

RELATIONS BETWEEN CHURCH AND STATE IN REPUBLIC OF CROATIA²

Abstract

This article offers an analyze of the relation between the state and the Roman Catholic Church in Croatia in the end of 20th and in the beginning of 21st century and shows how political pluralism and democracy have created conditions for a new, greater and more important role of religion in Croatian society and politics. On the first democratic elections held in spring 1990 important role of the Roman Catholic Church in Croatia was emphasized as well as its influence onto newly formed political parties and their voters alike. The approach which is in particular adopted in this article is a comparative study of position of the Roman Catholic Church in Croatia in two periods, straight after the first democratic elections, i.e. during 1990s and in more recent years, i.e. in the first decade of 21st century.

Key Words: Religion, Roman Catholic Church, Croatia, Democracy, Nationalism.

Introduction

After collapse of communist regimes in almost all Balkan countries and restoration of political pluralism in those countries, the role of religion has increased and become more significant. On the first democratic elections that were held in spring 1990 the important role of Roman Catholic Church in Croatia was emphasized as well as its influence onto newly formed political parties and voters alike. Therefore, political pluralism and democracy have created conditions for a new, greater role of religion in Croatian society and politics.

During existence of former Yugoslavia, the Roman Catholic Church was considered a minor church and was kept in an inferior position mostly because the part of its clergy collaborated with fascists and Nazis during World War II. In such circumstances Roman Catholic Church was relieved to see break down of socialist Yugoslavia. Therefore, it came as no surprise that Vatican was one of the first countries to recognize the independent Republic of Croatia.

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Period from 1990 to 1999

Temptations of transition were at the same time followed by new possibilities. Just before the first democratic elections in Croatia, held in April 1990, Roman Catholic bishops made a statement in which they implied that the Church supports right wing political parties, although it seemed that tried not to give political advice. In this statement the bishops emphasized their fear that in case that left wing parties won, they would continue to treat the Church as a potential threat, putting clergy under surveillance and trying to control the Church life.³ Anyway, the Church still did not support any particular political party and protested when presidential candidate Franjo Tuđman, used not particularly determined letter of Cardinal Franjo Kuharić, the arch-bishop of Zagreb, to suggest that his party Croatian Democratic Union, has the Church support. But, with the exception of this quarrel, the Church was surely satisfied that in the elections the communists were taken down from power and that a right wing political party came to power.

Decision about final recognition of independent Croatia was brought up by Vatican. This was agreed on November 29th in Vatican City – and was fulfilled before Christmas, on December 23rd 1991.

The First democratic elections in Croatia took in extremely nationalistic and secessionist Croatian Democratic Union. It is well-known that collaboration with Croatian nationalist emigration provided significant financial support to the party. There is no doubt that Roman Catholic Church in Croatia had the main influence, along with full support of Vatican and Pope John Paul II.⁴

In their pre-election letter, the twelve Croatian bishops and arch-bishops, lead by cardinal Franjo Kuharić, stated that „believers will rather give their vote to those political parties that will guarantee such freedom in which the Church could use public media and be in charge of upbringing and education of young generations“. Six Franciscan provincials were even more specific when they instructed the believers to vote for those political parties whose programs were „in harmony with Christian principals“ and that in this matter they should follow the particular instructions of „our bishops“.⁵

The Catholic weekly „Glas koncila“ („Voice of the Council“) published the picture of Franjo Tuđman kneeling in front of a Roman Catholic priest, along with the following text: „Believers were very interested to see ex-communist who kneels in front of the cross kissing it.“ The arch-bishop of Zagreb, Cardinal Franjo Kuharić in 1990 greeted succession to power of president Tudjman and „the new people“ who will turn the new page of Croatian history“ and „change the position of the Church“.

In the context of referendum appointed on May 19th 1991 by president Franjo Tudjman, the Catholic weekly „Glas koncila“ recommends that: „at the referendum the religious conscience will, undoubtedly induce people to circle FOR on the blue piece of

3 „Vjesnik“, February 21st 1993, page 12, Zagreb, quoted according to Ramet, Sabrina: „Religion and Politics in the Time of Changes – Catholic and Orthodox Churches in Central and South-East Europe“, Centar za ženske studije i istraživanje roda, Belgrade, 2006, page 105.

4 Bulajić, Milan: „Break-up of the Yugoslav State 1991/1992 – Crime against Peace, Responsibility of Vatican and Germany“, Srpska književna zadruga, Belgrade, 1994, page 104.

5 „NIN“, May 6th 1990, page 9, Belgrade, quoted according to Bulajić, Milan: „Break-up of the Yugoslav State 1991/1992 – Crime against Peace, Responsibility of Vatican and Germany“, Srpska književna zadruga, Belgrade, 1994, page 107.

paper, and AGAINST on the red one." Right next to the editorial „Glas koncila" published on its first page a „Proclamation" which gave the question on the blue ballot that was to be answered with FOR:

Ø that the Republic of Croatia can, as a sovereign country, join an alliance of sovereign countries with other republics; that Croatia has its historical subjectivity and its armed forces.

And the red one which was to be answered with AGAINST:

Ø or to stay in Yugoslavia which would be a federal unified state; that its international subjectivity belongs to this unified Yugoslav state and that it has unified armed forces. About 86% of all eligible Croatian citizens participated in the referendum and 94% of them gave their vote for independent, sovereign Croatia.

Pope John Paul II received Croatian president Franjo Tudjman on May 25th 1991. After the audience with the Pope, president Tudjman visited mons. Angel Sodan, the acting papal secretary of state. President Tudjman's audience with the Pope was formally private, because the Republic of Croatia was not an international legal entity. It was the Catholic St. Jerome Institute in Rome that stood behind the visit of the Croatian Democratic Union's leader to Vatican in 1991.

Right after his talks with the Pope, president Tudjman went to the Papal Croatian St. Jerome Institute where he stayed for lunch with his hosts. On that occasion he was greeted by the head of the Institute, mons. Ratko Perić, who stressed out that „throughout its history, the Institute has always devotedly and tirelessly strived to preserve the identity of the Croatian nation and worked in favor of its territorial integrity."

Monsignor Perić especially underlined that „this Institute is called papal and Croatian" mentioning two important events that took place in recent time: „The first one, in regard to the adjective „papal" took place on October 21st 1989 when we were visited by pope John Paul II on the occasion of the 400th anniversary of the church of St. Jerome. On that occasion president Tudjman visited the Institute and stayed for dinner. The second event, having to do with the adjective „Croatian", is the one taking place today, when You, Mr President, are visiting us, the first president of the Croatian nation to embody and shape all the aspirations, efforts and wishes of the Croats throughout history to get their freedom and independence".⁶ „This Institute does not usually receive politicians or diplomats, but today we do not receive policy, we receive rather Croatian country and democracy, which broke last year with strength, and culminated the week before in the referendum when the whole Croatian people opted for free and independent state of Croatia".⁷

Concerning the visit to Pope John Paul II, the Croatian Democratic Union's president Franjo Tudjman spoke about „cooperation with the Catholic church". „If, in a specific way the efforts of the Catholic Church and the program of the Croatian Democratic Union had not fully coincided, everything that we have achieved in establishing democracy, that spiritual unity and rebirth of the Croatian nation, and which is in a way a miracle, would not have been possible".⁸

6 Bulajić, Milan: „Break-up of the Yugoslav State 1991/1992 – Crime against Peace, Responsibility of Vatican and Germany", Srpska književna zadruga, Belgrade, 1994, page 110.

7 Ibidem.

8 Interview with Tomo Vukšić, „Glas koncila", 1991, Zagreb, quoted according to Bulajić, Milan: „Break-up of the Yugoslav State

One among the first decisions that new elected president Tudjman brought was to allow the Church to organize religious lessons in state schools. In spite of uncommitted position of some Catholic priests, who were afraid that state support will weaken Roman Catholicism, head of the Church hierarchy accepted this offer and already in autumn 1991 religion teaching was included in school program.⁹

Catholic Church also entered the discussion about legal guaranties of abortion in Croatia, whereas Anto Baković, semi-retired Catholic priest, started up so-called "Movement of Croatian people" and opened an office in the centre of Zagreb. The purpose of this movement was stigmatization of childless couples, fight against abortion, immigration prevention of young women from Croatia at the time when they are giving childbirth and popularization of concept „families with four children among Roman Catholic Croats”.¹⁰ But, Baković's movement stayed just irrelevant phenomenon in Croatian society.

Introduction of religious teaching to schools in the beginning was limited by certain obstacles such as war in some parts of the country and the question of availability of qualified teachers. During the 1991-1992 school year about 50% of all school children between the age of 6 and 14 or about 65% of all school children from Catholic families enrolled religious lessons.

However, next year religious teaching was accepted more widely and took place ordinarily in all primary and secondary schools throughout Croatia.¹¹ Formally, Catholic religious lessons were not obligatory and it was necessary to have parents' approval to attend these lessons. Although, 76% of population in Croatia is Roman Catholic, soon occurred problems with remaining 24% of schoolchildren.¹²

It was interesting, that instead of disorganizing the communist infrastructure established for following religious organizations and activities – infrastructure whose existence disturbed the Church ever since – the post communist leaders in Croatia only transformed it into Commission for relations among religious communities, which from time to time, held meetings with Croatian Bishop's conference. The level of dispersal between the Church officials and the new government was even more astonishing for everyone who expected that the end of communism would open a new era of mutual respect and friendship between the Church and the state. Croatian bishops, from their point of view, expressed dissatisfaction because of limited influence which they had on politics, and demanded a bigger role for the Church in political sphere.

From time to time, the Church criticized Tudjman's government for violating human

1991/1992 – Crime against Peace, Responsibility of Vatican and Germany", Srpska književna zadruga, Belgrade, 1994, page 111.

9 Ramet, Sabrina: „Religion and Politics in the Time of Changes – Catholic and Orthodox Churches in Central and South-East Europe", Centar za ženske studije i istraživanje roda, Belgrade, 2006, page 106.

10 „Slobodna Dalmacija", January 15th 1995, page 9, Split, quoted according to Ramet, Sabrina: „Religion and Politics in the Time of Changes – Catholic and Orthodox Churches in Central and South-East Europe", Centar za ženske studije i istraživanje roda, Belgrade, 2006, page 106.

11 „Novi Vjesnik", September 28th 1992, page 4, Zagreb, quoted according to Ramet, Sabrina: „Religion and Politics in the Time of Changes – Catholic and Orthodox Churches in Central and South-East Europe", Centar za ženske studije i istraživanje roda, Belgrade, 2006, page 106.

12 „Globus", June 30th 1995, page 11, Zagreb, quoted according to Ramet, Sabrina: „Religion and Politics in the Time of Changes – Catholic and Orthodox Churches in Central and South-East Europe", Centar za ženske studije i istraživanje roda, Belgrade, 2006, page 106.

rights, demanding more tolerance in ecclesiastical and ethnic relations. In March 1995 the Church organized two-day conference about „Church, Democracy and General Well-being in Croatia” where participants emphasized expressively the importance of human rights and respect of all people, no matter their ethnicity, in every society which claims to be democratic.¹³

In April 1992, some members of ruling political party Croatian Democratic Union assaulted the Roman Catholic Church. These accusations should be understood as an answer to criticism which the Church hierarchy sent several times to members of Tudjman's regime because of human rights violating. Exactly in this context should be assessed the importance of argue between Croatian bishops and Tudjman's government which took place in summer of 1993. After appealing several times on ethnic tolerance, archbishop Kuharić distanced himself very quickly from politics of division which president Tudjman and his deputy Mate Boban, leader of the Bosnian Croats at that time, plead for, and joined arch-bishop of Sarajevo, Vinko Puljić in order to protect territorial integrity of sovereign Bosnia and Herzegovina.¹⁴ Majority of lower clergymen supported premises of their bishop, contributing that way to broad difference between Croatian authorities in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church did not get the support from Croatian state authorities, so in May 1995 Vatican, worried because of permanent bitterness in relations between the Church and the state in Croatia, invited both sides to send their representatives to Rome in order to meet there with higher Vatican officials. On May 18th 1995 Croatian Prime Minister deputy Jure Radić and at that time bishop of Krk Josip Bozanić travelled to Rome. Radić's office made a statement in which was said: „we expect from these talks to help in development of harmonic relations between the Republic of Croatia and Vatican and to contribute in definition of relations between the Church and state in Croatia”¹⁵. The fact that these talks were held in Rome show how bad the relations between the Church and the state in Croatia were at that time.

Prestige of the Roman Catholic Church in Croatia was never bigger than it was during 1990s. This was obvious from the opinion poll that was undertaken in September 1994 in Zagreb weekly *Globus* where 30,7% of the participants said that cardinal Kuharić (arch-bishop of Zagreb) is most respectful person in Croatia.¹⁶

While president Tudjman was in power (1990 – 1999), between the Church and the authorities was developed a „comfortable symbiosis”. From this symbiosis, the Church derived certain benefits. Apart from introduction of Catholic religious teaching to state schools, we should also mention conclusion of four contracts between Vatican

13 „Večernji list”, April 1st 1995, page 7, Zagreb, quoted according to Ramet, Sabrina: „Religion and Politics in the Time of Changes – Catholic and Orthodox Churches in Central and South-East Europe”, Centar za ženske studije i istraživanje roda, Belgrade, 2006, page 108.

14 „Novi Danas”, August 24th 1992, page 4, Zagreb, quoted according to Ramet, Sabrina: „Religion and Politics in the Time of Changes – Catholic and Orthodox Churches in Central and South-East Europe”, Centar za ženske studije i istraživanje roda, Belgrade, 2006, page 109.

15 HINA, May 18th 1995, Zagreb, quoted according to Ramet, Sabrina: „Religion and Politics in the Time of Changes – Catholic and Orthodox Churches in Central and South-East Europe”, Centar za ženske studije i istraživanje roda, Belgrade, 2006, page 110

16 „Globus”, September 23rd 1994, page 11, Zagreb, quoted according to Ramet, Sabrina: „Religion and Politics in the Time of Changes – Catholic and Orthodox Churches in Central and South-East Europe”, Centar za ženske studije i istraživanje roda, Belgrade, 2006, page 109

and Croatia in 1996 and 1997: about legal matters, economic matters, about spiritual concern in police and army and cooperation in education and culture.¹⁷ But this symbiosis had its price: misuse of the Church or corruption of secular state. One of the tasks that Vatican wanted Kuharić's future successor as archbishop of Zagreb to undertake was to separate the Church from political establishment in general and from Croatian Democratic Union in particular. When in 1997 cardinal Kuharić offered his resignation because of old age, Vatican named the bishop of Krk, Josip Bozanić as his successor. Bozanić's naming, which became valid in October 1997, indicated a new era for Catholic Church in Croatia. Bozanić already drew attention in his Christmas speech in 1997 when he criticized the government because of adoption of laws and statutes that did not serve the public welfare and especially because of changes brought in economic system that resulted in „quick thriving of some people and serious pauperization of many Croatian citizens.”¹⁸ He continued the policy of his predecessor in keeping critical distance from the government. When parliamentary elections started, the Bishops' conference gave the statement in which they asked the citizens to consider how they can help further democratization, social justice and general welfare for the nation and every individual, which can be interpreted as indirect criticism of Croatian Democratic Union. Bozanić continued to criticize the government after Tudjman's death, accusing it to tolerate exploitation and corruption and summon for general campaign against corruption.¹⁹

New era - period from year 2000 until today

Parliamentary elections held in winter 1999/2000 won the coalition lead by Social Democratic Party. With its leader Ivica Račan they formed center-left coalition government which started preparations for passing a new law on religious communities, soon afterwards.

By November 2001, a new draft bill was introduced to the Parliament arousing controversies straight away. Draft bill guaranteed to religious communities the right to participate in public actions, i.e. politics, but process of registration for already existing religious entities and for those wanting to register in future in Croatia would be different.

In the meantime, the Catholic Church started an action in order to introduce religious teaching to nursery schools, which was allowed according to newly signed Agreement about Cooperation in Education and Culture. Those who were against such intentions of the Church believed that due to the Catholic monopoly „religious lessons in nursery schools would start to divide children very early in their lives”²⁰ Although the Agreement should allow education system from nursery school to university to

17 Zrinščak, Siniša: „Religion and Social Justice in Post-Communist Croatia”, Zakład Wydawniczy, Krakow, Poland, 2001, page 186

18 Ibidem, page 187

19 „Večernji list”, December 21st 2004, Zagreb, on www.vecernji-list.hr quoted according to Ramet, Sabrina: „Religion and Politics in the Time of Changes – Catholic and Orthodox Churches in Central and South-East Europe”, Centar za ženske studije i istraživanje roda, Belgrade, 2006, page 114.

20 Zrinščak, Siniša: „Religion and Social Justice in Post-Communist Croatia”, Zakład Wydawniczy, Krakow, Poland, 2001, page 309.

take into consideration Christian values and ethics, liberal critics believed that, the Agreement was breaking constitutional ban on discrimination based on faith and religion. The critics warned that all agreements signed between the government and the Catholic Church, together with draft bill, established caste system as far as religion is concerned. In this way, the Catholic Church would have privileged position not only in society but also in law, and all other religious organizations would be pushed into the second caste, to which the churches considered as traditional would belong, and into the third caste, to which the religions considered as „new ones”²¹ would belong.

At last, the Parliament, on July 4th 2002 adopted the Law about Legal Status of Religious Communities in an edited form. The Law bans religious organizations to spread intolerance towards other religions and their believers. The Law keeps controversial difference between already existing, newly formed religious organizations, and specifies minimum of 500 believers for registration of a new religious community, whereby it awards taxes to religious organizations from the state budget. Religious communities were mostly satisfied with the new law, although the property restitution went slower than they expected. Until year 2003, the government solved only 19% of all requests for municipal property restitution, i.e. the land that communists had confiscated over a half century ago. The Catholic Church requests restitution of around 700 buildings and 175.000 acres of land, most of which is held by local authorities.

In the meantime, sociological research documented a large increase of those who, since year 1990 in Croatia, declared themselves as believers beside low level of religious knowledge among grown up Croats.²² Although since 1990 religiosity increased, at the same time the high level of religiosity was not in perfect correlation with acceptance of ethic church premises. Some interesting variations show us that religiosity is maybe not the prime factor that has impact on someone's ethic premises. Therefore, for example, in year 2001, 87, 35% of the people in Croatia declared themselves as Catholics, and 55, 2% of them think that abortion should stay legal. As distinct from that only 24, 9% of Croats support legal ban of abortion in Croatia²³. In the second survey on the issue of contraception, 48% of convinced Catholics said that they use various methods of contraception, as distinct from 64,9% of moderate Catholics and 76,2% of those who said that they were not religious.²⁴ When it comes to the issue of homosexuality, only 7,1% of convinced Catholics thought that homosexuality is acceptable, as distinct from 13,3% of moderate Catholics and 20,5% of those who are not religious.²⁵ These responses show that some general prejudices and orientations of examinees can influence their vocation to accept church premises.

Goals of the Church expanded during the period 1990-1995, because the Church

21 Ibidem, pages 311 - 312

22 Marinović – Jerolimov Dinka: „Religiosity, Non – Religiosity and Some Values of Youth”, Institute for Social Research, Zagreb, 2002, page 82.

23 „National Catholic Report”, June 20th 2003 on www.nathcath.org quoted according to Ramet, Sabrina: „Religion and Politics in the Time of Changes – Catholic and Orthodox Churches in Central and South-East Europe”, Centar za ženske studije i istraživanje roda, Belgrade, 2006, page 116.

24 Zrinščak, Siniša: „Religion and Social Justice in Post-Communist Croatia”, Zakład Wydawniczy, Krakow, Poland, 2001, page 190.

25 Marinović – Jerolimov Dinka: „Religiosity, Non – Religiosity and Some Values of Youth”, Institute for Social Research, Zagreb, 2002, pages 114 – 115.

got the possibilities to regain its lost place in schools and opportunity to impose its traditional moral teachings. During these years, the Church actively criticized Tudjman's regime because of his policy towards Bosnia and Herzegovina and the violation of human rights in Croatia. From year 1995, and especially from 1999, the Church found itself in more or less normal circumstances.

In these „normal“ times, when most of its earlier requests were fulfilled, the Church could concentrate on sexual matters more than before. In this matter, the Church used its access to the media to send public criticism of homosexuality and to instruct people to give the priority to this topic when they vote in elections, and also has undertaken new severe measures in order to eliminate gay students from Catholic theological schools and faculties²⁶. Croatian Bishops' Conference also criticized program of sexual education which was introduced in cooperation with UNICEF, UNAIDS and other organizations in order to give the information to schoolchildren how to avoid AIDS infection. The Church's opinion was that the program „is unacceptable from professional and empiric point of view“²⁷.

Situation of the Church in Croatia also shows the suffering of people in regard to war in former Yugoslavia, communism legacy and especially years of secularization sponsored by regime along with decrease of religious knowledge.

In Tito's time and in the years straight after his death in 1980, the Catholic Church expressed national concern among Croats because of anti-nationalist and international program of socialist regime. But, from 1990 to 1999 the Church was pushed into the role of a guard of internationalism confronted with nationalist program of Tudjman's regime.

Since the year 1999 the Church in Croatia tries to plead for democracy and nationalism alike, where nationalism is understood as healthy valuation of everything good in Croatian past. The problem is that not everyone agrees with the Church, what can be assumed as good.

The church has its specific comprehension of nationalism and sees itself as a proponent of the “healthy” nationalism and a critic of the „unhealthy” one. For the Church, nationalism is, in its best sense, the feeling of common well, and if it stays faithful to its correct understanding of what is good, although that can be very relative, it can inspire whole nation to act in well and generous manner. But, in its worst sense nationalism puts nation above humanity. Also when humanity is sacrificed for a national or religious interest, political goals of such society can be seriously twisted. In the case of Croatia, as anywhere else in the world, the Church faces the challenge to serve as an indicator of sense and sobriety – the challenge that the Church well responded to.

Conclusion

In the end, as a conclusion, we should also mention the opinion of famous Croatian sociologist Srdjan Vrcan, who said that the Catholic Church in Croatia de facto has

26 Ramet, Sabrina: „Religion and Politics in the Time of Changes – Catholic and Orthodox Churches in Central and South-East Europe”, Centar za ženske studije i istraživanje roda, Belgrade, 2006, page 116.

27 Lilek, Mirela: „THE CHURCH FEARS FROM INTRODUCTION OF SEXUAL EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS”, <http://www.vjasnik.hr/html/2004/01/29/Clanak.asp?r=tem&c=1> (accessed on June 17th 2009).

the privileged position, although that position is not legally defined. According to his opinion this is significant in two things: „First, the Catholic Church has ethic monopoly in education department, and second, it has monopoly in the state television program. There is no other ethic factor in Croatia which would have such rights on television as it has the Catholic Church.”²⁸

Today, there are two institutions that are considered to have rights to care about human souls, and these are the Church and the state. Whereas, liberal state waived its rights to care about human souls, i.e. to take care of which life ideas the citizens should accept. Nowadays state interferes in such things from the point of national identity promotion and on this basis religion gets the privileged position.²⁹

It is a fact that Catholic Church in Croatia is a political factor, although this was more obvious at the time of archbishop Kuharić and president Tudjman, when their cooperation had the typical form of relation between throne and altar. This means that the Catholic Church in Croatia functioned as an institution that gives the legitimacy to politics and this legitimacy calls for peoples' will and transparent institutions. The Catholic Church in Croatia functioned as an institution which participated in raising of political legitimacy of Tudjman's regime and in this way the religious resources of Catholicism in Croatia were the foundation for political mobilization of certain political orientations, and above all, political orientation of Croatian Democratic Union. Croatian Democratic Union was the party, which could count on public support of the Church hierarchy, although not on all the believers' support. The second type of support went towards political right wing, no matter of its varieties. The most common way of support, was when the Church plead for which party people should not vote, and who can be rightful candidate for the Catholic part of Croatian nation. At the beginning of nineties, we in Croatia experienced something that could be defined as *re-catholisation* of public space and public life and this process did not happen on the ground of spontaneous decisions of believers. It was more a result of political intervening from above.³⁰

28 Interview with Srdjan Vrcan: „Together on Throne and Altar“, <http://www.zarez.hr> accessed on 26th May 2009.

29 Ibidem.

30 Ibidem.

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Биљана Рибих

ОДНОСИ ИЗМЕЂУ ЦРКВЕ И ДРЖАВЕ У РЕПУБЛИЦИ ХРВАТСКОЈ

Резиме

Овај чланак нуди анализу односа између државе и Римокатоличке цркве у Хрватској крајем 20-ог и почетком 21-ог века и показује како су политички плурализам и демократија креирали услове за нову, већу и важнију улогу религије у хрватском друштву и политици. На првим демократским изборима одржаним у пролеће 1990. године наглашена је важна улога Римокатоличке цркве у Хрватској као и њен утицај на новоформиране политичке странке и њихове бираче. Приступ усвојен у овом чланку јесте компаративна студија позиције Римокатоличке цркве у два периода, непосредно након првих демократских избора, тј. током 1990-их година и у скорије време, односно у првој деценији 21. века.

Кључне речи: религија, римокатоличка црква, Хрватска, демократија, национализам.

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