
THE WORD OF THE GUEST EDITOR

Ever since political thought exists, there have been two borders with which it has faced: religion and economy. Both fields mark somehow the limits of the political arena, while they constitute it on the same amount. On the one hand, the organization of material life has been a major political concern; that is why, in fact, there is no political treaty that do (or did) not confront at some point with the problem of goods, distribution, property, labour or the value of money. On the other hand, spirituality and religious institutions have always been present (either accompanying, either disputing or providing spaces) with political concepts and actions.

From the ancient Greeks to the most contemporary authors, affiliations and tensions between politics, economy and religion have been central to the notions and operations that have given shape to human societies. Nevertheless, for at least a decade now, and due to strong movements and events that have been shaking the political conceptions and ideas (starting –or becoming evidently public– with the *September 11* attacks on the World Trade Center), religion turned out to be one of the central issues for the political scientists. A very concrete and illustrative example of the present overlap between these factors is the promise of the current President of the United States (Donald Trump) to *destroy the Johnson Amendment*, reassuming an ancient tradition that obscures the confines between state and ecclesiastical power for religious institutions with a tax-exempt status¹.

In contrast of the secular development that Modern Times seemed to inaugurate, creed and sacredness are back as unavoidable topics in order to understand today's world. For that reason, *Politology of Religion* has grown to be an important field within Political Science. Nowadays, the supposed fixed distinctions between religious and secular, sacred and profane or philosophy and theology have been displaced by a reappearance of interest in religion, culture and identity, also as a response to globalisation and the so called "End of History". This becomes manifest not only in the proliferation of studies focusing on the religious conflicts in various parts of the world, but also about the relations between religious violence and economic conditions.

The purpose of this issue is, then, to explore interactions of these sort from various points of view, which range from theoretical positions to the analysis of specific practices. Consequently, in each and every one of the texts, readers will find nodal points to ponder and understand the complex links between political economy and religion. The authors herein involved come from different disciplines and have very distinctive perspectives. However, they are all linked through the analysis of the crosses and intensities that arise in the intersections between economy, politics and religion.

In the "Political economy and religion" dossier, we are invited to dive into

1 *Cfr.* <https://goo.gl/V0s3IK>.

reflections on such important and complex phenomena, while providing the readers with tools to continue thinking original edges of this fundamental set of problems. As Fabián Ludueña Romandini concludes in his article, today's Economics presents money as *an autonomous reality that can only be explained through the concepts of exchange and market*. Nevertheless, a different track can be ensued in order to understand it, first of all, as a social institution that can never be separated from political and religious matters.

To achieve that, an invitation is open to the readers to follow a classic chronological progression from ancient cultures until our very present times, which will be a way to remark the intense interconnection among politic, economic and religious aspects of human life. To begin with, then, the words of Paola Corrente reason about the diverse *aristae* that religion and economy held in the political conceptions of antique societies. Secondly, Miguel Herrero de Jáuregui centers his attentive work on Aristotle and the transformations within the Greek polis. Fabián Ludueña Romandini takes the trail and reconsiders the relations between political economy and sacredness though all Occidental history, focusing specially on Georg Simmel and Walter Benjamin. That opens a dialog with Micaela Cuesta's thoughts about materialism and capitalism as religion through Benjamin and Mario Tronti. With all that in mind, the comprehension of the 21st Century's development will be, without a doubt, much richer both conceptually and historically. Joaquín Algranti analyses, subsequently, the the material culture of Neo-Pentecostals' *mega-churches* in Buenos Aires City, Argentina, and Emilce Cuda explains how religious, economic and political disputes converge in one of the most fascinating figures of the last few years: Pope Francis.

Apart from the dossier, we also present a study by Francisco Letamendia that deepens in two specific forms of ethnic-political-religious conflicts (as a cleavage for confrontations and as a mechanism for legitimizing power) as revealed in different contemporary conflicts. This issue brings also two book reviews that correspondingly reflect old and new ways in which religion and politics are assembled.

The aim of my labour as the editor of this texts has been to display a constellation of viewpoints and historical studies about the unavoidable bonds that tie the ideas of sacredness, politics and economy, both in ancient and in present times. Throughout all this notions and discussions, a central meaning emerges: it is impossible to understand any of the mentioned topics without appealing the other two, and during these days of fanaticism, crisis and war, political reflection and rational comprehension are strong weapons that me must take again.

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