

ENTANGLED IN POLITICS, ETHOS AND MEDIA

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Abstract

The article presents anthropological reflection on the actions of the members of Polish post-Solidarity political elites, particularly regarding their political ethos. The analysis pertains to the attitudes towards legal norms observed and registered in the media (including the Internet), the behaviour and approaches displayed by representatives of various organs and political parties which infringes on legal norms or unwritten principles of conduct. Particular emphasis is placed on defining the attitude towards this phenomenon demonstrated by various social circles, including the so-called ordinary citizens. Each of the discussed problems is illustrated with a specific (local, as recommended by Geertz 1983) context of history, politics and culture, i.e. the Polish political scene and the actors present on it after the establishment of the Solidarity movement in August 1980. The present article contains an analysis of the old and modern ethos of a politician and politics, as well as on their relations with the community.

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Artykuł poświęcony jest refleksji antropologicznej na temat działalności polskich postsolidarnościowych elit politycznych, ściślej ich etosu politycznego. Dotyczy on respektowania form prawnych zaobserwowanych i odnotowanych przez mass media (w tym internet), zachowań i postaw przedstawicieli władz różnych szczebli oraz partii politycznych uwłaczających normom prawnym lub niepisanyim zasadom postępowania. Szczególny nacisk kładę na rozpoznanie stosunku do nich różnych środowisk społecznych, w tym i tzw. przeciętnych obywateli. Każdy z podejmowanych problemów odnośnie do konkretnego (lokalnego, jak chce Geertz, 2005) kontekstu historyczno-polityczno-kulturowego, czyli polskiej sceny politycznej i jej aktorów występujących po powstaniu Solidarności w sierpniu 1980 r. W tym tekście zastanawiam się nad dawnym i obecnym etosem polityka i polityki, ich relacjami ze społeczeństwem.

Key words: political anthropology, political ethos, political ethics, media.

INTRODUCTION

For more than ten years I have conducted research and prepared anthropological reflections¹ on the public activities of Polish political elites.² The present reflections focus on the behaviour and social attitudes violating legal norms or unwritten principles of

¹ Results of these research projects may be found e.g. in the following articles: Drozd-Piasecka 2001, 2012, 2013

² According to Anna Malewska-Szałygin all anthropological research that takes political context into consideration and focuses on aspects of power and dominance should be regarded as entitled to the label of political anthropology (Malewska-Szałygin 2005, p. 356).

conduct displayed by representatives of local and national authorities or members of various political parties³ and noted by the mass-media (including the Internet). Particular emphasis is placed on recognising the reactions to such behaviour demonstrated by various social circles, including the so-called ordinary citizens. Each of the discussed problems is illustrated with a specific (local, as recommended by Geertz 1983) context of history, politics and culture, i.e. the Polish political scene and the actors present on it after the establishment of the Solidarity movement in August 1980. The present article contains an analysis of the old and modern ethos of a politician and politics, as well as on their relations with the community.

THE CONTEXT

In everyday awareness of the majority of the Polish society, the pre-August (1980) anti-totalitarian opposition from mid-1970s was perceived as a uniform structure, free of any discord regarding the ideology, political programme and the vision of Poland's future, as well as of any antagonisms and personal grudges. Such an image of the Solidarity movement prevailed even during the Round Table Talks.⁴ Few people were already aware of the budding ideological disagreements. As a consequence, many of the later events, behaviour and ideological standpoints presented by the democratic opposition were not clear to the general public (Friszke 1994, p. 591).⁵ From the normative point of view, the political situation in the latter half of the 1970s and the 1980s was an example of a characteristic combination of subcultures and models of political culture, referring both to democratic and communist systems (Mocek 2010, p. 252). It may be argued that this description is still valid today. It can be related (along with its inherent resources of ideas, norms and attitudes etc.) to the theory of political behaviour and to contemporary displays thereof. The standpoint presented by the Solidarity movement was a combination of moral and physical pressure (strikes). It referred to both the proletarian myth and to national solidarity (strongly emphasised in Gierek's times) (Walicki 1984, p. 83). The activity of the organisation was characterised by a mixture of ideas taken from various traditions: conservative, liberal or socialist. Many of the members harboured radical beliefs, views, aspirations and ambitions. These influenced the self-definition of the movement that took place after 1989, as well as the leaders, parties and political programmes that claimed affinity with the organisation. In the

³ As well as the political and economic scandals related to these persons.

⁴ These pertained to the future political system of the country, the influence of parties and political organisations and the balance of power.

⁵ It might be added that this ignorance still (in Poland as a democratic country) results in the lack of understanding of the views, economic enterprises, priorities and strategies of the leaders and political parties, as well as the parties' political programmes.

words of Maria Ossowska (1986, p. 5), they resulted in the development of a new culture, macro-social in scope. The hierarchy of its values was based on ideological eclecticism; a mixture of moral conservatism, political liberalism and economic socialism (Mocek 2010, p. 263).

At the beginning of the 21st century, two new tendencies appeared in the formula of practice of Polish politics. Both were borrowed from developed democracies and have transformed the general image of politics in Poland. The first one is the phenomenon of the ‘marketisation of politics’, i.e. perceiving politics as any other type of commodity, subject to the laws of marketing, the principles of supply and demand and all that is related to it (advertising, promoting, quality of packaging, etc.).⁶ The other tendency, closely related to the one just mentioned, involved the ‘medialisation of politics’, particularly the ‘mediatisation of the politician’ (Mocek 2010, p. 265), i.e. the process of “designing politics and politicians to fulfil premeditated or short-term aims. This is effected by the media: television stations, radio stations and the press” (Mocek 2010, p. 266). Mediatisation inevitably distorts politics, as politicians now make statements to please the voters assuming that after gaining power they will still be able to do as they please. This phenomenon influences both positive and negative public opinion. The rules that govern the media – i.e. the speed of broadcasting, the drive to present sensational and not always truthful news, the care for audience measurement or readership – make the realm of politics subservient to its image as presented by the Fourth Estate. The ongoing processes clearly indicate a tendency towards practicing politics in terms of marketisation and mediatisation and not symbolism or upholding certain values.

THE ETHOS

In early 19th century prince Adam Jerzy Czartoryski wrote that “politics is guided not only by interest, but also by morality, which indicates that politics not only requires one to have a just and fair objective, but also to use the available means to this purpose” (Czartoryski 1992, p. 44). This idealist or even exemplary view became deeply embedded in the mentality of Polish intellectuals and ordinary citizens. It still influences the evaluation of politics both in the national culture and in everyday life.

For most of the people involved in it, politics is a profession.⁸ The public opinion generally assesses them on the basis of two conceptual categories: the art of ruling

⁶ Entire arsenals of socio-technical methods and psychological means (e.g. negative campaigning, populist and demagogic elements, etc.) have already been developed to serve this purpose.

⁷ All quotations from Polish-language sources have been translated solely for the purpose of the present article [translator’s note.].

⁸ For this reason, when discussing political culture we tend to – almost reflexively – refer it to the people who are actively participating in politics every day (Gala 2004, p. 339).

(and/or political culture) and morality or ethics. These categories are derived from Plato's thoughts on the state.⁹ For Plato, the good of the state was of utmost importance, worthy of sacrificing one's life and energy for. Thus, it is a moral obligation of politicians to be honest, just, truthful and to respect the people. Such characteristics enable them to establish an effective cooperation with the citizens (Turos 2004, p. 19). Politicians are to set an example for other social strata and professional groups – how to participate in public life and care for the country. In other words, they are to be role models (Turos 2004, p. 22).

Political culture is composed of two terms: 'culture' and 'politics', based on values that govern human actions and constitute the foundation on which people build their world and their lives, the footing for their behaviour.¹⁰ According to Leszek Gilejko, political culture functions within two main areas. "The first of them is authority, its principal institutions and the people called the elites of power or, more broadly, the political class [which includes parties, coalitions, and lobbies – M.D-P]. The latter area is the entire society, its inner segments, the most important groups and communities. It is both the object and the subject of politics" (Gilejko 2004, p. 240).

Gabriel A. Almond (1983, p. 131) distinguishes three types of political culture observable in communist countries: the official (ideological) culture, the operational culture and the real culture. Contrary to civic culture, in which various attitudes may coexist harmoniously, political culture is characterised by rivalry and struggle. The conflict takes place mostly between the model of ideological political culture and the operational one, the latter being a manifestation of resistance against the official doctrine and ideology and also of attachment to civic traditions (Mocek 2010, p. 252).

The abovementioned statements on the ethos of politics and politicians indicate that the basic features of this philosophy include the art of ruling and morality.¹¹ It is these characteristics that determined the shape of political culture. Recent events and

⁹ Plato sees the morality of politicians as nothing else but an authentic identification of the ruling individuals with the interest of the state and the citizens. For him, politics is a service to the state, a legal, social and moral obligation (Turos 2004, p. 15). It is based on the assumption that politicians will remain true to their ideals, uphold their mission and negate and fight all that weakens the state and makes it vulnerable. "Politics is the endeavour to implement the three values Plato considers the most important: good, beauty and truth" (Turos 2004, p. 16).

¹⁰ Mirosława Jaworowska, referring to acknowledged American political scientists Almond and Verba, states that political culture is a set of attitudes towards the political system as a whole (i.e. the legal system, the system of executive power, the institutions and the influential political players). The content and the form of citizens' questions directed at the ruling establishment is an emanation of the attitude towards it. This discourse reveals a certain type of political culture displayed by its participants (Jaworowska 2004, p. 151).

¹¹ Andrzej Walicki noted that "politics is, after all, an 'art of possibility' oriented not on results, but on showing moral standpoints. The only exception are profound symbolic gestures that may affect the imagination and ambitions of the next generation" (Walicki 1984, p. 83).

the reports transmitted by the mass media clearly suggest that the ideal of ruling is out of alignment with the practice. I am aware that this situation has continued since before 1989, yet my aim is to analyse the circumstances observable after that date.

The decline in the political culture of contemporary elites is not a phenomenon that has emerged only in the recent months. It is the result of a constant, complex process which started with the birth of a new social system and has had several points of escalation. At these points, the social and political life of our country included particularly kitschy attitudes and behaviour. They also had an impact on the personal life of citizens, whenever opinions or approaches (political, religious, identity-related, ethical, etc.) caused conflict and dissent not only in groups of friends and acquaintances, but also within families.

In my personal estimation, such trouble spots important for the process that determined the course of the social history of Poles in recent years included: the formation and development of Samoobrona Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej (The Self-Defence of the Republic of Poland) and the progress of the leader of this party, Andrzej Lepper, Vice-Marshal of the Sejm and Deputy Prime Minister of Poland in the cabinet of Jarosław Kaczyński (Drozd-Piasecka 2001, 2012); numerous corruption scandals (e.g. the so-called Rywin scandal,¹² or Begergate¹³); the Smolensk crash (2010),¹⁴ which consolidated the split of Polish society into opposing camps of ‘true Poles’ and ‘liberals’; and the publication of the book *SB a Lech Wałęsa. Przyczynek do biografii* by Sławomir Cenckiewicz and Piotr Gontarczyk (2008), who argued¹⁵ that the security service’s undercover agent ‘Bolek’ might in fact have been Lech Wałęsa, the leader of the Solidarity movement, former President of the Republic of Poland and winner of the Nobel Peace Prize.¹⁶

¹² The scandal pertained to a recorded conversation between Adam Michnik (the editor in chief of “Gazeta Wyborcza” and the “Agora” publishing house) and Lew Rywin (a film producer involved e.g. in the making of *Shindler’s List*, who in this conversation represented the “group in power”) on the subject of introducing changes (for a certain sum of money) into the draft law that would enable merging publishing houses with television stations.

¹³ The scandal pertained to a filmed conversation about the possibility of Renata Begger’s defecting to the ruling party in return for nominations for government posts and financial aid, in order to shift the balance of power in Parliament towards the PiS (the Law and Justice party).

¹⁴ It was the most tragic aircraft accident in the history of Poland. The victims included the President Lech Kaczyński, his wife and representatives of all parties and political or social elites, who were on their way to attend an event in honour of the victims of the Katyń massacre.

¹⁵ In the meticulously prepared appendix with source materials (350 pages) and illustrations (130 pages), which included scans of the most important documents analysed in the first part of the book.

¹⁶ The introduction for the publication was written by Janusz Kurtyka, who was then the chairman of the Institute of National Remembrance. The book became an item of public discussion even before it found its way to bookshops. It may even be said that the media ‘pitched’ the readers’ opinion and emotional responses. For example, the weekly “Wprost” reported that “apart from documents pertaining to the secret agent ‘Bolek’, the readers may be astounded to find out about the operation arranged by the

Thus, the core of the ethos of politics and politicians consisted of political culture and morality. Basing on my own research (Drozd-Piasecka 2001, 2012, 2013), I will demonstrate several features that contributed to the decline of this ethos. As it has already been noted, politics is and has been regarded as the art of ruling. In view of the principles, rules and high social expectations, its current form qualifies as kitsch. It meets the theoretical and factual criteria for this form of expression and stating opinions (Welsch 1998, p. 521; Denton, Woodward 1985, p. 202; Kubala 2003, p. 102). These include the aesthetic arguments used in the instrumental political activity in the media, e.g. concern for external appearance as a substitute of political programme and expressiveness. Such aesthetisation of politics is rooted in post-industrial pop-culture that has no place for messages conveyed to others, but guarantees the order of the significant world of culture. Aesthetic concerns are visible in the activity of individual politicians, but also factions and political parties, rendering their broadly defined activity kitsch.

The comparison of contemporary political culture to kitsch is legitimised by the analysis of theoretical approaches, statements and quotations. The analysis of recent conduct of leaders of various political factions reported by the media, e.g. the daily newspaper “Rzeczpospolita”, the weeklies “Wprost”, “Newsweek Polska” and television stations, as well as the reactions of the intelligentsia and the so-called ordinary citizens (expressed on Internet forums) have fully corroborated the thesis (Drozd-Piasecka 2001, 2012, 2013).

Classic ‘politics of diplomacy’ with its negotiation, manipulation, search for consensus and tendencies towards coalitional action is being replaced by the ‘politics of power’ based on ‘hard’ solutions, the execution of authority and threats of violence (Pakulski and Wasilewski 2006, p. 85). The discourse of war prevails over the language of cooperation. The style and character of the actions of Polish political elites¹⁷ is becoming more radical and brutal, shifting towards ‘hard’ solutions. Radical steps proposed by some parties trigger similar behaviour on the part of the remaining factions.

Populism, conditioned by the negative characteristics of Polish political parties, offers methods of practicing politics, administering the country and developing leadership that rival the arsenal of means provided by democracy. It presents mainly slogans, without any attempts to establish actual programmes. In its model sense, populism

Security Service in the spring of 1981 in connection with the voting to appoint the new chairperson of the ‘Solidarity’. Equally interesting is the operation of the Office of State Protection (in the 1990s), whose employees managed to obtain secret documents on the undercover agent ‘Bolek’, taken out of Tricity by a member of the Security Service [and the story that followed – M. D.-P] ... Interestingly, Lech Wałęsa is not the only former President that is mentioned in the book and to whom Security Service documents pertain. (JP) (Wprost, 22nd June 08, p. 8).

¹⁷ It is particularly striking in democratic systems that have emerged in the last two decades.

is an ‘anti-systemic’ and ‘anti-elitist’ movement. Functioning within a democratic system, it questions its fairness and denounces its factual elitism.¹⁸ Populist actions include dumping grain out of freight trains, refusal to vacate the parliament rostrum, refusal to comply with court orders, as well as the slogan: “They have already done governing” (and brought the country down). Such displays are in fact questioning the principles of democratic order and, of course, the entire elite as an establishment (Wesołowski 2004, p. 46). The behaviour of populist leaders is often mistaken for charisma, without taking into account that “in contrast with actual charismatic personalities, populist leaders lack a holistic political doctrine or [...] a social philosophy. Well-phrased remarks become a substitute for actual insight. When ordinary politicians begin to fight populist leaders using ‘catchy phrases’, populism soaks in into the soil of politics” (Wesołowski 2004, p. 46).

In the many centuries of European tradition, representatives of all types of authorities have been expected to serve as good examples. Regardless of the actual state of affairs, the norms of moral obligation are still the same. “It comes as no surprise that news of corruption and crimes committed by those that should not stoop to such behaviour puzzles, appals and frustrates the population. This is particularly accurate in the case of members of parliament” (Zadrożyńska 2004, pp. 378, 384).¹⁹ The arrogance of the authorities – that was supposed to disappear – and the lack of any sense of embarrassment at one’s own actions and the activities of one’s political faction are still observable. Power is now in the hands of people who learnt how to govern in the previous era, when the authorities were free to do as they pleased²⁰ (Indelak 2004, p. 358). A culture of shamelessness is a culture without guilt. More and more often an authority figure caught doing something morally ambiguous (or unambiguous) pretends that nothing has happened. They simply do not understand what they are being questioned about. For centuries, guilt kept human behaviour in check, especially in the Christian tradition. Today, as the concepts of authority and taboo are gone, so is guilt (Olbracht-Prondzyński 2004, p. 290).

¹⁸ This tendency was also discussed in: Drozd-Piasecka 2001, 2012.

¹⁹ Leszek Gilejko claims that critical opinions of political elites have numerous causes, but the lack of political culture is always one of them, as well as a negative symbol of their identity (Gilejko 2004, p. 243).

²⁰ A common concept among the rightist Solidarity governments involves the ‘original sin’ of initiation the transition into democracy through negotiations, started by the Round Table talks. The Third Republic that emerged from this process is marked by the compromises (or, as the radical opponents label it – the conspiracies) made at the Round Table. These include the ‘nomenclature’, ‘thievish privatisation’, the political dominance of the special forces originating from the People’s Republic of Poland and the ubiquitous corruption. Some rightists think that there is no other way but to demolish all structures of the former system and build a new one – a Fourth Republic – on the ruins (Pakulski, Wasilewski 2006, p. 97). In view of such assumptions the scandal concerning Renata Beger’s recordings became a political and ethical rift on the image of the Law and Justice party.

Boorishness,²¹ vulgarity, discourtesy and bad manners have become the widespread norm in political life. *Homo homini chamor est.*²² – przy zastosowaniu poprawnej językowo formy gramatycznej, przypis o makaronizmie jest zbędny, a szkoda. Politicians do not hesitate to “show their fangs, claws and elbows” in public (Indelak 2004, pp. 360–361). Academics believe that neglecting social and cultural norms of coexistence is a marginal phenomenon. They analyse it as the opposite of desired behaviour and try to define its extent, as social punitive measures are limited to lack of moral acceptance. There are, however, many cases in which boorishness borders on crime, therefore each violation of social standards of behaviour should result in an avalanche of consequences, also in terms of statutory law. This ought to pertain also to the so-called ‘political boors’ (Zadrożyńska 2004, p. 379). Such individuals have an ever more noticeable presence in Polish parliament. The process of gradual ‘boorisation’ of the public domain, the primitivisation of language and decline in the intellectual level of public debates was clearly observable in Poland (and other countries as well) in the course of the last twenty years (Legutko 2013, p. 39). This phenomenon is beneficial for the mass media, journalists, various experts and politicians who ‘run the whole business’ and use it to gain social status. “The stupider and coarser the discourse, the larger the extent of such individuals’ power over people’s minds. [...] When the allied forces of boorishness and stupidity supported by the judiciary consistently act to demolish all standards and to provide legal protection for this demolition, then propriety stands no chance [...] Boorishness and stupidity used to be just that. Today they are an essential tool in the fight for freedom, progress and democracy” (Legutko 2013, p. 39). The connection between boorishness and lies intensifies the helplessness of individuals and entire social groups. Politicians of the Western democracies seldom resort to lying, since the political culture of these countries does not consider this a permissible practice – making a statement later disclosed as a lie is most often tantamount to the end of the political career. In societies where lying is allowed, it quickly becomes widespread. Citizens of such countries are forced to search for a grain of truth in half-lies and falsehoods. “Dishonesty becomes

²¹ In colloquial language, the term boor (Polish: *cham*) is used to denote an oaf (in terms of behaviour) or a simpleton (in terms of birth). These two groups are, in fact, different, as the first encompasses individuals who do not conform with norms of polite behaviour or harmonious cooperation simply because they do not know such standards or because they choose to disregard them. The second category is based upon social class – in this understanding the term *cham* expresses disapproval for members of ‘lower’ social strata (Zadrożyńska 2004, p. 379). Aleksander Gieysztor noted that a person of proper upbringing is easily recognised by the fact that others are able to predict with absolute certainty how this individual will behave in any given situation. Manners consist in remaining faithful to customary norms of cooperation and personal conduct. Any person that violates these norms shows evidence of being a boor (Gieysztor, quoted in Zadrożyńska 2004, p. 379).

²² This macaronic expression was popularised in the 16th and 17th century. The term *chamor* refers to the Polish noun *cham* (see: footnote 21).

the rule, a permanent element of public life, which is difficult to eradicate, whereas investigating the actual state of affairs starts to be a major subjects of public life” (Wróblewska 2004, p. 82)

Dorota Simonides, an ethnologist and a member of the Polish Senate, emphasises that we are currently observing a rapid decline and erosion of moral values. The ethos of moral principles is relativised, and the model that gains more and more recognition favours individuals who have abandoned values such as honesty, integrity, reliability and concern for public welfare (Simonides, 2004, pp. 162–164). Modern lifestyles, new systems of values, accepting the media as an authority – all of this contrasts with the traditional image of a person who ‘accomplished something’ (Simonides 2004, pp. 162–163).

The approaches that begin to prevail in contemporary political culture represent a different axiological system. Political life develops new modes and types of behaviour, new subjective norms that lead to certain goals, important for the given political circle but based upon a different hierarchy of values. “A closer look at representatives of some political parties reveals that politicians are now able to trample old moral standards and lie, or deliver populist speeches with cynicism that the Polish society would not have expected even fifteen years ago” (Simonides 2004, pp. 162–163).

According to Włodzimierz Wesołowski, “in democratic systems openly ethical questions such as ‘is political life characterised by a feature that may be called morality?’ are sometimes asked” (Wesołowski 2004, p. 45). The harsh criticism directed at moral aspects of the behaviour of members of the ruling establishment that begins to be observable in Poland makes citizens disillusioned with Polish democracy and, most of all, with its representatives. We are witnessing a shortage of legitimisation in terms of views and opinions, or something more – a process of questioning the superiority of democracy over other systems. People begin to doubt whether this mode of government meets the criteria of validity, legitimacy and lawfulness. This situation may result in a crisis in the legitimisation of democratic authorities.

CONCLUSION

The politic culture of a given community consists of customs and habits, patterns of behaviour and institutions, attitudes and procedures, but also of the language used to describe politics. Such discourse²³ requires norms of propriety, an agreement which

²³ The new terms and expressions that have been added to the discourse in recent years include: the ‘thick line’ (a term coined by Prime Minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki; it denotes a break with the past and separating the political activity carried out before 1989, within the communist structures of government, from the actions undertaken after that date – often by the same individuals), Wałęsa’s ‘axe’ (an expression used by the former President, pertaining to his strict policy of dealing with corruption), ‘feel dismissed’, ‘black

is common and understood yet not codified and sometimes even not subject to the norms of ordinary consensus. In such circumstances respectability is valued more than the ability to get comfortably settled, and politicians and citizens agree on the definition of the mentioned respectability, i.e. on what is not acceptable and what makes one 'lose face'. In Poland, this sense of respectability has been weakened by the erosion of political life. "What becomes of democracy when the politics that forms it is utterly shameless and the population is no longer shocked – but only worried – by any of the new developments? What happens when people start to wonder what is proper and the gentlemanly principle of 'everything can be done, but not everything ought to' is slowly forgotten?" (Olbracht-Prondzyński 2004, p. 280).

These phenomena result in a gradual decline of the ethos of politics as a service to the community (representing and voicing its needs) and the rise of medialisation and marketisation.²⁴ The source of the romantic and patriotic vision of politics, i.e. compliance with the principles, values and norms, is, at the most, used in the instrumental mechanism of influencing the society. Moreover, the abovementioned principles that construct the current views on politics (even though sometimes inconsistent with the actual methods and types of political practice) become the elements of the 'marketisation', a component of the 'packaging' of the commodity politics has become (Mocek 2010, p. 266).

The statements quoted above clearly indicate that Poland's post-Solidarity history includes events that divide the society. Additionally, the country has experienced a wave of political kitsch. The most respected authority figures and political elites of the country have displayed blatant disregard for ethic principles and the basic rules of practicing politics. A closer look at current events suggests that this tendency is likely to become more pronounced in the nearest future. Presently, political behaviour and attitudes are determined by the issue of the Smolensk cross in Krakowskie Przedmieście Street in Warsaw and the related anniversary marches, as well as the approaching parliamentary elections.²⁵

cases' (the 'assets' of Stanisław Tymiński, a candidate for President in the 1990 election), 'judeopolonia' (a term denoting the alleged overrepresentation of Jewish community in all organs of government and levels of state administration); 'Rywinland' (cf. footnote 11) and 'Begergate' (cf. footnote 12).

²⁴ In democratic systems, the role of political culture is particularly significant, because only a small part of public life is regulated with legal and administrative rules. The majority of it is governed by norms of political culture (Wróblewska 2004, p. 73).

²⁵ Shortly after the plane crash at Smolensk (2010) members of the Polish Scouting and Guiding Association put up a cross in front of the Presidential Palace in Krakowskie Przedmieście Street. The cross quickly became an object of religious adoration, but also the cause of controversial behaviour. Since the Smolensk crash the square in front of the Presidential Palace has become a place of monthly marches and fiery speeches initiated by the PiS (Law and Justice Party). These stir much emotion in members of all political parties and 'ordinary' citizens. They are also used by the mass media.

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PERIODICALS

“Do rzeczy”

“Gazeta Wyborcza (GW)”

“Newsweek Polska”

“Rzeczpospolita” (Rz)

“Sieci”

“Wprost”

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