

From party- to antipolitics. Catholic political thought and activism in Poland from 1945 to 1948. A comparative approach

My interdisciplinary research project aims at analyzing lay Catholics' thinking about politics in the time of the establishment of the communist rule in Poland between 1945 and 1948 combining perspectives of historian and political scientists. Thanks to this it will be possible to present the whole specter of attitudes and ideas and to investigate why some organizational and ideological strategies were more successful than others. Moreover, by drawing a comparison between ideational evolution of Catholics in Poland and in Italy it will be easier to grasp historical and ideological limitations to catholic thought in Poland in the immediate after-war period. I am particularly interested what was the impact of the fact that Poland after World War II became a part of the Soviet sphere of influence on the catholic thought there.

The preliminary research I have undertaken shows that the period between 1945 and 1948 brought about a major generational and sociological change to catholic intellectual life in Poland: people who were closely linked with the interwar Christian democrats could not find themselves in the new reality of People's Poland, whereas young intellectuals from the margins of catholic discourse gained importance. This change must have left a mark on catholic political thought.

The project concentrates on analyzing public language: political press, public speeches, pamphlets. Some archival work (especially regarding documents from the Ministry of Public Security, MBP) is planned in order to show this aspect of Polish Catholics' history that could not be made public due to the censorship. While the core of my work will be historical research, I plan to apply methods and concepts from political science, especially those regarding comparative research on political ideologies and Christian democracy.

Interdisciplinary and comparative analysis of catholic ideas in Poland will allow to situate it and its creators on the map of European political Catholicism, that is these groups and parties which directly inspired by Catholic teaching engaged after World War II in political in Europe. Thanks to this I will be able to show how and to what extent catholic intellectuals in Poland participated in European-wide ideological currents and how the presence of the communist power constituted a limit to this participation.