

COMMUNICATION ON **INTIMACY**, **GENDER** AND **SEXUALITY** IN THE **RELIGIOUS** **COMMUNITIES** IN POLAND

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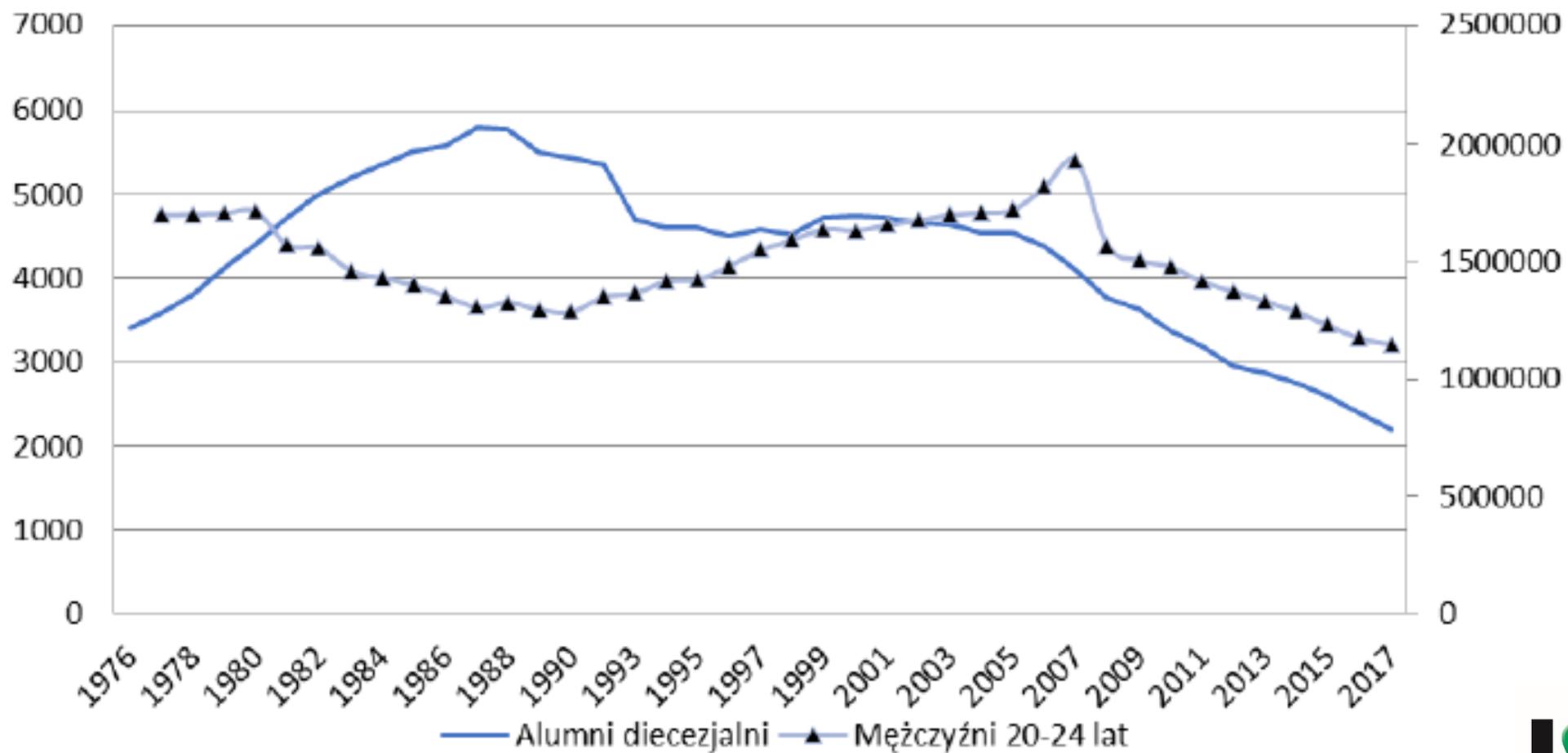


INTERNATIONAL CONSULTATIVE RESEARCH (ICR) CONFERENCE
22 September 2020

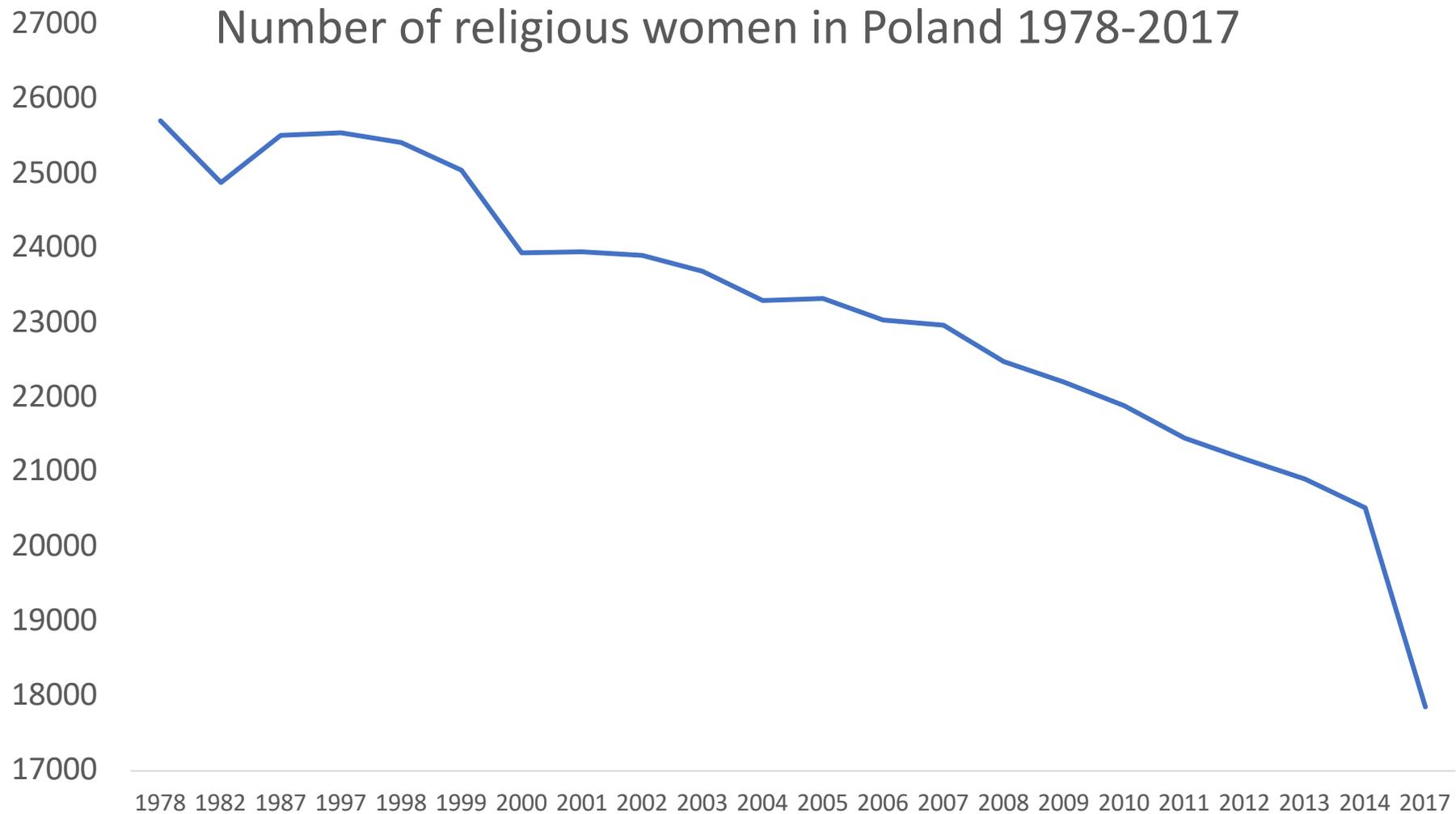
CATHOLICISM IN POLAND

- The unique situation of Polish Catholicism results from the **complex history** of Poland
- After the repressive Communist era and more than 30 years of political and economic transformation, Polish Catholicism is still **vibrant** especially in comparison to other Western European countries
- Polish society represents **an exception** on the world map in terms of religious attitudes. Rates of attendance at Mass in some regions in Poland exceed those of most other strongly Catholic parts of the world, for instance in South America, Africa or the Philippines.
- Polish Catholicism has experienced **a change**; in recent years the religiosity of Polish youth has shown the most rapid decline internationally.

Wyk. 1. Alumni diecezjalni w latach 1976-2017



Number of religious women in Poland 1978-2017



THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

- **RELIGION AND SEXUALITY:** Deep link between religion and sexuality confirms such crucial role of sexuality in the understanding of social life.
- **RELIGION AND GENDER:** Religious life as other cultural forms shape gender roles and affects also sexuality.
- **CELIBACY:** Religious vocation in the practice of celibacy is connected with elaboration and shaping sexuality of religious persons.
- **RELIGIOUS CONCERNS AND TRANSCENDENCE:** In this way sexuality could be understood as related to religious concerns. The relationship to transcendence affects and shapes sexuality understood not only as behaviour but also reflexively elaborated identity.
- **RELIGIOUS VOCATION:** That is why the study of sexuality in the context of religious vocation will be based on the distinction between eroticism and love as a reflexive and personal decision.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What cultural aspects affect living-out sexuality in a religious community?
2. To what extent human relationships affect living-out sexuality in religious life?
3. What is the impact of religious organization on living-out sexuality?
4. To what extent are consecrated persons reflexive on their sexuality?
5. To what extent sexuality shapes the religious vocation?
6. To what extent sexuality rules are obeyed?
7. To what extent are consecrated persons ready for changes in communication about sexuality?

METHODOLOGY

- 2 **panel experts** (word-Cafe technique) with about 40 religious female and 30 male novice masters representing all most important religious orders in Poland;
- **representative survey** of both male and female religious persons in Poland including 180 female and 140 male religious communities representing all religious orders in Poland (n= 1537) Response rate = 70-80%.

INTRODUCTORY CONCLUSIONS

- Culturally configured **norms** within Polish society and Catholic communities present religious **men as socially active** and **performatively engaged** rather than affective and emotional.
- Cultural norms do not stimulate religious men for **elaboration of emotions** and concerns related to embodiment and intimacy.
- That is why, sexuality of religious men is **no reflexively elaborated** and much more privatised.
- By contrast, biographies of religious women do not include such strong social commitment. Women are much more **faced with social expectations concerning intimacy and embodiment**. They elaborate personal concerns emerging from embodiment and confront them within social interactions. In this way women within religious vocation struggle for a configuration of natural embodiment and social search for self-worth.
- **Younger generation** of religious persons is much more open for communication on sexuality within religious communities.
- Individual elaboration of sexual concerns is not efficient in **integrating sexual concerns within individual and social identity**.
- Social interactions within **religious community** may stimulate for reflexive elaboration of sexual concerns.
- Need for **sexual education** within religious communities
- Need for building horizontal and vertical **communication channels** to communicate on sexuality, gender and intimacy.



Thank you for attention
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