

Abstract

CONFESSIONAL POLITICS. THEORETICAL ASPECTS AND EXAMPLES

Confessional policy is primarily a **specific kind of public policy of the state, focused on the activity of religious organizations** (religious or confessional associations), that is, communities whose purpose is to confess and spread religious faith (within the meaning of each religion), having their own hierarchy, doctrine and worship. The essence of politics is then shaping the relationship of the state with individual religious relationships, but also influencing the relations between them.

In addition, a broad perspective on religious policy allows for a perspective in which the state apparatus takes specific actions towards entities related – directly or indirectly – to religious organizations, precisely because of this relationship. They may be religious parties, parties referring to religion (in their name, program or ideological declaration), as well as associations, foundations, publishing houses and editorial offices of magazines and other organized forms of social activity that have religious connotation and, perhaps more importantly, they are perceived as religious in public space. In special cases, religious individuals associated with religious life may also be a party involved in religious policy.

The **religious policy of the state** includes **activities of a conceptual, program, operational and executive nature**, implemented by **specialized entities of state power** towards religious entities. Under the conditions of a democratic state, they are **administrative institutions** (independent, e.g. in the form of an office or ministry, or being part of a wider structure, e.g. a department within the ministry) and **special services** (e.g. monitoring the activities of religious fundamentalists or destructive sects). In authoritarian and totalitarian countries, the subject pursuing denominational policy may be more complex (e.g., apart from state structures, party structures have a decisive status, and extended special services also play a greater role).

Confessional policy is conditioned by a number **factors**, among which the following can be distinguished: **internal** (e.g. the specificity and the religious and confessional structure of the state, the political system, the ideology prevailing in the state, the pragmatics of political struggle, the legal and systemic religious model of the state, the relationships between the ethno-cultural and religious identifications) and **external** (e.g., state security considerations, the nature of confessional policy within the international environment, geopolitical conditions, international legal norms in which the said state participates, the scale and nature of international "networking" of a given religious community).

In modern Europe, the latest factor which occurs in both collections, and which among other issues will also determine the directions of the religious policy of all countries, are the new migration trends. This only confirms the observa-

tion that religious policy most often remains in close connection with national or ethnic politics.

Among the varieties of confessional policy the following can be distinguished: **the confessional policy of the concession** (practically unrestricted, with the activities of a religious association state-supported or at least approved), **the confessional policy of rationalizing** (consent of the state to the basic activity of religious associations, directed mainly at the faithful of their own community and consent to limited external activity) and **the confessional policy of liquidation** (counteracting the negatively evaluated tendencies and phenomena occurring in the activities of a religious organization, or even attempts at its delegalisation and complete eradication). Within variants of combinations of these varieties, hybrid (including even eclectic) confessional policies are created. The confessional policy of the state is most often considered as a component of **internal policy**, however, it may also be an important component of **foreign policy** as evidenced by even the "mosque policy" of Turkey or the Russian policy of promoting the idea of Moscow - the Third Rome.

Although the monograph is devoted primarily to the state's policy towards religious associations, it should be noted that confessional policy may also apply to other types of entities. Analysing, for example, the law and activities of the European Union or the Organization for Islamic Cooperation in relation to the religious sphere, a category of **confessional policy of an international organization** may be distinguished. In the conditions of religious pluralism, one's religious policy may also be created by a given religious association to-

wards other religious associations, e.g. by concluding coalitions and alliances with one religious organization and/or by engaging in rivalry with others – nationally and internationally. In such a case, it is referred to as **the confessional policy of a religious association**. Under the specific conditions of state hierarchy, the confessional policy of the state and the confessional policy of the dominant religious association are in practice convergent (e.g., the case of the Islamic Republic of Iran). Bearing in mind the perspective of religious association as a conceptual and operational subject in the area of its influence, one can also speak about its denominational policy in relation to actions created, for example, to resolve disputable issues that may occur in relations between representatives of various intra-confessional entities. The latter (factions, interest groups, individual people) are in this context *de facto* also subjects of confessional policy.

For many years Polish research on confessional policy was the domain of representatives of legal sciences who would explore its nature in relation to the respective religious law, as well as historians who in their analysis of the church-state relations searched, for example, for the possibility of explaining the phenomena of tolerance or religious intolerance in the modern day society. Confessional policy as a subject of research also drew the attention of religious scholars and philosophers (including practitioners – decision makers), whose conceptualisation in its area, however, was closely related to Marxist ideological determinants, which led to its today perception (and not without reason) of a service to the then mandatory ideological monism.

Relatively recently confessional policy has become an area of growing interest of researchers representing **Political and Administrative Sciences**. A special role in this regard was given to representatives of **political science of religion**. The name, according to the most popular interpretation, refers to the studies that take into account the various conjunctions of religion and policy phenomena based on the marriages of many disciplines and their methods, in particular: political and administrative sciences, cultural and religious sciences, theological sciences, sociology, philosophy, history, legal sciences, canonical law, economics and socio-economic geography. In the sense proper to the field of social sciences, it is defined as a subdiscipline of the political and administrative sciences, the essence of which is the political analysis of the phenomenon of religion or any of its components (doctrine, worship, religious structure). In this case, the basic assumption is the perception of religion as a political phenomenon (analogously to the assumptions of the sociology of religion, which sees religion as a social phenomenon). Another exegesis referring to the location of political science within the subdisciplines of political science and administration assumes that its content concerns issues of permeability or mutual influence of religious and political phenomena, and the initial research perspective are the findings of the sciences on politics and administration when referring to methods and achievements of other fields of science. Politics of religion, in the narrowest sense is, involves, in turn, the political science research on religion based on the paradigm of the function of the political factor in religion.