THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND THE CIVIL SOCIETY IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC[1]

Jan Váně
University of West Bohemia
vanejan@kss.zcu.edu[2]

Abstract:
The subject of this study are the representatives of the Czech Catholic Church and their ideas about the relationship of the Catholic Church to civil society, based on qualitative data gathered between 2009 and 2011. The data was gathered in frame of a research trying to define what strategies the Church selects in order to set issues in the public space. This text outlines both the strategies mentioned above and potential weak points and ambiguities implicitly hidden in the expectations of the representatives of the Church concerning the possible cooperation between the Church and the civil society.
Key words: civil society, Czech Catholic Church, agenda setting

Introduction

Intuitive expectations in Western societies are, most often, based on the assumption that the civil society is an integral part of liberal democratic societies and as such, it is an empirically provable reality.[3] I, too, have based my research on this assumption, and I have done it despite the fact that it is impossible to carry out empiric and analytical research aiming at the phenomenon of civil society unless this phenomenon is clearly and normatively anchored. The problem, however, is that political science and sociology have come up with a great number of normative ideas about what a civil society is (Alexander 1998; Cohen and Arato 1992; Elliot 2003; Edwards 2011).

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[2] Please send all mail to: Jan Váně, Department of Sociology, Faculty of Philosophy and Arts, University of West Bohemia, Avalon, Poděbradova 1, 306 14 Plzen, Czech Republic, e-mail:vanejan@kss.zcu.cz.
[3] In the early phase of capitalism, the private and public sphere divided and a liberal border between them was established. At the same time, the civil society identified itself as a system of free citizens controlling the political power. An opinion gradually developed that the existence of the civil society is conditioned by political, economic and social order if the liberal capitalism, carried on by liberal democracies (Alexander 1998, 3-4).

My view of the civil society is such an arrangement of the society where the market and the civil society are two separated spheres governed by different logic and inner mechanisms (Alexander 1998, 7). The civil society is defined by the amount of solidarity in the society, which is reflected in institutions such as public, public opinion, etc. The objective of the present paper being to outline the section of the empirical study that studied how the Czech Catholic Church feels about agenda setting in the public space and how it relates to the civil society, I have chosen to base my work on those conceptions of civil society that are comprised in empiric and analytical approaches. These conceptualize civil society as an arrangement featuring these characteristics: (a) existence of a state respecting the rule of law and providing for all functions necessary to preserve an integrated and free society, (b) will to maintain an open and pluralistic society, (c) private space of each member of the society is protected and citizens understand they are responsible for their own life, (d) no one or more particular groups of individuals are excluded for economic, political, social or other reasons, (e) public administration is decentralized to a certain extent, (f) a certain amount of civil responsibility, sense of community and solidarity helps to create a civil identity that helps to integrate the society around basic values and objectives, (g) free media and free access to information (Strnadová 2008, 107-117). All of the above should make it possible to make the public space open for setting of issues.

Actors of the civil society enter the public space. Political and social scientists see Churches as one of these actors (unlike, for example, trade unions, associations, interest groups or groups relating to a certain ideology) (Šamalík 1995, 159-197). The ability to successfully set an issue in the public space decides what influence the particular group has on the public opinion. This, in turn, can be seen (if we want to make things simple) as the most characteristic feature of the civil society. The chance to influence the public opinion and the media (as its constituent) represent the point of high interest for a lot of subjects, including the Church.

It is true that, as a result of secularization processes in Western and Central Europe, the Church might be seen as an "association" active in the civil society, no matter how long its tradition has been.[4] The above does not,

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[4] Pollack and Müller used data from PCE – Political Culture in Central and Eastern Europe to analyze the position of religion in eleven post-communist countries. They then divided post-communist countries into three rather different groups: (a) countries where traditional religious groups have a strong position and exercise quite a strong influence, (b) countries

however, mean that the Church would want to resign to its effort to gain a portion of influence over the public opinion.

I shall now try to define several basic questions I concentrated on when I studied the relationship between the Catholic Church and public-issues setting. In order to understand how the Church sets issues onto the public agenda and how it influences the public opinion, it is necessary to give answers to the following questions. The agenda-setting concept[5] asks how do actors (i.e. Catholic Church in this case) capture social problems to which they could (or should) draw the attention of the public. We will also examine whether the media take into consideration public issues that are considered as a social problem by the Church. Before that, however, we have to ask the following questions. Has the Church tried to identify potential social problems that, for some reason, the public "refuses" to see? And if it has, what tools has it been using to draw the attention of the public (and its members) to these problems? And, last, but not least, how does these activities reflect the relationship between the Church and the civil society?

The reason why I consider it as important to think about the role the Church plays in the very secular environment of the Czech Republic in relation to the civil society is this: The very tension between the profane and the sacred power helped both institutions (State and Church) to create an "uncontrolled" space within which citizens of nascent modern societies act. The above taken into consideration, it is interesting to explore how an institution that has, for a long time, sought to control them, sees the public space and civil society.

where traditional religious groups have a stable position and exercise a significant influence, (c) countries where traditional religious groups have a weak position and exercise little influence (Pollack and Müller 2006: 22–36) - a low level of declarative religiosity and a low rate of church attendance – e.g. the Czech Republic.

[5] Agenda setting theory describes how society reaches consensus on which issues are important enough to be addressed. James Dearing and Everret Rogers define the *agenda* of a system or subsystem generally as "a set of issues that are communicated in a hierarchy of importance at a point of time" (Dearing and Rogers 1996, 2). They also distinguish between policy, public and media agenda and assume a dense network of relationships among them. The media agenda is defined as set of issues which receives important media coverage (ibid, 5–6). John Kingdon focuses on policy process and specifies the policy agenda as a list of issues recognized as important by government (Kingdon 1995, 3). Roger Cobb and Mark Ross (1997, 6) describe the public agenda as a "set of concerns that the public has requiring governmental action". For further information about this problem, see also Thomas A. Birkland (1997) or František Kalvas (2009).

Another reason why concentrate on the Czech Republic and the role the Church plays within its public space is that one of the characteristic features of the Czech Republic, when talking about religious life, is a low rate of declared religiosity and a very low trust in the Church as institution, which I will support with facts further in the text. Until 2013, the relationship between the Church and the prevailingly secular society had been influenced by the Church property restitutions case, which had significantly born upon the way the Church representatives were perceiving the relationship of the Church to the civil society and vice versa. In 2013, the State finally brought up a decision according to which the property confiscated from the Church during the communist regime will be returned. This step, however, provoked considerable tensions: the value of returned assets, both tangible and intangible, is enormous. And since the Church ranges among the less trustworthy institutions in the Czech Republic, the need to explore its ideas about the civil society is more pressing than in the countries where the Church traditionally holds a strong position and where a positive attitude of the public can be anticipated when it comes to its activities. In the Czech Republic, on the contrary, it can be assumed that both the political and economic positions of the Church will be strengthened as a result of the property restitutions, and that is expected to be regarded with major suspicion by the public.

The Catholic Church and its Position in the Czech Republic
The Church has quite an interesting status in the Czech Republic, which stems from a number of factors. It must be said that the rate of religiosity in the Czech Republic is substantially lower than in the rest of Europe. Previous research has shown that belonging or not to a Church represents, for Czechs, a differentiating principle governing the individual value frameworks on which their perception of the world, life, society or normative systems is based (Pickel and Sammet 2012).

Table 1. Population and Housing 2001, 2011.

	Czech Republic 2001	Czech Republic 2011
Religious affiliation (claims to belong to a Church or a religious group) [1]	32 %	14 % [2]
Roman Catholic	83 %	74 %
No religion	59 %	34 %
No answer	9 %	45 %
N (total population)	10,230,060	10,562,214

Source: Czech Republic Censuses 2001, 2011
[1] In 2001, the number of religious people include even people who claimed not to belong
to a concrete Church.
[2] In 2011, 14% of the population claimed to belong to a Church or to a religious group,
while 7% of the population said they were religious but did not belong to
a Church or to a religious group. This means that, if methodology had not change, 21% would be the
figure in this category in 2011.

According to the data gathered in the 2011 Census, only 21% of the total of the population see themselves as religious people. Out of these 21%, however, only 14% declared themselves as followers of a Church or another religious organization. Most (74%) of the 14% of religious people who claimed to be followers of a particular religious organization, are Roman-Catholics. These 74% represent approximately 10% of the total of the population. 34% of respondents, on the contrary, stated that they have no faith. These 34% represent, in absolute numbers, 3.612.804 persons out of the total of 10.562.214. Yet the largest part of respondents (45% of the population, 4.774.323 persons) left the question about faith unanswered. The above thus shows that Roman-Catholics represent the largest religious minority in the Czech Republic. This, on the one hand, makes the Church a powerful institution, formally disposing of 10% of the population on which it can rely in political and cultural disputes with the non-religious majority in the society. On the other hand, various research projects have shown

that in the eyes of the broad public, the Church hardly exercises an influence that would match its cultural and historical significance.

When we look at the issue of trust in the Church from a long-term perspective, we see that the Czech society has always been among the countries with the lowest rates[6] and that since the middle of the 1990s, this rate has remained stable: one third on average. But when we look at different regions, significant differences can be seen.[7] In Moravian-Silesian region and in the South Moravian region, for example, the rate of the trust in Church is very high. In general, however, when it comes to questions (and answers) concerning the sense of being and various moral dilemmas, the Church is seen as a less significant actor. And the downward trend continues: society expects less and less from the Church, the only field where it is still expected to play an important (service) role is the sphere of social services (Prudký 2005, 55-56).

The Church sees this on-going distrust the majority society expresses towards it as an effect of systematic communist propaganda and of a negative image reflected by the media. According to the Church's own perspective, it is seen as an institution trying to push through its ideology and its own goals without taking into consideration the public well-being.

The Church is persuaded that this negative picture has been enhanced by the growing influence of information technologies that are empowering the media to such an extent that they claim to have the right to fulfill the basic human needs, including religious ones: the Church sees this as an unacceptable trend, eroding the influence of traditional institutions such as the family, education or the Church itself.

Aspiring to invert the way it is seen by the public opinion in the Czech Republic, the Church has been explicitly encouraging its members to actively revolt against "hostile media and majority society." This active revolt, however, is rather perceived as an effort to create a space encouraging the plurality of thinking. When it comes to a strategy how to do this, the Church believes in forming of alliances with kindred spirits (people and institutions): that is why it has strived to draw the public's attention to civil society and to be active in the public space, also emphasizing the need to work for the community in its broadest possible

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[6] C. f. these studies: Standard & Special Eurobarometr. [http://zacat.gesis.org]
[7] The Czech Republic is divided into 14 regions.

sense[8] and turning its attention away from the State as a key institution of the civil society.

Methodology

I have based this paper on a qualitative empirical study that was carried out from January 2009 to October 2011, in which I interviewed eleven respondents. Five of them were representatives of the Czech Catholic Church:[9] three bishops and two persons occupying middle or lower positions in the Church hierarchy.[10] As Kingdon, I identified key persons and I also used the "snowball technique: respondents were asked to identify others [we] should see" (ibid.). Our aim was similar to that of Kingdon, too: "to reach important, influential people (…) who could serve as knowledgeable informants" (Kingdon 1995, 233). I covered all possible combinations of two dichotomies: (a) figures who occupy the highest vs. middle/lower positions in the Church hierarchy, (b) figures often addressed vs. those disregarded by the media. The first dichotomy was important for me because I wanted to hear the reflection of the agenda-setting process by persons from different strata of the Church hierarchy. I employed the second dichotomy in line with Herbert Blumer (1971, 298-306) because I recognize the crucial role the media play in the arena of problem recognition and issue legitimation.

Each respondent was asked 6 questions, the question No. 6 being the key one for the present study.
Questions for representatives of the Czech Catholic Church:
  (1) Can you see a social problem that the Church could (should) bring to public attention?
  (2) Do you think the Church has been trying to identify potential social problems that have been, until now, neglected by the public? If yes, what is the way it has been doing so?
  (3) Has the Church been trying to bring public attention to these problems? If yes, what form, strategies and means has it been choosing?

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[8] Peace and Good Pastoral Lettre. A Christian Greeting to the Beginning 21st Century. 2000. Prague: Czech   Bishops   Conference   [http://tisk.cirkev.cz/res/data/004/000526.pdf?seek=1151404189].
[9] My colleague František Kalvas cooperated on a part of the study.
[10] For more details about the respondents, see Appendix.

(4) Has the Church been trying to draw the attention of religious people to these problems? If yes, what form, strategies and means has it been choosing to do so?

(5) Emancipation of the secular sphere from the control of religious institutions and norms represents one of the key features of modern times. As a result of it, the Church no longer represents an institution endowed with a strong coercive potential. It has rather been turning into a community of religious people joining each other of their own free will. What conclusion do you draw from this with respect to activities carried out by the Catholic Church in the Czech Republic?

(6) What do you think about activities the Church exercises within the civil society?

I used thematic analysis to examine the responses collected in the interviews with our eight informants (Silverman 2011). I coded the interview transcripts according to defined themes. Then I tried to identify any connections between the themes that could be compared, sorted, typologized and standardized. Based on this analysis and grounded in my data, I developed an outline of agenda-setting strategies.

Analysis
The interviews with the respondents have unveiled a number of problems that Church has been putting emphasis on that represent its long term agenda and that might be perceived as problems the Church would like to set onto the public agenda. They are: *family*, *old age*, *sickness*, *pastoral activities aimed at young people*. I shall now give a concise background to them.

The Church sees the *family* as the key issue, arguing that the family has suffered a radical change, ranging from substantial modifications of gender roles in the society, to a significant shift of how society looks at the significance and practice of pre-marital cohabitation, parenthood, reproduction (the Church refuses abortion and assisted reproduction) and sexuality within the family, or education. Economic pressures and the media are then seen by the Church as the main drivers disintegrating the (Christian) conception of the family. This phenomenon is, in the Church's view, linked to the issue of old age and sickness. The third big problem, as the Church puts it, is the fact that pastoral activities aimed at young people are insufficient or unsuccessful. These three essential themes can be

detected through the analysis of key documents. When we compare this finding with what we have learned through the interviews with the representatives of the Church, we find out that these themes are addressed in their answers, too. On the basis of the answers given by informants 1-5, however, additional public issues can be defined, that can be summarized as the *marginalized groups* category. Marginalized groups are treated inadequately and suffer and this suffering may be classified into several dimensions:

(a) physical (children, prostitutes, exploited foreign workers, political prisoners)

(b) psychological (children, elderly people, victims of disinformation campaigns)

(c) economic (prostitutes, exploited foreign workers)

(d) social (people suffering from social exclusion, elderly people)

(e) symbolic (deceased persons, humanity) (Kalvas and Váně 2011, 143-144; Váně 2012, 67-68).

Interviews with the Church representatives have proved what we have found in the Church documents: the Church did formulate issues the solving of which it has been trying to push through and to which it has been trying to bring the public's attention. This also means that the Church has formulated its long-term agenda. The problem lies elsewhere: it has become evident that it has not been able to create tools enabling it to systematically update its agenda and regularly enrich it with new public issues. And far from reality is the Church's wish to push the issues onto the public space and influence so the character of the civil society in the Czech Republic. It can also be said that the current public issues are formulated by people who usually stand outside the official structures of the Church. This means that the key role in the agenda-setting process is played by individuals and driven by their personal effort to formulate current problems: the Church lacks an institutionalized mechanism that would help it identify current public issues.

In other words, it is clear that the Church has elaborated an entire set of methods enabling it to target themes reflecting social problems but that it is not able to introduce issues from its own agenda into (local) public environment. And, in cases it did develop a strategy to introduce issues to the general public/local media, it rarely used them. Despite this fact, I was able to define three applicable/applied strategies the Church uses and

described them as: (a) *media* strategy, (b) *vertical* strategy, (c) *horizontal* strategy (Váně and Kalvas 2011, 30-49; Váně 2012, 69-77).

I shall now briefly define the strategies mentioned above. The principle of *media* strategy is that the issue is firstly set onto the media agenda from which it is supposed to be transferred to public agenda. All informants, however, feel rather skeptical about this strategy, seeing it as not effective enough and insufficiently mastered. Talking about the problems related to this strategy, the informants defined two main ones: (1) the problems identified by the Church are not interesting enough for the mainstream media relevant for the broad (i.e. non "religious") public, (2) the Church is able to successfully set issues on the agenda of the media this is used exclusively by the religious community (only a minimum use of them by the broad public can be assumed).

The main feature of the *vertical* strategy is the active participation of well-formed laics in top spheres of policy-making. The Catholic Church sees the laity as an integral part of the Church, expecting them to have an active approach to the outside world (Lumen Gentium 2002, 52-53). The Church realizes that a large number of the laity behaves rather passively. The laity expects priests and bishops to play active role in various areas of everyday life (see the document *Život a poslání křesťanů v církvi a ve světě* 2007, 17).[11] The Church itself speaks about the 'ready' laity (ibid. 50), who actively participates in the pastoral officially or unofficially. The CCC expects the laity to enter the public space in those areas that the official church structure fails to penetrate. The CCC looks for a systematic and a long-term strategic formation of adult Christians – the laity (ibid. 69). These persons are supposed to help transfer issues to policy agenda and further to media and public agenda.

The *horizontal* strategy, too, counts with well-formed laics and regular religious people who are supposed to transfer issues from the Church agenda to the public. This would enable the Church to set an issue through a part of the public who will later transfer it to the attentive public from where it will spread further, to mass public. The *horizontal* strategy is seen by the Church as the most efficient one when it comes to the cooperation between the Church and civil society. The well-formed laics and religious people transfer issues from the Church agenda to public discourse via

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[11] [*The Life and the Mission of Christians in the Church and the World*].

regular interpersonal communication with the other members of the public. One of the respondents sees the dialogue and a closer relationship with the other actors of the civil society as a chance to make the horizontal strategy more effective.

> [The Church] needs to learn how to talk and form alliances with the other players of the civil society, it needs to learn how to move around in the media and in the academia - it needs to be acknowledged as a competent expert on ethical questions and it needs to be able to create such environment that would encourage the thirst for spiritual experiences. That is where the Church is irreplaceable (unlike in the social and charity sphere, which, however, it must not leave either).

The supposed efficiency of this step may be explained as follows: if the Church enters into closer relationship with other institutions of the civil society, these would more probably take over issues from the Church agenda and help expand them further to the society. Parallel to this, the above cited statement clearly shows that the Church tries to retain its influence in the field of the morals and as a source of spiritual values. It is thus evident that it would like to play a more active role in the Czech pluralistic and religiously indifferent environment and more closely cooperate with other players of the civil society, emphasizing the ethical aspects of life.

Emphasis put on the ethical perspective of the cooperation is proved by the answer of another respondent who sees a closer contact with other institutions of the civil society as a promise of the deflection from "politicking" and a way of a more pragmatic way to solve problems. He explicitly says that the civil society creates a "*network of relationships (...) on which it can carry the weak ones, the disqualified ones, the marginalized ones.*"

From what was said, we can clearly see a relation between problems the informant enumerates (all of them are, in fact, marginalization-related) and with the promise of a deeper integration of the Church to the civil society. This deeper integration, in turn, is a promise to solve problems the Church concentrates on and has on its agenda. All respondents have seen this deeper integration as a necessity.

It might thus seem that the Church does not lack the will to cooperate with other actors of the civil society and that this cooperation is, in fact, just a

matter of finding a technical solution. But there are several fundamental problems that complicate the possibly "idyllic" cooperation between the Church and other institutions of the civil society in the public space. Why? One of the reasons might be the fact that, from the long-term perspective, Church is very little trusted in the Czech Republic (see above). Another reason for this is explicitly given by one of the respondents:

> The relationship between the Church and the civil society is, I think, quite perplexed. The social learning of the Church clearly says civil society should be supported but the truth is that we, Christians, do not always realize what this really means. I see a certain passiveness, constant waiting for what the others will do. The civil society, too, is based, among other, on the plurality and we are sometimes afraid of plurality, both inside the Church and in relation to the outer world. We are afraid to accept our place in the society, we are afraid to accept that we are just an item on the list of offers. This is what I have been emphasizing: I am happy to be a Christian and I am happy to be a part of the Church but I would never dare to say that we are the monopoly. I would exchange the Church for nothing but I think that the Church does not give real support to the civil society, I would say its support is rather theoretical than practical. So by talking about this as a Church representative, I hope to contribute to the construction of the civil society. At the same time, I want to encourage, not only encourage but also support not only religious but all people and tell them that they are doing the right thing when they are not just waiting for what the State will do but that they have their own ideas, initiatives and that they are able, for example, to find the money they need and that there still are a lot of volunteers in the society.

The Church is well aware that trying to find various forms of cooperation is a necessity in the civil society. It explicitly emphasizes the need of pushing through such themes on its agenda that could be echoed by secular institutions. These themes are related mainly to the processes of marginalization. On the other hand, the Church is not able to emancipate from the defensive strategy it adopted to face the majority society, even 23 years after the fall of the communist regime and in the context of the development of a liberal democracy and civil society in the Czech Republic.[12] It seems that the Church sees the pluralistic world as a

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[12] Peter Berger defined four principal strategies that the religioius (i.e. Christian) communities use in order to face the dezintegrating secularization influences of modern pluralism, which are the result of a congnitive discrepancies generated by pluralism. He

permanent danger and source of uncertainty. The Church does think about the agenda setting strategies but it is not clear whether or what kind of strategies it wants or will use to enter into coalitions with other institutions of the civil society. The only thing that is clear is that it wants to. All of the above means that the Church rather defends the position it has been able to keep, both with respect to the State and to the civil society.

Conclusion

A functional civil society relies on law-abiding citizens who, by their active interventions in the public space, set the agenda taking into consideration the principles of democratic discussion and strive to carry out the solution of the issues. Seen from this perspective, ideas and conceptions of the representatives of the Church concerning agenda-setting strategies and attempts to better connect to the civil society only prove that they are well aware of the civil and social role the Church plays in the society. It is also evident that the Church has been trying to identify with the civil society: it has been trying to act as an integral part of that section of the society where the non-profit organizations are at home. The problem, however, lies in the fact that this attitude, declared by our respondents, is, in reality, called into question for at least two reasons: the Church is still quite closely related to the Christian and Democratic Union – Czechoslovak People's Party (even though their link has been weakening since the 1990s and that the significance of the party has declined sharply in 2010 when it did not make it into the Parliament). Another even more discrediting factor is the issue of Church property restitutions, due to which it is virtually impossible to see the Church as a purely apolitical organization.

The Church property restitutions represent a process in which the State is trying to compensate for the wrongs of the Communist regime. Their objective was to return the Church property seized by the communist regime. The Church property restitutions are the most often seen as related to the Catholic Church: 90–98% of returned property would supposedly go to it. This is why the public awareness about the Church property restitutions is related mainly to the Catholic Church. The Church property restitutions have been a very controversial issue for 23 years and were not solved by the Parliament until the end of 2012. Closing of the property restitution case, however, changes nothing when it comes to the perception of the Church: it is still seen as a politicizing institution defending its own

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makes the difference between the "cognitive barrier" (either defensive or offensive one), "cognitive bargaining" and "cognitive capitulation" (Berger 1997, 38).

interests (property in this case), referring to public space and civil society purely as mimicry (Kalvas, Váně, Štípková and Kreidl 2012; Váně and Kalvas 2013: 290-315).

When we talked to respondents from inside the Church, we have seen that they are aware of the fact that if the Church wants to play an important role in the Czech society even in the future, it needs to become an integral part of the civil society. Despite this, however, the Church representatives have been groping in the dark, not being quite sure how to build this cooperation. This situation stems, besides others, from the experience the Church has made with the media: it is well aware that it might set issues in the public space but that, in order to do so, it must come up with issues interesting enough for the public, which cannot be made without the media.

The Church in general (not only the Church in the Czech Republic), has been, for a long time, trying to update its attitudes towards the mass media. But the interaction between the Church and the media is complicated by the fact that the mass media are seen and presented as a power (Rosůlek 2009), which, thanks to the completed media revolution,[13] relieved individuals of the influence of the Church. The practical consequences of the above is that with the coming of the global media era, in which it is so easy to travel in space and time, the space traditionally reserved to particular Churches might easily be occupied by a competitive religious groups (Esterbauer 1998, 115-143). It has become evident that the media take over functions and characteristics such as omnipresence, indispensability, "omniscience," forming of norms and values, defining sanctions as well as an everyday structuration of time (Günter 1998), reserved until recently to religion. These functions, traditionally the realm of the religion, have gradually become an attribute of the media and it is becoming evident that the initial "Extra Ecclesiam nulla salus" has been transforming into "Extra Media nulla salus."

The Church has thus lost control over numerous human activities, which now come under the sponsorship of the media: this has a double consequence. Firstly, the Church has been losing its position of a public

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[13] McLuhan talks about the end or "dissolution" of the Gutenberg galaxy, characterized by the linear intelligence of book culture (McLuhann 1962, 253-264). This "Gutenberg galaxy" is gradually being replaced by a new type of media, which are headed for the configurative type of thinking (Bolz 1993, 422).

guarantor (even though it is true that the religion is no longer pushed out of the public discourse with such intensity).[14] Secondly, the Church norms are applied less strictly (this is what Peter Berger calls "cognitive negotiation"). One of the manifestations of the cognitive negotiation and of the effort not to lose position is the fact the Church no longer considers the State as public space but acknowledges that this role was retaken by the civil society. In other words, religion in Western countries has lost it institutionalized and coercive character related to its function of defining and enforcing the observation of the norms of behavior. Public opinion, on the other hand, is an ever-growing element (Chomsky 2006, 10-13 and 291-293). The battle is now being fought not for souls but for public opinion (Habermas 2000, 165-183), the battlefield being the intersection of the Church and the civil society.

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[14] It is possible for the religion to re-enter the public discussion under the condition the secularization paradigm is disputed on the theoretical level. Since the 1980s the number of religious groups in society increased. These groups are striving to re-enter the public space, from which they have been sidelined as a result of modernization-related processes. This development has been studied and conceptualized by José Casanova (1994).

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Appendix
Characteristics of informant from the Church hierarchy:

One of the informants represents the highest ranks of the Church hierarchy, i.e. he is a member of the Czech Bishops' Conference. This person is definitely not invited often by non-religious media to comment on current affairs.

Another informant represents another particular segment of the Catholic Church: he appears in the media quite often, actively commenting on current affairs. But he is not a member of neither highest nor middle ranks of the Church hierarchy. He has definitely not been granted a status of an official "spokesperson" of the Catholic Church, on the contrary, he ranks among lower clergy within the Church hierarchy. He very often appears in the media, commenting on current affairs (religious, ethical and social) from the Church's perspective. He is one of the most popular unofficial Church representatives and works also in academic environment. This informant was the only one to whom I have not talked but he answered an electronic questionnaire with the same questions that were asked the other informants, too.

One of the informants represents a cross-section of the two parts of the Church hierarchy we mentioned previously. He works in academic environment and, at the same time, ranks among the higher spheres of the Church hierarchy. He has been actively involved in creation of pastoral strategies, which means besides others that he has been indirectly co-creating religious people's attitudes. He comments on current affairs to a rather moderate extent and if he does so, it is within the Church related media (e.g. Katolický týdeník, Perspektivy16, etc.) only.

One of the informants is a member of the Czech Bishops' Conference. Besides, he is considered by the media as one of the most popular representatives of the Catholic Church. He could be seen as a merging personality, sought-after by the media and an eminent member of Church establishment.

Yet another of the informants is a member of the Czech Bishops' Conference. He is not a person sought by the media but, inside the Church, he is seen as one of the most respected personalities.