



The Making of a Catholic Parish in Eighteenth-Century Hungary: Competing Interests, Integration, and Interference

Béla Vilmos Mihalik

Research Centre for the Humanities

mihalik.bela.vilmos@abtk.hu

In this essay the potentials for political interaction among local communities will be examined through parish organization in the century following the expulsion of the Ottomans from the territory of Hungary, i.e. the period referred to as late confessionalization (1681–1781). Roughly 150 years of Ottoman occupation had wreaked havoc on the parish network, which was reorganized over the course of the eighteenth century. Village communities took the initiative to establish parishes, but as they did so, the clashing interests of the Catholic Church, the landlords, and the state had to be addressed and negotiated. The dynamics of this process and the ways in which the local communities were able to assert their specific needs should therefore be discussed. The complexity of often divergent interests and aims compelled the communities to devise cautious means of communicating with the competing groups, and it also helped further the internal integration of the local societies and the integration of these communities into church and secular structures. However, growing state influence made abundantly clear that the roles of the church administration and the parishes would soon undergo slow but meaningful change.

Keywords: late confessionalization, parishes, local communities, community politics, integration

Introduction

In the eighteenth century, after the Treaty of Karlowitz and the end of the Ottoman occupation (1541–1699), it was finally possible to begin reorganizing the administrative structures of the Kingdom of Hungary. At the local level, one of the most important stages in this process was the establishment of Catholic parishes, since the parish, as an institution, played a central role in the integration of smaller communities into the larger networks of secular and ecclesiastical government. Once new settlers arrived in areas which essentially had been left desolate by conflict and flight and the network of settlements had been reestablished, the country bore witness to the rapid foundation of new

parishes. This essay focuses in particular on the moment of parish foundation in order to shed light on local developments in the larger process of Catholic reorganization. In the following discussion I examine how the local community was able to communicate its needs and aspirations within the web of often competing interests which emerged around the foundation of a parish.

The period under examination, which began with the religious articles of the Diet of Sopron 1681 and came to an end with the Edict of Toleration of Joseph II in 1781, is considered the century of late confessionalization in Hungary by András Forgó.¹ One might well have been tempted, therefore, to analyze the aforementioned questions within the familiar theory of confessionalization presented by Wolfgang Reinhard and Heinz Schilling.² However, in this article I argue that the case of Hungary provides good support for criticisms of this paradigm.³ First, the late developments of confessionalization in eighteenth-century Hungary prove the untenability of chronological definitions, which typically put the end of the confessionalization at the time of the Peace of Westphalia.⁴ The other principal criticism was the exaggerated role of the state. Micro-historical studies have shown the active role played by local communities, as confessionalization took place in areas where there was no strong state power. Even when the state was present, its aspirations could only be achieved when they overlapped with the expectations of local communities.⁵

In case of eighteenth-century Hungary, Zoltán Gőzsy and Szabolcs Varga came to similar findings in their research on the diocese of Pécs. Gőzsy and Varga demonstrated that the communities played a very active role in the consolidation of the post-Ottoman period and successfully articulated their specific local

1 Forgó, “Formen der Spätkonfessionalisierung.”

2 Reinhard, “Was ist katholische Konfessionalisierung?”; Schilling, “Die Konfessionalisierung.”

3 Lotz-Heumann offers a thorough discussion of the criticism of the theory of confessionalization: Lotz-Heumann, “Confessionalization.”

4 However, Reinhard later suggested several possible end points for confessionalization: the expulsion of the Huguenots after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes (1685), the Act of Succession to the English throne (1701), which favored Protestant monarchs, and the expulsion of the Salzburger Protestants (1731): Reinhard, “Konfession und Konfessionalisierung,” 125.

5 For theoretical criticisms, see Schmidt, “Sozialdisziplinierung?”; Schilling, “Disziplinierung oder ‘Selbstregulierung der Untertanen?’”; Holzem, “Die Konfessionsgesellschaft”; Lotz-Heumann, “Confessionalization.” Various regional case studies: Holzem, *Religion und Lebensformen*; Forster, *Catholic Revival*; Stögmann, “Staat, Kirche und Bürgerschaft”; Scheutz, “Konfessionalisierung von unten”; Pörtner, *Counter-Reformation*; Kümin and Tramontana, “Catholicism Decentralized.” Specifically on seventeenth-century Hungary: Molnár, *Mezőváros és katolicizmus*; Mihalik, *Papok, polgárok*. A rejection of the paradigm of confessionalization: Hersche, *Muse und Verschwendung*.

interests to the higher ecclesiastical, state, and landlord levels.⁶ Their research, however, relied on descriptive, often generalizing, serial sources produced by the Catholic Church, for instance, the church visitation records. Thus, they examined the communities through the lens of an external observer, the higher church authority. Although Gőzsy's and Varga's conclusions concerning the role of local society were convincing, I approach the topic from a different point of view. The goal of this essay to describe the internal and external dynamics of the local village communities, challenging the excessive top-down, state and church power perspective of the confessionalization thesis.

Highlighting the role of communities, one should consider the phenomena of communalism, a fruitful concept introduced by Peter Blickle.⁷ Although Blickle stressed the importance of both rural and urban communities in the spread of the Reformation, case studies proved again the limits of their influence and the various grades of their dependency.⁸ Thus, the complexity of the concept of community is a reason for caution. Instead of over-generalizing the notion, it is better to focus on the internal dynamics of the community.⁹ The variety of internal and external interactions and the forms of political communication used within and by communities offer the potentially different approaches. The "politics of parish," in Keith Wrightson's approach, could include many elements of communication: gossip, rumors, symbolic acts, forms of exclusion, inclusion, etc. The individual smaller components of the community and the interactions among them could have a major influence on the external, political space of the community.¹⁰ In the case of Hungary, Dániel Bárh focuses primarily on the conflict between the lower clergy and their communities in the early modern period. His recent studies, however, go beyond this, addressing several considerations about the local (horizontal) fields of power structures and communication with the (vertical) ecclesiastical and secular hierarchies, offering

6 Gőzsy and Varga, "Kontinuitás és reorganizáció"; Gőzsy and Varga, "A pécsi egyházmegye." Gőzsy also examined the role of the parish priest in the norm communication toward the communities: Gőzsy, "Plébánosok"; Gőzsy, "Ebenen und Phasen."

7 A summary of his theory: Blickle, "Communal Reformation."

8 Scribner, "Communalism."

9 For this warning on the use of the concept of community, see Spierling and Halvorson, "Introduction."

10 Wrightson, "The Politics of the Parish." Thomas V. Cohen has examined this kind of communal internal functioning and the community's responses to perceived threats in practice, drawing on the example of a village in Italy: Cohen, "Communal thought, communal words"; Cohen, "Social Memory"; Cohen, "The Great Italian."

a more complex image of the functions of the parish in the lives of village communities.¹¹

The concept and function of the parish changed a lot in the Middle Ages and early modern times in Hungary. The first king, Saint Stephen I, in addition to the establishment of the first bishoprics, placed great emphasis on the founding of parishes. In his second law-code, he ordered that every ten villages should build a church and provide these churches with various benefits in kind. The king provided the vestments and altar cloths, and the bishop provided the priests and the books.¹² By the fourteenth century, parishes had often been transformed into donated benefices, where a substitute clergyman appointed by the beneficed provided the actual pastoral care.¹³ This was accompanied by the separation of different types of parishes. The titles of parish priest (*plebanus*) and parish (*plebania*) were reserved for a narrow, privileged part of parishes. This distinguished them from the ordinary parochial churches (*ecclesia parochialis*) and their priests (*rector ecclesiae, sacerdos*) without prerogatives. Although privileges were not lost, by the early fifteenth century, the title of parish and parish priest had been extended to all congregations and their priests.¹⁴

The exact size of the Catholic parish network in the Middle Ages is not known, but it is estimated that by the mid-sixteenth century, as much as 60–70 percent of it may have been destroyed as a result of the Reformation and the Ottoman conquest. By 1600, this figure had risen to 90 percent.¹⁵ The reorganization took around two centuries. The Catholic renewal marked by Cardinal Péter Pázmány (1570–1637), archbishop of Esztergom, in the first half of the seventeenth century built up the institutional system (seminaries, schools, university) on which the Catholic Church could rely to strengthen itself again in the territories ruled

11 Bárth, “The Lower Clergy”; Bárth, *The Exorcist*. Similarly to the notion of the “communal Reformation” introduced by Peter Blickle, Katalin Péter examined the Hungarian “poor communities” as agents of Reformation, even under Ottoman rule and without protection or support patrons and landlords: Péter, *Studies*, 21–110. In the 1960s, Ferenc Szakály studied thoroughly the “peasant counties,” a self-defense organization of the Christian peasantry in Ottoman-occupied Hungary: Szakály, *Parasztvármegyék*. A detailed overview of the internal order of the eighteenth-century Hungarian village: Wellmann, “Közösségi rend.”

12 Engel, *The realm of St. Stephen*, 46.

13 Mályusz, *Egyházi társadalom*, 120–21.

14 Hegyi, “A plébánia,” 1–5. The extent and type of prerogatives further subdivided the privileged parishes. Privileges could include exemption from territorial ecclesiastical (episcopal, archdeaconry) jurisdiction, the extent of tithing (the parish priest could receive all or most of the tithes), and the free election of priests by the community.

15 Szakály, “Török uralom,” 54.

by the Habsburgs.¹⁶ However, the violent counterreformation in the last third of the century was so overwhelming that the number of the newly occupied Protestant churches exceeded the number of available Catholic parish priests. In a situation which escalated into a religious civil war, the Habsburg rulers and the Catholic prelates were forced to make concessions. Protestants were granted limited religious freedom at the Diet of Sopron in 1681. In the western part of the country, religious practice was permitted only in certain settlements, the so-called articular places, and several other restrictions were imposed. A 1691 royal decree (*Explanatio Leopoldina*) which explained the law in detail further restricted these rights, confirming the jurisdiction of the Catholic clergy over Protestant congregations.¹⁷

Following the expulsion of the Ottomans, the Treaty of Karlowitz (1699) and the Rákóczi War of Independence (1703–1711), the parish network underwent a huge development in the eighteenth century, which is clearly reflected in the following diocesan data.¹⁸

Diocese	Early eighteenth century	Late eighteenth century
Bishopric of Eger	1715: 72 parishes	1786: 328 parishes
Archdiocese of Kalocsa	1733: 17 parishes	1763: 58 parishes
Bishopric of Veszprém	1710: 20 parishes	1777: 185 parishes

This process was also supported by the secular government, notably through the Royal Council of Lieutenancy, which was established in 1723. Within this government body, two committees dealt mainly with ecclesiastical matters. The Religious Affairs Committee was responsible for the observance of the Sopron Articles of Religion of 1681 and the religious practices of Protestants.¹⁹ The Clergymen's Fund (*Cassa Parochorum*), on the other hand, financed the salaries of Catholic parish priests, the establishment of new parishes, and the construction of churches. When the Fund was established in 1733 by Charles III, a royal decree stipulated that the income of a parish priest had to be at least 150 forints a year, in addition to the incomes from fees and parish lands. Parish priests

16 Pálffy, *Hungary*, 197–204; Ó hAnnracháin, *Catholic Europe*, 119–37.

17 Mihalik, *Papok, polgárok*, 176–208; Michels, *The Habsburg Empire*, 251–339.

18 Sources of figures for the diocese of Eger: Mihalik, *Hangsúlyok és fordulópontok*, 5. For the Archdiocese of Kalocsa: Tóth, *A Kalocsa-Bácsi Főegyházmegye*, 177, 219. For the bishopric of Veszprém: Hermann, *A veszprémi egyházmegye*, 65.

19 Felhő and Vörös, *A helytartótanácsi levéltár*, 127–28.

whose annual income did not reach this minimum received additional state subsidies from the Fund. This minimum wage provided them with a modest standard of living, but one worthy of their profession. The royal decree also encouraged the creation of new parishes, therefore a country-wide census of parishes was carried out, diocese by diocese. On the basis of the surveys and other proposals and petitions submitted by the bishops to the Fund, the Council of Lieutenancy had to make suggestions concerning the construction of new churches and parishes or the renovation of old ones.²⁰

As an institution, the parish was more than a simple, geographically defined, territorial ecclesiastical administrative unit. It was also a community of believers living in a defined area and headed by a priest, the parish priest. At the center of the parish, in the mother church (*mater*), was the parish church, where the parish priest lived, but the parish could also include one or more daughter churches (*filia*). The choice of the parish priest was determined by the practice of patron's right, which had been developed and refined over the course of the centuries. The landlord-patron suggested his own candidate or, if he didn't have a candidate, a person recommended by the bishop (*recommendatio*) was presented by the landlord to the same prelate in writing (*praesentatio*). The bishop ordered the investiture, which was performed by the dean of the area (*investitura* and *installatio*).²¹

Although many municipalities in the Middle Ages won the right to elect their own parish priests,²² this was limited by the time of the Catholic Revival in the early modern period. Unlike in Carinthia and southern Germany,²³ however, the community was not completely excluded from controlling the parish. This was due to a complex economy based on a system of allowances paid by the community for the pastoral work of the parish priest. In the eighteenth century, this was supplemented by the parish's lending function.²⁴ Typically, the churchwarden (*aedituus*; *egyházbíró*) was chosen from among the village aldermen, and he played an important role in overseeing the management of the church's finances and in preparing the annual accounts. These accounts were also audited by the village magistrate. Churchwardens also had a role in collecting and

20 Mihalik, *A kétszáz megváltott nép*, 77–79.

21 Hermann, *A veszprémi egyházmegye*, 12–13.

22 Kubinyi, "Egyház és város," 288–94.

23 Tropper, "Zu grosser ergernus"; Forster, *Catholic Revival*. On the role of parish in medieval and early modern Western Europe, see Kümin, *The Communal Age*.

24 Bárth, "Lower Clergy," 193–94. On the concept of the "economic parish priest" (*Ökonomiepfarrer*), see Schmid, "Die Ökonomiepfarrer."

administering parish revenues. The schoolmaster, who was often also the cantor and organist, was under the supervision of the parish priest, but as an educated man, he very often became the village notary and thus a member of the local lay council.²⁵

The study focuses less on conflicts and more on the tools of the struggle for the parish. Therefore, three key factors, specifically competing interests, local integration, and possible hindrances and interference will be discussed. The foundation of parishes will be discussed through examples from the dioceses of Veszprém and Eger. The two dioceses bore important similarities. A significant part of both had fallen under Ottoman occupation in the sixteenth century and, after some initial events, it was only with the expulsion of the Ottomans that the reorganization of the church became possible in the eighteenth century. In both dioceses, there were significant population movements. New communities were created, and in parallel with this, there was an explosion in the creation of new parishes. In addition to the vast body of secondary literature on the history of both dioceses, the essay uses as sources parish documents preserved in the diocesan archives, primarily petitions submitted by the communities and testimonies.

Interests

Below, I consider the interests which lay behind the foundation of parishes from the perspectives of the different actors involved. Clearly, one should consider first the needs of the local community. As Christine Tropper has pointed out in her study of parishes in Carinthia, one of the most common reasons given in petitions for the establishment of a new parish was the physical distance of the community from the mother church, i.e. from the site where church services were held.²⁶ Poor roads, bad weather, and geographical obstacles made it difficult to maintain contact between daughter churches and parishes. One finds frequent reference to precisely these reasons in the Hungarian examples. The inhabitants of Alattyán, which belonged to the diocese of Eger and was pastored by the Premonstratensian monastery of Jánoshida, on the far side of the Zagyva River, offered a vivid description of the difficulties they faced. It was difficult to maintain ties between the two communities, because “when there

25 Mihalik, *A kétszer megváltott nép*, 108, 112, 115, 149.

26 Tropper, “Zu grosser ergernus,” 326.

are floods, which are sometimes frequent, sometimes occasional, it can take five or six days to get there.” This was an obstacle to the work of the local pastor, of course, and the people of Alattyán experienced “many shortages in spiritual things” because of the difficulties posed simply by transportation. Finally, in 1748, when Easter mass was almost cancelled due to a flood, the village asked the Bishop of Eger to establish an independent parish.²⁷

Alongside geographical distance, the apparent indifference of a parish priest to the members of his fold could also be a factor. The parish priest in Dorogháza, for example, kept to himself so much that the local community found it difficult to get him to baptize their children or go to the bedside of the dying, which in the case of members of the fold who lived in more distant communities was almost impossible.²⁸ The difficulties faced by people living in villages distant from a mother church in getting the pastoral services often prompted members of these communities to seek to establish separate parishes and obtain their own parish priests.

Apart from the parishes that were created when discontent daughter churches sought to break away from the mother parishes, new parishes were often very quickly founded on recently resettled areas. After the Ottoman occupation, new settlements were established, and new parishes were organized on the sites of villages which had been destroyed. This is striking because the establishment of parishes put a heavy burden on the community. A church and a parish house had to be built, money had to be found to cover the annual salary and maintenance costs of the priest, the salaries of the parish staff (cantor, sacristan) had to be paid, and a building had to be provided for the school and the schoolmaster’s house. Most of these buildings were available in a filiate parish that wanted to break away from the mother church. In the newly founded villages, however, they often had to be built. Even if the remains of a medieval church which had been destroyed during the period of Ottoman occupation survived, the ruined edifice needed almost complete renovation and rebuilding.

The fact that so many parishes were founded (and as noted above, this required a significant financial sacrifice from the new community) is also striking in part because many of the population movements were motivated by the economic challenges faced in the original settlements. Towards the end of the 1710s, the economic situation in Jászapáti was becoming increasingly difficult

27 EFL, Archivum Vetus, nr. 14. Alattyániensis ecclesia, February 6, 1754. Testimonies, vol. I, 1st witness, Testimony of Ivanics Gergely.

28 Mihalik, “Parish Priests and Communities,” 134.

“because of the growth of the population and the scarcity of land,” and this led to social tensions.²⁹ In 1719, to resolve the growing tensions, farmers from Jászapáti began to settle in Kunszentmárton, a town in the region to the east of the Tisza River that had been destroyed by the Ottomans. The new community was able to establish a parish in only two years, i.e. very quickly. It was very important because Kunszentmárton became the first Catholic parish in a region in which the Calvinist Church held sway, and thus the Catholic Church managed to break into what before had been essentially a homogeneous Protestant block. The importance of this parish became clear in the second half of the century, when the Catholic community in Kunszentmárton became the basis for the establishment of Catholic institutions in the surrounding Calvinist settlements.³⁰

The church authorities thus had a fundamental interest in the establishment of the parish. In most cases, if the local circumstances were considered appropriate, they supported and initiated the process of founding the new parish. For the diocese, the most important prerequisite was that the community have adequate resources to meet the requirements listed above (to provide a salary and housing for the parish priest and wages for the parish staff). In addition, if a former daughter church wanted to become an independent parish, the church authorities also had to consider the consequences this would have for the financial situation of the former mother parish and parish priest and whether the new parish could be established without endangering the old parish. Thus, even if the ecclesiastical authorities had an interest in expanding the parish network, they had to take into account an array of complex considerations affecting several communities.³¹

For the church leadership, the establishment of parishes could also be an issue which touched on denominational interests. Although the Sopron Articles of Religion of 1681 and the subsequent royal decrees allowed only limited religious practice among Protestant communities, these measures also constituted a hindrance to the Catholic counterreformation.³² The Catholic Church was only able to break up Protestant communities and establish Catholic institutions locally if it was able to work in cooperation with the landlords and the secular authorities. The Lutheran village of Iharosberény in the southern part of the diocese of Veszprém offers a good example. The Franciscans of Kanizsa

29 Barna, “A ‘Megszálló levél’,” 44.

30 Mihalik, *A kétszer megváltott nép*, 201–22.

31 Dénesi, “Plébániaszervezés Somogyban,” 207.

32 Forgó, “Formen der Spätkonfessionalisierung,” 283–85.

provided pastoral services for the small number of Catholics in the settlement in a small chapel next to the manor house of the local landlord, Boldizsár Inkey. As early as 1746, Bishop of Veszprém Márton Biró Padányi contacted Inkey in order to inquire about the possibility of bringing the local Lutheran religious services to an end. This took place during the canonical visitation of 1748, and in order to strengthen the position it had gained, the Catholic Church founded a parish in the village the following year.³³

The aforementioned resettlement of the lands which had been left devastated by the Ottoman occupation was unquestionably one of the most significant processes of post-Turkish reconstruction. The landlords, who were eager to see their estates resettled and their lands tilled, realized that the foundation of parishes would facilitate the peaceful development, growth, and strengthening of the community. In the region of southern Transdanubia, for example, the reestablishment of the network of settlements and the revitalization of the church went almost hand in hand. The landlords gave priority to the centers of their estates, and where necessary, they used their manorial administration to quicken the foundation of new parishes. The Esterházy family, for example, instructed their officers to supervise the parish priests and the management of the parishes in order to ensure their smooth development, while at the same time insisting that they cooperate with the clergy.³⁴

In some cases, the interests identified above intertwined. Balatoncsicsó was home to Calvinist members of the petty nobility who rented the land around the village from the landlord, the Bishop of Veszprém. The establishment of a new Catholic parish in that village was a direct consequence of the economic reform of the bishopric's estates, the aim of which was to restructure individual contracts in order to increase the incomes. The bishopric probably hoped to achieve several goals at once in Balatoncsicsó. In 1753, the aforementioned Márton Biró Padányi, as bishop of the area, lord lieutenant of Veszprém county and landlord, forbade the Calvinists of Balatoncsicsó from practicing their religion, adding that if they disobeyed, the lease would be terminated and the petty nobles living in the village would have to move. The community appealed to the Royal Council of Lieutenancy, which also investigated the matter from an economic point of view. In other words, the Council sought to determine whether the eviction of the noble tenants and the arrival of new settlers

33 Dénesi, "Plébániaszervezés Somogyban," 215–16.

34 Gózszy and Varga, "A pécsi egyházmegye," 246, 249–51.

would reduce or increase the state tax incomes. In 1754, the Calvinist nobles of Balatoncsicsó were finally forced to leave the village, and the bishop soon concluded a contract with the new Catholic settlers. As a result, the bishop's income as landlord increased considerably. When the new settlers arrived, a Catholic parish was established.³⁵ Two decades later, the parish of Balatoncsicsó included eleven surrounding villages as daughter churches.³⁶

One comes across many other cases on church estates of events very similar to the developments in Balatoncsicsó.³⁷ The bishop-landlords often achieved several aims. They were able to assert the denominational interests of the diocese in opposition to Protestant congregations and to extend their institutional system by establishing stable Catholic parishes in areas which they had previously been unable to reach. Furthermore, although they were largely unable to retain and convert the Calvinist populations, they were able to emerge from the situation with considerable economic advantages by bringing in new settlers and signing new landlord contracts.

We see that the Royal Council of Lieutenancy played an important role in the case of Balatoncsicsó, and this indicates that the state, i.e. the secular authority, was also concerned with the issues surrounding the establishment of parishes. Through the council, the secular authorities provided sustained and assured support for the expansion and strengthening of the parish network. The Clergymen's Fund, mentioned in the introduction, was responsible for these matters within the organization of the Royal Council of Lieutenancy. Thus, through the Clergymen's Fund, the state entered the reorganization of the parish network. The aim was clearly to create stable parishes with well-educated and well-paid parish priests. In 1732, one year before the creation of the Fund, the community of Jászládány petitioned their landlord and the Council of Lieutenancy to support the foundation of a local parish. It only succeeded two years later in 1734, with the financial support of the Clergymen's Fund.

In contrast to the paradigm of confessionalization, the initiative seems to have been taken by the communities. The intention to found a parish easily met with the approval of the landlord, the church, and the state. Although all from different points of view, they supported the process and the local needs. However, none of the actors, including the community, would have been sufficient to establish the parish on its own. The internal need of the community

35 Mihalik, "A veszprémi püspökség," 151–54.

36 VFL, I. 1. 8. *Visitationes Canonicae, Districtus Zaladiensis* 1778. 542.

37 Mihalik, "Felekezeti konfliktusok," 148–49.

was based on easier access to better pastoral services and, consequently, the provision of salvation. In the external communication with the ecclesiastical and secular authorities, this need was most often complemented by the need to overcome geographical barriers and distances.³⁸ There were significant differences, however, in the envisioned roles of the parish in the lives of the local communities.

Integration

One can approach the question of parish renewal as a process of integration from several points of view. The individual and group relationships which were an intricately interwoven part of local society were constantly evolving through internal processes, as these relations had to be constantly molded depending on the specific situations that arose. At the same time, integration was also a matter of how and to what extent individuals or a small group of individuals could become part of the larger whole. This can be examined within the local community, of course, but also in the context of the relationship between local communities on the one hand and the secular or ecclesiastical authorities on the other. Thus, integration implies a kind of political communication, not only between the community and the representatives of the power above it, but also between the key actors within the community.³⁹

These multi-directional interactions were crucial from the perspective of the foundation of new parishes, but the organizational processes hardly came to an end at the moment of the foundation of a new parish. With the creation of the new institution and the entry of the parish priest into the community, the relationship between the institution and the individual on the one hand and the community on the other had to be defined. The following discussion offers insights into this process of integration by drawing on some of the examples mentioned in the previous section and considering the main nodes of intersecting (and colliding) interests in parish organization.

The first of these nodes is the decision of the community itself. The initiative was usually taken by the community leaders. In the aforementioned village of Alattyán, after an Easter mass which had almost been cancelled, “the magistrates and several inhabitants, coming out of the church, gathered at the master’s

38 These reasons for better pastoral services are also reflected in German examples: Blickle, “Communal Reformation,” 225.

39 Schmidt and Carl, “Einleitung,” 11–12.

house.” Thus, the leaders of the community appeared, or in other words, the magistrate and the aldermen, as well as the schoolmaster, who was probably also the local notary. These individuals were essentially the local elite. Later, however, a popular assembly was held at which “the people, gathered together, cried out the same thing, that yes, they too wanted a parish priest.” Thus, the idea of founding a parish was suggested by the community leaders, but they also had the support of the local population.⁴⁰

Tarnaszentmiklós in Heves County was founded in 1751 by the farmers who were leaving the neighboring settlement of Pély, but Tarnaszentmiklós remained a daughter church of the parish of Pély for nearly thirty years. The people of Tarnaszentmiklós submitted their first application in the spring of 1779, which shows that they tried to lay the proper foundations for the establishment of the parish. They seem to have had a sense of community awareness and the necessary knowledge of the background of the parish.⁴¹ A building which would serve as the parish house had been built with the help of the landlord, i.e. the Eger Chapter, and efforts had already been made to generate parish income. They visited the neighboring settlement of Hevesvezekény for precisely this reason. Hevesvezekény was a daughter church of the market town of Heves, and it had a completely different social makeup. While Tarnaszentmiklós was a village of serfs, Hevesvezekény was a settlement of manorial servants. Thus, the Tarnaszentmiklós aldermen ended up “holding conference with the compossessor [landlord] of the neighboring Vezekény.” The serfs of Tarnaszentmiklós had to persuade the landlords of Hevesvezekény to join forces and support the establishment of a parish, with Hevesvezekény as the daughter church and Tarnaszentmiklós as the parish. This meant that the local community had to step out of its own social circle and had to negotiate with a socially superior stratum in the interests of achieving a common goal.

This brings us to the second node, which concerned the ways in which a local community communicated with the outside world on the issues surround the foundation of a new parish. A given community had to interact with higher levels of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. In the case of Tarnaszentmiklós, there is no precise information as to whether the lower ecclesiastical dignitary in the area, such as the dean or archdeacon, was contacted. It is true that the landlord of Tarnaszentmiklós was the Eger Chapter, and it appears from the petition submitted

40 EFL, Archivum Vetus, nr. 14. Alattyániensis ecclesia, 1754. február 6. Tanúvallomások I. kötet.

41 EFL, Archivum Vetus, nr. 1746. Pélyiensis parochiae divisionem.

for the foundation of the parish that the community, by helping to build the parish house, had the support of the ecclesiastical body as landlord. This was emphasized in their petition to the bishop, but they also mentioned their discussion with the noble landlords of Hevesvezekény as an important element. The community of Tarnaszentmiklós may also have thought that their negotiations with the nobles would strengthen the validity of their request in the eyes of the bishop.

This was more difficult in the case of Alattyán, where the local community did not have the support of the landlord (i.e. the Premonstratensian monastery of Jánoshida), and indeed the parish was established against his wishes. However, even in this case, the most prestigious representatives of the community were asked to communicate with the bishopric. One of them was the schoolmaster, who was also the notary of the village, thus he was a key intellectual figure in the community. Another was Gergely Ivanics, head of the local noble family, who had lived in the village since birth and was one of the people who best knew the recent history of the village community, since he remembered, for example, the first parish in Alattyán, which had existed in the 1690s. Both his father and he were local churchwardens at one time, so this added to the prestige and, thus, authority he enjoyed. Their selection was symbolic, and it seems to have been a shrewd decision, because they did not go to the bishop's court in Eger immediately, but rather went to the district dean in Jászapáti, and only after having obtained his support did they take their request to the bishop. This was a symbolic communicative gesture: the most respected members of the community, supported by the territorial mid-level church authority, personally took the village's humble petition to the bishop.

Thus, they brought the petition before one of the highest possible ecclesiastical authorities, the diocesan bishop. As noted in the previous section, the diocese was seeking to expand the parish network, but it wanted to do so by founding stable, adequately prepared parishes. At the instructions of the bishop, the territorially competent deans therefore held inquiries in both Alattyán and Tarnaszentmiklós. It is telling and indeed reveals a great deal about the interests of the ecclesiastical authorities in ensuring stability that “my Lord the Vice Deacon came [to Alattyán] and summoned all the farmers, especially the better-off, together with all the judges and aldermen,” and had them sign a contract concerning the parish priest's salary. In other words, he asked for a guarantee from the leaders of the parish and the wealthiest farmers, i.e. the local “elite,” on behalf of the church.

For this very reason, the dean's first investigation in Tarnaszentmiklós was unsuccessful. In today's terms, it could be referred to as an “impact assessment.”

The dean contacted the parish priests of Heves and Pély to ask them whether their parishes would actually continue to function properly if the daughter churches (i.e. Hevesvezekény and Tarnaszentmiklós) were to be separated from them. He then also visited the villages which would be made part of the envisioned parish, the future mother parish (Tarnaszentmiklós) and its planned daughter parish (Hevesvezekény). For example, he accurately assessed the different social composition of Hevesvezekény: the community consisted of four serfs who worked the land and otherwise only manorial servants, and the local members of the nobility. These nobles shared commonly managed estates, and they were only part of the petty nobility (*kurta nemeseke*), thus, they would be unable to provide support for the parish.

The dean's negative assessment delayed the foundation of the parish, but it did not discourage the people of Tarnaszentmiklós. They seem to have resolved to make better and more strategic use of the community's communication network. This meant, in part, more intensive discussions with the community in Hevesvezekény, but also with the community in Pély, which had already yielded some results. The people of Pély agreed to increase the salary of their own parish priest, and the poorer residents and nobles of Hevesvezekény also made more serious and concrete commitments. As a result, in the summer and autumn of 1780, a precise financial and economic plan was drawn up for each village, detailing where and how much agricultural land and what cash and in-kind commitments could be made to cover the costs of the priest's salary. The successful work was probably facilitated by the fact that the community of Tarnaszentmiklós, which was made up of farmers from Pély, had close family ties in Pély. Furthermore, they had been in contact with the parish priest of Pély for 20 years, which, according to the documents that have survived, made it possible for the village to separate from Pély amicably.

At the other end of the country, in the diocese of Veszprém, the ecclesiastical authorities were conducting similar investigations concerning the possible establishment of the parish of Kővágóörs. Here, the situation was different (and involved different competing interests) because the parish had to be established in opposition to the local Protestant community, with a large number of filia. This may explain why, although the dean had already concluded his investigation in 1750, it took another five years for the parish to be founded.⁴² In these cases the Catholic Church was assessing the potential economic consequences of the establishment

42 Dénési, "Egy plébániaalapítás nehézségei," 133–36.

of a parish not as landlord, but from the perspective of an ecclesiastical authority. Its main aim was both to expand and stabilize the parish network.

The construction of the parish house in Alattyán, which was an important prerequisite for the establishment of a parish, also sheds light on the forms of internal cooperation within the community. However, since events in the village unfolded relatively quickly and the parish had to be established in the spite of the opposition of the landlord, the building was only erected after the parish priest had arrived. Pending the completion of the house, at the request of the people of Alattyán, the Heves County authorities agreed to provide accommodations for the parish priest in the county building in the village. The population of Alattyán consisted essentially of three major groups: the serfs of the Premonstratensian monastery of Jánoshida (they were the majority), the serfs of the Calvinist Recsky family, and the local nobles. The Premonstratensians opposed the establishment of the parish. The Calvinist landlord was indifferent to the issue. The only concrete step he had taken was to forbid his serfs from transporting the Premonstratensian canons from Jánoshida to Alattyán across the Zagyva River at their own expense and in their carts. The leader of the community was the aforementioned elderly nobleman Gergely Ivanics, who even remembered where the house of the parish priest had stood in the 1690s. The building had been destroyed, but the cellar had survived. The community started to build the new parish house here, but the Premonstratensian administrator, as landlord, forbade his serfs from Alattyán from taking part in the construction. The community therefore decided that the peasants and the serfs on the Recsky lands would start building the house, with the Premonstratensian serfs helping out in the evenings or on days when it was very unlikely that the landlord would take any steps to check on them. The establishment of the parish was a matter for the ecclesiastical authority, and the community had the support of the bishop in this respect. The serfs of the Premonstratensian monastery had to deal with the consequences they might face for having provoked the antipathies of the landlord, but in practice, the other two larger groups in the community provided them with protection.

Thus, with the establishment of the parish, a new institution appeared in these villages which was also a new factor in the cohesion and identity of the communities. The primary expectation of these communities is captured in the request made by the people of Tarnaszentmiklós that the Bishop “be merciful in creating a parish priest to comfort our souls.” In their request, the people of Alattyán noted that the parish priest would “be our consolation in secular

and spiritual matters,” or in other words, they made specific reference to the role the parish priest would play in secular affairs. At the time, the parish priest was treated essentially as a member of the community. It was only at the end of the early modern era that the parish priest began to emerge and rise above the community due to the efforts of the church and the secular government.⁴³ The community valued their parish priest and expected him to be both their spiritual (and even lay) leader, but also not to lose touch with the community and to abide by its “norms.” In a 1726 letter sent on behalf of their first parish priest, the parishioners of Pély, for instance, noted that “he lived with endurance among us, quietly and in peace.” The community knew full well that the stability of the parish was always fragile under the difficult local conditions, and they appreciated the fact that the parish priest was willing to live alongside them under modest circumstances and serve them.⁴⁴

The parish was the crucible for a number of initiatives in the first period after its creation, and these initiatives further contributed to the internal and external integration of the local community. The religious confraternities that emerged in the village environment could become the primary form of community organization for local society. In Alattyán, by the 1740s, i.e. before the establishment of the parish, a local Confraternity of the Cord was set up by the Franciscans of Szolnok, which, in addition to overseeing various liturgical occasions (monthly mass, processions, etc.), also provided for the care of sick members of the society.⁴⁵ In addition to strengthening the internal community networks, it also provided the locals with another external link to a nearby major settlement, Szolnok, and its important ecclesiastical institution, the Franciscan monastery. A local branch of the Society of Holy Mary, which had been founded in the neighboring market town of Jászapáti around 1700, was established in Pély in 1736, a good ten years after the local parish was created in the village.⁴⁶

Integration, of course, was not simply an inclusive process. It was also an exclusive one, whereby elements deemed dangerous or alien to the community were pushed out, if this was considered necessary. These people were usually individuals who had come from other settlements and who did not adhere to the community’s norms. In some cases, this person was the parish priest himself

43 Tropper, “Zu grosser ergernus,” 323.

44 EFL, Archivum Vetus, nr. 1097. Ferenczy Franciscum respicientia, Pély, 1726. május 21. Testimony of the community of Pély.

45 EFL, Visitaciones Canonicae, nr. 3414. Districtus Heves 1746. 135.

46 Mihalik, “Felekezeti konfliktusok,” 125.

or a member of the household which had come to the community with him. As noted above, in 1726, the people of Pély spoke highly of their parish priest, who kept a low profile among them. It was necessary for the people to speak out on his behalf because the maid at the parish house had claimed that she was bearing his child. The leaders of the community were united in standing up for the beleaguered priest on behalf of the community. The local magistrate, the cantor, the aldermen, and the head of the local petty nobility family signed the petition. Thus, the same key figures in the community played the crucial roles in this communicative process as had initiated the establishment of a parish in the case of Alattyán. It is clear from the letter that the maid who had made the accusation was not a member of the community, and the people of Pély emphasized that she was from Héhalom, and thus from another county and diocese. The parish priest allegedly had admonished the woman in vain, sometimes with quiet words, sometimes with harsher reprimands, but she did not forsake her “many regularly bad ethics,” and “there was a time when for a whole month she went to and for in rakish disgrace.”⁴⁷ The case ended up coming before the bishop’s court, however, and the parish priest ultimately broke down and admitted that he had indeed had an immoral affair with the woman and was thus unworthy of his priestly vocation, but he insisted that he had not impregnated her. With the removal of the parish priest, Pély was briefly returned to its former mother church, Heves, and the community was right to fear that the unpleasant affair might result in the loss of their parish. This presumably was why they had been willing to overlook the priest’s conduct.

A similar incident took place twenty years later in nearby Jászladány. As was mentioned above, the local parish was established in 1734 at the initiative of the local community, with the financial support of the Clergymen’s Fund. Mihály Árvay, a highly qualified priest, was appointed to serve as the second parish priest in 1743, but he quickly ended up in conflict with the community. He embezzled from the church treasury, bought luxury goods, and behaved boorishly with the parish leadership and the parishioners. His most serious transgressions, however, were of a sexual nature. The testimony of the witnesses reveals that one of the parish priest’s first lovers was a local Roma woman, who was driven from the village under this pretext. The woman had cursed the village, saying, “rot in hell for driving me out, for the whole village knows that the priest does the same.” However, it was easier

47 EFL, Archivum Vetus, nr. 1097. Ferenczfy Franciscum respicientia, Pély, May 21, 1726. Testimony from the leaders and residents of Pély.

for the community to expel the Roma woman, who was on the periphery of local society, than to start a long process of ecclesiastical proceedings that would imperil the very existence of the parish and would have implications far beyond the local community. The moment the parish priest tried to take advantage of a prominent member of the community (the midwife) or of individuals related to the local leaders, however, the village reacted and informed the ecclesiastical authorities, using the channels of communication discussed above. The community took these measures in spite of the fact that the parish itself was relatively new. In Jászladány, the parish did not cease to exist, but the bishop appointed only a deputy parish priest, who was only installed three years later.⁴⁸

As the examples above show, the communities were aware of the prerequisites for the establishment of a parish, and they used the related communication channels carefully and strategically. This of course meant going beyond the internal space of the community itself, i.e. the space of local politics. When necessary, they responded by sharing tasks within the community, and they stood up against individuals who potentially threatened their efforts and against other exterior hindrances to their goals through the actors who embodied the unity of the community itself. This indicates that the community was very much aware of its strengths and possibilities, and it was also well-informed about the procedures before ecclesiastical and secular authorities. This enabled the village community to achieve its goals and made it possible for grassroots initiatives to succeed. To this end, they were ready to engage in internal discussions and negotiations, which could mean both exclusion and inclusion. Through internal community integration and external integration into the secular and ecclesiastical structures, they were also able to solve the problems that hindered the establishment of the parish.

Hindrances and Interference

As the discussion above shows, the process of establishing a parish depended on a number of issues, and in order for a parish to be founded, several factors had to come together. The process was made all the more complex by the fact that in many cases various hindrances arose, sometimes from unexpected sources of opposition. In the discussion below I will examine a few of the most important phenomena which either made the creation of a parish additionally complex or hindered it altogether.

48 Mihalik, *A kétszer megváltott nép*, 101–2; EFL, Archivum Vetus, nr. 764. Árvay Michaellem respicientia.

One of the most common sources of opposition was the entirely predictable resistance from Protestant communities. The above examples show that even in the best cases (when the community enjoyed the support of the ecclesiastical authorities and the landlord and there was an existing local Catholic minority), it was difficult to establish parishes in Protestant or mixed communities. Jászakisér, the only Calvinist settlement in the Jászság region, offers a good example of this. Several successive bishops tried to establish a parish in Jászakisér using different means. In 1701, a parish priest was installed in cooperation with the secular authority (the administration under the palatine) and the ecclesiastical authority (the Bishop of Eger), but less than half a year later, the local women chased the priest from the village, loading him and his household on a cart and sending him to the neighboring Catholic town of Jászapáti. Almost four decades later, in the wake of the plague epidemic of 1739–1740, the authorities wanted to settle Catholics on plots of land which had been left vacant so that the larger Catholic community could be used as a justification for founding a parish in the village. The Calvinists of the settlement, however, poured water mixed with cow manure into grape-picking buckets and used them to block the village street so that they would be able to pour the contents on any Catholics who were to arrive in the village. It was only in 1769 that a parish was finally established in the village, but the diocese of Eger was unable to rid the settlement of Calvinists.⁴⁹

In the case of the secular landlords, as noted above, following the expulsion of the Ottomans, they were mainly interested in the settlement of their estates and the rapid launch of production in the fields, and they usually established Catholic parishes in central settlements of their estates. At the same time, if the settlement consisted exclusively of Protestants, they were also careful to ensure that the Protestants could continue to practice their religion, and they were willing to confront both the ecclesiastical and secular authorities in order to do this.⁵⁰ This is striking because in the seventeenth century the Catholic nobility was still the main driving force behind counterreformation efforts in Hungary. Furthermore, agricultural production was the primary consideration for the ecclesiastical landlords too, the examples cited above of the bishoprics of Eger and Veszprém notwithstanding. The administrator of the Teutonic Order that held the landlord's rights of the Jászság region, noted with incisive mockery about Bishop Gábor Antal Erdődy of Eger that the bishop was more

49 Mihalik, *A kétszer megváltott nép*, 195–201.

50 Forgó, "Formen der Spätkonfessionalisierung," 281–83.

than happy to tolerate Calvinism when it was in his own private interests (i.e. when it was in his interests as a landlord), while at the same time he would stand up in fervent opposition to Calvinists on other estates, completely ignoring the interests of other landlords.⁵¹

Much as in the case of the Teutonic Knights in Jászság, in Alattyán (a case to which I have now referred several times as an example), the Premonstratensian order was also an ecclesiastical landlord. Although the village was Catholic, the Premonstratensian canons of Jánoshida did not support the establishment of a parish there. This was presumably because there was little or no separation between the functions of the landlord and the church in the case of the Premonstratensian monks of Jánoshida. Obviously, the loss of ecclesiastical income from Alattyán affected them, even if they maintained their power as landlords. Nevertheless, they opposed the parish establishment of 1748 so vigorously that the Bishop of Eger was forced to bring the matter before the Primate-Archbishop of Esztergom, and in 1754, a decision was made in favor of the diocese and the community of Alattyán.⁵² This example also shows that, in principle, even in the face of strong opposition (in this case, from the landlord), people pursuing a local initiative from within the community could prevail even when their case was brought before the highest ecclesiastical forums if they could win the support of the right parties (in this case, the diocesan bishop).

A similar conflict arose between the bishop of Veszprém and the Cistercian abbot of Zirc over the establishment of the parish of Magyarpolány. This case was made distinctive by the fact that before the establishment of the parish, the church authorities and the ecclesiastical landlord had to take coordinated action against the religious practices of the local Calvinist congregation. Once the parish had been established, however, a dispute broke out as to whether it was under the jurisdiction of the diocese or the Cistercian abbey. The local Calvinist community, furthermore, tried to take advantage of the tension between the two former allies and appealed to the Royal Council of Lieutenancy to ensure their right to practice their faith. Thus, the Cistercian abbot had to defend his acts even before the secular authorities.⁵³

As the examples above illustrate, the most important thing for the dioceses was the creation of stable parishes. However, in the eighteenth century, after the expulsion of the Ottomans, the dioceses had to take many other factors

51 Mihalik, *A kétszer megváltott nép*, 189–90.

52 Soós, *Az egri egyházmegyei plébániák*, 371.

53 Forgó, “Formen der Spätkonfessionalisierung,” 278–80.

concerning the reorganization of the Church and church life into consideration. The synods and visitations, which were the cornerstones of internal renewal, consumed a great deal of energy, time, and resources, as did the reform of instruction for the priesthood, the reorganization of education, the maintenance of social institutions, the construction of the episcopal seat, and the restoration of episcopal estates. The establishment of parishes was sometimes relegated to the background, not because it was unimportant, but because the diocese had to ensure the necessary conditions (including, for instance, a sufficient number of adequately trained priests). In the diocese of Veszprém, for example, in the 1730s, the bishop was compelled to exercise caution, since he recognized the complications that would arise as a consequence of the poverty of the parishes. He also recognized that the church was facing a shortage of priests in part because of the comparatively rapid foundation of new parishes in the earlier period and in part because many of the members of the priesthood had aged. The process of parish establishment gathered momentum in the 1740s, and by the early 1760s, the diocese's parish network was so thick that only a few areas were still in need of further development. The bishop's attitude may also have changed. There were periods when the emphasis was on areas closer to the bishopric seat, while at other times, attempts were made to build up the parish network in areas more densely populated by Protestants.⁵⁴

These kinds of considerations, which varied from diocese to diocese and from bishop to bishop, may well also have influenced the intensity of the process of parish creation. Thus, even if there was a demand from the community for the establishment of a local parish and even if the necessary preparations had been made, the bishop at the head of the diocese could hamper or block these local initiatives, depending on his ecclesiastical policy objectives and the more general, broader picture of the situation in the diocese.

Conclusions

The process of parish establishment in the eighteenth century forms a different picture than the Catholic renewal in the seventeenth century, a picture in which the growing importance of communities is vividly clear. Earlier, the church, the state, and the landlords had essentially cooperated against Protestant communities (if admittedly at times with tensions and hiccups). After 1681 and

54 Hermann, *A veszprémi egyházmegye*, 107–8.

particularly in the eighteenth century, these actors were pursuing a much more diverse range of objectives. This led to increasingly frequent clashes of interests, which, while not necessarily preventing or interrupting the general process of the establishment of new parishes, did at times slow it down or break it up into several successive phases of greater and lesser intensity. It was also an era in which the initiative taken by village communities became more visible. The period of peace that followed the end of the Rákóczi War of Independence (1711) helped strengthen local society, and the consolidation of ecclesiastical and secular government structures enabled proactive communication.

The dramatic growth in the numbers of new parishes is striking in part because in nearby areas which could be seen as parallels from other perspectives one finds a very different trend. Studies show stable parish numbers in Carinthia and the territory of the diocese of Constance, with rare instances in which new local parishes were founded (and this process was hampered by considerable difficulties). In the Hereditary Provinces under Habsburg rule, a new wave of parish foundation began only in the last third of the eighteenth century as a consequence of the aims of Josephine ecclesiastical policy.⁵⁵ Clearly, the explanation for the dramatic rise in the number of new parishes in Hungary may well lie in the large-scale destruction of the parish network during the period of Ottoman occupation and the delayed recreation and reorganization of the parish network.

While the process of parish foundation may have been considerably more restrained in the German-speaking areas than it was in Hungary, there were still some significant similarities in the initiatives that were taken. Communities in the German lands were also proactive, even if they had to use different strategies and methods to achieve their goals. The distribution of ecclesiastical jurisdictions was very different from the development of the church in Hungary, with monastic orders and ecclesiastical institutions in many places annexing benefices on which the local communities could have founded their parishes. Thus, they often had to restructure their finances in a manner that would allow them to free up at least enough income from each local ecclesiastical benefice to create a position for a chaplain or a curate. In order to do this, of course, they had to use their network of contacts and gain the support of individuals in the various institutional structures, or in other words, they had to mobilize their

55 Tropper, "Zu grosser ergernus," 316; Forster, *Catholic Revival*, 64–66, 207.

political toolbox.⁵⁶ The Hungarian communities were not lacking in these tools, and the examples presented above show how shrewdly and strategically they were able to use them.

In exceptional cases, such as the foundation of a parish in Alattyán or the accusations brought against the parish priest in Jászladány, one discerns indications of the use of the more elusive tools of local politics, such as gossip, threats, public gestures, and symbols. Catholic communities fighting to persuade the church to establish a parish had to use other means of communication with the authorities, of course, such as petitions, envoys, and the mobilization of supporters from higher and more influential social strata.⁵⁷ The foundation of a new parish sheds light on the interactions among different small subgroups within a community and the construction of elements of collective identity (e.g. the memory of the old parish).⁵⁸ It is also clear that the existence of a local parish constituted a source prestige for a village. Further examination of these experiences will foster a more subtle understanding of what a parish meant to a given community, in addition to the functions it served for the state and the church.

If we consider the individual local cases from a slightly more distant perspective, even over a longer time span and in a comparative context with other cases, we get a sense not only of the political-communication tools used by the community but also the wider field of “parish politics.” The ongoing changes in local social relations can be further grasped if we embed them in the structures of the world defined by the triad of landlord, the church, and secular power. Tropper, for example, suggests that the spread of literacy and administration strengthened the role of the power of the landlord in the lives of local communities to such a dramatic extent that these communities began to be excluded from the control of their parish.⁵⁹ Although the social order in Hungary may have developed differently in this respect, Zoltán Gózszy has also convincingly outlined how the state attempted to redefine the role of church administration and, within it, the roles of parishes in terms of social policy objectives.⁶⁰ However, Keith Wrightson has argued, considering precisely these kinds of changes and what came in their wake, that although the higher powers

56 Forster, *Catholic Revival*, 66, 154.

57 Wrightson, “The Politics of the Parish,” 12.

58 Tropper, “Zu grosser ergernus,” 329.

59 Tropper, “Zu grosser ergernus.”

60 Gózszy, “Ebenen und Phasen,” 72–74.

(state or church) had incomparably greater means to impose their will, even this seemingly overwhelming power had its local limits. The local power structure was able to adapt to the efforts of the state and church to assert their will, since even strong power from above required the cooperation of key local actors. This in turn made it possible for communities to maintain local spaces of power where they could continue to use their own specific political tools.⁶¹

In the eighteenth century, following initial shifts in the seventeenth century, the influence of the state on parish organization became more and more pronounced in Hungary. This was due in no small part to the various efforts of the Clergymen's Fund in the foundation of new parishes. Due to the parish census of 1733, which covered the whole country, the richness of the records of the Fund's activities is unprecedented. A longer-term aim could be to examine the history and the registry of the Council of Lieutenancy over a longer period of time to shed light on the growth of state influence through parish organization and the reactions of local communities to these measures. By taking into account regional changes in landlord and church power, this kind of research would provide deeper insight into the changing political opportunities for the communities within ever shifting frameworks.

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61 Wrightson, "The Politics of the Parish," 31–32.

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