

BRATISLAVA INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF LIBERAL ARTS

**THE ROLE OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC PARISH
IN THE CIVIC LIFE OF SLOVAK RURAL COMMUNITIES**

Bachelor Thesis

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Declaration of Originality

I hereby declare that this bachelor thesis is the work of my own and has not been published in part or in whole elsewhere. All used literature is attributed and cited in references.

Matej Bílik

Bratislava, February 15, 2020

Signature:

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Abstract

Thesis is concerned with the role that the Roman Catholic Church has in the contemporary society and in the Slovak rural communities in particular. In these rather peripheral spaces, the Church is in advantageous positions due to the access to vast amount of resources and great positioning. But with privileged position within legal system and support from public finances, comes a great deal of responsibility to use the position and moral authority well. Thesis focuses on the impact that the Church and its religious communities have on civic life of village.

Research combines sociological, historical and ethnographic approach, exploring the transformation that changed the role of the Church since mid-19th century with particular focus on period after 1989. Thesis also examines the roles of different stakeholders on the enactment and development of the institution of parish. Afterwards the analysis takes a close look at the results of the European Values Study, looking at the relation between religious community life in rural Slovakia and interpersonal trust, as one of the components of civiness. Later parts analyze more in detail the relation between political engagement and religious life within 22 selected case study rural parishes in Western Slovakia. This analysis will also look separately at the engagement on national and local level, which gives an opportunity to contrast them.

Thesis aims to provide insights on the role of the Church in rural areas and its position as one of the last community institutions. In particular seeing how parishes might be agent of the development and be contributing factor to civic life of the village. The work offers few proposals how to make the parishes and their functioning more efficient, and to ensure their long-term development, not only to benefit of the Church, but Slovak society at large.

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Abstrakt

Bakalárska práca sa venuje role, ktorú má Rímskokatolícka cirkev v súčasnej spoločnosti, špecifickejšie na slovenskom vidieku. Práve v týchto perifériách je Cirkev vo výhodnej pozícii vďaka prístupu k rôznym zdrojom, ľudským i finančným. S privilegovaným postavením v právnom systéme a vďaka podpore z verejných zdrojov má Cirkev na pleciach veľkú zodpovednosť, aby využila svoje postavenie a morálnu autoritu. Práca sa zameriava na vplyv, ktorý Cirkev a jej náboženské komunity majú na občiansky život vidieka.

Výskum v sebe spája sociologický, historický a etnografický prístup pri skúmaní transformácie úlohy Cirkvi v spoločnosti od polky 19. storočia, s pozornosťou na obdobie po roku 1989. Práca sa pozerá na rolu rôznych aktérov, ktorí sa podieľajú na vzniku a vývoji farnosti ako inštitúcie. V ďalších častiach sa analýza venuje výsledkom európskej štúdie hodnôt, na vzťah medzi náboženským komunitným životom a medziľudskou dôverou, ako jedným z komponentov občianskej kultúry. Analýza sa následne zameriava na politickú angažovanosť, pozerajúc sa bližšie na prípadové štúdie 22 vidieckych farností na Západnom Slovensku. Pri týchto prípadoch sa odlišuje aj medzi angažovanosťou na národnej a lokálnej úrovni, čo umožňuje ďalšie porovnanie.

Táto práca ponúka pohľad na rolu Cirkvi na vidieku a jej pozície ako jednej z posledných komunitných inštitúcií. A hlavne ako individuálne farnosti môžu napomôcť k rozvoju občianskeho života dediny. Práca ponúka zopár návrhov ako zefektívniť fungovanie farností a zabezpečiť ich dlhodobý rozvoj nielen pre dobro Cirkvi, ale aj slovenskej spoločnosti.

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Introduction

Every village has them; pub, football field and church, the three central places where the life happens. Around these places, communities emerge, and their institutions are generated, developed, and enacted. Some of these institutions are more successful in building a strong network of social relations, their work impacts more than just active participants, but a whole village can be lifted up. The public sphere of a village seems worryingly empty, there are not many social actors that would see worth it of their resources to contribute. There are actually few social actors besides the state and a football union that have that wide institutional infrastructure and resources like the Roman Catholic Church in Slovakia. From this unique positioning comes a great deal of responsibility, hence it would seem fit to put those structures up for the benefit of local communities.

The Roman Catholic Church might seem as a uniform institution with rigid structures, but on the level of parishes there is quite a variety of approaches. This diversity enables us to consider multiple manifestations of institutional practice and confront it with the impact it has upon the local community. There has been little research done on this or related topics, considering the role the Church can play on local level in rural areas. The thesis might then be of interest to anybody who is concerned with rural community development, questions of leadership and grassroots democracy. This might include variety of policymakers, experts and wider public. But thesis aims also to confront the thinking within Church structures about their social responsibility and their capacity to be agents of change and development.

In the past century, there were five different political regimes with different relations towards the Church and spaces in which it was allowed to operate. Especially since the Velvet revolution and reintroduction of religious freedoms in 1989, Slovak Roman Catholic Church similarly to the state underwent transition and reinstatement of its institutional structures. When pope Francis took office in 2013, a lot of hope, that as saint after which he took the name, he will also make his calling to ‘rebuild my church’ (Esposito, 2013). Something that St. Francis of Assisi heard from God, and he went to first to rebuild a church in ruins, but also to transform the Church as whole. In some ways, what the Slovak Roman Catholic Church in 1990 was faced with, is a similar calling, to rebuild itself. To both reinstate its position in society and different spaces of life, but also to fix the physical buildings. To rebuild should not be limited

to trying to restore some glorious past. But also, to find new spaces for Church, while acknowledging while the past state of affairs leads to its demise. Therefore, the first part of this thesis will examine the history of Roman Catholic Church both globally and specifically in Slovakia that could explain, why in 1990 it needed to rebuild.

Over the past 30 years parishes took different development paths to reinstate their positions. What is of particular interest here is their impact upon civic life of rural areas. As there are a few actors within the Slovak civil society that are as present as the Roman Catholic Church in the life of so many communities. The research examines the role of the institutional design both on the parish and the upper Church hierarchy level, compares different approaches and their impact upon the development of civic communities. Thesis particularly focuses on the transitions within Church and parish, as those open space for action, that has a capacity to shape the institution of parish. The development of parish as community institution that engages parishioners is consequential on the capacity of the Church to contribute to the development of civic communities. Similarly to Lowndes and Wilson and their work *Social Capital and Local Governance: Exploring the Institutional Design Variable*, this thesis assumes that institutions have agency in the development of civic communities (2001). It then adopts the framework presented by Elster, Offe and Preuss to examine the nature of transitions (1998) and how those shape community leadership, henceforth the community itself (Brown & Nylander III, 1998).

This work examines the institutional practices related to transition on the level of parish. By gaining this understanding, it outlines a possible causal effect it has upon the development of a specific kind of parish, which in turn has an impact on the prevalent civic culture of the village. *Making Democracy Work* by Robert D. Putnam (1993) had a substantial influence on this thesis. At its core is the interplay of civic culture and institutions. Leaders on top often have a clear vision, but differences in interpretation and implementation lead to diverse outcomes. Thesis examines the effect that the Roman Catholic Church, as represented by parish has on the kind of civic life within the village. Looking in particular at the specific *doing and being* of that parish in regard to applying of the Church teaching, as well as the impact that transitions have on these communities.

Regardless of the final outcome, Church that is either capable or incapable to have an impact upon civic life of the village has serious consequences. The first option begs the question of

what kind of influence Church has, whether contributing or undermining democracy. The second option, on other hand, would mean that Church holds no power or relevance for contemporary Slovak society besides meeting spiritual needs of some people. In thesis it is hypothesized that the Roman Catholic parish is capable of creating and generating civic life within Slovak rural communities. This capacity is limited by the type of transitions that take place, as it makes this impact on the particular villages short lived, unless the transition uses the open new space for action to build a religious community with structures that can survive longer then presence of one pastor.

Unless specified otherwise, the Church, capitalized, refers within this thesis to the Roman Catholic Church of Latin rite. While a church, without capitalization, refers to the physical building in which services take place.

Chapter 1. Methodology – The Roman Catholic Parish and Civic Life

The Roman Catholic Church has a unique position in rural areas, but its effectiveness to contribute to the improvement of life is often limited to the religious sphere of life. This is both a drawback for the Church, as it then holds little relevance in the public life and a drawback for the public, as a great amount of public resources are not used efficiently (Harris, 1994). The strength of the Church can be particularly visible in peripheral spaces, which often lack other civic and social infrastructure (Filipović & Reimer, 2019). There they become possible developers of civic communities that are not only beneficial to democracy but are also positive for the individual wellbeing. However, it is not the religion that makes the difference, but the social networks that it develop, the religious community that can be positively associated with the development of civic communities (Putnam R. D., 2015; VanderWeele, 2017; Lewis, MacGregor, & Putnam, 2013).

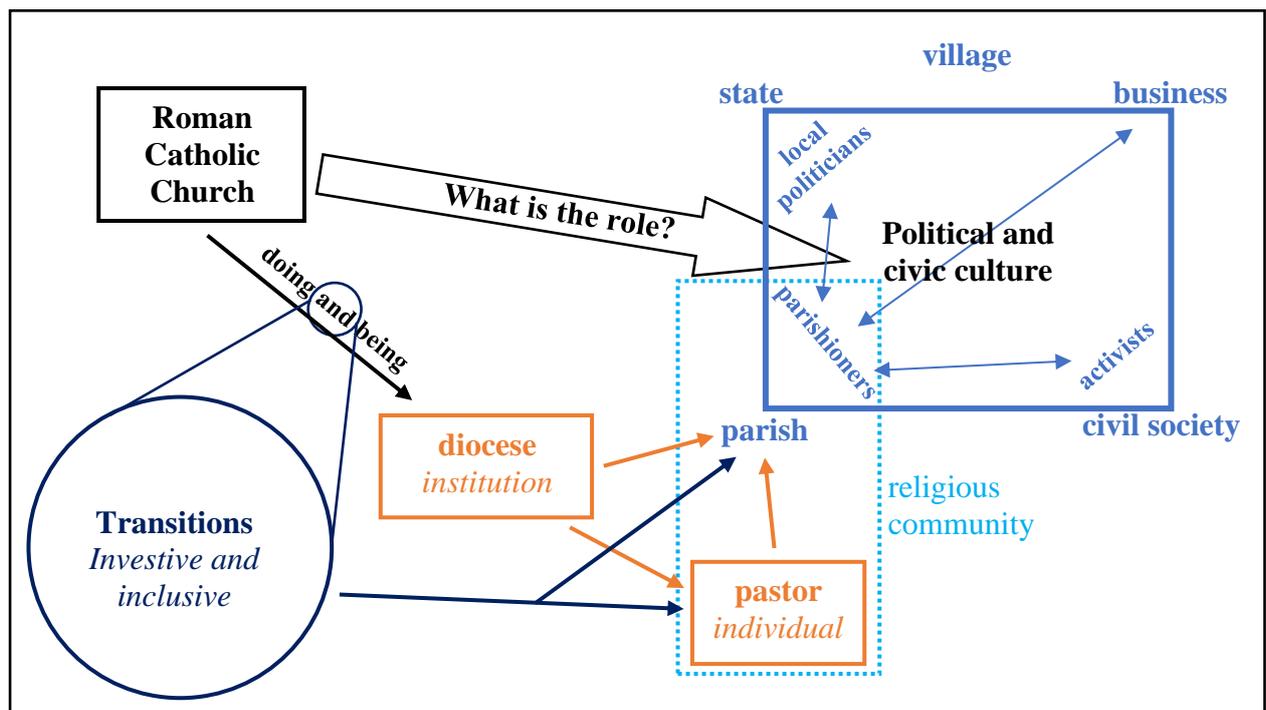
How these communities come to be on the most local level, the parish depends on the delicate cooperation between a multitude of social actors that generate this institution (Goodin, 1998). The interplay of ideas and needs, under a wise leadership, could result in a lively religious community that spills over to the wider community and enables the development of civic community (Brown & Nylander III, 1998; Putnam & Campbell, 2012). But these institutions are still vulnerable to external factors, such as transitions, as they open a new space for action, which might be used to improve or worsen the situation (Elster, Offe, & Preuss, 1998). The contribution and impact of different stakeholders on the parish and religious community is explore in Chapter 3.

The crucial turning point in the role of the Church came in November 1989, thus the focus of the primary research will be limited only the development after the Velvet Revolution. Still the context of the global and national changes in the role of Church is established in Chapter 2. Then the thesis approaches the topic of civic and political culture in connection to religious social networks and transitions. Chapter 5 is the practical part of the thesis, which describes the effect of transition on civic life in 22 selected rural parishes in Western Slovakia. As well as the connection between religious community life and interpersonal trust. The research design is not as ordered as some of the similar studies. This thesis was inspired by the work of Robert Putnam in Italy, where he described his method as “engrossing detective story” (Putnam R. D.,

1993, p. xiv). This research uses a similar type of approach, as available resources vary from parish to parish, from community to community, thus certain creativity and unusual research methods were used. Thesis most of all attempts to map the complexities of these relations and draw possible conclusions to open space for further research exploration in later works.

Figure 2 offers an overview of an overall idea behind this thesis. The primary motivations were to understand the role of the Roman Catholic Church in the life of a village, as represented by the parish. Here it became obvious that the generation of the institution of parish is not only the result of specific guidelines from above, from the diocese and the Church at large. But each parish is shaped by the individual qualities of pastors and parishioners, who generate the religious community within the village. But because of these complex factors that come to the emergence of the parish, there is a great diversity of *doing and being* Church. There are some limitations from above structures, but as much is being generated by the pastors and parishioners. From the secondary research and the preliminary primary research of the selected villages, transitions are vital for the long-term development. At each change, the institutional infrastructure is being tested in its durability and sustainability.

Figure 1. The research model



It should be stated that the scope of this research is greatly limited by the extent of freely available information. Even upon repeated requests and substantial communication with Bratislava bishop's office, the access to more detailed statistics of individual parishes was in the end rejected. Multiple pastors have declined to answer even few brief questions or further participate in research activities. Even though each parish is registered as a separate entity within the legal system, there are basically no information on their activities publicly available, even though dioceses collect many statistics annually. From 22 selected parishes only five have publicly available statistics for the past year, including the financial and pastoral matters. Surprisingly, there were great disparities between the dioceses in the availability of track records for the pastors that were in those parishes since 1989 and therefore the list is not complete for some of the parishes. Even with all these difficulties, some narratives were compiled to try to unpack the complexities of the Church and its particular role in the life of Slovak rural communities.

I. Research design

The research and analysis consist of two layers, offering a mix of quantitative and qualitative research methods to describe particular topic. First layer consists of more theoretical and historical overview, and analysis of the norms and Canon law. Chapter 2 examines the role Church and parish had in Slovakia throughout modern history, with focus on the period since 1989. Ending with the brief commentary on the role of the Church in contemporary society. Chapter 3 explores the role of stakeholders in the shaping of the parish as an institution. This analysis looks both on the legal constraints existing within the Code of Canon Law, pastor personal capacities, and established norms in regard to the involvement of laity and other social actors within the village.

Second layer is more concerned with closer and more quantitative examination of the Church's impact on the civic life after 1989. Theoretical foundation for this part is presented in Chapter 4, followed by presentation of the research in Chapter 5. The practical research can be divided into two sections. Firstly, there is comparison in time, tracking the developments and relations on the national level between the religious community life in rural areas and interpersonal trust. The comparison is founded on the three waves of the European Values Study in Slovakia, that were conducted in 1991, 1999 and 2017 (European Values Study, 1990; European Values

Study, 1999; European Values Study, 2017). Within these, it is possible to filter participants from towns under 5000 inhabitants, which can be roughly labeled as more rural areas or a small urban setting. There are over 550 respondents in each wave that fit these demographical categories.

The study examined in three waves dozens of different values indicators, with five that can be used to suggest that the respondent is part of lively religious community. The selected indicators for this thesis were the frequent attendance of religious services, seeing religious faith as important for children to acquire, having confidence in the Church, belonging to a religious organization and importance put on religion. Developments in each indicator separately are compared in time and in relation to interpersonal trust, as one of the main components of the civic communities, besides political engagement.

The second section of practical research studies 22 selected parishes in Western Slovakia in more detail, all similar in size and in a relative geographical proximity to each other, all together they are a part of three different dioceses. They have been selected from three neighboring districts in two localities. The two main selection criteria were the number of eligible voters in 2018 communal elections, between 500 and 1000, and that the village has its own parish. When looking at the last available census in 2011, all selected villages have similar age structures. There are two villages with a significant Hungarian minority, over 45%, and only two more with 3.2%, respectively 4.9%, the rest have below 1%. In terms of religious structures, the Roman Catholics make up less than 70% of total population only in five villages. Four of those have a significant population that identify with the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession. But only one of them has the Roman Catholics in minority. There are two villages with the share of people without affiliation reaching over 20%. Because there were some confidential communications with representatives of some of the parishes, the names of the villages are not going to be stated in the text of thesis. Instead, acronyms will be used to represent each village, each parish is identified by its district and diocese in Table 1.

On the level of parishes and individual villages, the focus is on the political engagement, both within their communities and in national matters. The comparison is done in two ways, firstly by comparing over time. Each selected village is assessed in two periods, then the scores of overall political engagement is compared and contrasted with other indicators. The first assessment period ranges from 2002 till 2004, aligning with the period of the Church dominance in the recent history. Second period is connected to the same sex-referendum and losing power of the Church, it ranges from 2014 until 2016.

The overall political engagement has the national and local dimension, which is composed each of two indicators. The local engagement is represented by the turnout in the communal elections and the number of non-profit

Acronym	District	Diocese
B2M4	Malacky	Bratislava
P5M3	Malacky	Bratislava
M4M5	Malacky	Bratislava
L3P2	Pezinok	Bratislava
B6P4	Pezinok	Bratislava
C2S3	Senec	Bratislava
P4S2	Senec	Bratislava
S4S3	Senec	Bratislava
B4N4	Nitra	Nitra
C4N3	Nitra	Nitra
H4N4	Nitra	Nitra
J5N2	Nitra	Nitra
N4N4	Nitra	Nitra
L4N3	Nitra	Nitra
D4N3	Nitra	Nitra
H1N2	Nitra	Nitra
N3T4	Topoľčany	Nitra
O6T3	Topoľčany	Nitra
Z5T2	Topoľčany	Nitra
O5H2	Hlohovec	Trnava
Z5H4	Hlohovec	Trnava
P6H5	Hlohovec	Trnava

Table 1. Selected case studies

organizations per 1000 inhabitants. The periods specified above are closely related to the second indicators, as the consistent available statistics are only from 2004 till 2014. The political engagement on the national level is indicated by the turnout in parliamentary elections. Another indicator differs in two periods, while the first period uses the 2003 EU accession referendum turnout as a good indicator of engagement in matters that go beyond the life of individual and surrounding village. In the second period, preferential voting in 2016 parliamentary election is used. The relevance of this indicator is especially relevant in that election, when the number of preferential votes could be associated with vote for democratic parties. The populist, nationalist and anti-system parties in 2016 parliamentary election had worse results in villages with greater preferential voting (Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, 2016). Thus, contrary to the Putnam's view that preferential voting might not be as relevant, in this case, it is indicating not only the degree, but also the kind of political engagement. So, from this point of view, the usage of this indicator is relevant. To standardize

all values, national average was used as a reference point for each indicator. So, if any village had above average turnout in an election, their score will be over 100%, while anything below represents turnout below the national level. Henceforth, all four indicators are scored around the 100%, which marks the average national level of engagement.

The overall as well as the local and national political engagement is then compared with the lists of pastors in each of the parishes. Three main indicators are looked into here, first, the number of pastors that were in the parish from 1994 till 2004 for the first period and for second period from 2004 till 2014. Second indicators look at the length of the current pastor occupation before the assessed period. Thirdly correlation is checked between the share of the declared Roman Catholics in censuses 2001 and 2011 and political engagement in selected villages. The statistical comparison is accompanied with some specific cases from the selected villages, specifically in regard to the types of transitions that occur within each parish when the pastor or parochial administrator changes. These case studies are compiled on the basis of information gathered from the parishes or local pamphlets, village or parish websites and other online sources. Some personal observations, interviews, and interactions with pastors and mayors in each of the locations were also conducted. Those were few, but they provided a different kind of insight. All will be referenced by the acronym of the village, year and a type of source. Part of these case studies are also information about renovations, to show the ability of the parish to mobilize resources to rebuild the physical church and other buildings. The primary source of renovation records comes from the register of national cultural heritage monuments, where many churches are logged.

Chapter 2. The Role of the Church in the civic life of Slovak rural communities

The Roman Catholic Church as a transnational institution takes on many shapes, when it comes to realizing its goals at the most local level. Because of this divergence, it is possible to analyze how different approaches could lead to different outcomes in many spheres of life. This thesis looks at the impact that the Roman Catholic Church has on the civic life of rural communities in Slovakia. It is only about 30 years since the institutional structures of the Slovak Church and Slovak Republic begun to be rebuilt. There is only a handful of similar studies even in the surrounding countries. Therefore, it will be required to put together pieces of literature and research from various places in order to build a model that could help to explain the role of the Roman Catholic Church in the civic life of rural communities in Slovakia. The very first point of inquiry is to consider what ought to be the role of the Roman Catholic Church in the contemporary world, to understand where its place is. Next two sections will map where in political, social, cultural and geographical spaces Church and churches resided since mid-19th century.

I. Changing role of Roman Catholic Church before 1989

The Church in the mid-19th century enjoyed strong position not only on the global stage, but also in Hungary, which at that time had ecclesiastical sovereignty over the territory that covers Slovakia. The bishops and leading Church figures in Hungary were distancing themselves from the Vatican and the pope due to politics. Also, they were far also from its people, living close to the royal court, not around the people. Clergy at that time enjoyed a special place in the society, being highly educated and well connected. In Slovakia they were also the ones that spread the ideas of a Slovak national identity. That is where the conflict between the Hungarian Church and individual priests with Slovak identity arose; they had to choose between loyalty to their superiors or their identity, often under threats or even through forced transfers. This inner working might sound disturbing, but overall the Church was an integral part of both religious, social and political life in the life of a village (Holec, 2007). This state of affairs remained until the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian empire after the First World War.

The Czechoslovak Republic was established in 1918, as a successor state from the collapsed empire. New political arrangement offered a great deal of independence to Slovaks and support

for Slovak culture. With that came an aspiration of Slovak priests and believers to gain their ecclesiastical independence from the Hungarian Church. The Committee of priests headed by Andrej Hlinka was established to make this attempt (Holák, 2007). But Vatican was struggling to keep its relevance within the new united Italy at that time and had other priorities, so only a general statement of recognition sent by the Holy See (Tížik, 2005). Slovak Church figures enjoyed raising influence especially in the politics and the Committee soon transformed into a political party that not only promoted Christian values, but also Slovak nationalism and greater autonomy. In 1938, Andrej Hlinka died and was succeeded by Jozef Tiso and his more radical wing of the party (Holák, 2007).

The Slovak state was declared a Christian state headed by the Roman Catholic priest, Jozef Tiso as the president in 1939 (Tížik, 2005). This was the time of absolute dominance of the Roman Catholic Church over social, political, educational, and cultural life all around Slovakia. Not only they enjoyed monopoly in almost all aspects of life, they were able to join the religious story with the national story, developing a narrative that is present in Slovakia to this day (Kocúr, 2009). There was some opposition from some segments of clergy and believers against this clerical fascist regime, but the dominant role that Church played in this regime is clear (Holák, 2007). Independent Slovak state had a short lifespan and immediately after the Second World War, Czechoslovak Republic was reestablished in 1945.

The first elections after the war took place in 1946, in which the Agrarian and Andrej Hlinka party were prohibited from running, due to the crimes committed by previous regime. In the Slovak part of the Republic, the Democratic Party won with trans denominational coalition to stop Communist Party (Horobová, 2001). Nevertheless, the new Czechoslovak government became predominantly communist due to great victory of Czech Communist party. In 1948 the party took complete control over the government, and they established the State Office for Church affairs that started interfering in the dealings of the Church. It was an easy target after all the atrocities that the Slovak state committed under Jozef Tiso's leadership (Kmet', 2007). The state offered the Church to pay for their activities in exchange for the vow of loyalty to the Republic, but it was not very effective. Later by nationalization of the Church properties, they managed to gain complete control over the Church in Czechoslovakia. All religious organizations lost their financial independence; thus, they could not perform any activities besides what was approved by the state. The consent to perform any religious function became

institutionalized. The communists did not stop here, by active propaganda, they promoted a new “religion,” that of atheist Marxist-Communist ideals (Tížik, 2005). Last strong blow to any systematic religious activity was dealt by the strike against religious societies and orders in 1950, which were forcefully moved from their places (Kmet', 2007). Communism ousted religion and the Church from public spaces, buildings were being emptied, transformed to serve other functions, religious acts and traditions were disappearing, participation discouraged, and atheist propaganda left no place for other ideas. This was all done by threats of imprisonment, firing from job, expulsion from schools, and alienation of these individuals from society (Filipović & Reimer, 2019).

Post-war period had great consequences on societies all around the world. The Church reacting to cultural developments in the West, declining participation, was looking for a new role in the world. This was manifested by the opening of the Second Vatican Council in 1962. The pope tried to open the participation for delegations also from the communist countries to restore the relationships. Multiple countries of the Eastern bloc put together delegations to be sent to Rome, after receiving positive signals from Moscow. Individuals that participated in the Council were properly vetted and were under strict control, so they were not that active in the proceedings. Nevertheless, the Council brought about some warming up of the relationships and some political prisoners were released (Zubko, 2012). This limited participation not only in the Second Vatican Council, but also the global theological discussions and research led to a situation, where Slovak Church living in isolation did not adapt many changes. The Council reformed how the Church works, but that was hardly reflected in Slovakia, which was disconnected from these developments for more than 40 years of the communist rule (Kocúr, 2010).

During all this time, Slovakia was within the ecclesiastical sovereignty of the Hungarian Church, even though effectively the day-to-day functioning was operated from Slovakia. This changed in December 3rd, 1977, when the pope Paul VI established the Trnava Archdiocese, which also became the metropolitan seat for Slovakia. With that came some corrections regarding concrete parishes, so the new ecclesiastical borders of the Slovak Church province would align with the borders of the Slovak Socialist Republic. This however did not stop conflicts between the state and Church about the appointment to newly created archbishop post (Košíar, 2018).

The communist regime might have suppressed any visible religiosity from life, but the religious life was still lively. There were in fact two Churches, existing along each other in Czechoslovakia. The official Church was represented by the Association of the Catholic Clergy *Pacem in Terris*, which was allowed to function publicly thanks to its connection with the communist regime. They were in charge of the only theological faculty and occupied most of the posts within the Church hierarchy. At the same time, the underground Church with secret priests, communities and retreats developed all around Czechoslovakia. Many of the prominent members of these secret communities were imprisoned, but that did not weaken the morale of the community. Imprisonment could have even contributed to the downfall of the regime in some sense. Dissidents from all walks of life met in prisons, built networks that were important in the early stages of the Velvet Revolution (Filipović & Reimer, 2019).

The Church led by Polish Pope John Paul II since 1978, vocal critique of communism, created an international pressure and supported local groups in undermining of the communist governments. Already before the revolution in 1989, the unofficial Church organized few manifestations and mass public pilgrimages. And when the regime started crumbling down in Czechoslovakia, dissidents from the underground Church were among the first ones to speak out against the regime and they joined the talks. So finally, in 1989 the duality of official and unofficial Church could be abandoned and Church could reemerge from secret spaces to public (Filipović & Reimer, 2019). Rightfully, the Church felt that they scored a moral victory and they could get back their place in the life of society (Kocúr, 2010, p. 263). But the transition was as messy in terms of state structures, as it was for the Roman Catholic Church in Slovakia.

II. The Changing role of the Roman Catholic Church after 1989

The newfound freedom both for believers to express their faith and for the Church to be active in public brought about a lot of hopes after the Velvet revolution. It seems that functionaries thought the Church will regain their position in the society and come back to the time when the Church oriented and regulated piety in the pre-communist past. What they did not account for is the change that Slovak society underwent during communism. It was no longer an agrarian, traditional society, but rather a modern society with communist heritage, with a different value orientation (Tomka, 1995). The Second Vatican Council and its reforms that were supposed to prepare the Church for these changes, but they were not properly implemented in Slovakia

(Moravčík & Mikloško, 2015). In November 1989, the Church was not ready for change and the transformation took it by surprise (Zubko, 2014). This section map how the role of the Roman Catholic Church changed in Slovakia since 1989, working out of phases developed by Miroslav Tížik (Religiosity in Slovakia - white paper, 2017).

a) The period of the institutional creation (1990 – 1992)

One of the key demands of the Velvet Revolution was the establishment of independent religious sphere, and religious freedoms were among the primary concerns (Podolinská, Tížik, & Majo, 2017). For the Church to be free of the state oversight and believers not being prosecuted for their faith, so religious freedom were embedded into the constitution (Tomka, 1995; Tížik, 2005). In this early stages, Church failed to make use of energy and laity participation present in the underground Church, some of the underground priests were even not allowed to continue in their work (Kocúr, 2010; Moravčík & Mikloško, 2015; Balász, 2019). It is a period of creation, because it is time in which most of the official structures of the Church were built, as well as new churches started to be build, old ones repaired and there was a great influx of aspiring priests entering new seminaries (Zubko, 2014).

b) The period of formation (1993 – 2000)

Independence of Slovakia was celebrated among many leading authorities within the Slovak Church, which saw it as the finalization of the national story (Košíar, 2018). In general, 1990s count among the harshest time for the Slovaks—political and economic transformation left some scars on society, creating great disparities. It was time in which the social importance of religion and Church could be seen (Podolinská, Tížik, & Majo, 2017). The Slovak Church might have excelled in that regard, but at the same time, it lost most of its moral authority, due to the lack of resolution in important political moments. As well as conflicts between leading lay dissidents, some politically active, and the clergy. Church strategically aligned itself with the ruling party, in part to ensure the return of the property and to create a favorable model of the relationship between the itself and the state. Still there were voices to restore the Church to its previous dominance, not addressing own historical drama and its involvement in the fascist clerical Slovak state during the Second World War (Kocúr, 2010).

The Church received most of its properties back in this period. But they were then managed by priests with little financial education and experience, which resulted in poor decisions. Overall bishops and priests, it seems, were satisfied with the regained administration, structures and property (Moravčík & Žuffa, 2019). Due to missing implementation of the religious and theological developments in the West, the Slovak Church was not ready for religious pluralism and secular politics (Tomka, 1995). First decade of freedom was accompanied with the increase in religiosity and more people identified themselves as Roman Catholics. But it was mostly declared religiosity as there was a decrease in institutionalized religiosity and less people were now subscribing to the Church prescriptions (Tomka, 1995; Kocúr, 2010).

c) The period of domination (2000 – 2004)

The Christian Democratic party joined the reformative coalition in 1998 to bring Slovakia into European Union and NATO. But their presence in decision making was also used to push for an agreement between the Slovak Republic and the Holy See, which guaranteed a special position to the Roman Catholic Church in Slovakia. While it gave many special provisions to the Church, there were little and no concrete expectations to be met on the side of the Church (Tížik, 2005). This can be seen as the period of dominance, signing favorable agreement with state, which guaranteed it some advantages over other religious organizations. And even though there were similar agreements signed with other religious organizations, the dominant position of the Roman Catholic Church was not being threatened (Podolinská, Tížik, & Majo, 2017; Tížik, 2005).

d) The period of decline (2004 – 2009)

There are three great events in this period that lead to declining influence of Church in Slovakia. Firstly, in May 2004, Slovakia has entered the European Union, which expanded the political space and allowed for new actors to have more direct influence over Slovak politics (Podolinská, Tížik, & Majo, 2017). Secondly, in April 2005, pope John Paul II died, someone that used the power of the whole Church to shape the politics in Central and Eastern Europe was replaced by Benedict XVI, who was less invested into this region (Coughlan, 2005). Lastly, in 2006, the ruling coalition was torn apart by another proposed agreement with Holy See (Podolinská, Tížik, & Majo, 2017). Dissatisfaction with the Church is documented by stagnation and slow decrease in declared religiosity, but also by decrease of applicants for

priesthood (Moravčík & Mikloško, 2015). The Roman Catholic Church in Slovakia overestimated its own power, it lost a great part of its social purpose, such as orphanages, schools, healthcare, even its position as social elite with better education (Norris & Inglehart, 2004).

e) **The period of Eurosceptic Church (2009 – present)**

The adoption of the Euro by Slovakia in 2009 together with the financial crisis meant that national politics became also the European politics, which made the Church even smaller player (Podolinská, Tížik, & Majo, 2017). The global financial crisis and the subsequent euro crisis hit the society hard and put the existing international organizations, such as European Union, in question. The Church on the global stage, led by pope Benedict XVI became more Eurosceptic, criticizing liberalism and capitalism (Coughlan, 2005). Also, in Slovakia, the Church started taking more skeptical view of the developments and is not able stand up to the parties with extreme views and use Christian symbols and rhetoric to mitigate extremism (Podolinská, Tížik, & Majo, 2017; Krempaský, 2017). Since 2009, it seems that the Church in Slovakia is primarily concerned predominantly with abortions and same-sex marriages. It was able to organize and mobilize about 60 thousand people for each of the three Marches for Life in 2013, 2015 and 2019 (Pochod za život, 2019). But even with that attendance, they were not able to mobilize enough people in 2015 for the same-sex referendum, only 21,41% of eligible voters casted their ballot (Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, 2015).

According to the census in 2011, about 62% of Slovaks identify with the Roman Catholic Church, but most of them are not weekly attenders of the religious services. Individual practice of religiosity is less present than the public religiosity. Which can be also linked to falling share of baptized children since 1989 (Podolinská, Tížik, & Majo, 2017, pp. 11,17,27,28). Currently, “Slovakia can be considered a part of moderately religious countries with a high level of declarative religiosity and an average level of church attendance” (Podolinská, Tížik, & Majo, 2017, p. 12). What the Church in Slovakia might not have realized is that the landscape of the modern believers is more diverse, and not all are in need to express their beliefs through the institutionalized means (Podolinská, Tížik, & Majo, 2017, p. 30). This might be a part of explanation, why the capacity for political mobilization of Church has decline. Therefore, if

there is a role for the Roman Catholic Church in the contemporary Slovak society, it will not be direct involvement in the politics.

f) The period of pope Francis (2013 – present)

Even though Miroslav Tížik outlined only five phases, there is a space for the sixth one to be added, that has a particular impact upon the global Church. The sudden move by Benedict XVI to step down as the pope was shocking, but then the election of pope Francis in March 2013 brought a new hope. He was the first pope from outside of Europe in centuries and the first one from South America, a person that would bring topics and can help the Church to overcome its struggles (Esposito, 2013). Pope Francis is seen as someone who can “rebuild the Church” (Esposito, 2013). His papacy, however, came in a period of great polarization not only in politics and society, but also within the Church, which prevents greater reform or further conservation. Certain rejection of pope Francis’ ideas can be seen among the leading Slovak Church figures in similar way the implementation of some parts of Second Vatican Council was ignored (Moravčík & Mikloško, 2015).

III. The role of the Church in contemporary society

To conclude this chapter, this section outlines some scenarios for potential roles that the Church can hold in the contemporary society. On the one hand, there is an idea of certain retreat from the world to strengthen the beliefs and prepare for a confrontation with the secular world. This would mean for Christians to go and live in communities that will be separated from the world, actively promoting counterculture, which would challenge the mainstream. One of the most prominent advocates for this kind of the Church activity is Rod Dreher, in his book *Benedict Option*, where he envisions communities that build institutions separate from the outside world that would help to maintain the “Great Tradition” (Dreher, 2017). More extreme versions of this would call for purification of the Church from not proper believers – those that might show public, but not private religiosity. On other hand is pope Francis and his vision of Church that serves to those that are on the margins of society. In his apostolic exhortations *Evangelii Gaudium—The Joy of Gospel*—he presents the need for the Church and world system reform in order to better help those in need, those that are on the margins and in periphery. It is more open and missionary approach to the Church, which interacts with the world and tries to change it (Pope Francis, 2014). An approach of that is not a complete accommodation, but an attempt

to engage with the world in a constructive manner, without losing its Christian values (Volf, 2015). With current believers, the Church that would like to be pure and go into retreat, also means the Church would be much smaller and with little voice in the affairs of society. One of the outcomes of Second Vatican Council is a recognition that other religions and secular world have something to offer and are relevant social actors (Tomka, 1995).

It is not only that Church will risks its own existence, but also society has much to lose from the Church that is in retreat. Particularly Slovak rural communities, in which the Church has a unique position and could have positive impact upon lives of many. There is a tone of evidence that suggests that Church can have positive impact. In Robert D. Putnam's view, Church is one of the last remaining community institutions (2015). Church is one of the few surviving institutions with country wide network (Tomka, 1995). It has both organizational and cognitive resources, which gives them a potential for political mobilization (Harris, 1994). Where Church can be especially important is in lower income areas, to facilitate social capital, mentoring and access to many resources that otherwise would be inaccessible to people there (Putnam R. D., 2015). But Church is losing the poor and they do not participate in the religious communities the same way their peers from higher income families do (Moravčík & Žuffa, 2019; Putnam R. D., 2015; Schwadel, 2002).

The societal benefits of the Church and religion are not at all about faith, but about religious communities and social networks that are enormously beneficial for human flourishing, health, finances, life satisfaction, civic engagement, and these effects can spillover also to the people that are not religious (VanderWeele, 2017; Schwadel, 2002; Lewis, MacGregor, & Putnam, 2013; Norris & Inglehart, 2004; Putnam & Campbell, 2012). Tomka even went as far as to consider religious communities as potentially the "first germs of local and civil society" (Tomka, 2005, p. 85). There is a clear expectation from the Church to contribute to civil society, especially when it comes to community creation and integration (Tomka, 1995; Tomka, 2005). What remains unclear is whether the Church understands and accepts this as their responsibility, which comes from their unique positioning.

There are of course still great issues with the way the Church treats certain minorities and its past record is not great (Schwadel, 2002). Slovakia has its own past of clerical fascist regime, something that Church had hard time to reconcile with as well as collaboration of some clergy

members during communism with secret service (Kocúr, 2009; Vagovič, 2008). To move forward, the Church needs to face its own history and failures of its leaders. Nevertheless, it still holds a unique position within society, its structures contributed to the fall of communism and there is potential for the Church to be a positive social actor. Challenge is to define what kind of *doing and being* Church is the most positive one to the society and what steps can be taken to promote that model. The question is not whether the Church has a capacity to do something, question is when and where it is the most successful in doing so, preferably with a spillover effect on the society at large.

It is not only its self-realized responsibility and opportunity for growth, but also an expectation, as the Church and other religious organizations in Slovakia receive public funding. Even though these funds directly cover only wages of clergy and some administrative staff within the structures. But there are other finances used to run religious schools, hospitals, projects for youth or other disadvantaged minorities. All religious organizations that have special status within the law enjoy a systematic benefit, which gives them also exemptions from many types of taxes and toll. Because of this status, there is little room for public accountability (Vokálová, 2009). With privileges come great responsibility, Church should be expected to use its unique position, public funding, own resources, and moral authority to advance the whole society.

Chapter 3. Institutional design – the *doing and being* of the parish

The Roman Catholic Church might seem as a very controlling and discreet institution with precisely defined procedures, norms, and practices. Indeed, it has an entire legal system with the Canon law and courts. But their implementation and application of goals and priorities is quite diverse, especially outside the strictly laid out religious services. How pastoral work is done, the participation of laity and the position of a pastor within communities varies from parish to parish. These small institutions that develop their own internal structures, norms, guidelines, practices, their own way of *doing and being* the Roman Catholic Church. This thesis analyzes the individual parishes as institutions of their own, with their design that makes them unique, because “[w]hat matters is not what people are supposed to do, but what they actually do” (Goodin, 1998, p. 13).

The Code of Canon law (Catholic Church, 1983) specifies that parishes are erected, suppressed or altered by diocesan bishop after consultation with the presbyterial council (Can. 515). Generally parishes are bound to some territory over which they govern (Can. 518), pastor is appointed from among priests to teach, sanctify and govern the parish, “with the cooperation of other presbyters or deacons and with the assistance of lay members of the Christian faithful, according to the norm of law” (Can. 519). When the circumstances are such, one pastor can task to also take care of neighboring parishes (Can. 526). If a parish is vacant or a pastor is not able to fulfill his pastoral work, a parochial administrator can be appointed with duties and rights as pastor within limits set by the diocese (Can. 540). Pastor ought to administer sacraments, give homily on Sunday and offer catechetical instructions. Additionally, they are asked to do “what pertains to social justice,” care for Catholic education and spread the Gospel to those without faith (Can. 528, §1). Lastly, with their office comes an expectation to visit families, help those who are sick and close to death, seek out the poor, lonely, exiled and those held down by any difficulty (Can. 529, §1). These are the very basic boundaries and guidelines within which each parish and pastor operates.

Parish as such is only an administrative post, with responsibility to represent the Church at the given locality, but it is not automatically creating a religious community (Weber, 1993). Instead, this local institution adopts some ways of *doing and being* of the Church that through its functioning, then can create a religious community. Thus, parishes in different localities can

be characterized in different roles they realize. While one remains merely an administrative unit, another one becomes the core community institution, and many variations in between. Parishes as institutions have their own “sets of routines, norms and incentives that shape and constrain individuals’ preferences and behavior” (Lowndes & Wilson, 2001, p. 8). Those cannot be only prescribed, as “social actors generate, support, and enact institutions, and these institutions, in turn, generate social agents capable of observing social norms” (Goodin, 1998, p. 199). It is therefore a self-reinforcing circle where local particularities shape institutions and institutions shape local particularities.

The Roman Catholic Church can be characterized as transversalized institution, with both horizontal and vertical networks that shape the inner working and institutional design of the individual parishes. It is strongly hierarchical institutions and many decisions, norms and guidelines are being passed down by vertical axis, from the top to the parish and then to the parishioners. But at the same time, all the levels to some extent communicate and are confronted by the world outside. Those do not have to be only secular, but also other religious movements, which use different preaching methods or have a different interpretation of Biblical passage. This became an even more prevalent after the Second Vatican Council, which called for some adaptation of the Church to the contemporary world (Torre, 2002). These changes might not be as prevalent on a global level, but on a parish level, the strength of other actors is much greater, and the horizontal networks of relations might be stronger than the Church teaching and its vertical enforcement. An older survey found that clergy does not hold consistent religious views (Gannon, 1979), so it is not entirely the fault of rebelling laity or some administrative issue. There are distinct parish institutional designs, which were shaped by local particularities, and various local actors within and outside of the Church. Those in turn lead to different outcomes in the kind of parish, whether it is merely administrative or community institution. The following sections examine different social actors that interact with the institution of the Roman Catholic parish.

I. The role of the pastor and types of leadership

The pastor or parochial administrator, through their possession of the office, dispense “salvational goods” and become an authority because of that (Weber, 1993). This gives them, regardless of their personal capabilities and charisma, access to a substantial amount of

resources and there are various ways in which they can handle their responsibilities. This is where a distinction can be made about the different approaches to pastoral work in regard to the development and enhancement of the parish. On one side, pastor might use their office to gather resources and dispose of them as acts of individual reciprocity, in a kind of a patron-client relationship between the pastor and individual lay members of the parish (Putnam R. D., 1993). Other approach would have the pastor create such structures that would be more “enduring than the personalities involved” (Brown & Nylander III, 1998, p. 72) by allowing others to participate in communal decision making. In ideal case of community leadership, existing structures would persist even if personal qualities of the pastor will be limited (Brown & Nylander III, 1998). The Canon law (Catholic Church, 1983) enables the creation of a pastoral council, which ought to assist and consult pastor in matters concerning the pastoral activity (Can. 536). And when it comes to administration of the goods of the parish, financial council ought to be already present in each parish (Can. 537).

The role of a pastor comes with great power to shape the parish, they can govern all matters without consulting local parishioners. And such strong leaders with clear vision are necessary in the early stages of development, when they need to build the basic structures. But all their work is useless in the long run, because when they leave, it can easily collapse. Only once structures and relations are institutionalized, parish can be successful in long run. So, it should not be as a whole dependent upon single pastor, one patron to mobilize resources (Brown & Nylander III, 1998).

An ethnological study of rural communities in Slovakia with a focus on religiosity and interconfessional relationships found that parishioners do not feel comfortable to confront the pastors. If they are not satisfied, attendance decreases and pastor is losing his mobilization potential, effectively ceasing to be a community leader. So then, everyone is just waiting for pastor to be transferred and problems to disappear (Beňušková, 2004). But such state of affairs means that there is no steady development, but rather periods of ups and downs. It is not only a very inefficient way to manage the material goods, but it is also then reflected on the faith of the parishioners. Thus, the role of the pastor is to build such parishes—institutions that are not solely dependent on them, if they wish to contribute to the long-term community development, that does not only increase the influence of the Church, but also possible impact it can have upon civic life of the whole village.

II. The role of laity participation in parish

Parishioner is not a mere believer because of their faith, but they are also convinced that the way to salvation is through institutional grace, through the Church, represented by the pastor. That creates a very powerful position for the pastor within the community and transforms the relationship between the pastor and laity. In Weber's *Sociology of Religion* (1993), he sees that the power of the pastor comes in conflict with the needs of laity. Firstly, because of "prophets," other community leaders or charismatic individuals that offer different approaches to life and religion, questioning the pastor's authority. Secondly, "traditionalism of laity" confronts categories of sacredness, as folk traditions are introduced into religious practice. Thirdly, as religion becomes codified, it creates educational system, but that means that also laity is given access to that education, so lay intellectuals emerge and they can challenge the pastor (Weber, 1993). These are the horizontal challenges within the parish, "prophets" coming up with new interpretations, people bringing their traditions and rituals, and intellectuals challenging the teaching. Transversalized institution like Church must confront these challenges, but that confrontation also transforms the Church either by adopting or rejecting any of these ideas (Torre, 2002). It is up to the pastors whether they decide to fight, ignore or cooperate, but if those lay needs are not met, parishioners may decide to change which church to visit on Sunday or stop practicing their religion in an institutionalized way. In recent years it has become increasingly easier to travel, so any individual can decide to attend a religious service in neighboring village or change denomination in increasingly diverse spiritual 'market.' Still, pastors in small villages, full of people with low mobility can afford to be relatively careless in terms of cooperation with laity.

Thus, it would be most sensible for a parish to create such structures that could accommodate these differences and make common decision. Not only would it provide for a more sustainable institutional design in terms of leadership change (Brown & Nylander III, 1998), but also it can have a positive impact on acquiring civic skills, by adopting more horizontal internal governance (Verba, Schlozman, Brady, & Nie, 1993). The parish is not only of pastor or of Church, but also of people that ought to have the same say about what happens with their property and in their community (Moravčík & Žuffa, 2019). Religiosity depends upon the relationship between priesthood and laity, and their ability to create common structures of community leadership, institutionalized practices and relationships (Brown & Nylander III,

1998). That is when a parish can be more than just an administrative unit and becomes a community (Weber, 1993).

In Slovakia, there is over 40 years' experience of laity as the cornerstone of religious communities during communism. But transformation has destroyed the ideals of many lay dissidents, as the newly recreated Church structures dismissed their work and took over their activities (Filipović & Reimer, 2019; Moravčík & Mikloško, 2015; Tomka, 1995). This led to a situation in which there are deep discrepancies between the key issues that concern the clergy and laity. Of even greater concern is that only three out of ten Slovak Catholics are being invited to join the decision-making process in their parish (Moravčík & Žuffa, 2019). There are still many active laity members and organizations in Slovakia that are doing lot of great work, but many of their activities are disconnected from the official structures, which limits their impact and access to resources.

III. The role of the diocese and vicariate forane

The parish, especially in the rural areas, being the lowest unit of the Church hierarchy has lot of institutional pressures from above. When it comes to the day-to-day functioning of the parish, it is mostly the diocese and vicariate forane that regularly intervene. According to *Code of the Canon Law*, the whole Church is made of particular Churches—dioceses, the basic building block. “A diocese is a portion of the people of God which is entrusted to a bishop for him to shepherd” (Can. 369), which “is limited to a definite territory” (Can. 372, §1). Diocese bishops are entrusted with “legislative, executive, and judicial power” (Can. 391, §1). Vicariate forane consist of multiple parishes, from which one pastor is appointed by the diocesan bishop to become the vicar forane for a specific period of time (Can. 554). Vicar coordinates common pastoral activities, checks on other clerics, manages their personal development, visits parishes and examines whether pastors are fulfilling their duties in their respective parishes (Can. 555). But at the end, it is the diocese bishop that is in charge of both the parish and the vicariate forane, as they appoint priests that take upon those roles and hold absolute power over the particular Church.

One of the key characteristics and most important virtues of Catholicism is obedience (Weber, 1993). It is therefore no surprise that diocesan priests are considered to be almost like soldiers, ready to do anything without a question, but also not doing more than necessary (Moravčík &

Mikloško, 2015). The life of a pastor, especially in rural areas, is quite solitary, they have little space for self-realization (Gannon, 1979). There are three main ways by which the diocese bishop has a lasting impact on a parish: [1] appointment and removal of the pastor or parish administrator, [2] education and guidelines for priests and [3] change of territory or responsibilities. All these decisions are quite consequential for the development of the parish, but often they are done, without involving the stakeholders (Torre, 2002).

In the Slovak Church, only selected clergy that surrounds the bishop is consulted, as there is little participation of laity and especially of women (Moravčík & Mikloško, 2015). Gannon characterized this as an exchange model—there is practice of individual reciprocity, priests obey and do difficult tasks in promise of seniority. Those that deviate are transferred to problematic parishes and have little chance of career growth (Gannon, 1979). In this model, none of the actors within the community and of those that help to enact the parish as an institution have a real say in these external decisions. Almost 46% of the current priests in Slovakia think differently compared to the Church hierarchy, internal communication is poor, which leads priests to laicization (Moravčík & Žuffa, 2019).

IV. The role of other social actors in village

The ability of a parish to create or contribute to a community might be interfered by local politicians, businesses or activists. Networks of community leaders become very important when it comes to larger projects, and when community needs to mobilize vast amount of resources (Brown & Nylander III, 1998). Of the most importance are the relations with local politicians and local administration, which often determine the institutional success of the parish (Beňušková, 2004). There are multiple difficulties in dealing with other actors within the space of a village. It is for pastor to develop ties with the fellow community leaders, and if possible, to institutionalized them with the aim to promote long-term cooperation between the parish and others. One must do it without invoking possible political interference of the Church.

Parishes are not only vulnerable to political misuse, but also to a number of scams that arise from their special status in law and properties they own. For that reason, bodies like the financial council are necessary, which would have to approve any financial step taken by the pastor. The kind of *doing and being* parish is also determined by the presence of another religious organization within the village, geographical positioning and demography.

Chapter 4. The Church and the Civic Life of the Rural Communities

In the previous chapters, it was established that the Roman Catholic Church has some role even in the contemporary society. There plenty of ways in which this ancient institution could contribute to meet diverse needs among communities around Slovakia. The potential impact is in the peripheries, where due to its positioning can make great difference and other actors failed to produce socially desirable outcomes, because they do not have existing infrastructure and resources. Thesis focuses on the rural areas, where the Church is in that unique position. Few organizations and institutions have that wide infrastructure, beyond state and maybe football association (Tomka, 2005). The challenge that the Roman Catholic Church and religions are potentially able to address is building of cohesive groups, networks that create a community. In the context of a democratic society, this would include also a “sense of civic responsibility” (Almond & Verba, 1963, p. 9) and making democracy work by creating self-reinforcing “virtuous civic circles” (Putnam R. D., 1993). This section focuses on culture of democracy, civic culture and how to build it, make it and sustain it through religious social networks.

I. Civic and political culture – civic communities

The concept of civic culture is closely intertwined with the one of political culture. Their relation and functioning were pioneered by Almond and Verba in their work *The Civic Culture*, where they defined political culture as a particular distribution of value orientations towards political objects and different components of political systems by the population (1963, p. 12). According to them, there are four main dimensions of political orientation: [1] population relation towards the system as a general object, [2] individuals being input objects, the demand side of policy creation, [3] individuals as output objects, receivers of policies and [4] seeing self as active participants in the political system. Based on these four dimensions, Almond and Verba created a typology of three general types of political culture that reflect the orientations of people within each dimension.

Parochial political culture has no orientation towards the system, no relationship of the individual to the nation, state or society at large. This type of political culture is prevalent in closed communities or ones with strong kin relations.

Subject political culture consists of individuals who recognize the political system and its capacity to apply policies, but they see themselves as merely subjects of political decisions. It is a passive relationship; they are not giving any input and they do not see themselves as the active parts of the system.

Participant political culture is the most engaged kind, people here recognize themselves as active participants that have capacity formulate inputs into the political systems. This culture is one most involved in decision making and people are active participants.

Multiple types of political culture can be present at the same locality or even within one person, so there can be a mix of them. In a way, it can be beneficial if they are combined. Almond and Verba, in their definition of civic culture, see the combination of all three types as the best option, but with a prevailing participant political culture. What is also needed is certain level of rationality that guides individual decisions and ability to apply right type of political culture in relation to specific issues and topic. That ought to be combined with interpersonal trust, because that keeps the community together and enables the sustenance of civic culture. Religion would be generally associated with the parochial civic culture, as the Church would both literally and symbolically orient people towards the church and parish (Almond & Verba, 1963).

Public domain of a civic community should not be only a battleground for personal interest, but rather a place of mutual trust and general reciprocity. As an individual in a village, people can choose to either align their interests with the ones of people around them or not. Because of this freedom, free rider problem or tragedy of commons arises. Either people participate or there is no community, and everyone tries to exploit public resources for own interests. The challenge is how to build such relations that most people would chip in, build patterns of general reciprocity and the benefits of being in will rise. Findings of Putnam from his study of Italian regional governments (1993) were that both presence and absence of these traits is self-reinforcing. The lack of trust leads to more exploitation, and more trust leads to more cooperation and civic engagement. What then defines civic community are stocks of social capital, such as trust, norms, and networks, high levels of cooperation, trust, reciprocity, civic engagement and collective well-being (Putnam R. D., 1993, p. 177). Absence of these, then, is what defines *uncivic* communities.

The best way to explain the rise of these civic communities is to investigate the past. It was the past civic engagement, that best predicted present civic involvement. In Putnam's ideal case, a community will steadily invest into the development of the social capital, which would also in turn shape the institutional performance towards even greater accumulation of social capital and creation of civic community. One of the challenges that communities, on their path towards "civicness," have to face are strong patron-client relationships, which are breeding ground for corruption and nepotism. Dissolution of these relationships or at least their strength might be crucial for transformation towards a civic community. Civic communities differentiate themselves from uncivic ones not only in the degree, but also in the character and kind, which matters as much (Putnam, 1993).

Lowndes and Wilson critique Putnam's assumptions that institutional design can be held constant after the regional government reform. In their view institutions shape the constitutional and legal frameworks, the structures and conventions of the government, and the traditions and conventions of political life (Lowndes & Wilson, 2001, p. 8). Those in turn shape the available opportunities and spaces for realization. Other factors are non-elected agencies, which can change the character of a civic community. Their works widens the inquiry scope of possible actors that could explain the civic community (Lowndes & Wilson, 2001).

The political culture model, as developed by Almond and Verba, needs to be revised for the purposes of a more contemporary analysis. Dalton and Welzel, using the longitudinal and global data of the World Value Survey, were able to propose a new look into this topic. They recognize the relevance of Almond and Verba's model for that era and the reasons behind the selection of their case studies. But in their view and backed by their findings, world and political culture changed. The modernization, the new wave of democratization, and the eroding trust towards elite in more developed democracies lead to a shift in values regarding the research on quality of democracy. What Almond and Verba proposed was a model of an allegiant citizen, in that time type deemed perfect for stabilization of a democracy. Participant political culture was by its dimension limited only "to orientations that tie citizens loyally to their society and its institutional order" (Dalton & Welzel, 2014, p. 291). But confidence towards the system, belief in democracy and norm obedience are not enough in modern democracies. It is not only that the needs and expectations of the individual roles changed, but the culture shifted as such. They argue there was a shift towards a new type of citizenship—an

assertive citizenship, “that encourages people to be critical and to voice shared concerns” (Dalton & Welzel, 2014, p. 291). At the core of the assertive political culture are concerns for gender equality, individual liberties, and advocating for people’s voice (Dalton & Welzel, 2014). Almond and Verba start their work by talking about the kinds of citizens democracies need (Almond & Verba, 1963), but in a contemporary democratic society, it is not enough to be a participant subject, but rather an influential citizen (Almond & Verba, 1963; Dalton & Welzel, 2014). It could have been enough then to know the political system and relate to it, but with the current informational capacities that individuals have, mere cognition is not enough, they need to assert themselves into the public debate, otherwise it stagnates. This can be expressed in the level of people’s initiatives, both in formal and informal way.

Therefore, the ideal case of a civic community would be one of general reciprocity, mutual trust, one that accumulates social capital, contributes to individual well-being, while also allowing a space for individual assertion, for people to share their concerns and address them (Almond & Verba, 1963; Dalton & Welzel, 2014; Putnam R. D., 1993). To build such civic community, one needs to not only look into different social actors, but also institutional design and ask how institutions can create breeding ground for such communities. There is not one answer or set of policies to be pursued, local context must be considered and variety of approaches offered that are adaptable to different settings (Lowndes & Wilson, 2001). The thesis examines what kind of *doing and being* of Roman Catholic Church is the most beneficial to the development and nourishment of such civic communities.

II. Religious social networks

The aspect of the Church that has the potential to develop civic communities is religious social network as created by local parishioners. Many studies over and over have shown that personal religiosity has little to do with civicness. Religious social networks are found to be much more important in explaining why religious people tend to volunteer, vote and donate more than their non-religious peers (Lewis, MacGregor, & Putnam, 2013; VanderWeele, 2017; Norris & Inglehart, 2004; Putnam & Campbell, 2012; Putnam R. D., 2001). Most authors explain this relationship through social networks that are developed in the Church activities that allow for personal interaction and certain communal effect. Those effects can then spill over from the religious communities and people start caring about local issues, which gets them involved in

local politics. At the same time, vast network of strong and weak ties that build around the religious community is a source of cognitive and material resources for political mobilization. Those are not only resources, but also skills and knowledge that is aquired through organizing and participating in the life of a religious community (Harris, 1994). Religious networks have an impact on civic engagement close to that of education (Lewis, MacGregor, & Putnam, 2013).

The strength of religious communities is especially visible where there are no other community institutions or organizations. Similar positive effects on civic community and human wellbeing can be observed on the members of secular organizations. Religion based communities additionally provide social norms and discourage certain behavior, which reinforces specific way of life (VanderWeele, 2017). There are some drawbacks to religious communities, they were found not to be the most tolerant, the poorest people are disconnecting in recent years from the religious community life, at most they are the recipients of assistance, but not really active members. Overall the distribution of aquired civic skills copies socioeconomic lines (Lewis, MacGregor, & Putnam, 2013; Schwadel, 2002; Putnam & Campbell, 2012; Moravčík & Žuffa, 2019). These are general challenges, but it is about the particular institutional design of parishes to shape the extent to which the Church can be succesfull in shaping of the civic community. That can be done through developing and maintaining of the religious social networks especially in rural areas of Slovakia.

III. Transition (on the use of new open spaces for action)

One of the most reoccurring challenges to the role of the Roman Catholic Church and parishes is the transitions. Even if a particular mode or modes of *doing and being* Roman Catholic parish would be found that helps the most to develop and nourish the civic community, it is still not enough. Parishes are quite vulnerable institutions, as a change in community leaders could paralyze their operation. The issue of sustainability is therefore one of great importance, so individual parishes and established religious social networks could thrive in the long run. This issue is particularly relevant for parishes on the periphery, both socially and geographically, where another institution would not be enacted that easily.

Elster, Preuss and Offe in their book *Institutional Design in Post-communist Societies* focused to a great extent on the process of transition. Their focus was on the transitional process in political institutions, with focus on post-communist countries, including Slovakia. They saw transition as opened “new space for action and the potential for innovation” (Elster, Offe, & Preuss, 1998, p. 59). There are two axes on which the transition can be assessed: [1] new space for action can be used to create new institutions, connect new social actors together, to make “investive” use of transition. On the other hand, transition might be used for accumulation of power and ad hoc dealing with new problems, thus a “consumptive” use of new space for action.

[2] Another axis tracks the extent to which the old elites were excluded or included in the transition processes (Elster, Offe, & Preuss, 1998, pp. 59-60). Both axes are relevant not only to transitions of political institutions, but also to institutions such as parish, where also new space for action is opened and the institution can be rebuild.

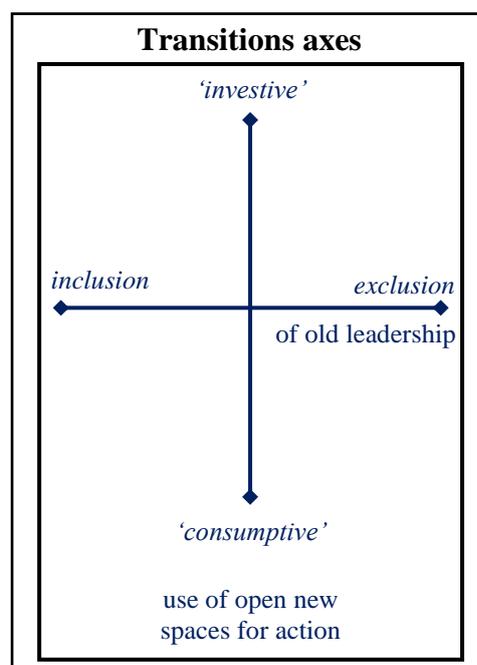


Figure 2. Transitions axes

Chapter 5. Roman Catholic parishes in transitions after 1989

The calling to “rebuild my Church” heard by St. Francis of Assisi, suggests that there is some reference point in the past, some glorious past, when the Church was well standing. Slovak Church right after 1989, also tried to rebuild itself, some thought it would be best to return to the period from 1939 till 1945. Back to society in which the Church has dominated the political, social, cultural and religious aspects of life. But it was unrealistic to expect that the Church could be as dominant an actor, because both the global Church and the Slovak society changed. Still, the Church is one of the best positioned institutions in rural areas to create communities and thus to have positive impact on the civic life of the village. It is among the last community institution that is still standing with resources and capacity to help. Because to rebuild means not only to return to some point in past, but also to reflect on current needs and create something new fitting for the contemporary society. It is unclear whether Roman Catholic parishes in rural Slovakia were able to rebuild also in this regard.

I. Rebuild communities – religious communities and trust

Interpersonal trust is one of the key indicators of civic communities along the political engagement. This section looks at how the indicators of religious community life interact with interpersonal trust within the Slovak rural population from 1990 till 2017. Specifically, to what extent the respondents from towns below 5000 inhabitants agree with the statement that “most people can be trusted” in comparison with “one cannot be too careful.” As the sample is limited, it was not possible to take into consideration another question with more options. This specific question has been asked in all three waves of European Values Study surveys in Slovakia, that took place in 1990, 1999 and 2017. Overall, percentage share of the people that do think that most people can be trusted over the period of 27 years dropped from 18.6% to 15.5%, while the rest that thinks otherwise, increased (EVS, 2015; EVS, 2019). It is important, for further comparison over the years, to standardize the value for each year to the ratio outlined here. Thus, in further analysis all numbers will be in percentages, where 100% signifies the base ratio, anything above are people that have a higher level of trust then the average person living in rural Slovakia, while anything below are people that do not trust those they don’t know and opt to be more careful. Table 2 shows the share of people in each wave that think that others can be trusted or that one cannot be too careful. The ratio is showing the relation between these

two answers. Correlation r and significance p -value are calculated in relation to years, in both cases, there is strong correlation and significant relation between time and the extent of interpersonal trust among Slovak rural population.

Table 2. Interpersonal trust in rural Slovakia 1990 – 2017 (EVS, 2015; EVS, 2019)

	1990	1999	2017	r	p -value
Trusted	18,6%	17,5%	15,5%	-0,999711	0.015312
Careful	81,4%	82,5%	84,5%	0,99971	0.015312
Ratio (trusted/careful)	0,2285	0,2121	0,1834		

On average, all those that identify with a religious community life have a higher trust towards other people. The relation between them is particularly visible in the last measured wave, in 2017, when people attending the services, raising children in religious faith, having confidence towards Churches, belonging to religious organization and seeing religion as important in their lives have on average said that people can be trusted more than people that were not as present in religious communities. Only the respondents that want to raise children with religious faith have on average a level of interpersonal trust that is comparable to that of those who are opposed. But looking at the last available wave, the division even with this indicator is clear, the difference in ratio is almost 50%. This can be also related to the general decrease in the number of people that see religious faith as important child qualities, which dropped from 44.7% in 1990, to 29.4% in 2017 (EVS, 2015; EVS, 2019). Table 3 clearly shows that religious life in communities can be associated with a higher trust towards other people.

Table 3. Indicators of religious community life and interpersonal trust (EVS, 2015; EVS, 2019)

	1990	1999	2017	Average
<i>Religious services attendance*</i>				
Regular	89,88%	106,02%	132,12%	109,34%
Sometimes	112,31%	68,58%	98,25%	93,05%
Rarely	98,88%	118,87%	67,17%	94,97%
<i>Child qualities: religious faith</i>				
Mentioned	75,81%	114,47%	117,14%	102,47%
Not mentioned	123,59%	91,16%	94,18%	102,98%
<i>Confidence: Churches**</i>				
Confidence	88,35%	135,37%	107,65%	110,46%

No confidence	114,27%	128,77%	64,48%	102,50%
<i>Belonging: religious organization</i>				
Mentioned	97,25%	179,59%	143,86%	140,24%
Not mentioned	92,55%	83,56%	96,74%	90,95%
<i>Important in life: Religion***</i>				
Important	98,87%	98,29%	111,83%	103,00%
Not important	102,97%	104,02%	76,07%	94,35%

Some categories are composed of aggregates to create statistically more significant groups:
 *regular – more than once a week, once a week, sometimes – once a month, only on special holidays, only during holy days (Christmas, Easter, etc.), rarely – once a year, less often, never
 **confidence – a great deal, quite a lot, not confidence – not very much, not at all
 ***important – very important, quite important, not important – not important, not at all important.

Two indicators of religious community life show in 2017 particularly significant relation between themselves and interpersonal trust. Firstly, religious service attendance with significance of $p = 0.0185$, those attending religious services more than once a week have the ratio of trusting people 158.02%, while for those that never attend, the ratio is only 47.96%. Secondly, confidence in Churches and trust go hand in hand, reaching significance of $p = 0.0047$ in 2017, starting at 140.37% for those that have a great deal of confidence and ending at 54.02% that have none at all.

Looking solely at the indicators of religious community life, there is decline in four indicators, while only one slight increase in the importance of religion. In Table 4, correlation r shows strong correlation of the decline in the attendance, religious organization belonging and religious faith as important child quality over the years. The later two being also the most significant in terms of the decrease. These numbers however include all the denominations, thus it is not conclusive for the Roman Catholic Church, even though it is clearly the most dominant religious organization among respondents in the study.

Table 4. Indicators of religious community life over time 1990 – 2017 (EVS, 2015; EVS, 2019)

	1990	1999	2017	Correlation (r)
<i>Religious services attendance</i>				
Regular	44.3%	48.2%	41.3%	-0.596040

Sometimes	26.3%	24.3%	24.1%	-0.807183
Rarely	29.4%	27.4%	34.5%	0.819571
<i>Child qualities: religious faith</i>				
Mentioned	44.7%	38.9%	29.4%	-0.998679
Not mentioned	55.4%	61.1%	70.6%	0.998906
<i>Confidence: Churches</i>				
Confidence	62.8%	76.8%	64.1%	-0.105794
No confidence	37.2%	23.2%	35.9%	0.105794
<i>Belonging: religious organization</i>				
Mentioned	19.8%	20.3%	9.1%	-0.931239
Not mentioned	80.2%	79.7%	90.9%	0.931239
<i>Important in life: Religion</i>				
Important	66.7%	65.8%	70.5%	0.870366
Not important	33.4%	34.2%	29.4%	-0.882498

Categories are the same as in Table 3.

The correlation is calculated in relation to the three waves and development over time.

One of the explanations behind the rising interpersonal trust for the people that participate more in religious activities and find faith more important, is that their number has decreased. Those that move further away from the religious community life were the ones without trust already before they left. That might be also the case for those that see religious faith as important both for their life and life of their children, or those that belong to religious organizations, as a significant decrease over time can be observed, with correlation of three mentioned indicators above at $r > 0.85$. But as can be seen in Table 4, that is not the case for religious service attendance and confidence in Churches. For those, regular attendance did not decrease by a lot, but rather those that attend only sometimes are now rarely in religious services. Trust toward Churches took a little bit of rollercoaster ride, with a great increase towards the turn of millennium and then decrease back to levels close to the ones in 1990.

Rather surprisingly, religion is still important in life of more than 70% respondents in rural areas of Slovakia, even though less of the people belong to religious organizations or see as important for their children to acquire religious faith. Overall, religious community life is only a bit smaller compared to 1999, but a group of people that subscribe to religious community life within the Church is positively correlated with the level of trust they have towards other

people. It is unclear whether this finding is caused in some direction and whether there are great differences between different denominations. The sample in each category and year exceeds only 500 people, thus the implication of this finding is relatively limited, without further in-depth study to prove causation and try to better explain the concrete mechanisms that are in working here. The religious communities are related to trust, but the puzzle remains as to what extent the kind of *doing and being* Church in particular parishes is contributing.

II. Rebuild engagement – religion, transitions and civic engagement

The Roman Catholic Church is not an institution standing alone, but it is in a society with which it engages. This section will go beyond interpersonal trust and examines the connection of mostly political engagement indicators, as described in the methodology chapter, on national and local level, and how those might be related to religion, the Church, and its transitions. The focus will be on the selected 22 villages, table 5 summarizes the relation between the indicators of religiosity and pastoral transitions. Local civic engagement combines the number of non-profit organizations as well as turnout in communal elections. While the engagement at the national level is connected with parliamentary elections, preferential voting in 2016 and EU accession referendum in 2003. Table 5 at the correlation as presented in r , which should be more than $r > 0.5$ positive or negative to indicate any relation. The significance of relation is measured by p -value, which should be less than $p < 0.05$. The calculation takes in account only statistics for 22 selected villages.

Table 5. Civic engagement and parish transitions (Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, 2002-2019)

		Share of population identifying as Roman Catholics in census		The number of pastors within parish over 10 years prior the period		The length of the last pastor occupation	
average		correlation	p-value	correlation	p-value	correlation	p-value
Local civic engagement							
2004	115,30%	-0,226158	0,311515	-0,224260	0,315703	0,162359	0,470362
2014	111,60%	-0,077438	0,731952	-0,090973	0,687220	0,073111	0,746440
change	-3,70%						
Civic engagement on national level							
2004	98,95%	0,022511	0,920793	-0,084610	0,708135	-0,011654	0,958947
2014	99,99%	0,208965	0,350676	-0,418537	0,052552	0,512749	0,014682

change	1,04%						
Overall civic engagement							
2004	107,12%	-0,156109	0,487841	-0,205203	0,359611	0,114195	0,612846
2014	105,79%	-0,010460	0,963152	-0,188019	0,402076	0,204202	0,362011
change	-1,33%						
Civic engagement on national level in 2016							
2016	99,99%			-0.434203	0.043473	0.563382	0.007826

There are only two instances that there can be found any significant relation between transitions and the civic engagement on the national level in the second assessed period. Those values for engagement at the national level were at this period taken from the parliamentary elections in 2016, thus there is added row which makes comparison also at this year. The correlation in this instance is even stronger and the significance of the relation greater. The longer the period that pastor is in the one parish, the more people go to vote in parliamentary elections and opt for preferential voting, with significance $p=0.008$. Also, if there is a smaller number of pastors within specific parish over the span of 10 years prior assessment, civic engagement on the national level is greater, $p=0.043$. Contrary to the assumption that transitions in parish would be more impacting the local setting, there is indication of some relation to the political engagement on the national level.

Overall there is little effect that the transitions within parish have on the civic and political life within selected 22 villages. From these case studies it seems that the share of the Roman Catholics has even negative effect on local democracy. Religiosity in these cases is related to less candidates in communal elections, while the winning candidate is more dominant. This particularly is not a great news, as it seems that religiosity is linked with less competition in local elections, which is essential for democracy. From the analysis of selected villages, it seems that while transitions might cause better outcome in the civic engagement on national level for those villages. On other hand the Church might hinder the development of strong local democracy.

This disparity between the impact that transition and religiosity have on civic engagement at the national and local level could be partially explained by the institutional structures in which pastors are placed. Even though the pastor or the parish administrator are given a particular territorial unit to look over, their time is definite, and their future lies somewhere else. So,

unless they make a real effort to become a part of the local community, they never integrate, thus are not able to shift the life of given rural community. At the same time, they are under close scrutiny from above, not to attract too much unwanted attention, as that might hinder their career advancement within the Church (Gannon, 1979).

Great social and cultural shifts also took place within the society, where new means of communication and transport changed the space in which humans live. Bureaucracy, even within the Church became more centralized, taking away part of the independence that pastors once enjoyed in relation to their work. Their life was more constrained to the life of village when they did not have means to travel or communicate daily with the rest of the country. Now, pastors can take on responsibilities and activities that are further away, which makes them less present in the day-to-day life of the village. This is not a trend limited to the Church, but also to society at large, which is shifting away from the local media. All selected villages are in relative proximity to cities, so a great portion of these people travel every day for work, school, and their activities away from their homes. This comes together in a larger sentiment of a disappearing community life, especially in rural life that came with great technological advancements in the past decades (Putnam R. D., 2001).

a) Transitions in particular parishes

The narrative of this sub-section is quite repetitive, transitions have a very unique quality of being accompanied by change. *The Code of Canon Law* (Catholic Church, 1983) sees two possible reasons “for a pastor be transferred from a parish which he is governing usefully to another parish or another office,” if it is demanded [1] by “the necessity or advantage of the Church” or [2] for “the good of the souls” (Can. 1748), so either to the benefit of the Church or parishioners. In principle the transfer should take place upon the advice and reasoning from the bishop to the pastor, who should then willingly change their parish (Can. 1749). But even if the particular pastor refuses, bishop is able to overrule and effectively force the pastor to transfer (Can. 1750).

The practice in Slovakia seems to be that priests are not being consulted much before they are requested to transfer. It looks a bit chaotic or random, the believers are not consulted and often the last ones to find out (Pastor B2M4, 2019). Parish B2M4 was one of those parishes, in which their previous pastor left after 29 years, which resulted in a petition being filed by the

parishioners to the archbishop, without response. Transfers do not only affect the parish and its parishioners, but also priests. Multiple priests that underwent laicization in Slovakia, left because of lacking communication with the bishop and they felt like having no agency in their life (Moravčík & Žuffa, 2019). In those cases, and many others, it is clear that their transfers were of no advantage to the Church.

While on for individual priests, transfer seem at times unsystematic, on a larger scale, they follow certain patterns. Already in 1979, Gannon outlined how the structures of the Church create career paths for the diocese priests, which have incentives to obey the superiors, in order to be transferred to better locations with more resources and even acquire an assistant priest. On the other hand, there are those that step out of the line and they are then purposefully transferred to small rural and difficult parishes (Gannon, 1979). It is the very outcome of the Church's institutional design, which promotes loyalty, creates hierarchy, where superiors can overrule their inferiors and take steps against their expressed will. There have been countless cases in Slovakia of active, entrepreneurial, even publicly famous priests being transferred to location, where they have no space to use their individual qualities (Vološčuková, 2004; Moravčík & Mikloško, 2015). This is resulting in a great disadvantage for the Church and “the good of the souls.”

When it comes to Western Slovakia, and parishes nearby to larger cities, the trend is to transfer in more conservative pastors—in the eyes of the bishops this is done in order to balance the liberal urban culture (Pastor B2M4, 2019). This claim comes from a pastor that is rather critical of the Church hierarchy, and as it is not publicly acknowledged practice of the Church, it is hard to check its validity. Nevertheless, the tendency to send away uncomfortable priests away to very small parishes in poor condition is well documented and started already in 1989, when secret priests revealed themselves and expected to continue in their work. Anton Srholec spent almost 8 years in prison, during communism, then was allowed to become a priest, while on a study in Italy. He returned back to Czechoslovakia and after some interventions was allowed to practice as a pastor in small villages in Western Slovakia. State approval was withdrawn in 1985 and he went underground. But even after 1989, he was not given any position in the Church, ending up creating his own center for homeless people (Krčmárik, 2019). It is still unclear why any of his qualities and qualifications were not recognized by the Church during his life. The following paragraphs will be filled with case studies of transitions within the

selected parishes and what kind of an impact they had on the various activities within the parishes. Even though this subsection examines only a few selected case studies in detail, there are quite a few findings that can be drawn from them. Before, table 6 summarizes the changes between two measured periods, all cases that are mentioned below are highlighted in grey. The value of 100% within this table represents the national average of participation within each indicator.

Table 6. Changes in civic engagement within selected villages

Village	national 2004	national 2014	local 2004	local 2014	CE 2004	CE 2014	CE average
B4N4	94.8%	95.0%	106.9%	88.9%	100.9%	92.0%	96.4%
B2M4	114.6%	112.1%	174.5%	123.1%	144.5%	117.6%	131.0%
C2S3	101.2%	101.1%	92.0%	89.0%	96.6%	95.1%	95.8%
C4N3	90.5%	91.1%	101.2%	74.2%	95.8%	82.6%	89.2%
L3P2	94.0%	102.8%	118.8%	115.7%	106.4%	109.3%	107.8%
B6P4	111.8%	102.0%	125.5%	123.6%	118.7%	112.8%	115.7%
H4N4	105.0%	100.1%	105.0%	170.5%	105.0%	135.3%	120.2%
O5H2	84.5%	94.4%	126.5%	90.5%	105.5%	92.4%	99.0%
Z5H4	79.4%	89.1%	101.5%	114.7%	90.5%	101.9%	96.2%
J5N2	104.4%	93.0%	93.1%	96.8%	98.7%	94.9%	96.8%
P4S2	104.0%	106.2%	129.5%	124.4%	116.8%	115.3%	116.0%
S4S3	128.9%	115.8%	138.9%	138.9%	133.9%	127.3%	130.6%
N4N4	93.7%	108.7%	120.7%	131.5%	107.2%	120.1%	113.6%
L4N3	105.5%	99.4%	104.9%	114.5%	105.2%	107.0%	106.1%
N3T4	103.7%	96.2%	141.0%	115.8%	122.4%	106.0%	114.2%
O6T3	87.3%	103.6%	111.5%	100.8%	99.4%	102.2%	100.8%
P6H6	98.3%	94.0%	95.9%	120.4%	97.1%	107.2%	102.2%
P5M3	83.5%	95.6%	127.5%	125.5%	105.5%	110.6%	108.0%
M4M5	98.2%	93.0%	99.3%	73.9%	98.7%	83.5%	91.1%
D4N3	87.1%	100.6%	114.3%	120.5%	100.7%	110.5%	105.6%
H1N2	119.0%	106.6%	105.6%	99.0%	112.3%	102.8%	107.6%
Z5T2	87.4%	99.3%	102.6%	102.9%	95.0%	101.1%	98.0%

Institutional stability is needed for the development of relationships that are not dependent on personality or mood, but rather are derived from the office one holds and enjoys the responsibilities and benefits thereof (Brown & Nylander III, 1998). P4S2 is the only parish that had an experience with a religious order. In early 2000s, local parishioners wanted to do more in their religious community, so they approached one of the religious orders to provide them with some help. They send three students aspiring to become priests and the community

religious life has exploded. Starting with weekly meetings of small groups, choir practicing again, and they even organized a summer camp, in which also children from surrounding villages participated. Those students were sent away over time, as they became priests, but they were able to build a community that was not dependent on them. Right now, the community in P4S2 counts over 200 members, with dozens of annual activities, running almost independently from the parish, having its own internal structures and many volunteers. The model they adopted was not something new, but something already used, they created governing structures with a meaningful participation of laity (P4S2, 2007; Domka, 2017). When approached for interview, the current pastor declined with the argument that there are not many activities within his parish. In this case, transitions became so smooth, that the presence of the pastor does not affect the religious community. What is being observed is a passive pastor that harvests the fruits of the work done earlier and by active laity. The difference can be clearly seen on two Facebook pages, the one of the parish sharing mostly formal announcements and few pictures, having little over 250 likes, while the page of the religious community has more than 950 likes and diverse content (Facebook, 2020; Facebook, 2020). This is also among the better performing from the selected villages, as it has over 115% of the national average civic engagement.

The second case involves a somehow functioning even though distanced parish, which had no formal structures or even governing bodies. If the civic engagement score for both measured periods is averaged, this village has the highest level of engagement from all selected villages, even though it dropped by more than 24% from 2004 to 2014. Before the pastor's transfer, religious services took place regularly, there was an interaction with the self-government and also minor church reconstruction took place before the transition. But too much of this depended not upon the pastor, but upon the parish clerk (Pastor B2M4, 2019). B2M4 was until recently administered by the neighboring parish, thus the pastor was present only twice a week for a service on Thursday evening and Sunday morning. Other than occasional visits to families, there was little interaction with parishioners. But with the recent development boom, hundreds of people moved into the village in the past decade, transforming the village (Former pastor B2M4, 2020). When the new pastor took over, he found himself in a rather difficult situation, there were no structures created that he could rely on or build upon. There was a company with informal contract to fix few things around Church, but with no paper evidence.

It was unclear what kind of property the parish owns in the village. The challenges like these pushed new pastor to establish economical council, which started dealing with material concerns of the village. Sometime after the transfer of the new pastor into B2M4, a new mayor was also elected. This restarted the relationship between the parish and the local self-government, they were able to organize together voluntary work to clean up a calvary in the woods. In the interview, the pastor repeated that it is necessary to have a common experience with his own parishioners, to be immersed into the life of the village, interact with the people and to learn about the local politics. Only then parishioners and pastor start creating one community, not clergy and laity, but one community, but that takes time (Pastor B2M4, 2019). So even if one pastor comes into a specific location, just their mere will to change it is not sufficient, as it requires years of building trust. Only then people can start rethinking and slowly change their habits, practices that are connected with their religion and civic engagement.

In 2012, pastor of L4N3 was transferred to a neighboring parish B4N4, after more than a decade at his previous post. He was able to put together resources for a major church renovation in 2006, activities were running, with a particular focus on children. L4N3 is an average scoring village among the selected in terms of its civic engagement. But with the transition came rather hard time for many of the activities, the new pastor was not as open and active, so naturally in a few years almost all activities vanished (L4N3 mayor, 2012; L4N3 activities coordinator, 2014). During an observation at the site in November 2019, the pastor refused the repeated offer to answer any questions about his work in this parish. At service that evening, he snapped at the organist in the middle of mass, the atmosphere was really tense, which was also confirmed by the remarks of some of the parishioners. Rectory located right next to the church was the center of life no less than decade ago, but it has been closed off and few saw the inside in years. When in 2012 B4N4 received its new pastor, he brought more than his personal items with him. In a few years, the new pastor was able to start some activities for young (Facebook, 2020), the earning for charities went up (Dobrá novina, 2017; 2018; 2019). Considering B4N4 is the village with the lowest level of civic engagement among the selected, any and even small activity can have great effect. While departure of one priest in one location led to the halt of some activities, while his arrival to another village meant an investive use of new space for action. This gives hope to the villages with low civic engagement and their concern for local

causes. Pastors as they are transferred take some of their activities with them, trying to build similar structures to their former parish.

From all of the selected parishes, B6P4 has one of the earliest records of a formalized religious community life, already from 1990s, especially the church choir, praying and charity focused groups (B6P4 village, n.d.). In 2010, after one pastor transfer, 28 parish pamphlets were published on almost weekly basis to inform about the activities. But after the second transfer year late, pamphlet ceased to exist, and the parish website was not updated since 2011 (B6P4 parish, 2011). Even though the village website lists quite a few religious organizations, it is unclear which of them are still functioning, as their websites are not being updated and there seems to be little public evidence of their functioning (B6P4 village, n.d.). It suggests that even well-established structures can be worn out by a pastor who does not provide at least a minimal level of support. Not only could pastors withdraw parish support for any activity, they can also effectively dismantle them. In Z5H4, certain pastor started a parish council, some minor reconstructions took place and he invited missionary priests to give a spiritual boost to the parishioners. At the same time, the village took a leap towards greater civic engagement. But then pastor was replaced, all the work on church stopped, parish council was dissolved and since then the parish did not have any major activities (Z5H4 neighboring village, n.d.; Ondrej, 2013). This particular village is interesting for the competition that the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession provides. From the records it seems that over the years, it was this religious community that has been developing. While priests can be the community leaders that motivate and mobilize the people and resources, their occupation of any given office is temporary and as are the visions for the religious community. If any religious community should thrive, there needs to be long-term plans, activities that transcend one pastor stay. Here, the diocese and the vicariate forane could intervene in the transition, through dialogue in which the local parishioners and multiple pastors develop some long-term goals, a strategy which would be binding for years to come.

All these cases have a recurring theme of change that came with the transition, the new space for action was not always used to the full potential. Quite understandably, when a new pastor takes on a new office, it takes time to build relationships and start realizing certain vision. This transitioning period might be shortened if the takeover is carried out properly and there are structures built that institutionalized some of the relationships, so the religious community is

strengthen. To provide for more stability and durability of religious communities, it is also necessary to involve the diocese and the vicariate forane. Bishop holds responsibility for the transfers; thus, it is in his power to change the norms and practices that surround the whole process in order to promote inclusion of the old pastor and discussion with the active parishioners. Secondly, greater cooperation between parishes within vicariate, that would include common strategy in specific field, could ensure that the new pastor will not completely alter the priorities of any parish. Lastly, on the level of the parish, there should be an invitation for parishioners to make decision together with the pastor. The Code of Canon Law already permits for this, but it is not implemented into practice to the full extent.

Conclusion

The Roman Catholic Church has a unique position within the Slovak society. Even though its influence has been decimated during the communist time, the Church has made a relatively successful comeback (Kocúr, 2010). It is still an institution of great resources and infrastructure that can use it for a variety of pursuits (Tomka, 2005). The thesis argued that there are certain roles which the Church could take on and it has a potential to have a wide-ranging influence. This expectation does not only come from within the Church, in form of spreading the gospel and religion, but also should come from the state that partially funds the functioning of the Church. The conclusions presented below are not so much proposals for a change of the values, but rather for a shift in priorities, not only for the good of the society, but also for the religious communities and in turn, for the good of the Church's activities and its influence. Diverse application of the same teaching and practice means there is quite a variety in practical pastoral activities among the parishes. And some are more successful in developing civic skills and habits within the village.

Thesis has shown that over time, there is growing significance in the relation between interpersonal trust and indicators of the religious community life. Those that are attending religious services more often, raise their children in faith and belong to a religious organization tend to trust other people more. It is still unclear what is the exact connection between the two variables from this partial analysis, but from other studies it has been drawn that those who live in these communities are happier, healthier, more satisfied, wealthier, and create stronger democracy. The reason for it is not only in moral lessons that one receives in religious activities, but the mere fact of socializing, regular social interactions, and possibly the encounters with people outside of one own social group, whether ethnical or socioeconomic in the Church could make person more trusting (VanderWeele, 2017; Lewis, MacGregor, & Putnam, 2013). It will be needed to explore further this relation in rural Slovakia, because most of the available studies have been conducted in the US and thus only indicate possible explanations.

Civic engagement is not only about interpersonal trust, but as much about the political engagement of the people within the community. The analysis above has shown little relation between religiosity and civic engagement within the 22 villages of Western Slovakia. What has caused some impact on the civic engagement mostly on the national level is the length of the

stay of a pastor. The longer his stay, the greater the participation of his parishioners in the national elections, EU referendum and preferential voting. The Church in past years started much more communicating about national topics such as abortion, same-sex marriage or finances for religious organizations. This might relate to overall social development, in which everything becomes more centralized and center oriented. The Conference of Bishops in Slovakia provides their statement before the parliamentary elections or did before same-sex referendum, but not for the communal elections or other local issue. Also, the pastor is being stationed to any parish only temporarily, their primary concern would thus stay on issues that transcend one particular locality. Lastly this development is not only connected to the Church, but to the society at large, many people commute for work and education, local media are close to nonexistent and community institutions are disappearing. Surprisingly, religiosity within the selected villages had even a negative effect on the competitiveness in local elections. Aligning with Putnam's work on disappearing local community institutions, the Church seems to follow the same pattern, focusing more on the issues on the national rather than on the local level. This puts in question the potential of the Church to be the community institution that would stay in periphery and take care of people there. But to address the problems and challenges that these people face, the Church should be more reliable, stable and ready to adopt to everchanging world. Transitions that occur within the Church, however, make this complicated, as everything can change within few weeks.

While the approaches to pastoral work vary in between parishes, it varies also greatly in time. One of the findings is the particular impact that transitions have on the parishes and religious communities, as represented by the transfer of the pastor. The change opens a new space for action, for the new pastor to adopt new practices, introduce new activities and involve different people. But also, the opportunity for the incoming pastor to ignore the work of his predecessor. It is not really a sustainable approach, which includes parish as institution starting over every time new pastor arrives, the parish never acts with long-term strategy that could move its potential beyond what can be achieved within few years. The institutional design of the Church already allows for the creation of such structures and institutional relationships that can transcend one pastor's term in any given parish and thus provide for a smoother transition. But this requires greater involvement of the parishioners in the governing of the parish and its day-to-day activities. And also, a great share of responsibility for a long-term continuous

development rests with the diocese and the vicariate forane. They are positioned to create strategies, plans and provide for smoother transitions—in the end, these are the levels on which the transfers are decided upon, and cooperation is created.

The thesis does not want to suggest for the Church teaching to change or shift, but rather to adapt the existing guidelines and share the best practices between the parishes to create a more sustainable Church development. This is not only in the interest of the Church itself, but also in the interest of the society that funds part of its operation through public finances. These are all steps to be taken on local and regional level, but there seems to be a need for further discussion on the national level about the social responsibility the Church has due to its unique position. It is physically present in most villages and there are dozens of really active pastors that created vibrant community in their village. What seems to be missing is the exchange of good practices, as well as motivation for the pastors to act in this, as the current institutional design does not reward them for too much activity. Action that the Church would do in this regard can have long-lasting effects, as they can on mass scale promote civicness. One of the possibilities is to incorporate these expectations to the future agreements between Holy See and Slovak Republic. The Roman Catholic parish is well positioned to be play greater role in the Slovak rural communities and be consequential in the development of the civicness within these villages.

Resumé

Rímskokatolícka cirkev má na slovenskom vidieku výhodnú pozíciu, ktorá jej umožňuje formovať život na dedine. Toto postavenie je nielen ukotvené v právnom systéme, ale aj v kapacite, ktorú má Cirkev pri mobilizácii ľudských a finančných zdrojov za rôznymi účelmi na globálnej, národnej, ale aj lokálnej úrovni. V úvode sa práca venuje aj tomu, do akej miery je Cirkev stále schopná ovplyvňovať život dediny. Či už je, alebo nie je, v oboch prípadoch to má ďalekosiahle dôsledky. Vnútri Cirkvi fungujú farnosti, ktorých efektívnosť a dopad na život v dedine je väčší, kým pri iných je tento dopad až negatívny. Nedá sa teda zovšeobecniť, aký dopad má Cirkev, skôr je treba skúmať ako rôzne prístupy a špecifické činnosti jednotlivých farností ovplyvňujú občiansky život.

Prvá kapitola sa venuje metodike tohto výskumu. V prvej časti práce sa čitateľ stretáva skôr s historickou analýzou, kde je štruktúrované prezentovaná meniac sa rola Rímskokatolíckej cirkvi. Následne sú prezentovaní jednotliví aktéri, ktorých činnosť má dosah na vznik, vývoj a fungovanie farností. Táto časť využíva cirkevné právo, aby ohraničila kompetencie jednotlivých aktérov a možností, ktoré jednotlivé farnosti majú. Sociologická a etnografická časť výskumu využíva dáta z európskej štúdie hodnôt, ktorá bola vykonaná na Slovensku celkovo v troch vlnách, v rokoch 1990, 1999 a 2017. Z týchto dát je vyňatá vzorka, ktorá býva v obciach do 5000 obyvateľov. V rámci analýzy sa pozerá na vzťah medzi indikátormi náboženského komunitného života a medziľudskej dôvery. Druhá časť praktickej časti využíva 22 vybraných prípadových štúdií vidieckych farností zo Západného Slovenska. Názvy obcí a farností nie sú v práci uvedené, namiesto toho sú použité skratky. Toto opatrenie bolo urobené za účelom ochrany zdrojov, keďže v poslednej časti sú niektoré prípadové štúdie opísané, ako aj predstavené vyjadrenia od niektorých farárov.

Druhá kapitola sa venuje historickému vývoju postavenia Cirkvi od polovice 19. storočia na Slovensku. Až do roku 1977 bola slovenská Cirkev podriadená maďarským biskupom, čo bolo zdrojom napätia už počas Rakúsko-Uhorska. Prvé snahy o osamostatnenie prišli po prvej svetovej vojne, v prvej Československej republike, kedy politická angažovanosť slovenských klerikov začala rásť. Tá vyvrcholila počas vojnového slovenského štátu. Cirkev v ňom dominovala skoro všetkým aspektom verejného života, ale taktiež bola zapojená do mnohých vojnových zločinov. Pre komunistický režim, ktorý sa v roku 1948 zmocnil vlády v obnovenom

Československu, bolo ľahké po vojne útočiť na Cirkev a jej predstaviteľov. Náboženstvo a jeho prejavy boli na 40 rokov vytlačené na okraj spoločnosti, i keď stále existovali podzemné cirkevné štruktúry. Tie sa zapojili do Nežnej revolúcie a disidenti z náboženských kruhov patrili medzi hlavných predstaviteľov na tribúnach, aj pri rokovaní s vládou v roku 1989. Po zmene režimov, nasledovala fáza obnovovania štruktúr, štátnych aj cirkevných. Tieto inštitúcie sa formovali v poslednej dekáde 20. storočia. Asi najsilnejšie obdobie pre Cirkev na Slovensku prišlo začiatkom nového tisícročia, kedy sa podarilo presadiť zmluvu medzi Slovenskou republikou a Svätou stolicou, ktorá upravovala vzájomné vzťahy. Nasledovalo obdobie pomalého úpadku vplyvu, spôsobené ako vstupom Slovenska do Európskej únie, tak smrťou pápeža Jána Pavla II, ktorý bol osobne angažovaný v celom procese zmeny po páde železnej opony. V posledných rokoch sa Cirkev stala viac euroskeptickou, riešiacu najmä veľké kultúrno-etické otázky, ktoré ale často polarizujú spoločnosť. Posledná veľká zmena pre Cirkev prišla s nástupom pápeža Františka, ktorý otvára nové témy a poukazuje na mnohé globálne problémy. V súčasnej debata oproti sebe stoja dva názory o najlepšej stratégii pre Cirkev. Zatiaľ čo niektorí ľudia si želajú, aby nábožní ľudia vytvorili komunity mimo kontroly tohto sveta, iní preferujú ísť do úkrytu pred pokazeným svetom. Finálnym produktom by asi nemal byť ani jeden prístup, ale skôr hľadanie možnosti využitia súčasného postavenia na ďalší rozvoj Cirkvi a pomoci tým, ktorí sú v perifériách spoločnosti.

Tretia kapitola prechádza cez úlohy jednotlivých aktérov, ktorí sú dôležití pri vzniku, vývoji a ďalšej formácii farnosti. V prvom rade ide o kňaza, farára, ktorému je zverená istá farnosť a je na ňom, ako vynaloží so svojou zodpovednosťou. Dôležité pre dlhodobý rozvoj je rozvíjanie inštitucionalizovaných vzťahov s inými aktérmi, ako aj tvorba štruktúr na úrovni farnosti. Druhou skupinou sú farníci, ktorí sú niekedy až v priamom konflikte s farárom. Pre nich je prioritou vytvárať medzi sebou komunitu, ktorá nie je závislá od kňaza, ale dokáže sa spravovať sama. Tretím aktérom je diecéza a dekanát, ktoré rozhodujú či už o vzdelávaní pre kňazov, ako aj o ich presune na iné miesto. Čo ale často chýba, je prepojenie medzi laikmi a realitou jednotlivých farností, ktoré sú veľmi krehké a malá zmena môže zničiť všetku prospešnú prácu. V neposlednom rade, okrem Cirkvi na dedine pôsobia aj iní dôležití spoločenský hráči, či už lokálni politici alebo aktivisti, ako aj podnikatelia. Práve spolupráca s nimi môže znásobiť efekt, ktorý farnosť môže mať na život v malej dedine.

Štvrtá kapitola sa venuje prehľadu literatúry. Prvá časť je venovaná politickej a občianskej kultúre na základe modelu vytvoreného Almondom a Verbom. Model rozlišuje medzi tromi základnými typmi politickej kultúry, farskou, poddanou a participatívnou. Ten je následne doplnený prácou Roberta Putnama, ktorý pracuje viac s občianskou kultúrou, so zameraním na sociálny kapitál a medziľudskú dôveru. V neposlednom rade, tento model bol aktualizovaný Daltonom a Welzelom, ktorí tvrdia, že participatívna politická kultúra je dostačujúca na stabilizáciu demokracie, ale na ďalší rozvoj spoločnosti už nestačí mať občana ktorý len participuje. V ďalšej fáze rozvoja politického systému je potrebné mať vplyvného občana, ktorý sa musí vedieť presadiť. Druhá časť sa venuje dôležitosti náboženských spoločenských sietí, teda vytvorenie vzťahov a komunity. Tie majú oveľa väčší dopad na rozvoj občianskych kompetencií, ako aj na blaho jednotlivca, než samotná viera. V tretej časti tejto kapitoly je predstavený model, cez ktorý sa dajú analyzovať zmeny na inštitucionálnej úrovni. Zmena vytvára priestor, ktorý sa dá využiť rôznymi spôsobmi, či už na konsolidáciu moci alebo investovanie do budovania nových vzťahov. Takisto dôležitá je otázka, do akej miery pri presune kňaza bude on spolupracovať s bývalým farárom.

Piata kapitola sa venuje praktickej časti práce. Prvá sekcia analyzuje dáta z troch vln európskej štúdie hodnôt, v ktorej sa pozerá na vzťah medzi náboženským komunitným životom a medziľudskou dôverou. V priemere pri všetkých indikátoroch platilo, že respondenti, ktorí vykazujú známky náboženského komunitného života, viac dôverujú ľuďom. Tento trend je ešte výraznejší pri poslednom meraní v roku 2017. Najvýraznejší vzťah je pri účasti na náboženských obradoch a dôveru v Cirkev, kde s klesajúcou účasťou a dôverou klesá tiež medziľudská dôvera. Celkovo si ale náboženský komunitný život na slovenskom vidieku neprešiel až takým prepadom. Výrazne klesol len počet ľudí, ktorí sú členmi náboženských organizácií a tých, čo považujú vieru za dôležitú vec pri výchove detí. Druhá sekcia sa venuje prípadovým štúdiám, teda 22 vybraným farnostiam zo Západného Slovenska, a úroveň ich politickej angažovanosti na národnej a lokálnej úrovni. Výrazný vzťah bol nájdený len pri politickej angažovanosti na národnej úrovni a aj to len v posledných rokoch. Čo naznačuje úpadok komunitného života a taktiež spochybnenie úlohy Cirkvi ako jednej z posledných komunitných inštitúcií, ktorá dokáže ovplyvňovať veci na lokálnej úrovni. Tento úkaz sa môže vysvetliť centralizáciou vnútri Cirkvi, ako aj investovaniu času najmä do tém, ktoré sú dôležité na národnej úrovni. To, čo spôsobuje dopad na politickú angažovanosť vybraných dedín je

dĺžka pôsobenia farára. Čím dlhšie pôsobenie, tým väčšia angažovanosť. Mat' dosah na ľudí, si vyžaduje vytvárať vzťahy s farníkmi, na čo nemá každý farár motiváciu, ak vie, že o pár rokov odíde. Celkovo nie je kňazom daná podpora z hora riešiť lokálne problémy. Ak niečo riešia, zvyčajne ide o ich vlastnú iniciatívu alebo tlak od laikov. Tretia sekcia sa venuje zmenám a presune kňazov v jednotlivých prípadových štúdiách. Až príliš často, aj pri tejto relatívne malej vzorke, zmena znamenala začatie odznova alebo slabú kontinuitu. Z dlhodobého hľadiska je takéto fungovanie veľmi neefektívne nielen pre Cirkev, ale aj z pohľadu vynaložených verejných financií za účelom podpory platov duchovných.

Záver sumarizuje hlavné zistenia práce a formuje odporúčania, medzi ktoré patrí väčšie zapojenie laikov za účelom budovania štruktúr na úrovni farnosti, ktoré by mohli zaručiť väčšiu kontinuitu pri presune kňaza. V tomto ale zohráva úlohu aj diecéza a dekanát, ktoré by mali intenzívnejšie pracovať s jednotlivými farármi a spoluvytvárať dlhodobé zámery pre jednotlivé farnosti tak, aby personálne zmeny čo najmenej ovplyvnili život farnosti. Celkovo je nevyhnutné viac sa venovať v Cirkvi dialógu medzi jednotlivými aktérmi. Tak aby farnosti neboli len administratívne jednotky, ale vytvárali náboženské komunity, ktoré majú pozitívny dopad na život nielen ich členov, ale aj ich okolia. Cirkev by mala naplno využiť svoje unikátne postavenie najmä v perifériách, kde má možnosť zlepšiť životy mnohých ľudí, dokonca aj napomôcť k budovaniu demokracie a lepšej spoločnosti.

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