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**Development of the Roman Catholic Church's accommodation facilities in Poland
– a temporal and structural analysis**

Religious tourism is one of the oldest forms of tourism which continuously attracts consistent interest. Along with its development an appropriate accommodation infrastructure has been established. The duty of hospitality, or care for pilgrims, traditionally rested on monasteries, and this role evolved significantly over time, both in form and structure. Although the phenomenon of accommodation infrastructure serving pilgrims spans nearly two thousand years, it is scarcely documented. A review of literature in the field of religious tourism confirms this gap. Foreign systematic reviews in this area suggest a future emphasis on studying this form of tourism from the perspective of hotel products and accommodations. Similarly, in Poland, comprehensive studies on this phenomenon still need to be completed.

Given this, the author formulated the following question:

Does the Roman Catholic Church in Poland possess and develop an accommodation base for religious tourism? If so, to what extent, why, and what factors influence this development?

The following research objectives were set to address this question:

- To identify and scientifically describe the phenomenon under study.
- To indicate patterns observed within this phenomenon.
- To identify the factors shaping the phenomenon.

To conduct the research, the author defined a "Roman Catholic Church accommodation facility" as an establishment that provides lodging services, owned by a legal entity of the Church or a religious organisation according to the Polish Law on the State's Relationship to the Catholic Church. Key terms in the study include *development* (a gradual and long-lasting process leading to a more efficient, complex, and advanced state) and *temporal-structural analysis* (a research method examining changes in a phenomenon over time).

The spatial scope of the study encompasses the entire territory of Poland within its current borders. For enhanced analysis, the study divides the country according to both administrative (voivodeships, counties, municipalities) and ecclesiastical (dioceses) boundaries.

The research was conducted over five years (2018–2023), covering entities currently operational but established over the past 120 years, since 1903.

To conduct the research, an inventory of the Church's accommodation base was created. A questionnaire comprising 18 variables was developed, with data gathered from websites of the establishments or their administrators, industry portals, as well as through a distributed survey and direct phone or email contact with diocesan curies, religious provinces, and staff of Church accommodation facilities.

Additional research methods included literature review, website analysis, examination of documents and Church reports, statistical data analysis, spatial analysis, mapping, temporal-structural analysis, spatial diffusion of innovation, and growth dynamics.

The research identified 471 accommodation facilities of the Roman Catholic Church. Complete data was available for 226 facilities, which were subjected to statistical analysis, confirming their representativeness and enabling a range of analyses.

The research and analyses provided structure to the phenomenon developed a regulatory definition and proposed a typology of the Church's accommodation base in Poland based on three criteria: name, capacity, and ownership affiliation. Through growth dynamics, six stages of development for the Church's accommodation base in Poland were identified. The research indicated that the location selection for the Church's accommodation facilities is often random, supporting the concept of behavioral location selection. Spatial analysis revealed distinctive features of this type of accommodation infrastructure, such as increased facility numbers in mountainous areas and regions with high tourism appeal. The study also examined the correlation between the size of the Church's accommodation base and various regional factors, with the strongest associations found with the number of nuns, priests, monks, and sanctuaries. Other influential factors include tourism appeal, altitude, and the size of the hotel base.

In conclusion, the Roman Catholic Church in Poland does have an accommodation base for religious tourists and continues to develop it. This base consists of 471 facilities spread throughout Poland, influenced by a range of political-historical and socio-economic factors.

Keywords: Roman Catholic Church accommodation facility, Church accommodation base, ecclesiastical accommodation, retreat house, pilgrim house, religious tourism, temporal-structural analysis, spatial diffusion