

*The struggle to belong.  
Dealing with diversity in 21st century urban settings*

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**A post-secular suburb:  
space, gender, and Catholic revival in Poland**

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### **Abstract:**

*This paper traces the 'elective affinity' between spatial transformations and the process of suburbanization in the Gdańsk agglomeration (Poland), and emergent forms of radical religiosity. It argues that the centuries-long spatial hegemony of the Catholic Church has been recently undermined by the 'fundamentalist' broadcaster and media conglomerate Radio Maryja. The paper first traces the broader changes in spatial regimes and forms of faith associated with it, only to delve into a place-bound study and to compare the life narratives of two key informants in a village-cum-suburb in the Gdańsk area, and the spatial transformations of both their community and their immediate surroundings/households. It shows how suburbanization of the community went parallel to the emergence of a 'post-secular', 'individual' and 'intellectual' strain of faith associated with the radio technology and forms of belonging it facilitates, and how it distinguished itself from the more 'traditional' Catholic faith and practice. It ties those with the life stories and changes in gender and work regimes of the two key informants.*

The Catholic Church is an institution with the longest record of spatial continuity in Poland. While the current administrative division and state's spatial structure is heir to the 19<sup>th</sup> century industrialization and the post-war socialist urban boom, the Church's division into parishes and dioceses harks back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and has managed to weather the ensuing political and economic storms. Only in the last two decades has the spatial hegemony of the Church been undermined. The onslaught came not from the state, as secularist narratives would expect it, but from the 'integratist' Catholic broadcaster and a grassroots institution *Radio Maryja* and its notorious leader Tadeusz Rydzyk. It boasts an estimated 2 million listeners, and organized a veritable Catholic "state within the state", including local prayer groups, its own pilgrimage sites, a TV station, a daily newspaper, a media and communications university complex, and even a mobile telecommunications network (now defunct). Its radical politics, often nationalistic and Eurosceptic, anti-establishment, anti-Semitic and anti-Communist, has duly been deemed by Catholic authorities (including the last two Popes) as offering "vulgar Christianity" and as "extremely compromising and shameful, sick and dangerous" (Poblocki 2004). Tadeusz Rydzyk is the favorite villain of the liberal media, and the echelons of his supporters, many of whom are mature women, are described wryly as the army of 'mohair berets', a derogative term alluding to their militancy, partisan politics, mature age (mohair beret is fashionable only amongst female seniors) and intellectual bluntness, if not backwardness.

In this paper I will argue that *Radio Maryja* is not a vestige of Poland's Catholic past, but a product of its post-socialist and post-secular present (see also Bracke 2008, McLennan 2010). Its success can be attributed to its ability to employ modern media and communication technologies to circumvent the spatial hegemony of the Catholic Church. Moreover, I will describe how this new, radical (sometimes even described as “fundamentalist”) strain of Catholicism can be understood by the spatial transformations that occurred in Poland over the last 50 years. Much of the post-Vaticanum II changes in Polish Catholicism came as a response to the post-war rapid urbanization. The peasantry ceased being the “base” for the Church, and since around the 1970s the clergy started displaying interest in the urban working class. The urban boom of the 1970s coincided with a surprisingly amicable relation of the Communist authorities and the Church; as a result, more churches have been built in Poland after 1945 than in the entire millennium preceding it. Since the state in Poland has historically been very feeble, in part due to the sixteen century tradition of Polish liberal republicanism that favored a weak state structure, which eventually lead to Poland's partitioning between Russia, Prussia and Austria and its disappearance from maps during the climacteric nineteenth century, the Catholic Church has always been active as a possible surrogate for the state. Indeed, during the antebellum years, the clergy was commonly treated as state officials of sorts. The Church-state nexus was so strong that for example school teachers were obliged to bring children to the Church on Sundays. Postwar urbanization put an end to this lingering *ancien régime*, and this also affected the church. Starting from the 1970s, priests were no longer considered members of the elite, but became increasingly activist-like and became increasingly involved in the lives of urban communities. This is the backdrop to the introduction in 2002 by John Paul II the “luminous mysteries” to the rosary, so they describe the life and activities of Jesus Christ. A telling example of the priest-activist model is late Bolesław Paleczny, whose ship-building project hit international headlines in 2009. He mustered a group of unemployed men in from Gdańsk, many of whom were shipyard workers who had been made redundant, and who retained their sense of self-worth and meaningfulness in life thanks to building a sailboat that was to take them on an odyssey around the globe. Such priest-activist is supposed to be meek, humble and always willing to help others, as opposed to the older generation of priests who lined up with the powerful rather than with the powerless (*New York Times*, 1 August 2009).

*Radio Maryja* is, in my view, a continuation of that process of ridding Polish Catholicism of its former peasant, or folksy, attributes, similar to the urban “secularization” movement within the Islam (Hefner 1998, Simone 1994, Baxstrom 2008), and radicalizing the ‘activist’ direction took up by the Church during the 1970s and 1980s, but that was somehow abrogated after 1989. Because of the rolling back of

the state, and the extraordinary expansion of the Church after 1989 (a special state commission designated for restitution of the Church property has 'given back' the Church 608 square kilometers of real estate—by comparison the total area of Warsaw is 517 square kilometers—together with a handsome restitution fees, making the Church the largest real estate owner in the country), the Church to a large extend has flourished as both a quasi-welfare institution and a moral anchor. It lost its former activists and partisan edge and turned increasingly conservative and got involved in politics: if not at the national scale, then at the local one. Recently, two theologians of the younger generation, have reminded in an Easter publication, that 'Christianity has to loose. ... Christ sided not with the powerful but with the powerless ... he chose service to others over power, goodness over truth, modesty over success...But don't Christian Churches reject Jesus' logic of defeat, and try by all means to be on the winning side? Don't they side with those who desire prestige and fame, rights and privileges?' (Makowski and Bem, 2011). Paradoxically, despite the fact that, as many non-believing critics of Radio Maryja point out, Rydzyk's media empire is a well-run and profitable business, at the level of rhetoric Radio Maryja sides precisely with the 'losers' rather than the 'winners' of the post-socialist transition. It thus radicalizes the Catholic Church in both its conservative and activist dimension, offering its followers an odd blend of the two. And it also feeds on the enormously well ingrained and popular anti-hierarchical and anti-clerical sentiments of the Polish believers.

## Spatial transformations

I will argue that there is an "elective affinity" between the radical *Radio Maryja* creed and the process of suburbanization, and, as most *Radio Maryja* followers are female, emerging gender regimes. I will thus argue against the popular 'psychological' explanations of the allure of the Radio its its 'mohair' partisans. There is an widespread assumption that people, and especially women, tend to be attracted to religion as their life approaches its end, and, even though they may have been non-believers for decades, the prospect of death brings them closer to thinking about terminal issues and makes them embrace faith. As I will demonstrate by discussing the case of Marta, my key informant, who indeed became an ardent believer only in her 60s, this phenomenon can be accounted for not by her internal transformation, but rather by the changes of the state-church relationship. While in the 1950s and 1960s, when Marta was a young person and a fellow traveler of communist ideals (as was most Polish population at the time), she was an ardent anti-cleric and, being a head of a tiny primary school in the countryside in the Gdańsk region, was directly and defiantly involved in a conflict with a local priest who was older and more 'respectable' than her. As a representative of the state institutions, she stood up

against a local priest and his class-based hubris. He was of the pre-war generation, had a university degree, and by this virtue earned twice as much as she did when they both worked at the school. He was supposed to teach religion, but did not, only he pocketed the salary. He argued he could not commute to school and demanded the local community buys him an automobile. When they did, classes were still not taking place. As a man of letters and higher social standing, considered himself superior to the peasant community, and demanded services from them, and not the other way around. The priest-activist model is supposed to be serving the community. Today, Marta speaks about the liberal elites, including some clergy, in the very same way she would admonish the Catholic 'leisure class' of the yore. It is thus the world, and especially the structure of the state-citizenship relationship, that changed, and not Marta. Her outlook, and especially her criticism of crony and power-grabbing elites, has remained very consistent throughout her life, and this led her, in her youth, to be supportive of the Communist state, and now, faced with the profound rolling back of the state, to lean towards *Radio Maryja*.

Thus, although what follows is to a large extent a place-bound study, I base my analysis not really on the view of faith as a place-bound phenomenon (Baxtrom 2008), but rather on changing spatial regimes. In this I follow in the wake of the tradition in urban theory that treats space, rather than place, as the ontological basis of realty and human experience (Smith 2010, Harvey 2006, Harvey 2009). The analysis of the life narrative of Marta, coupled with a spatial analysis of suburbanization of the settlement that she lives in, is only to demonstrate these larger spatial shifts in micro-scale. This article is based upon ethnographic research conducted in 2009 in the suburb of the Gdańsk agglomeration. I will describe how the village community has been gradually absorbed by the Gdańsk agglomeration, and how this engendered a split into peasant-like "traditional Catholicism" and more abstract, intellectual and political "Radio Maryja" faith, and how this slip can be clearly observed in the spatial transformations of that community, the life stories of my two key informants and the ways their female identity is constituted by the interplay of family and work regimes, spatial changes, the mass media and religiosity (Abu-Lughod 2004). Just like Hafez (2010) I will thus demonstrte the relationship between spatial transformations and narrative forms, but not in their literary version, but in personal life narratives, and especially in vernacular faith.

The village of my study, let's call it Gora, is a classic linear settlement – the houses were built alongside a single communication axis. During the 1970s, when intensive links between the Gdańsk agglomeration and its environs gradually draw Gora into its orbit – mainly through its labor market, a

second “spine” for the village developed, and it also served as an important transit route connecting two towns of the agglomeration. In the mid 1970s, the village mayor organized the villagers who built a stop and a loop for the bus, and thanks to this the village was connected to the nearby town by a municipal bus service – making daily commute for wage laborers easy. The old “spine” was getting underdeveloped, and the most affluent houses during the 1980s were built alongside the new road. The plots were typically rectangular with the front side rather narrow but very deep, reflecting the previous land division into long and narrow arable plots. Also this is where the new school was built together with a local store. This is precisely where Marta and her husband built their house during the early 1980s. Her best friend, let’s call her Renata, on the other hand, belonged to the older echelon of “native” inhabitants of Gora, who lived alongside the older thoroughfare, remained their “peasant” outlook, and throughout the 1980s and 1990s inhabited the area that was called in everyday conversations as the “old Gora”. There, there was still a dirt road, while the new one was made of asphalt already during the 1970s.

Marta and her husband used to work as schoolteachers. When Gora was still essentially a village, Marta and her husband, just as those who lived off the land, as well as Gora's residents who commuted to the nearby city for work, had livestock that was both a good source of food (especially during the crisis-ridden 1980s), and could be a source of handsome extra profit. Marta's husband was particularly skilled in breeding and trading horses, but he also had some other business, such as breeding coypu, an animal whose fur was highly valued in the 1980s. Their property was divided into three parts: the one nearest the road comprised their two-story house, a well, a dog shed and a lawn with a bench and three fruit trees. Then there was a wooden fence, behind which there was a stable for two or three horses, sometimes a cow or two, and a dozen of chicken. The fence was clearly separating the productive and living space, although there were also some fruit trees in the front part. Behind the stable there were two haystacks, a greenhouse for tomatoes, a small garden with garlic, herbs and the like, and there was yet another fence behind which there was a potato field. After Marta and her husband retired, they still kept some of their farming activities, although they would gradually diminish due to their (mainly his) deteriorating health. Gradually they turned from workers/farmers into pensioner, and this is when Marta's interest in politics and *Radio Maryja* begun. Her husband was scornful about her 'hobby' and demanded he provided him with household services (such as not only preparing but also serving the food) essentially until he died in 2003. Although her transformation begun before, it took full swing after he expired.

Before retirement, she recalled, “I was not a human being. It was only work, work, work.” Now, she turned from a productive to a contemplative mode. It was coupled with the suburbanization of both her surroundings and her own life. It started with the disappearance of the local food economy: while still in the 1990s Marta either had her own food (eggs, meat, potatoes, butter, milk and the like) or would buy it from her neighbors, increasingly she would obtain such items from the local store. Not only the village was being suburbanized, and the productive activities were on the wane (because of the housing boom in the 2000s, many peasants obtained most profits from the sale of plots instead of producing food on them), but it was also her internal transformation. “I am a country damsel” (*wiejska dama*), she would tell me laughing, meaning that she could no longer eat “country food”. The milk she used to buy from the neighbor “smells of the cow” and it literally made her nauseated. So does butter: and hence she stopped using it and replaced it with margarine. Sometimes Marta’s children bring her home-made food either prepared by them or by some relatives, and those Marta enjoys, precisely because this food is exogenous to her community. Likewise, after her husband’s death, he gradually erased all vestiges of productive elements in her property not only she has no animals now, but also she cut down all the fruit trees (some of them very old), so she would not have to be bothered with processing the fruit into jams and the like. The fence that used to separate the productive and living spaces around their house was torn down: and the stable is now a place where all sorts of items are being stored. The same happened to her house: before her husband’s death, the two rooms on the ground flour served as ‘display rooms’, and in one of them, where there was the TV set, her husband spend most of his time. Marta would listen to her *Radio Maryja* in the remaining room, but it was the room where guests would be normally received, and her own belongings in the room had a temporary character: before guests arrived, she would clear them. The room on the first floor served as a bedroom. Marta’s only space in the house was really the kitchen. Now, she fully occupied the former TV room, and does all her activities there: reading, praying, sleeping, watching TV and receiving guests. The other ‘display’ room is reserved only for more official gathering, such as family get-togethers, and the space upstairs was turned into a storage space, where all unwanted objects are being placed.

At the same time, the village as such was becoming suburbanized. A new settlement, this time for inhabitants of the nearby city who were attracted by good nature, quiet and lower taxes, started building houses in plots just on the outskirts of Gora. It was also farther away from the now rather busy main road – as heavy traffic was not really part of the “suburban peace and quiet.” The only way to get to the new settlement was through the old dirt road. Suddenly, the formerly abandoned communication line became busy with upscale cars and SUVs and the new population moving between there and the nearby

town. This is, in my view, what put the immense pressure on the “old” population and particularly on Renata, Marta's lifetime friend, to rebuild her garden. Marta and Renata were nearly peers, and when Marta arrived to Gora with her husband in the 1960s to run the school, Renata was one of the very first persons “to talk to me like an equal”. She was the daughter of a well-to-do farmer and then the village mayor and member of some of the most affluent and respectable families in Gora. Later on what bonded them further were their abusive and drinking husbands: Renata would give refuge to Marta when she had to occasionally flee her own home in fear of domestic violence. Both of them also experienced the slow deaths of their husbands, which somehow coincided. Ever since, however, their pathways have diverged, although their friendship is still very strong. While Marta retired and embraced Radio Maryja, Renata kept on working the farm. She is 71 and lives with her son and his wife and child. Her son took up the farm, while the daughter-in works in the city. As a consequence, Renata does what would normally be wife's feminine duties on the farm: feeding the pigs, milking the cows and the like. She also takes care of the child when his mother is at work. While Marta is financially independent, Renata has no financial income of her own, and thus is wholly immersed in the relationships of reciprocity with her son and his family.

The new suburbanization of the village put enormous pressure on the old inhabitants. Because of the real estate boom of the 2000s, the most affluent local families have really ceased farming and made fortunes from the sale of plots: as the local stories go some of them do not have to work but they can live off the interest rates. Even if this is not true, it shows that the traditional productive activities ceased being at the very center of the local community: being a farmer is even somehow shameful, in the sense that it smacks of the inability to make money from the most profitable source: land speculation. Because the old dirt road, next to which Renata has her house, suddenly became frequented by upscale automobiles of the new suburbanites, this put enormous pressure on her. Renata is known locally for being the foremost expert in gardening: she was one of the very first inhabitants of Gora to start actively cultivate her garden. Her advice is often sought locally, and I saw her numerous times bringing in twigs or plants for Marta so she could plant them in her own garden too. But there is a crucial difference between the gardens of Marta and Renata. The latter's is really spectacular, with many relatively high plants. Her house is next to it, and behind it there are the productive buildings. Renata nurtures her garden, as she put it, “so people don't see me running around with a wheelbarrow”. It was, in other words, to disguise the productive and farming character of the household and property. Marta's garden, on the other hand, comprised a lawn and a number of tiny bushes and flowers. One could see through the entire property – not very wide but enormously long (nearly 1000 meters). But

paradoxically, although Marta's garden was transparent, it was not for display. Rather, it emphasized its unproductive and even contemplative character—Renata's garden, serving as a screen, had no benches or even chairs that would facilitate any form of recreation there.

### ***Post-secular practices***

This difference between the spaces that these two women created was also visible at the level of their religiosity. Renata remained wedded to the traditional Catholicism: one of the highlights of her garden is a tiny road-side shrine with a statue of Virgin Mary: a traditional landmark in rural Poland. She's much more than Marta a member of the local community: for example she participates in the traditional “death watches”. It is an event organized by the family of the deceased, where, traditionally, the coffin would be open and left for display for the visitors, who would stay up the entire night, and be served food and drinks. As Marta narrates this tradition, it was a lot of work for the women, who had not only to organize the funeral, but also to prepare the food for the entire village. One of the portents of Marta's gradual withdrawal from the local community was her decision not to organize a death watch for her late husband: she was exhausted from the entire year in which she had to take care of her terminally ill husband, who would stay up all the night and had to be watched, and who would sleep in during the day, when Marta had to perform all the domestic duties. She decided only to organize a wake for the family members. Some of the village members ostentatiously did not attend the funeral because Marta did not organize a death watch: which for her is the proof that it was the right decision, as they were not 'worth it'. So she puts the blame for breaking the village reciprocity on their side. In either case, this was an important step for her in leaving both the village community and the identity of the “working country woman” and the type of religiosity associated with it. The three elements: hard labor, commitment to the community and traditional religiosity had been wedded, and Marta took the opportunity with the death watch to forsake all three of them simultaneously.

Marta's faith is quintessentially post-secular, in the sense that *Radio Maryja*'s vivid interest in contemporary issues and politics is one of the central aspects of its allure to her. While she is often scornful about the way regular priests would occasionally talk politics during their Sunday sermons, this is not a problem for her in *Radio Maryja*. This is so because being a listener of the radio is far more interactive than going to the Church. “In the past”, she told me, “there was no faith. People who attended the Sunday mass did not understand what the priests say [services were held in Latin], and people were so exhausted from the heavy work that they usually slept in Church”. Nowadays, her

involvement is much deeper and all-encompassing. *Radio Maryja* structures her entire day. But she is not, as the liberal media would paint it, a passive and mindless partisan. She has her favorite radio speakers and priests, and is actually not very fond of Father Rydzyk: because of his penchant for criticizing the liberal media and his use of hate speech. The radio is highly interactive, in the sense that listeners' participation is exceptionally high as compared to regular media. Not only can they call and express their opinions, a lot of the airing time is devoted to prayers, in which listeners actively participate. This generates a sense of community, and Marta knows by heart the names (and places of residence) of some of the most active listeners. She is often adamant of the most devout listeners, who are the army of Father Rydzyk in the sense that they follow his calls and preaching by the letter. She thinks of herself as independent in thinking, and watches a lot of television. She says that by watching the news on the mainstream television and then on the notorious Radio Maryja gives her a 'balanced view' and is a way of remaining objective, siding neither with the liberal nor with the radical viewpoints. Unlike Renata, whose day is structured by her labor duties, Marta's entire day is structured by the programming of *Radio Maryja* and the family soap operas she watches on other channels. All her other activities, such as cooking or even family visits, are scheduled in such a way so they fill in the gaps between the programs she watches/listens to daily. Even her children know what time they can pay her a visit, so she is between a prayer and an episode of her favorite series.

Her faith is entirely intellectual and contemplative. She is adamant of the remnants of the folksy believes. She does not believe in the village gossip that one of her neighbours can cast an evil eye on animals, she disregards such stories as "silly sortilege" (*takie tam gusła*). She is amused when she tells the story of how her and her husband went for a "healing session" to a large theater in Gdańsk and is convinced the speaker as a con. Likewise, she "does not believe in healing by distance": one of the most influential families in the village spend a considerable amount of money on trying to heal their cancer-stricken daughter, who had emigrated to Germany, by sending money via post service to a "healer". She says she "doesn't believe in flailing one's hands" that is supposed to have a healing effect. She does, however, believe in the therapeutic effects of massage. She rejects all that is ideal and accepts what is concrete and material. Her outlook on life, and her religiosity, are extraordinarily sober and down-to-earth. She spends most of her day on reading religious literature, watching television or listening to Radio Maryja, but her faith is rather intellectual. Thanks to the Radio, she has "went to the entire catechism of the Catholic Church" and is especially keen on rosary. But, as John Paul II warned in an apostolic letter, she does not regard the rosary and its beads "as some kind of amulet or magic object" but instead only an instrument designed to produce "spiritual effects". It is, after all, "simply a

*method of contemplation.* As a method, it serves as a means to an end and cannot become an end in itself” (John Paul II, 2002). I was particularly struck that Marta, a person who is generally very careful about her stuff, leaves her rosary tied to a wooden chair in her garden. Normally, she takes all her belongings home after sitting in the garden, because they could be damaged by rain in the night. Generally she is a person who would take extraordinarily precaution about material objects of value. I have seen her rosary being rained upon and she did not mind, because it was not a material but a spiritual object for her.

Her religiosity is part and parcel of the role she sees for herself in her extended family and the emancipation from the traditional gender role prescribed to her in her marriage. This is why consuming the regular media, and especially family soap operas and political news, is crucially complementary to her participating in the *Radio Maryja* community. Her favorite TV series are those about the problems of keeping a large family integral in the contemporary world (*M jak miłość*, *Plebania*, *Klan*). She speaks of the older couple of Mostowiakowie, the grandparents in one of the series, with awe and respect, because “although the young do as they please, the Mostowiakowie keep all the family together”. She prays for all the individual family members, and when she talks about the fact that the family “is no longer one” but fragmented, she cries, blaming herself for not being able to “keep everybody together”. Also, her adherence to “traditional family values” stems from her interpretation of the deteriorating position of women in contemporary society. She argues that the marriage contract gave the woman a stronger position than they get now in more flexible arrangements. She herself was a single mother for a couple of years, as her partner decided to marry her only when their first child was 4 years old and the second child was on his way. She would not admit this openly, as this is an embarrassing event from her past, but I could be inferred from her other stories and it explains why there were no her own wedding pictures in her house, despite the fact that there were the wedding pictures of all her children. A Church marriage is for her above all an economic contract, and it gives both parties equal economic rights to property. Now, because women have an inferior material position, being 'girlfriends' and not wifes, allows the men to change them as they please. She tells the story of her granddaughter-in-law, who even after marrying Marta's grandson, was not allowed to make even the simplest decisions about the house they moved into when they were renovating it: because “it was his house”. She is especially adamant of a certain pop singer, Doda, who is for her the embodiment of the contemporary woman who is structurally essentially a veiled prostitute. Marta's consumption of the family series and political news is thus a way of finding subjectivity and empowerment in her identity as a woman, who, after decades of unhappy marriage, hard work and humiliation, now can have an

opinion of her own, her own private space and intellectual and spiritual life, as well as the central (if imagined) role in the extended family: the most important social institution in her view.

## **Conclusion**

This essay sought to trace, to borrow Weber's term, an "elective affinity" between material, spatial changes and the immaterial realm of beliefs, organization of the public sphere, and forms of identity. It sought to circumvent the often encountered fallacy in urban studies of treating space as passive screen onto which social relations are inscribed. Such approach stems from the still dominant thinking within the paradigm of "absolute space" (Harvey 2009, Smith 2010). Instead of tracing mechanical and clear-cut relationships between spatial forms and social relations, I sought to trace the emergent spaces and practices of post-secularism. I argued that thus as in the example of Cairo, as described by Hafez (2010), there is an elective affinity between the new literary forms and the Egyptian novel and the spatial expansion in the Cairo slum. Likewise here, by linking the divergent life paths of my two key informants with the spatial transformations of their village-cum-suburb of residence, I sought to describe the possible convergence points between these processes. There is a crucial caveat to this, however. This study, oscillating between a micro-scale reading of life narratives and larger spatial transformations, ought not to be read metonymically. It is doubtful whether one can generalize and lift the insights from this paper to a larger, mainly national, scale. The intersection between spatial and religious processes described here may just as well be a product of the local social conditions, and an attribute of a relatively well-to-do sub-urbanizing village adjacent to a large city. It is uncertain what portion of *Radio Maryja* listeners resemble Marta, how many of them are rural, how many are urban and so forth. In fact, a large part of the strength of Radio Maryja comes from its fragmentation and heterogeneity. This is the difference between a mass media audience and a Church. This fragmentation is writ large into the structure of the movement, and thus has to be taken seriously in any meaningful study of it. So far, however, because the liberal media have been using Radio Maryja as the token of the "backward", simpleminded "conservative" Poland. Yet, as any audience research indicates, the medium is not the message. Just as regular audiences of any large media, listeners of Radio Maryja may be attracted to the medium for very different reasons. This study tried to elucidate some of them. The message is thus local, and not inscribed into the medium.

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