

Artur Ryszkiewicz, MA – Abstract of the doctoral dissertation entitled „Lobbying of the Catholic Church in Poland after the 1989 political transition”

The primary objective of a doctoral dissertation was to examine the mechanisms used by the Roman Catholic Church in Poland to exert influence on Polish public authorities. The study also identified the fundamental areas in which the Church influences political decisions by analyzing the political, economic, moral, and bioethical spheres. Through the achievement of several specific objectives, it was possible to realize the main goal of the research.

The work presents the theoretical foundations of lobbying and agenda implementation by interest groups within a democratic order. It also traces the role of the Catholic Church in the Polish political system during various historical periods and the nature of Church-State relations in the Third Republic. This led directly to the need to characterize the legal framework of Church-State relations in contemporary Poland and to compare the political and economic situation of the Catholic Church in Poland with the position of other churches and religious associations. Significant space in the dissertation is devoted to presenting the lobbying efforts of the Catholic hierarchy within institutional forms of dialogue with the state, as well as the nature of these activities in political, economic, and educational dimensions. The research process also required a careful analysis of "third-party" participation in pursuing the Church's interests and the related category of "soft power" to analyze selected mechanisms of influence exerted by the Church on public authorities and society.

Summarizing the findings required defining the positive and negative implications of the Catholic clergy's lobbying activities for the Polish state. To most accurately define the current position of the Church, an attempt was made to compare its socio-political situation in Poland with selected regions of the world. Predictions regarding the future nature of Church-State relations were also proposed.

The dissertation consists of seven chapters, preceded by an introduction and summarized with a conclusion. A bibliography is included, and the entire work comprises 355 pages. The first chapter focuses on the theoretical foundations of studying the links between religion and politics. It describes the theoretical assumptions underlying the political science of religion as a subdiscipline of political science. The theoretical and legal frameworks of lobbying are described, and the research category of "religious lobbying" is introduced. Furthermore, religious policy is characterized as a tool for shaping Church-State relations. The first chapter was crucial for outlining the legal framework of the system in which the Church operates in Poland—a step essential for further systems analysis.

The second chapter is dedicated to the historical background of the relationship between the Polish state, the nation, and the Church. The discussion begins with an outline of the institutional strengthening of the Church in previous centuries; the first subchapter focuses on the era of the partitions, the second on the Second Polish Republic, and it concludes with a subchapter describing the era of the People's Republic of Poland. Great emphasis was also placed on identifying the activities of

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the clergy during the partitions and the formation of three distinct models of socio-political engagement characteristic of each partitioned territory.

The third chapter presents the current state of Church-State relations. It analyzes the legal basis defining the place of the Catholic Church and other religious associations in contemporary society and the legal-constitutional order. Much attention is also paid to analyzing the economic situation of the Catholic Church and its impact on the shape of the institution's relations with the state. The role of the Church as a participant in the political system is defined, and the previously outlined framework of the system in which it operates is further specified.

In the fourth chapter, the implementation of interests by the Church across several levels is defined. The political, economic, and educational dimensions were selected for study. This section also examines which formal, legally permissible institutions of dialogue with public authorities are utilized by the Church and the Holy See to realize their interests.

The fifth chapter is devoted to how the clergy pursues its interests using "soft power." For the purposes of this research, this category—borrowed from international relations—was adapted to identify patterns of action at the national level. The use of soft power methods at both the national and local government levels is characterized, demonstrating how the Church, through religious and para-religious organizations, exerts influence on political decisions and the personnel composition of certain state institutions.

The sixth chapter attempts to evaluate the implications of church lobbying for the Polish state. Following the principle of objectivity, both negative and positive consequences of these lobbying efforts were selected for analysis. Among the positive implications, the Church's efforts toward the growth and survival of the Polish state, the institution's participation in Poland's accession to the European Union, and ecclesiastical patronage of culture (especially during the PRL era) were examined. Among the negative implications, the Church's actions aimed at halting progressive social changes were investigated, as well as the consequences of political clericalism for the quality of democracy and public debate. The final subchapter is devoted to the link between religious nationalism and the Church's actions and its implications for the state's memory and cultural policies. This chapter utilizes an original research tool based on the decision-making method. Developed specifically for this dissertation to clearly identify all variables relevant to the topic, it consists of an analysis of selected decision-making processes considering: (1) actors involved, (2) interests articulated by the Church, (3) channels of influence, and (4) effects of public decisions. This tool was qualitative in nature and served to organize the analytical material.

The final chapter is devoted to considerations regarding the process of redefining the Church's place in Poland in light of its lobbying activity. It demonstrates the directions in which the perception of the Catholic Church in Poland is evolving and (using the comparative method) reflects on the changing role of both the Church and Catholicism in selected countries. Ireland, Canada, Brazil, and the Sub-



Saharan Africa region were chosen for analysis. Predictions regarding the future of the Church and the shape of its lobbying efforts were also presented, using scenario and SWOT methods.

The considerations are recapitulated in the conclusion, where the research hypotheses are verified based on the conducted studies. The conclusion also indicates research areas requiring further depth. It is worth noting that the problem of church lobbying has not yet received sufficient attention in political science, resulting in a lack of extensive literature on the subject. However, for many years, researchers have addressed topics such as the Church's participation in governance, efforts to maintain preferential tax conditions, Church claims regarding biopower, the involvement of clergy in party politics, the clergy's role in the systemic transformation, and the influence of John Paul II's pontificate on the Polish political system. Thus, the pursuit of interests by the clergy is analyzed from many perspectives by political scientists, sociologists, lawyers, and historians alike.

The subject of analysis was the actions of the institutional (hierarchical) Church, but the specifics of the issue required that in some cases, other entities—formally (in terms of capital, personnel, or administration) unrelated to the Roman Catholic Church but pursuing a similar agenda and interests—also be examined. The following research methods were used: systems analysis, statistical methods, comparative method (analogy), institutional-legal analysis, historical method, decision-making method, and scenario method.

In the course of the study, the main hypothesis was positively verified: "In order to realize its interests, the Roman Catholic Church in Poland utilizes diverse tools and strategies that go beyond traditional legislative lobbying, also encompassing formal and informal communication activities (including in the political, economic, educational, and bioethical spheres), while long-term coexistence with the state and nation has led to the development of a specific type of relationship within which the Church is able to successfully realize its aims and aspirations in many cases." The specific hypotheses were also positively verified.

Keywords: Catholic Church; lobbying; hierarchical Church; exerting influence; political science of religion; religious policy; Church-State relations

Zielona Góra, March 16, 2026

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