickich pod wezwaniem Św. Zyty w Krakowie (Association of Catholic Female Servants under the Invocation of St. Zyta in Cracow)
- 1900 – Polski Związek Niewiast Katolickich in Cracow (Polish Association of Catholic Women in Cracow)
- 1902 – Związek Nauczycielek (Union of Women Teachers).
- 1906 – Chrześcijański Związek Rękodzielniczek “Dźwignia” (The Christian Union of Female Artisans “Lever”)
- 1906 – Polski Związek Niewiast Katolickich in Lviv (Polish Association of Catholic Women in Lviv)
- 1907 – Katolicki Związek Kobiet Polskich (Catholic Association of Polish Women)
- 1907 – Rada Wyższa Pań Miłosierdzia Towarzystwa św. Wincentego a Paulo na archidiecezję Gnieźnieńsko-Poznańską (Higher Council of the Ladies of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul in the Gniezno-Posen archdiocese)
- 1909 – Zjednoczenie Stowarzyszeń Kobietych Oświatowych na Rzeszę Niemiecką w Poznaniu (Union of Women’s Educational Associations on the Reich Territory in Posen)
- 1912 – Związek Katolickich Robotnic w Krakowie (Union of Catholic Female Workers in Cracow, 1912)

1912 – Zjednoczenie Polskich Chrześcijańskich Towarzystw Kobietych (Union of Polish Christian Women`s Associations)

1913 – Gościna (Inn)

1916 – Związek Stowarzyszeń Katolickich Kobiet i Dziewcząt Pracujących diecezji krakowskiej (Union of Associations for Catholic Workingwomen and Girls in the Cracowian diocese)

Abroad:

A) Alphabetically:

Catholic Women`s Association (Australia, 1913)

Catholic Women`s League (England,1906)

Catholic Women`s League of Canada (1912)

Catholic Women`s Social Guild (Australia, 1916)

Catholic Women`s Union, USA (1916)

Fédération Internationale des Ligues Catholiques Féminines (International Federation of Catholic Women`s League, 1910)

Katholische Frauenbund, Germany (Catholic Women`s League, 1903)

Katholischer Reich Frauenorganisation (The Organization of Catholic Women in the [Habsburg] Empire, 1907)

Katolikus Női Tanács (Catholic Women`s Council, Hungary, 1911)

L'Association Catholiques des Femmes Lorraines (The Catholic Association of Women in Lorraine, 1907)

Lietuviu Katalikiu Moteru Draugija (Lithuanian Catholic Women`s Organization, 1908)

Liga da Acção Social Christà (League of Christian Social Action, Portugal, 1902)

Liga de Señoras para la Acción Católica (League of the Ladies for Catholic Action, Spain, 1909)

Ligas de Damas Catolicas del Uruguay (League of the Catholic Ladies of Uruguay, 1906)

Ligue des Femmes Chrétiennes de Bruxelles (League of Christian Women in Brussels, 1893)

Ligue Patriotique des Françaises (Patriotic League of Frenchwomen, 1902)

Országos Katolikus Nővédő Egyesület (National Catholic League for the Protection of Women, Hungary, 1906)

Union des Dames Espagnoles del Sagrado Corazon de Jesus (Union of Spanish Women of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, 1908)

B) Chronologically:

1893 – Ligue des Femmes Chrétiennes de Bruxelles (League of Christian Women in Brussels)

1902 – Liga da Acção Social Christã (League of Christian Social Action), Portugal

1902 – Ligue Patriotique des Françaises (Patriotic League of Frenchwomen)

1903 – Katholische Frauenbund (Catholic Women's League), Germany

1906 – Catholic Women's League, England

1906 – Ligas de Damas Catolicas del Uruguay (League of the Catholic Ladies of Uruguay)

1906 – Országos Katolikus Nővédő Egyesület (National Catholic League for the Protection of Women), Hungary

1907 – Katholischer Reich Frauenorganisation (The Organization of Catholic Women in the [Habsburg] Empire)

1907 - l'Association Catholiques des Femmes Lorraines (The Catholic Association of Women in Lorraine)

1908 – Lietuviu Katalikiu Moteru Draugija (Lithuanian Catholic Women's Organization)

1908 – Union des Dames Espagnoles del Sagrado Corazon de Jesus (Union of Spanish Women of the Sacred Heart of Jesus)

1909 – Liga de Señoras para la Acción Católica (League of the Ladies for Catholic Action), Spain

1910 – Fédération Internationale des Ligues Catholiques Féminines (International Federation of Catholic Women's League)

1911 – Katolikus Női Tanács (Catholic Women's Council), Hungary

1912 – Catholic Women's League of Canada

1913 – Catholic Women's Association, Australia

1916 – Catholic Women’s Social Guild, Australia

1916 – Catholic Women’s Union, USA

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Pracownica Katolicka (Catholic Workingwoman)

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