
THE WORD OF THE GUEST EDITOR

Politology of religion in Poland

I was asked to edit an issue of the *Politics and Religion Journal* devoted to the political science of religion in Poland. It is difficult to say whether in Serbia or in Poland, the scientific career of the term “politology of religion”, as research on the political science of religion is defined in both countries, is longer. But it is not, however, about the symbolic palm of priority, but about honest learning and sharing one’s own achievements in this field with others. In post-communist Poland, dealing with the mutual relations of religion and politics, the state and the Church was an urgent challenge. In the period of the political transformation, religion was freed from the shackles imposed by the previous system and it entered social life quite rapidly. The question then arose: how should it be present in the social and political life of a vast majority Catholic society. This period ended in the late nineties with the adoption of the new constitution and the ratification of the concordat. However, this did not mean “the end of history”.

On the academic ground, the question arose within which discipline of science should research on the above topics be conducted. On the one hand, there is the Catholic social teaching that belongs to the theological sciences, but it is difficult to expect scientists or politicians to always be open to theological arguments and share the Catholic point of view. On the other hand, social sciences (sociology, political science) during the communist period were strongly ideologized and under the almost total control of the power apparatus.

With the emergence of new research units devoid of the communist past, it was possible to start real research on religion within the framework of political science. For generational reasons, however, scientists who devoted themselves to this type of research, and at the same time had not previously dealt with Marxist religious studies, were few and most often alone in their parent units. Attempts have been made at times to marginalize them, “pushing” them beyond the scope of political science. In this context, the official name of the sub-discipline was very important as it rooted them in the very science of politics. Today, it seems that we also have this stage behind us. The authors whom I have invited to write papers for this issue come from various academic centers that cooperate with each other to create a research environment called: politology of religion. Thanks to the text of Ryszard Michalak „The history of politology of religion in Poland. Research review”, you can read in more detail about the briefly discussed history of the political science of religion in Poland. For reasons explained in the paper, Michalak divides it into three stages: 1992-1999, 2000-2013, 2014 -.

In turn, Joanna Kulska analyzes the relations between the State and the (Catholic) Church, wondering to what extent the Church in Poland can be regard-

ed as a political actor. If so, how much voluntarily? Due to historical reasons, the role during the partitions, the German and Soviet occupations, and communism, Catholic Church's is firmly embedded in public life. A question arises whether in a pluralized society she can find herself in a new role, as one - and not the only - of the actors around whom people focus their expectations and ambitions for a good life? It is accompanied by the second one: to what extent is the Church able to maintain her freedom in the face of various attempts at her political instrumentalization?

It is interesting that during the transformation period, the main axis of the dispute between the State and the Church was not the issue of religious freedom, but above all ethical issues. For communism built a legal system based on materialistic anthropology that urgently needed to be rebuilt after communism collapsed. It soon turned out that materialist anthropology was not only the specificity of the communist system, but that also in the West, starting from the 1970s, many legal solutions were adopted, although liberally justified, but referring to the same anthropology as Marxism. The regulation of issues like abortion, euthanasia, same-sex unions, prostitution, pornography, drugs or gambling has become an area of highly emotional political conflicts, deeply dividing democratic societies – writes Michal Gierycz. His paper entitled: "The Catholic Church and the dispute on the primary morality policy in Poland – life issues matter" is discussing not only very particular ethical issues, but also the theoretical models of morality policy.

Another topic that has been widely discussed in recent years is the issue of mass migration to Europe. Many Western European countries responded to the migration crisis in 2015 by opening their borders to immigrants from the Middle East and Africa. Central European countries mostly reacted completely differently. In their resistance to the EU policy of forced relocation of immigrants, they referred to both the arguments of freedom (immigrants must not be forced to live in a place where they do not want to live), historical (mass migration was interpreted as the second phase of the decolonization process) and religious (the great majority of people intended for the relocation were Muslims). This topic is widely elaborated by Anna Solarz in the text entitled: „The Impact of Immigration Crisis on Europe's Cultural Condition: Why Are the Poles 'Apprehensive' About Muslims?" It is interesting that also on this issue, like previously on abortion or in vitro fertilization, the position of the Catholic Church, following the indications of Pope Francis, and of the politicians in power at the moment (this time from the center-right wing) was different.

In the recent past, the Catholic position was actually represented in international politics by the governments of such countries as Italy, Spain, Ireland or Malta. Recent decades have definitely changed this picture. In ethical disputes held in international bodies, the Holy See could more often count on the support of Russia than of the European Union countries. Undoubtedly, however, two Cen-

tral European countries, Poland and Hungary, differ – at least declaratively – from this model. Only these countries and the United States under Donald Trump had, for example, a special minister for aid to persecuted Christians. Their politicians also played an important role in the appointment of Slovak politician Jan Figel to a similar office in the European Commission. Piotr Burgoński in his paper on “Religion and Polish Foreign Policy in the 21st century” discusses both theoretical models of the presence of religious themes in the foreign policy of the state, and detailed religious issues raised by the authorities of the Republic of Poland in the international arena.

I hope that reading these texts will allow you not only to get acquainted with some practical issues raised in the field of political science of religion in Poland but also with theoretical models within which such practical solutions are sought in my country.

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