

ORIGIN AND GEOPOLITICAL DETERMINANTS OF PROTESTANTISM IN POLAND IN RELATION TO ITS MODERN SPATIAL RANGE

1. INTRODUCTION

Main reformatory movement within the Latin Church which led to the formation of Protestantism began in the 16th century. A direct cause for its creation was the posting of 95 theses against indulgences by a German monk, Martin Luther (1483–1546). Charismatic characters of the reformatory movement, such as aforementioned Luther or John Calvin (1509–1564), doctrinal separateness shaped by them, diverse reformatory ideas of church organization in addition to the character of relations between the religious situation of the faithful and their political leaders caused the fact that Reformation had not been a uniform movement from the very beginning, which resulted in the formation of numerous Churches and protestant communities¹, both in the 16th century and the following centuries. Thus, the term “protestant” was used initially for Churches deriving from the 16th century Reformation and subsequently for other Christian communities which were in opposition to the Roman Catholic Church.

¹ Despite the differences that arose, Churches which derived from the Protestant tradition have common doctrinal foundations. Above all, the Bible is considered as a sole source of faith. Protestantism by attaching a special significance to the Holy Bible rejects all the elements of a Christian religion that do not originate from it and are not justified by it (i.a. indulgences, saints’ and Holy Virgin’s cult, sacrificial character of a mass, hierarchical priesthood, clerical celibacy). The justification, according to the rules of Protestantism, is made through the faith of man which was received through the act of God’s mercy. Therefore, the salvation is a gift from God and does not result from the merits of man.

Being aware of these divisions, which were also present within Polish Protestantism during almost five centuries, the author attempted to present origin and geopolitical determinants of Protestantism in Poland as well as to determine the level of influence of the original expansion of this religion on its modern spatial range in Poland.

2. ORIGIN AND GEOPOLITICAL DETERMINANTS OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF PROTESTANTISM IN POLAND

At the time of Protestantism's emergence in Poland, there had already been three different factions of Christian religion present – Catholicism, Eastern Orthodox and Armenian Church, as well as other Non-Christian religions: Judaism, Islam and Karaism. The foundations of the newly created faction within the womb of Christianity had a significant influence on the origin of Protestantism in Poland, which differed from the aforementioned religions². The need for reform of a crisis-ridden Catholic Church, desired by its adherents in Poland, resulted in great interest and trust towards new religious movement. The birth of a new religion in Poland has to be linked primarily with a spreading religious propaganda. However, together with growing wave of Protestantism advocates' persecutions in the Western and Southern Europe (mainly during the Thirty Years' War), the influence of Protestant immigrants from this part of Europe on the development of Protestantism in Poland grew. The beginning of the new religion dates back to the twenties of the 16th century, as Tazbir (1996) proves. It was, therefore, soon after the famous address of M. Luther in Wittenberg in 1517 which was a symbolic birth of Reformation.

3. LUTHERANISM AND CALVINISM

The need for the introduction of national languages into liturgy proposed by Luther and his German translation of the Bible brought followers for the new movement, mainly among the Germans living in Poland. Lutheranism became, for many of them who were undergoing the gradual process of

² Judaism, Islam and Karaism in Poland originate from the adherents of these religions who came to live in the Polish lands.

polonization but not assimilation, an important determinant of their ethnic identity. Apart from Ruthenians who professed Eastern Orthodox, Jews – Judaism and Tatars – Islam, they constituted the largest national minority not hitherto associated with a separate religious faction in Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The Germans shared the same religion with the two politically strongest nations: the Polish and the Lithuanians. That prevented them from shaping a strong sense of group identity.

A positive feedback which followed the new movement among the Germans had its roots in the areas where they constituted economically, culturally and quantitatively large communities. Such areas included mainly Royal Prussia, Silesia (bearing in mind that the latter had not practically and formally belonged to Poland for over 150 years at the time) as well as borderlands of Greater Poland and Western Pomerania (Duchy of Western Pomerania) belonging to the Reich and inhabited mainly by the Germans (Fig. 1).

Among the aforementioned lands, Duchy of Prussia (Ducal Prussia) deserves a particular attention. It was this area, where Luther's slogans found strong foundation at the beginning of the twenties of the 16th century. Duchy of Prussia had its capital in Królewiec (Königsberg) and was founded after the decline of the Teutonic Order as a result of the Treaty of Cracow. It was a Polish fief. Its ruler, and at the same time last Grand Master of the Teutonic Order was Albert Hohenzollern. Albert, motivated mainly by geopolitical reasons (the withdrawal of imperial/German/papal claims to his country), conducted the secularization of the Monastic State of Teutonic Knights. Ducal Prussia soon became the hub of Lutheran Protestantism and a starting point for the expansion of Luther's ideas into Lithuania and northern lands of the Polish Kingdom.

Gdańsk was a city particularly prone to new ideas. The progress of Protestantism in Gdańsk sat well together with radical social postulates (resulting i.a. from excessive taxation of city's citizens) which in 1525 took a form of a rebellion against local patricians.

A vast social feedback on the new religious movement in Gdańsk was not restricted only to its German inhabitants. In the same way, other hubs of Protestantism started to expand beyond this ethnic group. While analyzing the social aspects of the origins of Protestantism, one has to consider the fact that it received a warm welcome from the social elite of the Polish society which cared deeply for the improvement of both, the state and the Church. The social range of the phenomenon also included aristocrats who wished to limit the privileges of the Church (i.a. through imposing the duty of

participation in the expenses on the military on the clergy and through limiting of Church judicial system over secular judicial system). It also included bourgeoisie and even Church representatives, mainly monks and lower clergy. A certain ethnic context of the new religion, which was perceived as “German” (although it was not the only aspect), became an obstacle for gaining new followers among the lower social classes (rabble and plebs) as well as the peasants.



Fig. 1. Main clusters of Protestantism (Lutheranism, Calvinism and Bohemian Brethren) in Poland during the 16th and 17th century
 Source: Author's own elaboration

The above outlined foundations of Protestantism in Poland were born under the influence of Martin Luther's teachings. However, Lutheranism was

not the only Reformation strand which in a short period of time gained a large number of Polish supporters. Shortly later, mainly during the reign of Zygmunt August (Sigismund II Augustus) (1520–1572), the ideas of Calvinism started to reach Poland. This allows to assume that its origin is similar to that of Lutheranism. Calvinism became so popular that it soon became the leading religion among the Polish nobility. One of the principles of Lutheranism was particularly not popular among the nobility, as described by Tazbir (1956, 1959, 1996) – it was an absolute obedience for the authority, king or a duke. The nobility, as widely known, wanted to put limitations to those dependencies³.

The political motives for choosing a religious faction resulted in a particular perception of Calvinist religion by some members of nobility. Calvinism is based on predestination which assumes that at birth people are destined by God either for salvation or damnation and it cannot be changed. The former benefit from God's grace which enables them to run business and gain wealth, while the latter have no luck in business and live in poverty. According to the aforementioned author, Polish Calvinism was only partly similar to its Western European counterpart. It did not involve praise for active life nor did it advocate trade and the idea that luck in business is granted by God's grace. In Poland, being a Calvinist was a statement of superiority of nobility over the ruling dynasty and its administration (Tazbir, 1956, 1996). When creating the Calvinist Church, the nobility aimed at gaining control over it. Its clergy members (ministers) were considered mostly as officers, not co-rulers, unlike its secular patrons, mostly wealthy nobility (Tazbir, 1996; Gołaszewski, 2004). Such an approach to religion had also its geopolitical aspect – Calvinist faction was a factor of autonomic aspirations for Lithuanian nobility (Fig. 2).

Not only nobility, but also wealthy bourgeoisie adopted the new religion. One of their main motives was to join the elite group of the chosen ones, graced by God with the success in business. Calvinism and also Lutheranism were significantly less popular among other social bourgeois groups, such as rabble and plebeians who considered the new religion as a domain of the loathed patricians. Calvinism, as well as the entire Protestantism, bestowed much authority on the Holy Bible and the individualization of piety reflected

³ The quickly growing popularity of a new religious movement brought the summoning of the first Calvinist synod in 1554 in Słomniki, which was also the first Protestant synod in Poland. It was preceded by the first convention of the clergy of the new Church which took place in Pińczów 4 years earlier.

in the individual readings of the Bible. It resulted in lack of popularity among the less educated, mainly peasants and aforementioned plebeians. One of the reasons for these social groups remaining loyal to Catholicism was the liturgical setting of the religious ceremonies, which was much richer than proposed by Calvinism and Lutheranism and therefore considered more solemn, dignified and eminent. Moreover, hard socioeconomic situation of the peasants, who did not recognize Polish Reformation as a chance for improvement, only fueled their distrust for the new religion. It is noteworthy that predestination was an explanation for the distress of peasants and reluctance of nobility for improving their situation.

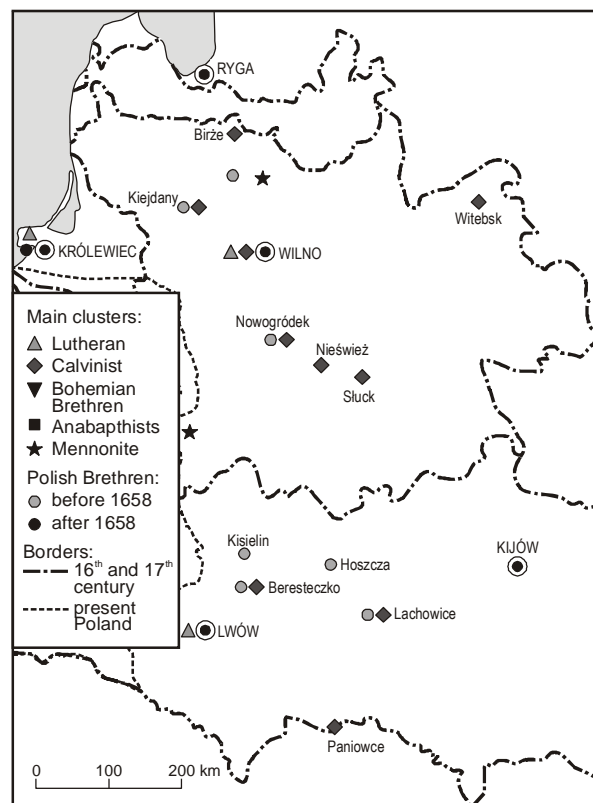


Fig. 2. Main clusters of Protestantism outside present borders of Poland during the 16th and 17th century
Source: Author's own elaboration

The support for Calvinism from only two social groups as well as treating it as a political tool by the Lithuanian nobility were reflected in the spatial

development of the new religion. It was most popular within the borders of Grand Duchy of Lithuania. In the Kingdom of Poland it was most popular in Lesser Poland. Strong clusters of Calvinism were also present in Greater Poland.

4. OTHER PROTESTANT DENOMINATIONS

Lutheranism and Calvinism were not the only denominations which determined the foundation of Protestantism in Poland. The origin of this religious movement was more complex. The deepening crisis within the Latin Church, as mentioned in the introduction, paved the way for many reformative movements which were just the introduction to its 16th century schism. Among them, there were two socio-religious movements: Waldesians and Hussites (thus the term: Pre-Reformation Churches). However, the origin of these two factions in Poland differs from that of Calvinism and Lutheranism. In case of the two main Protestant denominations, new followers were gained by religious propaganda. The ideas of Waldesians and Hussites, on the other hand, came with the followers themselves. The former, excommunicated in 1184 and persecuted, reached Silesia in the 14th century. Their main cluster was Świdnica until the inquisition intensified its actions. The inquisition trials lead to the demise of dozens of Waldesians, which remains a tragic episode in the history of formation of religious movements in Poland. On the other hand, first incoming groups of the Bohemian Brethren which derive from the Hussites, reached Poland at the beginning of 16th century after they had been delegalized in Bohemia in 1508⁴. Constant persecutions within their own country led to the increase in their migration to Poland. The migration came in three main waves. The first wave occurred in 1548 and reached Royal and Ducal Prussia, which were the areas of largest religious freedom in Poland and to Greater Poland. The second wave (1628) involved mainly Greater Poland (mainly Leszno) and the third – Silesia and Greater Poland in 1742.

⁴ The Hussitism was a socio-religious movement started in the 14th century in Bohemia by the teachings of the Bohemian religious reformer – Jan Hus. Hus proclaimed i.a. the need for personal sanctification through a decent life based on the Holy Bible, prohibition of the ownership of secular goods by the clergy, equality of both the clergy and laics in the face of the law and punishment for sins without consideration for sinner's social status.

Bohemian Brothers participating in the first migration wave were initially not granted the complete freedom of worship. A royal edict, issued after pressure from the clergy, ordered them to leave Poznań and other centers in Greater Poland as well as Royal Prussia, where most exiles from Greater Poland went. Ducal Prussia also did not provide good start for the formation of Hussite clusters, mainly due to animosity from local Lutheran groups. This caused the Brethren to once again flee to Greater Poland, but this time surreptitiously. This time they managed to get the support of local bourgeois, as well as nobility and magnates (Tazbir, 1956, 1996; Dworzaczkowa 1997). Their hard work and modesty enabled them support of the wealthiest Greater Poland families: Górka, Krotoski, Leszczyński, Lipski and Ostroróg (Dworzaczkowa, 1997, Gołaszewski, 2004). Thanks to the families' protection, the earlier royal edicts lost their judicial power which resulted in greater stability among the clusters of Bohemian Brethren⁵.

Freedom of belief granted to Bohemian Brethren in Greater Poland brought the second wave of migration. Most of the new immigrants reached Leszno which belonged to the Leszczyński family and spurred the economic growth of the city.

When considering the social and spatial development of Bohemian Brethren, it is noteworthy that although the Bohemians formed the core of the Church, they were not its only members. The community, despite its national background, promoted universal religious values which attracted attention of the Poles (mainly nobility, but also bourgeois and peasants), the Germans and the Scots (mainly Presbyterians). Another factor which brought many new followers for the Brethren was its efficient organization and high morale of its clergy. After 1655 many Bohemian Brothers (mainly Bohemians) along with other Protestants left Poland (despite the fact that they were not forced to leave by the royal decree, like in the case of Arians who were accused of helping the Swedish invaders). Those who remained (including the Bohemians who gradually mixed with local citizens) applied for access to Evangelical Reformed Church (Calvinist)⁶.

⁵ In the years 1587–1590, there were 35 congregations of the Bohemian Brethren. In the 16th and at the beginning of 17th century they had the total of at least 50 congregations within Greater Poland, Kuyavia and Sieradz Province, although all of them did not exist at the same time (Dworzaczkowa, 1997).

⁶ Before the end of 17th century – as mentioned by Dworzaczkowa (1997) – almost all the differences between the Brethren and the Reformed Churches of Lesser Poland and Lithuania had withered.

Polish Anabaptists shared the same origin as other representatives of pre-reformative movements in Poland. Their practices included baptism of the adults. They preached radical social reforms such as pacifism, equality of all people, rejection of military service and division between Church and state. Anabaptists reached Poland due to persecutions they had to endure in the Netherlands and Germany. Despite the royal edict of 1535, which prohibited accepting them within the state borders, they reached Royal Prussia, Volhynia (Włodzimierz Wołyński) and Lublin Province (Kraśnik) forming stable clusters within the domains of Greater Poland's nobility (i.a. in Międzyrzecze, Kościan, Śmigiel, Wschowa area). The nobility valued the Anabaptists as skilled craftsmen (Fig. 3).

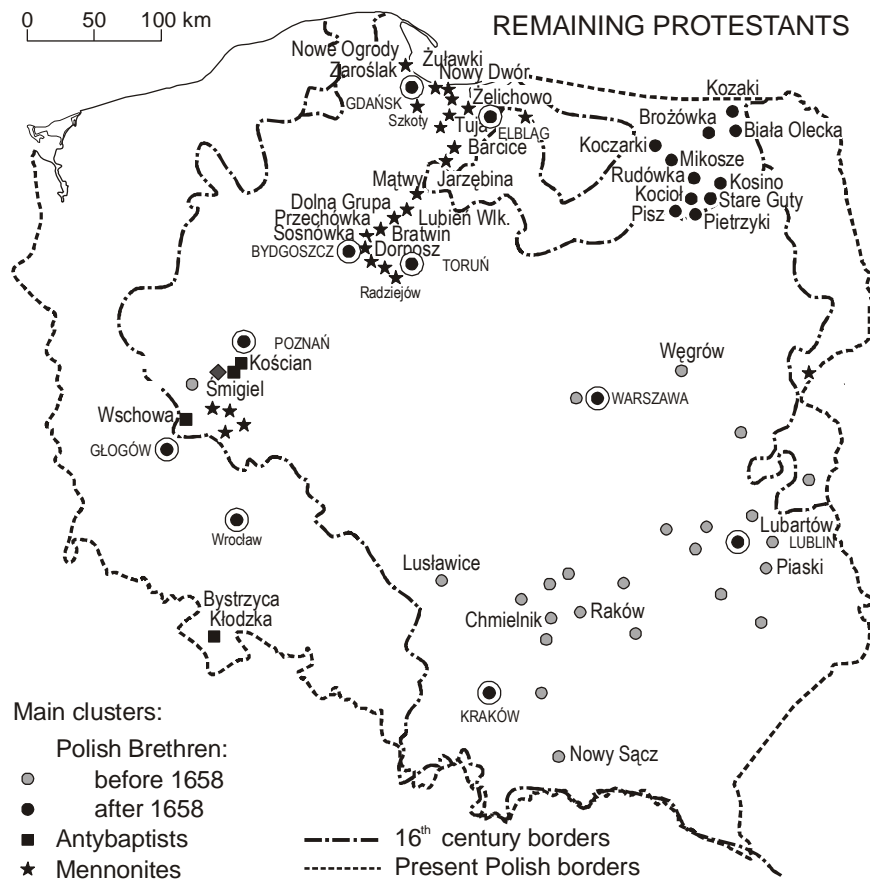


Fig. 3. Main clusters of Polish Brethren, Anabaptists and Mennonites during the 16th and 17th century within present borders of Poland

Source: Author's own elaboration

Mennonites – one of the factions of Anabaptists, advocates of adults' baptism and equality of all men – is another Protestant, religious minority which was founded in Poland by the refugees from Western Europe. Persecuted for their religious beliefs and finally banished from their lands (hard to access and marsh areas of northern Netherlands, Friesland, Rheinland and northern German provinces) they reached Royal and Ducal Prussia at the end of 16th century. A dozen thousand of them settled in Żuławy, in the vicinity of Elbląg, Gdańsk and Malbork and later in Kuyavia, Greater Poland, Lesser Poland and Masovia. They were considered experts in the field of drying and development of wetlands and flood plains. Undoubtedly, these valuable economic skills together with unwillingness to convert “Polish” believers to their faith, paved the way for a large dose of tolerance towards the Mennonites. The tolerance was reflected in the freedom of worship, even within the borders of lands belonging to Catholic bishops.

The persecutions at their homeland also determined the origin of Puritans in Poland. They started as an opposing movement within the Anglican Church and finally started to form its separate religious structure. They were represented in Poland by Scottish and Irish immigrants. Unlike Mennonites who consisted mostly of peasants and artisans

The persecutions at their homeland also determined the origin of Puritans in Poland. They started as an opposing movement within the Anglican Church and finally started to form its separate religious structure. They were represented in Poland by Scottish and Irish immigrants. Unlike Mennonites, who consisted mostly of peasants and craftsmen, the Puritans in Poland had usually military and merchant background. They were not as numerous as the refugees from the Netherlands and their contribution in the development of Poland was not as significant as that of the Dutch.

5. THE BEGINNING OF THE DIVISION WITHIN PROTESTANTISM

Protestantism, as mentioned before, was characterized by divisions from the very outset. A dozen years after the introduction of Calvinism in Poland there was already a division among its followers. After doctrinal and social disputes during 1562–1665, a new branch called the Polish Brethren (also called the “Arians” by their religious opponents) emerged. They were con-

sidered to be the most radical branch of Polish Reformation⁷. Doctrinal and social radicalism of the Polish Brethren made them enemies, not only within the Catholic Church but also within other Protestant Churches. The policy of tolerance attracted hostility from the wealthy nobles who sympathized with both Catholicism and Protestantism. On the other hand, Polish Brethren received a warmer welcome among the middle class and the poor. This social ostracism did not help in any way to gain a larger number of believers. These factors determined the spatial development of Polish Arianism. Their clusters emerged mainly in the lands belonging to the nobility who belonged to the Polish Brethren or simply sympathized with them or just tolerated all Protestant movements. The clusters were founded in remote areas in order to preserve the ideal community of “the real Christians” (for example in Raków) but also in the largest of cities which were also open for the religious minorities⁸, despite the dominance of the Catholics within their walls.

The majority of Arian communities suffered a final decline when Polish Brethren left the country in 1658. This was a result of legal act persecuting them for their religious beliefs. However, the actual motive behind the issued act of law was the support of Polish Brethren for the Swedish invaders in 1655. Conversion to Catholicism was an alternative for banishment. As a result of these migrations, the geography of the Brethren’s clusters changed significantly. The clusters that remained took the forms of secret Arian communities (for example Pińczów, Jankówka) and soon ceased to exist at all. Most of the Polish Brethren fled to take refuge in Ducal Prussia. It soon became the new center of Arianism after 1658. The majority of Arians settled in rural areas (i.a. Kosinowo, Rudówka) but they also chose urban areas, such as Królewiec (Königsberg), as their destinations (Fig. 3).

It is noteworthy that the rise of Arian clusters in the aforementioned villages was only possible because of the support of nobility. It was similar in the case of Lutheran, Calvinist and Bohemian Brethren congregations. The

⁷ What differed Polish Brethren from other factions (not only Protestant by Christian in general) was their doctrinal radicalism (i.a. rejection of the Holy Trinity) and daring political and social statements (i.a. religious tolerance, division of Church and state, banning of participation in any wars, termination of serfdom, rejection of physical wealth and any state offices by Arian nobility). The Holy Bible constituted the entire doctrine of the Polish Brethren.

⁸ The main clusters of Polish Brethren included Raków, Pińczów, Gdańsk, Kraków, Lewartów (nowadays Lubartów), Lublin, Lusławice, Nowy Sącz, Śmigiel, Węgrów and also Lachowice in the Volhynia and Nowogródek (Navahrudak), Kiejdany (Kėdainiai) and Taurogi (Tauragė) in Lithuania.

nobility owned or occupied (as lease- or lienholders) the fiefdoms which included these villages. The nobles themselves often belonged to Polish Brethren.

6. SPATIAL RANGE AND PERIODIZATION OF PROTESTANTISM'S DEVELOPMENT IN POLAND

6.1. Areas of Catholicism's and Eastern Orthodox influence

When analyzing the spatial range of the entire reformative movement, it is noticeable that it developed mainly in the areas inhabited by Roman Catholics. It is justified by the origin of the movement which was mainly the intention to cure the Catholic Church. However, the reformative movement did not achieve any significant success within the areas dominated by another Christian faction – Eastern Orthodox. It was due to the fact that Eastern Orthodox Church had already adopted several rules which were being discussed by the reformative movement. These included: holy communion in both kinds (bread and wine), using national languages in liturgy and, with several restrictions, matrimony of the priests. However, Protestant congregations were also present in the areas dominated by Eastern Orthodox. In the Ruthenian lands of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the Protestants received protection from the sparse nobles who decided to support or join the new movement. Still, their conversion to Protestantism did not bring any improvement in economy for the lower social classes, which rendered the peasants indifferent to the new religion. Moreover, the nobility often challenged the Eastern Orthodox traditions by ordering extra work for their serfs during the Eastern Orthodox holidays. Therefore, there had been no support from the peasants for the “new religion of the liege lords”.

6.2. Polish fiefdoms and lands independent from Poland

Protestantism (especially Lutheranism) also received a warm welcome within Polish fiefdoms and lands independent from Poland. After Albert Hohenzollern's conversion to Lutheranism and converting the Monastic State of Teutonic Knights into a secular state which became Polish fief, Ducal

Prussia and Duchy of Livonia⁹ became areas of intensive development of the reformative movement.

The ideas of Protestantism (mainly Lutheranism) gained popularity also in other Polish lands, such as Western Pomerania and Silesia, which were almost completely out of Polish jurisdiction during that period of time. The Pomeranian knights introduced Lutheranism officially in 1534 in fear of the growing power of the Diocese of Kamień, as proven by Urban (1988). Moreover, some knights of the politically divided Silesia (which was under the Habsburg dominion) proclaimed Lutheranism as an official religion. This occurred in the Duchy of Bierutów, Duchy of Brzeg, Duchy of Legnica, Duchy of Oleśnica and Duchy of Ziębice. Another interesting example was the Duchy of Cieszyn which was inhabited mostly by Polish people. Duke Wenceslaus III Adam shifted to Lutheranism as an official religion in 1545¹⁰.

6.3. Within the domains of nobility

The progress of the Reformation, also in its spatial aspect, was influenced by the wealthy nobles and magnates who supported the new religion. The Warsaw Confederation acts (1573) gave the nobility the right to constitute an official religion of their choice within their domains. The Protestant congregations developed in Lesser Poland under the protection of Oleśnicki, Ossoliński and Potocki families; in Greater Poland – of Ogórek, Ostroróg and Zborowski families; in Lithuania (mainly Lutheran) – Radziwiłł, Bilewicz, Chodkiewicz and Naruszewicz families. The spatial development of Reformation was also influenced by the extensiveness of particular magnate domains. The domains with largest areas were located in Lithuania (and also Ukraine). Smaller domains were situated in Lesser Poland and in Greater Poland. The main clusters of Protestantism were the administrative centers (including residences) and larger towns with developed trade and

⁹ Duchy of Livonia, which was the historical land of Livonian Sword Brethren, was incorporated to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in 1561. Their Grand Master, Gotthard von Kettler, converted the Duchy of Livonia into a secular state after an agreement with Sigismund Augustus. The part of Livonia, known as Duchy of Courland and Semigallia, was given the freedom to profess Lutheranism which became an official state religion in 1570. These lands were given under the rule of Gotthard von Kettler and became Polish fief.

¹⁰ The future rulers shifted back to Catholicism which brought a wave of persecutions towards the Protestants. Paradoxically, this only strengthened and consolidated the Lutherans. The Lutheran denomination received equal rights officially in 1781.

craft. Such clusters in Lesser Poland included: Baranów, Kock, Książ, Lewartów, Łañcut, Piñczów, Secymin, Słomniki, Włodziław; in Greater Poland: Koźminek, Leszno, Międzyrzecz, Ostroróg, Pradziejów; in Lithuania – Birże, Kiejdany, Kleck, Nieśwież¹¹.

6.4. Royal cities

The development of new religious movements had a different path in royal cities. Even Sigismund Augustus, who was highly tolerant for the progress of Reformation, issued several decrees forcing the Protestants to flee from these urban areas. However, the actual decision in terms of the execution of royal decrees belonged to local royal officers (“starostas”) who were given much independence in that field. The starostas sympathizing with reformative movement usually did not persecute the Protestants, thus contributing to the development of Protestant congregations, even within the cities belonging to the king. This could be observed in Kościan, Międzyrzecz or Wschowa. Under the pressure from wealthy protectors, the Protestant clusters also emerged in larger cities, such as Cracow or Warsaw (Tazbir, 1956, 1967, 1973, 1996; Gastpary, 1977).

6.5. Areas with large autonomy (Royal Prussia)

The process of Reformation followed an easier path in the cities of Royal Prussia. This part of the state of Teutonic Knights, incorporated to Poland after the Treaty of Toruń in 1466, had a vast autonomy. The main cities of Royal Prussia were given vast economic and judicial privileges. These privileges were extended by royal mandates in 1557–1558 which enabled the free development of Lutheranism in Gdańsk, Toruń, Elbląg and later also in other cities. The bishop cities (i.a. Lubawa, Chełmża, Chełmno) were an exception and remained the pillars of Catholicism (Tazbir, 1996). In 1559 local nobility received the full religious freedom. This concerned mainly wealthy nobles whose domain consisted of royal acres. Therefore, the Reformation widened its territorial range. Only the lands belonging to Diocese of Warmia were excluded.

¹¹ Especially during the Thirty Years' War many Lutherans came to Greater Poland, mainly from Silesia and Germany. They were encouraged by local nobility and included mainly skilled and hardworking artisans. The Protestants contributed to the economic growth of both, noble domains (i.a. Skoki, Zduny, Rawicz, Szlichtyngowa, Kargowa, Bojanowo) and royal cities (Kościan).

6.6. Other areas

The reformatory movement received the smallest feedback in the Masovia (except for the lands were Eastern Orthodox dominated). This resulted from the lack of large magnate domains and therefore, lack of financial and judicial protection from the wealthy nobles. Masovia was dominated by the poor nobility which was unable to oppose the influence of the Catholic Church and to create the infrastructure (churches, schools) to enable the development of the new religion.

The Reformation also did not find much support in some of politically and economically significant cities which were inhabited by people of different cultures and religions. Lwów is an example of such a city. Various (but mainly economic) interests of the Catholics, Eastern Orthodox, Jewish and Armenians collided in Lwów. The Catholic patricians found it important to keep the support of the Catholic Church in order to maintain the strong position in the multi-cultural balance of power.

To sum it up, the cities that determined the initial spatial range of Protestantism in Poland were Toruń, Gdańsk and Królewiec (for the Lutherans) and Pińczów, Leszno, Kiejdany and Birze (for the Calvinists). These were the places where their general councils were held and where their schools, archives and printing houses were built.

7. THE PERIODIZATION OF PROTESTANTISM'S DEVELOPMENT IN POLAND

The origin and initial spatial development of Protestantism in Poland can be also categorized within the specific timeframe. Two main stages can be determined: 1) "initial stage" (during the reign of Sigismund I the Old) when new religious movement was developing illegally and was persecuted by the state, thus it did not meet much publicity and spatial range, and 2) "advanced stage" also called the "golden age" of Polish Reformation (during the reign of Sigismund Augustus), when the religious movement came "out of the underground", became fully legitimate and widened its spatial and social range of influence¹².

¹² The peak achievement of the period was the so-called Warsaw Confederation of 1573. It was a legal act which gave Polish nobility full religious freedom.

7.1. The decrease of Reformation's progress and its decline – demographic, social and spatial aspects

Counter-Reformation, which was a religious movement within the Catholic Church, stopped the development of Reformation in Poland and led to reclaiming its former, dominative position by the Catholicism. However, the Counter-Reformation in Poland – as proven by Tazbir (1956, 1967, 1973) – did not reach the scale of bloody persecutions as it did in other parts of Europe. The movement took the advantage of a widespread propaganda and certain legal gaps in the Warsaw Confederation (the legal act did not state what the punishment for breaking the religious peace would be) (Tazbir, 1959, 1967, 1973). The propaganda led to numerous acts of vandalism which began in the second half of the 16th century. As a result of that, many churches, houses, cemeteries were vandalized. In extreme cases, there had also been acts of assaults and even assassinations. This occurred mainly in large cities with Catholic majorities which were not the main clusters of Protestantism, such as Cracow, Lublin, Poznań and Wilno. The Counter-Reformation did not achieve any success in the lands which were under nobility's jurisdiction. Within their borders, the Protestant congregations continued their religious activities through the development of churches, schools and printing houses. Vast economic and legal privileges, in addition to religious freedom, made the cities of Royal Prussia free of any religion-based violence and turmoil. A similar status was held within the borders of Polish fiefdoms – Ducal Prussia and Duchy of Livonia.

It is noteworthy that the operations of Counter-Reformation led to the victory of Catholicism. There were also other factors, beside Counter-Reformation and the ones mentioned before, that led to Reformation's decline and caused the majority of the nobles to remain loyal to the Catholic Church. The most important factors, according to Tazbir (1959) include the highly acclaimed Jesuit colleges and the Protestant schools which often faced financial difficulties.

The decrease of Reformation's progress and its consequent decline resulting in the decrease in the numbers of its followers and churches was also influenced by:

- 1) legal aspects – legal act of 1668 banned the rejection of Catholicism (under the penalty of banishment) which put an end to the religious freedom granted by the Warsaw Confederation act (also within the domains of nobility);

- 2) legal and political aspects:

a) implementation of postulates addressed by the nobility against Church and secular officers (the so-called execution of rights) by the Polish parliament; some nobles, after having their demands met, decided to return to the Catholic Church;

b) lack of support from the ruling monarch;

3) organizational and religious aspects – lack of organizational framework of the Protestant Churches (including lack of centralized power) and their dependence on noble protectors caused any shift to Catholicism from nobility to result in the conversion of parishes from Protestant into Catholic;

4) political and economic aspects – ousting of Protestants from the state offices without any legal basis (this was mainly during the reign of Sigismund III Vasa and concerned offices both nominated by the king and manned through elections);

5) geopolitical aspects – wars which were waged against forces of other religious traditions than Catholicism (i.a. against the Eastern Orthodox Cossacks or Lutheran Sweden) were used as a motive to fight religious minorities by the Catholic propaganda; the vicinity of non-Catholic countries (from the north – Sweden and Ducal Prussia, east – Eastern Orthodox Russia, south – Calvinist Transylvania, west – Lutheran Brandenburg) was another factor.

The condition and character of early Polish Reformation in is very accurately described by Wyczański (1965, 1987, 1991) who claims that Reformation in Poland

was rather an intellectual movement (than a religious one – ed. A.R.) which attracted the attention of people with a certain level of culture but it did not inflame feelings or revolutionize normal life [...] The attitude towards religion was part of a Renaissance attitude towards life which can be described as open (Wyczański, 1965, 1987, 1991).

In the face of more intensive Counter-Reformation activities, especially during 17th century, many reformative congregations ceased to exist in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

Some data confirms these tendencies. During Reformation's biggest boom in Poland (mainly during the years 1570–1580) there had been nearly 1000 Protestant congregations, of which at least half was Calvinist, as reported by Litak (1994). According to calculations, made by other authors, there were fewer congregations. According to Kriegseisen (1996) their total number reached 800. In the following years, the number of congregations decreased, regardless of the region. According to other authors, there were 250

Reformed parishes in Lesser Poland at the end of 16th century, while in 1650 the number decreased to 69, in 1773 – 10 and in 1791 – only 8. On the other hand, in Grand Duchy of Lithuania at the end of 16th century there were 191 Reformed parishes, 8 Lutheran and 7 Arian. In 1655, the number of Reformed parishes dropped down to 140, in 1696 – only 48, in 1764 – 40 and in 1791 – 30. In Greater Poland, where Reformation achieved much success, the majority of parishes were Lutheran, then Calvinist and finally Bohemian and Arian Brothers'. The success of Lutheranism in Greater Poland was the most durable in a longer perspective. In 1791 there were 68 Lutheran parishes. Therefore, during the two hundred year period the changes were not so significant. At the same time, in Lesser Poland and Lithuania there were respectively only 10 and 5 Lutheran parishes (bearing in mind that this Protestant denomination was less popular than Calvinism in these areas). In Royal Prussia in 1580, the Lutherans owned 162 parishes (50% of all parishes in this area) and in mid-17th century – ca. 90 (Gastpary, 1977; Wyczański, 1991; Litak, 1994; Kriegseisen, 1996).

7.2. Five centuries of Protestantism in Poland

Nearly five years of Protestantism's presence in Poland led to its many divisions, which are still ongoing. Not all the Protestant communities, which have emerged during that period of time, have their origins in Poland. Some of them have their roots in other countries.

During the last five centuries Protestantism in Poland witnessed periods of significant decline (caused mainly by the acts of convocation parliament of 1668 and legal acts of the 1717–1733 period, which rendered all religious minorities as second-class citizens)¹³, but also periods of prosperity (mainly resulting from the immigration of German settlers during the partition period). It is noteworthy, that in 1768 by the power of the so-called Warsaw treaty (which was enforced by both, Russia and Prussia) all the religious

¹³ Upon the vacancy of the throne the convocation parliament delegatized the rejection of Catholicism and declared an obligation of raising the children from mixed marriages as Catholics. As a result of the Great Northern War (1700–1716), during which the Protestants supported King Stanisław Leszczyński, they were banned from building new churches after 1717. They were also banned from holding services in churches erected after 1632 (only private services were allowed) which were to be destroyed. Moreover, after 1736 the Protestants were deprived of political rights – they were not allowed to be members of the parliament or senate or to hold any state offices (except for starostas).

dissidents' rights were reinstated, which undoubtedly improved the status of Polish Protestantism. As a result of 18th century emigration, the disproportion between the Calvinists and Lutherans started to grow (the latter began to gain advantage¹⁴). As an effect of migration movements, the number of Protestants in Poland increased. However, the increase is hard to measure precisely. At the beginning of 18th century the number of Protestants ranged from 200 to 300 thousand (as compared to 10 million Catholics). In 1921 there was over 1 million Protestants in Poland (with 27,2 million of total inhabitants). The rebirth of Poland brought the increase of nationalism, which caused the Protestants to move to their "foreign homelands", especially those of Czech (Bohemian) origin. During the Second World War both, the Evangelical-Augsburg (Lutheran) and Evangelical Reformed (Calvinist) Protestants, suffered great human losses. The Reformed also suffered heavy material losses (many churches and printing houses were destroyed). However, the most significant decrease in Protestants in Poland (especially Lutherans) was witnessed after the Second World War. As a result of evacuation, escape, voluntary relocation or compulsory eviction, many German Lutherans, who were a dominant ethnic group within the Evangelical-Augsburg Church, left Poland. Moreover, a group of Czech Evangelical Reformed Church Protestants fled to Czechoslovakia.

8. MODERN SPATIAL RANGE OF PROTESTANTISM IN POLAND IN RELATION TO ITS ORIGIN AND ITS INITIAL EXPANSION

There are two descendants of the 16th century Protestantism in Poland: Evangelical-Augsburg Church (Lutheran confession) and Evangelical Reformed Church (Calvinist confession). Indirectly, its descendants also include numerous Churches and religious groups, deriving from the "Second Reformation", many of which separated from the traditional Churches (Augsburg and Reformed).

¹⁴ At the end of the 18th century, apart from large number of German Lutheran emigrants, a number of foreign Calvinists also came to Poland (mainly from France, Germany, Switzerland and Scotland). It is also worth to mention that a large number of Reformed Evangelical nobility from Greater Poland converted back to Catholicism as a sign of solidarity with Polish nation, which was being Germanized.

To determine the level of influence of initial spatial development of Protestantism in Poland on its modern spatial range, the author will refer to the religious groups which defined the origin of the Protestant faction.

The Evangelical-Augsburg Church is the largest Protestant community in Poland. Together with the Evangelical Reformed Church, it constitutes 51.6% of Polish Protestants. Nowadays, there are 6 dioceses of Evangelical-Augsburg Church in Poland: Cieszyn Diocese (with its seat in Bielsko-Biała, 46 thousand members), Katowice Diocese (Katowice, 15.2 thousand), Masurian (Olsztyn, 5.1 thousand), Pomeranian-Greater Poland (Sopot, 4.15 thousand), Warsaw (Łódź, 5.6 thousand) and Wrocław (Wrocław, 3 thousand) (Fig. 4). Therefore, the Evangelical-Augsburg Church refers in its territorial-administrative structure to the spatial concentration of the initial Lutheran clusters. However, it is noteworthy that during the five centuries Protestant immigrants (mainly from Germany) settled in many of the 16th century clusters, forming many new ones, especially in central Poland, such as Łódź (which is nowadays a seat of the Warsaw Diocese), Pabianice or Zduńska Wola. The number and the locations of Evangelical-Augsburg parishes in Poland nowadays confirms the coexistence of both, the initial clusters of Polish Protestantism and the new centers, which emerged during the late 18th century and during the 19th century.

Some of the aspects of the social activities of Evangelical-Augsburg Church, such as ministries, also relate to its initial territorial development. The ministries are located i.a. in Dziegiełków (Evangelical Ministry of Youth), Wisła (Evangelical Firefighters Ministry), Świętoszówka in Bielsko County (Evangelical Prisoners' Ministry). The locations indicate the importance and stability of the Cieszyn Silesia enclave for Lutheranism.

The roots of Evangelical Reformed Church in Poland date back to the 16th century. However, up to the mid-nineteenth century (in 1849 a consistory, which was an executive body of the Reformed Church, was formed) it did not constitute one organizational entity, which resulted from the synodal-presbyterian structure of traditional Protestant Churches. There were three Church communities in Poland, called Unities: Greater Poland Unity (including the clusters of the aforementioned Bohemian Brethren), Lesser Poland Unity and Lithuanian Unity. They all had independent organizational structure (informal federation of communities) which held irregular contacts and irregular general synods.

Continuous decrease in ranks of Evangelical Reformed Church members and its extremely hard condition during the People's Republic of Poland period resulted in the decline of many clusters of the Reformed Evangelists.

Their modern geographical distribution reflects the initial spatial range of Calvinism in a very limited way¹⁵.

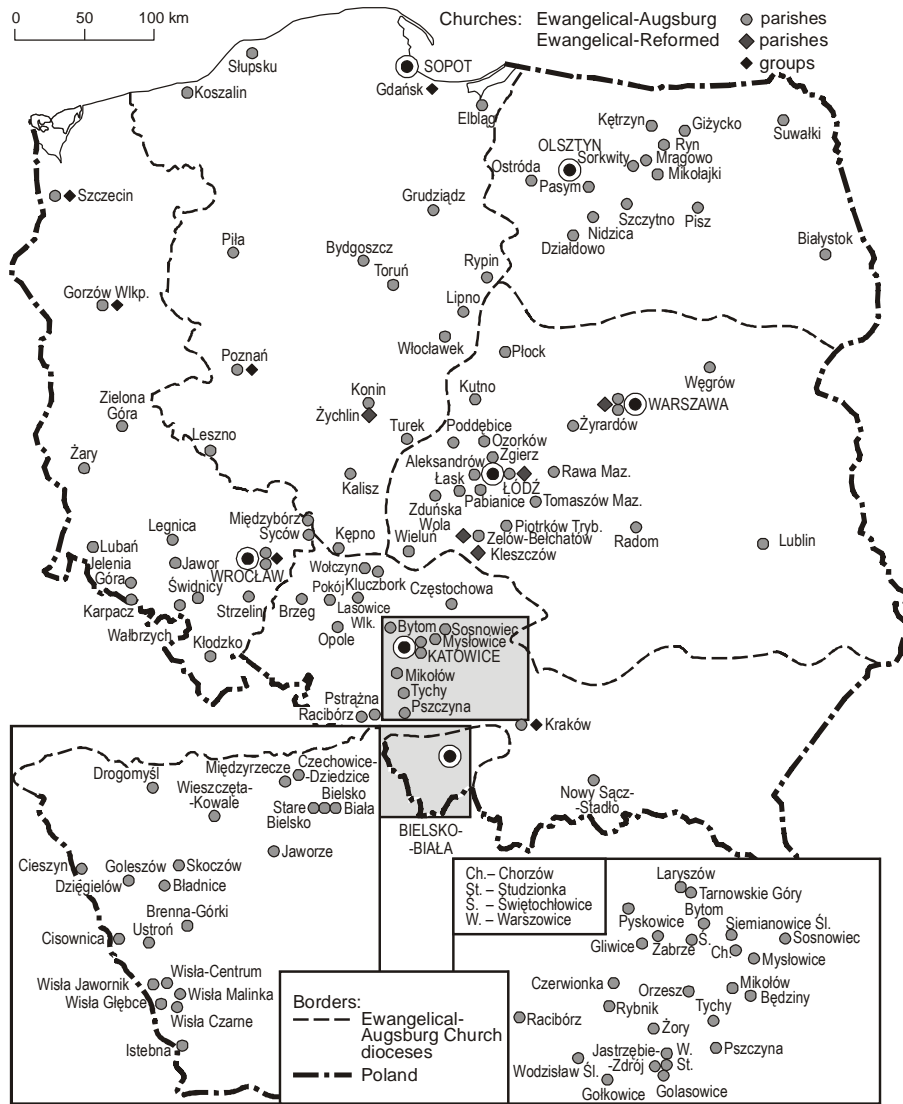


Fig. 4. Evangelical-Augsburg and Evangelical Reformed Churches' parishes in Poland (as of 2008)
Source: Author's own elaboration

¹⁵ The only modern Evangelical-Reformed parish, whose roots date back to Polish Reformation, is located in Żychlin.

Its modern range is shaped mainly by the clusters which emerged as a result of the 18th and 19th century migrations. In the mid-eighteenth century, the persecuted Calvinists from Western Europe moved to Silesia (i.a. Pstrążna, Strzelin¹⁶) and Greater Poland. At the beginning of 19th century central Poland (i.a. Żelów) was populated by the Bohemian Brethren (due to economic reasons) who joined Evangelical Reformed Church, but kept their language and traditions. There were also other Polish, German and Czech settlers who settled in developing industrial cities (Łódź, Żyrardów). Some of the modern Evangelical Reformed clusters have their roots in the 20th century. For example, a growing industrial center, Bełchatów, started to attract Reformed Christians from the neighboring areas (i.a. Żelów) (Fig. 4).

The remaining religious communities, whose origin dates back to the beginning of Polish Reformation, have not endured until today. Although Mennonites remained independent in their religious beliefs, traditions and customs for a long period of time, in 18th century they lost their ethnic individuality under Polish influence and as a result of partitions, they were Germanized¹⁷. Persecuted by Wehrmacht for refusing military service during the Second World War, they immigrated to Germany as part of the repatriation movement. This resulted in the decline of Mennonite confession in Poland. The Bohemian Brethren joined the Evangelical Reformed Church, which was dogmatically close to their beliefs. The Polish Brethren members are organized in two separate religious entities (Unity of Polish Brethren and Community of Unitarian Universalists) but their activities are not the direct continuation of the initial Arian movement¹⁸. They can be considered as a reborn incarnation of the historic Polish Brethren (Unity of Polish Brethren was formed in 1937 and registered in 1967).

9. CONCLUSIONS

At its outset, although Polish Protestantism gained big popularity, it did not manage to cover a broad social scope. It gained members mainly among the nobility and wealthy bourgeoisie. Cieszyn Silesia region was an

¹⁶ The first Hussites came in the mid-fifteenth century.

¹⁷ During the partition period, especially under Prussian occupation, the Mennonites lost part of their rights which led to their emigration, mainly to Ukraine, Siberia and Canada.

¹⁸ In 2002 Unity of Polish Brethren numbered 221 members, while the Community of Unitarian Universalists – 289 (*Wyznania...*, 2002).

exception – Lutheranism was adopted by many Polish peasants from this area. The spatial analysis of Protestantism's development proves that it gained the most influence within areas dominated by Latin Christian confession. This resulted from the postulates of the new religious movement, especially in: the fiefdoms of Poland (Ducal Prussia, Courland), lands independent from Poland (Silesia, Western Pomerania), areas of wide autonomy (Royal Prussia) and lands belonging to noble and magnate domains, whose owners became protectors of different Protestant confessions. The Counter-Reformation and further persecutions of Protestants in post-partition Poland, and also in the People's Republic of Poland, resulted in decrease in their ranks and decline of many of their existing clusters.

The modern offspring of the initial Polish Protestant movement includes two of the most numerous factions – Lutheran and Calvinist, represented by Evangelical-Augsburg Church and Evangelical Reformed Church. As opposed to the initial influence of both these confessions, since the late 18th century the Lutherans have dominated in numbers over the members of Evangelical Reformed Church. It was caused mainly by the partitions of Poland, especially under Prussian occupation, where Lutheranism was supported by the local authorities. Many Protestants from Saxony, Silesia and Bohemia immigrated to Poland to settle in the developing, industrial cities of the Kingdom of Poland. The changes in numbers of followers of both confessions led to substantial shifts in their spatial influences. The changes were less significant in case of Evangelical-Augsburg Church, as under Prussian occupation it strengthened its influence within the areas of its original domain. In case of Evangelical Reformed Church, which suffered continuous losses in its ranks, the changes were more significant. They resulted mainly from the 18th and 19th century immigration of Bohemian Brethren, who later became members of the Evangelical Reformed Church, as well as from later migrations within this area, especially during the second half of the 20th century (Fig. 4).

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