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Summary of the doctoral dissertation in English

Topic: Organizational structures of the Polish Catholic Church in southern Poland from 1945 to 1989

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The Polish Catholic Church, tracing its origins from the Polish National Catholic Church, currently belongs to minority confession functioning legally in Poland since 1951. The noticeable lack of historical interpretation of the process of establishing the parish network of the Polish Catholic Church in the southern part of Poland during the years 1945-1989 became the direct reason for preparing this dissertation. The particular deficit of monographic studies on the genesis of Polish Catholic parish communities in the new political and social conditions of Poland after 1945 inspired the undertaking of scientific research on the archival resources, both of state and church provenance, and the initiation of field studies.

The subject of this dissertation analyzes the historical reconstruction of church structures with Polish-Catholic origins in southern Poland during the years 1945-1989, that is, during the period of communist rule. It acknowledges the presence of the Polish-Catholic Church as a fact and the strengthening of Polish-Catholic faith as a religious and social phenomenon. The process of integrating the confession into the traditional cultural model of southern Poland brought numerous antagonisms and, consequently also multi-stage conflicts of varying intensity. It can be concluded that the foundation of religious changes, and consequently the assimilation of the Polish-Catholic denomination in the landscape of cultural identity in southern Poland, was the increasing social support for this non-Roman Catholic confession, especially after 1951. The conditions under which the idea of the Polish-Catholic parish matured favored the process of conscious religious conversion.

This work conducts the research analysis of the dynamics of changes in the religious activity of Polish Catholic parishes under the influence of political and social interferences. The visible support from party-state authorities played an important role in strengthening the Polish Catholic Church within the traditional local community. The post-war fate of the Polish Catholic Church sheds light on the nature of the state's religious policy directed towards

minority religious associations. The initiatives aimed at the Polish Catholic Church were supposed to incorporate the confession into the framework of full autocephaly. In the initial stage of making Polish Catholics dependent on the decision-making center of the party-state authorities, actions were undertaken to initiate a supposed dialogue between the state and the Polish Catholic Church. This mechanism was particularly noticeable at the level of dioceses, deaneries, and individual parishes.

The presence of the Polish Catholic Church in the cultural landscape as well as in the public space of southern Poland has made a change in the nature of religiosity. Since then, Polish Catholic adherents were classified as being inclined to be unfriendly towards the Roman Catholic Church and proclaimed teachings. They primarily represented a type of open religiosity, moving away from excessive confessional ritual. They expressed approval for the idea of cooperation between laypeople and the clergy, for example, in order to activate parish life. The Polish Catholic Church initiated many social and cultural actions within its parishes and supported the policies of the people's state. The parish somewhat served as a center of culture and a place of integration for its believers.

The complete historiography of the history of the Polish-Catholic Church in the People's Republic of Poland is still waiting for its researcher. Due to the destruction of many documents by the communist authorities and the failure to preserve the archival collections of inactive parishes, the reconstruction of the fate of this important Polish religious community is difficult. This work serves as a contribution to the continuation of further historical research on the history of Polish-Catholic organizational structures during the period of the People's Republic of Poland.

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