
A WORD FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Thirty Years of Politology of Religion

This year marks the thirtieth anniversary of the emergence of the scientific discipline of Politology of Religion. In 1993, the Faculty of Political Science – University of Belgrade established politology of religion, which was the first of its kind in the world. It was a great intellectual victory, as the whole process was encountered with resistance by many colleagues influenced by marxism thought which viewed religion as “the opium of the people”. The department eventually accepted politology of religion after realizing that religion-based differences fueled the Yugoslav conflict, a fact used by world’s powers to interfere in the whole process. Fourteen years after its founding, the first issue of the Politics and Religion Journal was published to disseminate research in the field of politology of religion.

Since the establishment of Politology of Religion, more than 3,000 undergraduate students have attended lectures and passed exams. The discipline has also served as a basis for developing the Master’s program “Political Studies of Religion,” which is the first of its kind globally, as it was built on the distinct subject of politology of religion. Although many Master’s programs worldwide have courses on religion and politics, they are usually part of sociology, philosophy, or other political science disciplines, such as international relations or comparative politics. So far, dozens of students have completed the Master’s program in Belgrade, and a specific course on politology of religion is also available in the Ph.D. program in Political Science.

A crucial aspect that students learn from studying politology of religion is how religion affects political processes worldwide. By examining how religious leaders participated in Donald Trump’s inauguration ceremony or how religion influenced the US Congress riots in January 2021, our students are trained to avoid the mistake of neglecting religion when analyzing political events. For instance, after 9/11, the US State Department wrongly claimed that the terrorist attack had nothing to do with religion, despite Al-Qaeda’s contrary claim. This is very similar to the event when former U.S. president Carter warned Ayatollah Khomeini that he “should not mix religion and politics”, and soon after Ayatollah responded “who wants to separate Islam and politics does not know Islam nor politics, and is a fool”. Students trained in politology of religion are also able understand the significance of the 2023 Jerusalem riots during the Ramadan concerning the growing influence of religious parties in Israel. Our students know very well that The Patriarch from Constantino-ple gave autocephaly to Ukrainian church under pression of the USA. And that act contributed to the Russian-Ukrainian war. Additionally, students are able to understand that growing influence of Yasakuni Jinja Shinto temple on Japanese politics provoked bad relationships among Japan and South Korea. Furthermore, they are able to understand the political changes in India since the religious Bharatia Jana-ta party came into power. Consequently, students who have attended classes on

politology of religion have a more comprehensive education than students in other political science departments worldwide which does not have a specific course on politology of religion, including Columbia University, Institute for Political Studies in Paris, London School of Economics and Political Science, etc.

The Politics and Religion Journal, which gathers authors, reviewers, and Editorial board members, recognizes the relevance of religion in politics. Even if their home departments lack the discipline of politology of religion, they acknowledge that religion is a critical factor in politics. By being a part of this Journal, they demonstrate that the future belongs to this discipline as the political significance of religion continues to grow worldwide. The political significance of religion in the world is increasing, thus making room for establishment of politology of religion in other places in the world.

Politology of religion has become increasingly important in the global political landscape, and its relevance continues to grow. As a result, the Politics and Religion Journal is the most international social science venue globally, representing the most significant scientific breakthrough from the Balkans since the works of Greek philosophers like Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. Let's take a look into this issue and things will be clearer. Even the most prominent magazines and journals, such as Foreign Affairs, Foreign Policy or the Revue française de science politique, cannot gather such competent authors to discuss Al Qaeda, Taliban and ISIS. These organizations have significantly influenced global politics over the last three decades. This issue of the Politics and Religion Journal offers possible solutions to these groups, which are more dangerous than conflicts in Ukraine or Taiwan.

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