Lublin Theological Studies

Dominik Kiełb

Religious and National Identity of Polish Emigrants in Great Britain

Catechetical and Pastoral Implications

V&R


V&R

Lublin Theological Studies

in connection with
The John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin (KUL)

edited by
Adam Kubiś (The John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin)

Advisory Board
Nicholas Adams (University of Birmingham), Klaus Baumann (University of Freiburg), David Fagerberg (University of Notre Dame), Zdzisław Kijas (Seraphicum, Rome), Juan Luis Lorda (University of Navarra), Paweł Mąkosa (The John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin), Dalia Marx (Hebrew Union College, Jerusalem), Antoni Nadbrzeżny (The John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin), Łukasz Popko (École biblique et archéologique française de Jérusalem), Ilaria Ramelli (University of Cambridge; Durham University; Sacred Heart University, Milan), Carl-Maria Sultana (University of Malta)

Volume 19

Dominik Kiełb

Religious and National Identity of Polish Emigrants in Great Britain

Catechetical and Pastoral Implications

VANDENHOECK & RUPRECHT

ISBN 978-3-525-50271-6
ISBN 978-3-647-50271-7 (PDF)
ISBN 978-3-666-50271-2 (eLibrary)
DOI https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666502712

Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek
The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data are available on the Internet at https://dnb.dnb.de.

© 2026 Brill Deutschland GmbH, Robert-Bosch-Breite 10, 37079 Göttingen, Germany

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, translated, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior written permission from the publisher. Text and datamining for commercial purposes requires the publisher's permission.

Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht and Brill Deutschland GmbH are part of De Gruyter Brill.
www.degruyterbrill.com

Questions about General Product Safety Regulation:
productsafety@degruyterbrill.com

Printing: CPI books, Leck
Cover design: SchwabScantechnik, Göttingen
Publishing reviews: Dr. Hab. Wojciech Osiał, Prof. Stanisław Dziekoński
Indexes: Dawid Mielnik

Contents

Preface 9

Introduction 13

I Theoretical basis of the research 17
1. Justification of the subject of research 18
2. Research problem of the monograph 23
3. Research issues in the context of contemporary changes in religiosity and pastoral challenges 29
4. Definition of identity 41
5. Components of identity 47
6. The component of self-identification 49
6.1 The community-social component 51
6.2 Moral and ethical component 55
6.3 Spiritual and emotional component 59
6.4 Traditional and cultural component 61
6.5 Cognitive component 64

II Empirical research methodology 67
1. Research method 68
1.1 Methodology and method 68
1.2 The problem of using sociology in pastoral theology 73
2. Research technique 75
2.1 Quantitative and qualitative research 75
2.2 Quantitative research techniques 76
2.3 Qualitative research techniques 78
3. Research tools 79
3.1 Quantitative measurement tool 80
3.2 Qualitative measurement tool 83
4. Research implementation 86
5. Characteristics of the research group 87

III The religious identity of emigrants in the light of research 99
1. Self-identification component 101
1.1 Declaration of faith 102
1.2 Constituent elements of religious identity 106
1.3 Diffusion of identity 108

2. Community and social component 111
2.1 Attitude towards the Catholic Church 112
2.2 Parish membership 122
2.3 Community and participation 131
3. Moral and ethical component 135
3.1 Values and opinions of Polish emigrants 136
3.2 Axiological conditions 139
3.3 Axiology in the context of emigration 143
4. Spiritual and emotional component 147
4.1 Religious experiences of Polish emigrants 148
4.2 Religious practices 166
5. Traditional and cultural component 170
5.1 Participation in liturgical celebrations 171
5.2 Factors influencing the cultivation of religious holidays ... 173
5.3 The importance of liturgy for Polish emigrants 178
6. Cognitive component 182
6.1 Forms of religious knowledge development 183
6.2 Religious education of the younger generation 186

IV National identity of emigrants in the light of research 191
1. The component of self-identification 193
1.1 Sense of Polishness and its manifestations 194
1.2 Objective criteria of national identity 198
1.3 Respondents' opinions on the interaction of identities 199
2. Community and social component 202
2.1 Connection with the homeland 203
2.2 Length of stay in emigration 211
2.3 Knowledge of and membership in Polish community organisations 216
3. Moral and ethical component 223
3.1 Manifestations of Polishness in emigration 224
3.2 Patriotic attitudes 228
4. Spiritual and emotional component 233
4.1 Sense of national pride 235
4.2 The emotional dimension of national identity 241
5. Traditional and cultural component 247
5.1 Celebration of patriotic holidays 248
5.2 Cultivating regional and family traditions 255
6. Cognitive component 262
6.1 Care for intellectual resources related to national identity . 263

Dominik Kiełb: Religious and National Identity of Polish Emigrants in Great Britain

6.2 Dimensions of cognitive development of Polish emigrants in terms of national identity 265

V Verification of research hypotheses and research conclusions in the context of catechetical and pastoral work 269
1. Verification of research hypotheses 269
1.1 Hierarchy and interdependence of identity 272
1.2 Language and tradition 278
1.3 The role of the family in the transmission of identity 283
1.4 Religious identity and religiosity 287
1.5 Sense of identity and commitment versus emigration 295
1.6 Attitudes towards the Church and its significance in emigration 307
1.7 Motives for contesting the Catholic Church 314
1.8 Place of origin and residence versus religious and national identity 321
2. Conclusions regarding religious identity 323
2.1 Internal religious motivations and the pastoral needs and expectations of migrants 324
2.2 Lack of knowledge and understanding of Church teaching 335
2.3 Reasons for the liberalisation of views 340
2.4 The fundamental importance of spiritual and emotional experiences 346
2.5 Reasons for lack of engagement – faith, belonging, not commitment – faith, belonging, lack of commitment 354
2.6 The need to maintain a proper image of the Church 360
3. Conclusions regarding national identity 368
3.1 National identification 370
3.2 Directions of identity transformation 378
3.3 The importance of tradition and culture 383
3.4 National community 387
3.5 The phenomenon of individualisation of emigrants 392
4. Pastoral and catechetical perspectives 398
4.1 Identity conditions in the context of the Church's pastoral activity 399
4.2 The significance and role of parishes in emigration 407
4.3 Spiritual formation based on experience 413
4.4 Adult catechesis 417
4.5 Communication and presence in *social media* 423

VI Conclusion 431

List of abbreviations 445

Bibliography 449

List of Tables 487

List of Charts 491

List of Figures 493

Indexes 495

Preface

This monograph addresses the current and important issue of identity – both religious and national – among the Polish community living in the United Kingdom, placing it in the context of contemporary changes in religiosity and pastoral challenges. In the era of globalisation and secularisation, the processes of forming individual and collective identity are gaining in importance. The author aptly emphasised that in the face of secularisation, growing individualism and cultural changes in Western countries, the analysis of the mechanisms constituting the identity of emigrants has scientific and pastoral significance.

The monograph combines sociological and theological-pastoral perspectives, referring to the magisterium of the Church and interdisciplinary empirical research, which significantly increases the interpretative value of the study. The author systematically reconstructs the theoretical context by using an interesting approach of *status questionis* instead of the criteria-based paradigm of the three stages of theological and pastoral analysis. This modified method provides greater opportunities for the use of sociological techniques and the development of empirical material. The chosen direction is supported by B. Misztal's assertion that the concept of identity "has undergone a peculiar evolution: from its initial, peripheral and auxiliary status in sociological discourse to a central and autonomous concept that plays a key role in explaining contemporary processes." This opinion is an accurate methodological reference and justifies placing identity at the centre of the analysis. At the same time, however, the author does not limit himself to a sociological perspective: references to the teachings of the Magisterium of the Church appear as an integral part of the argumentation. Furthermore, these sources give the study a deeper theological dimension, emphasising that the renewal of religious identity requires reference to the relationship with Christ. In this perspective, comments on the reduction of "quality of life" to economic criteria and the claim that "the light of faith" is mistakenly perceived as an obstacle to modernity become important points of reference for interpreting the identity changes of emigrants.

The work is characterised by its interdisciplinary nature and solid methodological structure. The author skilfully combines a theological perspective with the empirical tools of sociology, which allows for in-depth and reliable research results. The detailed presentation of six multidimensional components is a valuable theoretical contribution. This structure makes it possible to capture the complexity of the issue under study and leads to multifaceted conclusions that go beyond simplistic questions about declared affiliation. As a result, the work

not only resolves the hypotheses put forward, but also formulates practical conclusions of great pastoral significance.

The empirical material is extensive and carefully prepared. The research is based on a sample of over a thousand respondents and qualitative case studies, which provides a basis for triangulation of the results. The use of two complementary methods – quantitative and qualitative – allows both to identify trends and to deepen the interpretation of the respondents' motivations. The author clearly identifies variables, presents measurement tools and openly discusses the limitations of the study, which increases the credibility of the study and makes it a useful reference for further measurements. The contextual analysis takes into account the influence of the local environment, the availability of church structures, the specificity of media coverage and trends in the choice of axiological models in the United Kingdom, which deserves recognition.

The results of the study reveal interesting mechanisms. Firstly, religious and national identity can reinforce each other: the experience of "being Polish" abroad often encourages the maintenance of religious practices and participation in parish communities. Secondly, at the same time, this identity is susceptible to environmental influences: the pressure of individualism and a secularised lifestyle in the United Kingdom in some cases contributes to the weakening, and in some cases to the strengthening, of spiritual practices and participation in liturgy, and consequently to the ineffectiveness of the Catholic Church's current pastoral model. The monograph documents this adaptive-conservative process with numerous examples, showing how migration can simultaneously strengthen and transform patterns of religiosity. The monograph also refers to changes taking place in Poland. The data cited from ISKK, CBOS, and many other researchers, including Paulina Niechciał, indicate a decline in the percentage of people declaring their affiliation with the Catholic Church, while references to the analyses of Prof. M. Grabowska and many other data forecasting a decline in the number of declarations of faith in the long term give the work an empirical basis. Showing the convergence of trends in the country and in the diaspora allows for a better understanding of the mechanisms of accelerating secularisation and the implications of these processes for the pastoral ministry of the Catholic Church.

One of the greatest advantages of this work is its praxeological nature. The monograph formulates specific postulates: the development of adult catechesis, support for family formation, building parish communities as places of identity support, and the use of modern media in communication with younger generations of Poles. The postulate of treating parish communities as a "substitute homeland" for emigrants is particularly apt: it promotes the creation of spaces where both the religious and national dimensions can be nurtured and combined in a constructive way. Recommendations for deeper spiritual and intellec-

tual formation, with particular emphasis on adult catechesis, seem appropriate in view of the observed decline in community ties and growing individualism. Importantly, the author does not limit himself to generalities: specific strategies for action are provided, making the monograph a valuable tool for pastors, catechists, and community leaders. Practical proposals include, among others, adapting formation programmes to the needs of migrants, integrating parish activities with cultural initiatives, and making better use of digital platforms to build community identity. This approach has real potential to influence everyday pastoral practice.

In summary, this peer-reviewed monograph is a valuable and reliable contribution to research on identity, migration, pastoral theology, and catechesis. Thanks to a cross-sectional analysis of religious and national identity in emigration, knowledge relevant to theorists and practitioners has been gained. The work combines a strong empirical base (over a thousand respondents, triangulation of methods), a multidimensional model of identity, and references to the magisterium, which makes it useful for emigration pastoral care and catechesis. Researchers in the sociology of religion and migration, as well as pastors and leaders of religious communities, can find inspiration and concrete tools for action in this monograph. Its findings and recommendations should be incorporated into formation programmes and parish strategies in order to respond more effectively to the challenges of secularisation and emigration and to support the identity of the faithful living outside Poland.

Pawel Makosa
The John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin

Introduction

Theological reflection on contemporary changes in religiosity and on the models of functioning of Western societies, conducted in the context of the salvific activity of the Catholic Church, seems to point to the source of their identity. Aware of the crisis of Christian identity and attempts to transform it, Pope Benedict XVI repeatedly drew attention to this direction of discourse. He emphasised that the renewal of the religious identity of believers should essentially consist in the primacy and rebirth of their relationship with Jesus Christ. The Pope wrote: "In God revealed in Jesus Christ, man finds himself, his true self and his true identity"[1]. "Contemporary culture, especially in the West, tends to exclude God and treat faith as a private matter that cannot influence social life. And although the values underlying European society – such as a sense of human dignity, solidarity, work and family – derive from the Gospel, one can observe a kind of 'relegation of God to the background,' a kind of amnesia, if not an actual rejection of Christianity and a renunciation of the treasure of the faith received, which threatens the loss of one's own deep identity"[2]. The successor of Saint Peter emphasised: "Therefore, the Christian faith is not only a belief in certain truths, but above all a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, an encounter with the Son of God, which gives new dynamism to our entire existence. When we establish a personal relationship with Christ, He reveals our identity to us, and in friendship with Him, life develops and is fully realized."[3]

The multitude of scientific studies presenting a whole range of theoretical and empirical research results relating to the issue of identity indicates the importance and relevance of the topic. It is significant that even opponents of Christian tradition and the Church, in pursuing their goals, attempt to transform the fundamental assumptions of Christianity and the system of values based on Revelation. It is obvious that the process of remodelling the assumptions of world perception or moral principles is directly proportional to the process of creating human identity. It seems that the pastoral activity of the Church should therefore refer to this fundamental source in order not to lose the right direction and appropriate dynamics aimed at proclaiming the message of the Gospel.

---

1 Benedykt XVI, *Katecheza środowa: "Św. Augustyn III," L'Osservatore Romano (polskie)* 3 (2008): 55.

2 Benedykt XVI, "Orędzie na XXVI Światowy Dzień Młodzieży," *L'Osservatore Romano (polskie)* 10 (2010): 4–5.

3 Benedykt XVI, "Orędzie na XXVI Światowy Dzień Młodzieży," 4–5.

The secularisation processes that have taken place and continue to take place in almost all European countries also affect Poland.[4] From the point of view of the Catholic Church, however, it is important to ask to what extent these processes will be similar to those in Western countries and whether their structure and scale will allow for the formation of an analogous status for the Church. To what extent will it be able to adopt a similar pastoral model? This monograph is part of a series of studies on Polish emigrants living in the United Kingdom. It is worth mentioning that their estimated number has definitely exceeded one million.[5] Poles with a specific religious and national identity who have moved to another country temporarily or permanently may suggest a certain direction of change in this area. The research will also serve to answer the question about the direction of change in terms of identity and how the Catholic Church will be able to conduct its pastoral activity in this context. Furthermore, what aspects to pay attention to and what pastoral models to use or prepare anew. The assumptions of this study indicate the need to use an auxiliary discipline in the form of sociology, which will contribute to the creation of a database thanks to empirical measurements and their in-depth analysis.

This monograph will be divided into five chapters. The first will be the theoretical basis of the developed research concept. First, the subject of the research will be defined in the context of changes, primarily in religious and national identity, and their impact on the activities of the Catholic Church. Next, the problem addressed by the author's research will be presented, specified in the main question and research hypothesis. Specific hypotheses will also be indicated, which will be subject to verification. Next, the research issues will be presented. An important part of this stage will be the presentation of previous scientific achievements in the field of research on Polish emigrants living in the United Kingdom. It should be emphasised that the number of statements made by the Catholic Church's Teaching Authority and the multitude of research studies conducted on various aspects and from different angles testify to the importance of the issue. This part of the work will be a review of the published literature. Another important element will be the analysis and description of the term "identity." This concept is vague and therefore requires a description and definition that will serve as a basis for operationalisation, determination of the components of the concept, and development of the research tools necessary to

4 Cf. Dominik Kiełb, and Paweł Mąkosa, "Between personal faith and facade religiosity. Study on youth in the South-Estern Poland," *European Journal of Science and Theology* 5, no. 17 (2021): 15–30.

5 Główny Urząd Statystyczny, *Informacja o rozmiarach i kierunkach czasowej emigracji z Polski w latach 2017–2022* (Warszawa: GUS, 2023), 1–4. Cf. Paweł Mąkosa, *Edukacja religijna Polskich emigrantów w Wielkiej Brytanii* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL, 2019), 11.

carry out empirical measurements. The last element of the first chapter will be a description of the components that make up the basic concept. At this stage, it will also be important to refer to the specific questions contained in the tables, which relate to interesting aspects in the context of religious and national identity. The main purpose of the chapter is to present the research concept that underpins the project.

Chapter II deals primarily with the research method. The paradigm on which this monograph is based is the empirical-praxeological method. It is based on the three-stage model of theological and pastoral analysis developed by R. Kamiński and W. Piwowarski. However, the methodological model has been limited to two basic stages, namely the sociological element and the praxeological element. In fact, the theoretical stage will be synthetically replaced by an overview of previously published scientific research conducted in the fields of sociology, psychology, pedagogy and theology. In other disciplines, this stage is known as *status questionis*. This is due to the fact that numerous monographs on the issue of religious or national identity were based on broad preliminary theoretical analyses relating to history and diagnoses of the observed reality. On this basis, the author decided that there was no need for another study in this area. It seems much more appropriate to focus on interdisciplinary and empirical sociological analyses and, above all, on praxeological conclusions that can serve as inspiration and a basis for pastoral and catechetical activities. This chapter describes the research method used. It provides a description and analysis of the research tools used for both quantitative and qualitative measurement. It presents the method of conducting empirical research and characterises the research group. The description of the respondents is based on data obtained from demographic questions.

The next two chapters (Chapters III and IV) will present the data obtained in empirical measurements. Each chapter will have a similar structure based on individual components of national and religious identity in order to ensure methodological clarity and order, as well as to make it easier for the reader to compare the research results. In addition, the identified relationships will be presented by referring to key responses (at a given stage of the analysis) from respondents explaining the relationships that have emerged. The breadth of the research results and the wide range of statistical analysis options will be limited to only those that are most relevant to the key aspects of the Catholic Church's catechetical and pastoral activities.

The fifth chapter will contain praxeological inclinations concerning identity changes, also with reference to the Polish context. The inclusion of key results of qualitative research will be important in this part of the monograph. The first subchapter will be devoted to the verification of the research hypotheses. Scientific reliability requires their assessment in terms of the truthfulness of the state-

ments they contain. Next, the directions of religious and national identity changes among Polish emigrants will be indicated. The analysed data point to fundamental aspects of changes conditioned by the situation of emigration. These are of key importance in the pastoral activity of the Church, and above all in the coexistence and interaction of identities, and consequently in their strengthening and deepening or loss. The last subsection will contain conclusions and proposals regarding the practical activity of the Catholic Church in the English environment. The fact is that they can be an inspiration for pastors serving primarily in Poland, as emigration and identity changes have undoubtedly brought Polish society closer to Western societies. Similarly, some elements of the model of religious identity of Polish Catholics that function in the United Kingdom are also becoming a reality in the Polish context. In terms of expectations towards the Catholic Church and pastors, as well as religious needs, they are becoming similar in our homeland. The last chapter will therefore present conclusions regarding the identity of Polish emigrants, followed by results concerning the needs of Polish emigrants and various aspects of Christian formation in the broad sense.

The monograph will conclude with a synthetic summary and a review of the key conclusions drawn from the analyses. The author hopes that the research concept developed in this way will, first and foremost, be consistent with scientific methodological principles. Secondly, it will contribute to practical guidelines for deepening and shaping the religious and national identity of Poles both at home and abroad.

I Theoretical basis of the research

Any scientific study of a selected measurable aspect that includes empirical measurements should be based on scientific theory. In fact, it is necessary for the entire research concept to be preceded and placed in a specific theoretical context, which is the basis for scientific analysis. This part consists primarily of defining the subject of the research. It is then followed by a description of the issues covered by the analysis, i.e. the scope and angle from which the scientific discourse will be conducted in order to capture specific phenomena, processes, relationships or connections between characteristics and variables. Another important element is to present the research problem, i.e. to indicate the objective and the main question, as well as specific questions, and then, on this basis, to specify the main hypothesis and specific hypotheses. These should be subjected to objective verification through the analysis of empirical data. At this stage, it is also important to precisely define key concepts, especially when they may have a vague meaning depending on the research context, scientific discipline, or interpretative differences resulting from differences in worldview. At this stage of the study, it will also be important to identify the components of identity that allow for the operationalisation of the research and the construction of research tools relating simultaneously to the religious and national identity of Polish emigrants living in the United Kingdom.

The structure of scientific discourse outlined in this way would meet all the assumptions of sociology, which conducts a thorough analysis of the results of empirical measurements, but stops at the presentation of the results and possible relationships between dependent and independent variables. Practical theology, as well as catechetics, go a step further, however, by attempting to capture the causes of the processes taking place[6] and, crucially, to present praxeological conclusions aimed at improving negative social phenomena, such as the secularisation of societies, lack of participation in religious life, low involvement in the life of the Church, inefficiency of catechetical ministry, and many others. These disciplines also set themselves the demanding task of identifying pastorally effective methods and forms of pastoral care. The aim of this research is to identify practical elements that have a real impact on Christian formation and the

6 Cf. Dominik Kiełb, "Sociological research in pastoral theology. Objectives and execution," *Roczniki Teologiczne* 70, no. 3 (2023): 9–32. Cf. Wiesław Przygoda, "Paradygmaty metodologiczne współczesnej teologii pastoralnej," *Teologia Praktyczna* 10 (2009): 31–44.

development of parish communities. Therefore, the entire theoretical side of the research, as well as the service-oriented involvement of other scientific fields aimed at promoting contemporary interdisciplinarity[7] and their achievements in the form of sociological measurements, is directed towards the fundamental goal of presenting praxeological conclusions and pastoral conclusions.[8] Only these can have a real impact on improving the pastoral situation, pastoral ministry in the organisational units of the Catholic Church, and Christian communities. These conclusions also form the basis for the development of pastoral concepts, strategies and programmes, the creation of textbooks and catechetical aids, and the organisation of parish life.

1. Justification of the subject of research

The new reality in which the Catholic Church carries out its mission of proclaiming the Gospel is becoming increasingly challenging. This is due to globalisation and the culture of modernity or postmodernity. Undoubtedly, one of the reasons for this situation is also emigration, which is sometimes referred to as the modern migration of peoples.[9] The multitude of factors influencing population movements has led many researchers, primarily sociologists, driven by scientific curiosity, to conduct empirical measurements aimed at explaining these phenomena in the context of the contemporary social, political, religious and

7 See Joe Moran, *Interdisciplinarity* (London–New York: Routledge, 2002). See Grzegorz Strzelczyk, "Potrzeba interdyscyplinarności w polskiej teologii. Uwagi metodologiczne," *Teologia w Polsce* 2 (2008): 257–265. See Wioletta Szymczak, "Interdisciplinarity in Pastoral Theology. An Example of Socio-Theological Research," *Verbum Vitae* 2, no. 38 (2020): 503–527. See Tomasz Wielebski, and Mateusz Tutak, "Meandry interdyscyplinarności teologii pastoralnej. Przyczynek do dyskusji," *Teologia Praktyczna* 7 (2016): 25–46.

8 See Kiełb, "Sociological research in pastoral theology," 9–32. See Philip Hughes, "Theology and Social Sciences in Ministry Research," *Journal of Contemporary Ministry* 3, no. 1 (2017): 37–57. See Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Sanctorum Communio: A Theological Study of the Sociology of the Church," Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works*, vol. 1, ed. Clifford J. Green, transl. Rienhard Krauss, and Nancy Luken (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998). Cf. Jeff Wheeldon, "Theology and Sociology, Sociology as Theology," *Journal of Sociology and Christianity* 6, no. 2 (2016): 6–23. Cf. Vivencio Ballano, "Catholic Social Teaching, Theology, and Sociology: Exploring the Common Ground," *Religions* 10 (2019): 557. Cf. Vivencio O. Ballano, "The Social Sciences, Pastoral Theology, and Pastoral Work: Understanding the Underutilization of Sociology in Catholic Pastoral Ministry," *Open Theology* 1, no. 6 (2020): 531–546. Cf. Bryan T. Froehle, "Catholic Pastoral Sociology in the United States since Vatican II: Making a Path by Walking," *US Catholic Historian* 25, no. 4 (2007): 85–116.

9 Cf. Mąkosa, *Edukacja religijna Polskich emigrantów w Wielkiej Brytanii*.

cultural situation. This issue is extremely important from the point of view of the catechetical and pastoral activity of the Catholic Church. Although the phenomenon of emigration occurs on all continents, in Europe it takes on a massive form. It therefore affects almost all countries of the Old Continent. This applies not only to countries that have opened their borders to people from other cultures, countries or continents fleeing war or the threat of armed conflict, but also to European nations that have chosen emigration as a result of unemployment or an unfavourable economic situation. These factors, among others, caused emigration from countries such as Poland when it joined the European Union in 2004.

The temporary or permanent transfer of people to another country has an impact on various areas of their lives. There is no doubt that faith and religion are an important part of life. The population living in Poland had a specific national identity based on their belonging to the Polish nation, as well as the history and culture of their homeland. At the same time, this population had a religious identity based on formal membership of the Church and the religious practices resulting from this membership. Emigration has caused and continues to cause this identity, which is conditioned by through residence in one's own country, to be somewhat shaken. Over time, changes occur in the way people relate to their homeland. These are particularly evident in situations where people do not consider returning to their home country. There is also a change in religious identity, especially in the context of the secularised and secularised environments of Europe where Poles live. Although the Church is active in these countries, the forms of activity of Polish Catholic communities are often different, and access to Polish parishes is much more limited. This has a significant impact on the frequency of religious practices. A significantly different living environment, economic attitudes, limited access to parishes, and the observed secularised living environments of Western societies are the main factors influencing the relatively rapid processes of change in the religious identity of Polish emigrants. This poses a major challenge for pastors serving in the structures of the Polish Catholic Mission,[10] present in countries such as the United Kingdom, Switzerland, France and the United States. The pastors serving within its struc-

10 The Polish Catholic Mission is an administrative unit of the Catholic Church directly subordinate to the Polish Episcopal Conference. This institution coordinates pastoral care for Poles living in England and Wales. It covers over 200 localities where Holy Mass is regularly celebrated in Polish. Its structure includes about 70 parishes in which about 100 priests serve, providing pastoral care to Poles. The history of the Polish Catholic Mission in England and Wales begins in 1853, when Fr. Eryk Podolski began celebrating services for Poles in a chapel on Sutton Street in London's Soho district. Based on information from the website: https://www.pcmew.org/ (accessed: 08.09.2025).

tures want to ensure access to the sacraments for Poles who have emigrated, care for their spiritual lives, and attempt to reach out to those who have given up any participation in the life of faith. The Church has always provided material support to migrants by organising shelters, soup kitchens and other forms of assistance, but above all, it has sought to nurture their spiritual lives.[11] On the other hand, however, these changes are a source for research into their complex causes and consequences, which are the starting point for the Church's activity in the new pastoral reality. For the Church must always remain faithful to the mission entrusted to it by Jesus Christ: "Go into all the world and teach all nations" (Mt 28:19).

Approaching its mission responsibly, the Church should seek the causes of these changes, but also look broadly at the factors influencing them. All this so that scientific reflection in pastoral theology, which is by its very nature focused on practical action, may be the starting point for this activity. From the point of view of the particular Church, which is the Church in Poland, the current time of change is significant. In an attempt to assess the causes of the very dynamic process of secularisation taking place in Poland, especially among the younger generation, the Pew Research Center points out that Poland is the fastest secularising country in Europe.[12] One of the reasons mentioned is mass emigration to Western countries, which has undoubtedly accelerated the phenomenon of secularisation. Young people, having become enamoured with the model of "life without God and moral principles," did not return to the Catholic Church and the practice of their faith after returning to their country in significant numbers. Living in a Polish environment, they retained the Western model of life. Importantly, very often there was a change in religious identity while maintaining national identity.[13]

---

11 See Marian Zając (ed.), *Emigracja wyzwaniem duszpasterskim dla Kościoła w Polsce* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL, 2009).

12 See Pew Research Center, *Being Christian in Western Europe*, accessed 27.01.2020, http://assets.pewresearch.org/wpcontent/uploads/sites/11/2018/05/14165352/Being-Christian-in-Western-Europe-FOR-WEB1.pdf. See Pew Research Center, *Eastern and Western Europeans Differ on Importance of Religion, Views of Minorities and Key Social Issues*, accessed 27.01.2020, http://www.pewforum.org/2018/10/29/eastern-andwestern-europeans-differ-on-importance-ofreligion-views-of-minorities-and-key-social-issues. See Stephen Bullivant, *Europejska młodzież i religia. Wyniki Europejskiego Sondażu Społecznego (2014–2016)*, accessed 23.08.2020, https://wszystkoconajwazniejsze.pl/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Raport-prof.-Boullivant.pdf. See Krzysztof Pacewicz, *Polska globalnym liderem … w spadku religijności*, accessed 23.03.2020, https://oko.press/polska-globalnym-liderem-w-spadku-religijnosci. See Institute for Advanced Studies. *European Social Survey European Research Infrastructure (ESS ERIC 2022)* (London: Institute for Advanced Studies, 2022), 1–129.

13 See Kiełb, and Mąkosa, "Between personal faith and facade religiosity," 15–30.

The scale of religious change currently seems so great that it appears that the Church is unable to stop it. It must find its place in the new reality by proposing a slightly different model of pastoral care[14] and an evangelical, even missionary, approach to people who have practically no personal experience of God or do not want to have it. The Church is also called and sent to them to bring the "proposal" of the Gospel. Therefore, research on these identity changes is very important because it indicates their likely direction. It also shows the possibilities for "preparing" the Church, its models and forms of pastoral activity, following the example of Western societies, especially in the United Kingdom, where the structure of priestly ministry and organisational structure seems to be appropriate and adequate for the more than one million Poles living in the United Kingdom, both temporarily and permanently.

The key question remains: to what extent will these processes be repeated in the Polish context and how can the Church in Poland prepare for them? What measures and pastoral models should be introduced in order to present the "Gospel message" not only to emigrants, but also to Poles living in their homeland who are beginning to adopt an emigrant lifestyle characterised by a range of specific values that are not always consistent with Christian values? To what extent, based on research into the religious and national identity of Polish emigrants, can the results obtained be related to the changing situation of the Church in Poland?

The author's research seems to be relevant due to these changes in religious identity in Poland, but also due to the need to develop new pastoral models. The fact is that many believers are radically departing from religious practices and the morality preached by the Church, especially in central and western Poland. This is also indicated by the decline in the participation of children and young people in religious education classes, the renunciation of First Communion and Confirmation, the low rate of sacramental marriages, the lack of involvement in the life of the Church and parishes, and the number of apostasies.[15]

---

14 See Wojciech Węgrzyniak, *Zanim Zapomnę* (Kraków: Rafael – Dom Wydawniczy, 2023), 181–189.

15 Cf. Instytut Statystyki Kościoła Katolickiego, *Kościół katolicki w Polsce 1991–2011*, ed. Paweł Ciecieląg, *et al.* (Warszawa: Instytut Statystyki Kościoła Katolickiego, 2014). Cf. Instytut Statystyki Kościoła Katolickiego, *Annuarium statisticum Ecclesiae in Polonia Ad 2015*, ed. Wojciech Sadłoń (Warszawa: Instytut Statystyki Kościoła Katolickiego, 2015). Cf. Instytut Statystyki Kościoła Katolickiego, *Annuarium statisticum Ecclesiae in Polonia Ad 2016*, ed. Wojciech Sadłoń (Warszawa: Instytut Statystyki Kościoła Katolickiego, 2016). Cf. Instytut Statystyki Kościoła Katolickiego, *Annuarium statisticum Ecclesiae in Polonia Ad 2018*, ed. Wojciech Sadłoń (Warszawa: Instytut Statystyki Kościoła Katolickiego, 2018). Cf. Instytut Statystyki Kościoła Katolickiego, *Annuarium statisticum Ecclesiae in Polonia Ad 2019*, ed. Wojciech Sadłoń (Warszawa:

The observed situation calls for action in the form of scientific activity by theologians, theorists and pastoral practitioners, so that even if it is impossible to stop the ongoing processes of secularisation, the Church can still offer the Gospel. Scientific research is therefore important, as it is an expression of a genuine search for ways to reach contemporary man. This monograph is part of the search for new pastoral strategies aimed at contemporary man and, thus, the renewal of pastoral care. The experiences of the Catholic Church in Great Britain, the "fresh" perspective of pastors serving in the Polish Catholic Mission and the expectations of Poles living in different cultural contexts can be of real help in preparing new forms of pastoral care and, above all, in focusing on the search for new followers of Christ, who often return to the Catholic Church after some time.

Instytut Statystyki Kościoła Katolickiego, 2019). Cf. Instytut Statystyki Kościoła Katolickiego, *Annuarium statisticum Ecclesiae in Polonia Ad 2020*, ed. Wojciech Sadłoń, and Luiza Organek (Warszawa: Instytut Statystyki Kościoła Katolickiego, 2021). Cf. Instytut Statystyki Kościoła Katolickiego, *Annuarium statisticum Ecclesiae in Polonia Ad 2021*, ed. Wojciech Sadłoń, and Luiza Organek (Warszawa: Instytut Statystyki Kościoła Katolickiego, 2022). Cf. Instytut Statystyki Kościoła Katolickiego, *Annuarium statisticum Ecclesiae in Polonia Ad 2022*, ed. Wojciech Sadłoń, and Luiza Organek (Warszawa: Instytut Statystyki Kościoła Katolickiego, 2023). Cf. Instytut Statystyki Kościoła Katolickiego, *Annuarium statisticum Ecclesiae in Polonia Ad 2023*, ed. Wojciech Sadłoń, and Luiza Organek (Warszawa: Instytut Statystyki Kościoła Katolickiego, 2024). See Centrum Badania Opinii Społecznej, *Młodzież 2003* (Warszawa: Centrum Badania Opinii Społecznej, 2003). Cf. Centrum Badania Opinii Społecznej, Krajowe Centrum Przeciwdziałania Uzależnieniom, *Młodzież 2010* (Warszawa: Centrum Badania Opinii Społecznej, 2011). See Centrum Badania Opinii Społecznej, Krajowe Centrum Przeciwdziałania Uzależnieniom, *Młodzież 2013* (Warszawa: Centrum Badania Opinii Społecznej, 2014). See Centrum Badania Opinii Społecznej, Krajowe Centrum Przeciwdziałania Uzależnieniom, *Młodzież 2016* (Warszawa: Centrum Badania Opinii Społecznej, 2016). See Centrum Badania Opinii Społecznej, Krajowe Centrum Przeciwdziałania Uzależnieniom, *Młodzież 2018*, ed. Mirosława Grabowska, and Magdalena Gwiazda (Warszawa: Centrum Badania Opinii Społecznej, 2019). See Centrum Badania Opinii Społecznej, Krajowe Centrum Przeciwdziałania Uzależnieniom, *Młodzież 2021*, ed. Rafał Boguszewski (Warszawa: Centrum Badania Opinii Społecznej, 2022). See Centrum Badania Opinii Społecznej, *Sekularyzacja po polsku*, ed. Mirosława Grabowska, Marta Bożewicz, Marta Kołodziejska, Jonathan Scovil, and Beata Roguska (Warszawa: Fundacja Centrum Badania Opinii Społecznej, 2022). See Centrum Badania Opinii Społecznej, *Deklarowane wartości i cele życiowe młodych Polaków*. Komunikat z badań nr 54/2025, ed. Beata Roguska (Warszawa: Fundacja Centrum Badania Opinii Społecznej, 2025). See Wojciech Sadłoń, "Religijność studentów według własnej oceny," in: *Między konstrukcją a dekonstrukcją uniwersum znaczeń. Badania religijności młodzieży akademickiej w latach 1988–1998–2005–2017*, ed. Sławomir Zaręba, and Marcin Zarzecki (Warszawa: Warszawskie Wydawnictwo Socjologiczne, 2018), 199–216. See Kiełb, and Mąkosa, "Between personal faith and facade religiosity," 15–30. See Dominik Kiełb, Michał Pierzchała, and Marcin Gazda, "Youth Attitudes towards Religious Education in Poland," *Religions* 14, no. 7 (2021): 1–13.

2. Research problem of the monograph

It is generally accepted that every scientific study should include a research problem. Methodologists define a research problem as a description of the subject of research. They point out that at the stage of developing this issue, it is important to define the main objective of the research, expressed in the form of a fundamental question and specific questions that clarify the main question, to which the research should provide an answer. According to sources, the main problem is "a description of the research topic, the objective and the questions to which the researcher wants to find answers by conducting the research. In a narrower sense, a research problem is a question or set of questions to which the research is intended to provide answers. Research problems concern the properties of the subject of research, their changes and conditions, the relationships between the characteristics of objects, the significance of variables and their interactivity, and their joint or exclusive impact."[16]

Methodologists postulate that scientific proceedings aimed at achieving specific goals in the form of new theoretical knowledge or practically oriented through conclusions should include a clearly defined research subject and a problem that has been defined in direct or indirect reference to the subject at the stage of conceptualisation and operationalisation of the research. This is the basis of the entire scientific process, also in the field of pastoral theology, especially when using auxiliary sciences such as sociology or psychology. As S. Nowak notes, "correctly defining the subject of research allows researchers to focus on a specific topic and precisely determine research objectives. At the same time, specifying the subject of research allows for the selection of appropriate research tools and methods that will be most adequate and effective in the analysis and interpretation of the collected data."[17] Thanks to this, the entire scientific process will focus on explaining the main topic that has been taken up in the research.

The subject of research is a topic or area that is the object of scientific interest.[18] The definition of the subject of research may vary depending on the scientific field that intends to carry out the research procedure. Following J. Apanowicz, we can define that the subject of research can be anything that is

16 See Hubert Witczak, "Problemy i twierdzenia naukowe," in: *Podstawy metodologiczne prac doktorskich*, ed. Maria Sławińska, and Hubert Witczak (Warszawa: Polskie Wydawnictwo Ekonomiczne, 2012), 84.

17 See Stefan Nowak, *Metodologia badań społecznych* (Warszawa: PWN, 2011). See Janusz Sztumski, *Wstęp do metod i technik badań społecznych* (Katowice: Śląsk, 2005).

18 See Sztumski, *Wstęp do metod i technik badań społecznych*, 18.

included in the research problem.[19] According to T. Pilch, the subject of research depends on the type of research we are conducting. It is therefore a task that we have to perform. Scientific research consists of various activities aimed at gaining accurate, reliable and comprehensive knowledge of the reality selected for research.[20] Another prominent methodologist, A. W. Maszke, in his study entitled *Methodological Approaches to Empirical Research*, refers to this issue as follows: "we will define the subject of research as all objects, things, phenomena and processes to which they are subject and in relation to which we formulate research questions."[21] L. Sołoma makes a similar statement, defining the subject of research as "a phenomenon, object or thing that we want to study or about which we want to formulate statements in relation to research questions."[22]

Taking into account the above analyses and definitions, it can be concluded that the research conducted is a response and an attempt to solve this problem. The subject of research is therefore broadly understood scientific reality, which consists of material and formal objects of particular fields of knowledge, as well as objects, entities, structures, things, institutions and ideal creations, such as phenomena, relations, relationships, dependencies, connections or processes. The last group of potential research subjects are creations of an intangible nature.[23] It can therefore be concluded that the subject of research may concern people as well as objects, both social and natural phenomena.[24] It should also be emphasised that a given person, object or phenomenon may become a point of interest for various scientific disciplines, including theology.

However, it is important at this stage to define the objective of scientific research, which is inextricably linked to the subject matter and research problem. As K. Rabucha writes, "the objective of scientific knowledge, and therefore of scientific research, is to explain, which is understood as assessing the relationships between the phenomena under study."[25] According to J. Pieter, scientific

19 See Jerzy Apanowicz, *Metodologiczne uwarunkowania pracy naukowej* (Warszawa: Difin, 2005), 72.

20 Tadeusz Pilch, *Zasady badań pedagogicznych* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Akademickie Żak, 1995), 101. Cf. Tadeusz Pilch, and Teresa Bauman, *Zasady badań pedagogicznych* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Akademickie Żak, 2001), 35–36.

21 Cf. Albert W. Maszke, *Metodologiczne podstawy badań pedagogicznych* (Rzeszów: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Rzeszowskiego, 2004), 44.

22 Cf. Luba Sołoma, *Metody i techniki badań socjologicznych* (Olsztyn: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warmińsko-Mazurskiego, 2002), 38.

23 See Janusz Sztumski, *Wstęp do metod i technik badań społecznych* (Katowice: Śląsk, 2005), 19.

24 See Sztumski, *Wstęp do metod i technik badań społecznych*.

25 See Krzysztof Rubacha, *Metodologia badań nad edukacją* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Akademickie i Profesjonalne, 2008), 18.

research is "the totality of activities undertaken to identify and define a problem, up to the development of research materials."[26] Z. Skorny gives a similar definition of scientific research, indicating that it is "the totality of activities and means enabling the enrichment of knowledge about a given field of reality (basic research) or finding ways to achieve a practical goal (applied research)."[27] W. Zaczyński, on the other hand, emphasises that "scientific research is a multistage process of internally diverse activities designed to provide us with objective, accurate and comprehensive knowledge of a selected segment of natural, technical, social or cultural reality. It is therefore a procedure regulated by praxeological norms."[28] According to the above definitions, the purpose of research should be either the expected end result, which is the desired outcome of the research procedure, or the place where the research procedure is heading.[29] In turn, according to W. Dudkiewicz, the purpose of scientific research is "to strive to enrich knowledge about the people, phenomena or things that are the subject of research."[30]

In summary, it can be said that the aim of scientific research is to obtain the most accurate, reliable, simple and general knowledge containing the greatest amount of information obtained in the scientific process.[31] However, it should be emphasised that the purpose of both quantitative and qualitative sociological research is essentially the same, as it concerns understanding and explaining an issue of interest from a scientific point of view.[32] In essence, the purpose is a specific, clear and realistic focus of research on the expected results or effects.[33] Therefore, the fundamental objective is to consciously follow a specific direction through the twists and turns of scientific research focused on specific effects.

Taking the above analyses into account, we can divide research objectives into:

- theoretical objectives – focused on formulating general assumptions, scientific concepts, developing models, etc.,
- cognitive objectives – establishing relationships, measuring phenomena.

26 See Józef Pieter, *Ogólna metodologia pracy naukowej* (Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1967).

27 See Zbigniew Skorny, *Prace magisterskie z psychologii i pedagogiki* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Szkolne i Pedagogiczne, 1984), 48.

28 See Władysław Zaczyński, *Praca badawcza nauczyciela* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Szkolne i Pedagogiczne, 1995), 9.

29 See Maszke, *Metodologiczne podstawy badań pedagogicznych*, 20.

30 See Waldemar Dutkiewicz, *Podstawy metodologii badań do pracy magisterskiej i licencjackiej z pedagogiki* (Kielce: Wydawnictwo Stachurski, 2000), 50.

31 See Pilch, and Bauman, *Zasady badań pedagogicznych*, 23.

32 See Pilch, and Bauman, *Zasady badań pedagogicznych*, 56.

33 See Zaczyński, *Praca badawcza nauczyciela*, 52.