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POLITICAL SCIENCE AND RELIGION¹

After social and political revolutions in Holland and England in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries respectively, and after the American and French revolutions, the development of social sciences intensified, and politics emerged as a separate scientific discipline taught at universities from the seventeenth century on.² The establishment of specialized institutions such as *L'Academie des sciences morales et politiques* in 1795 in Paris³ followed, although they still remained part of larger educational centers for study of philosophy, political economy, law and history.⁴

In the second half of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries there emerged institutions solely dedicated to political studies, such as *L'Ecole Libre des Sciences Politiques* founded 1872 in Paris and transformed today into *L'Institut d' Etudes Politiques*.⁵ Similar course of development is also encountered in the USA, England and others countries, while some researchers think that the beginnings of modern political sciences were born in the United States at the start of the twentieth century.⁶

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² Look for example *Politicka enciklopedija*, Savremena administracija, Belgrade, 1975, p.752.

³ *Le Petit Larousse*, Librairie Larousse 11th edition, Paris, 1962, p.1123.

⁴ Ibidem

⁵ *Sciences Po*, brochure for students, published by "La Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, Paris, p.1.

⁶ *Politicka Enciklopedija*, ibidem, p.754. See also: *Les Sciences Politiques Contemporaines*, Paris, UNESCO, 1950; E. Voeglin,

The first topics of interest in the newly emerging political sciences were as follows: state and government, political processes, political parties, comparative political systems, political theory⁷ etc., so that political sciences, institutionalized as a special school, are not older than one and a half century at the most.

As a distinct analytical school, political sciences are a rather young discipline, although politics as a research subject is as old as our civilization: works of Aristotle, Plato and others from ancient times attest to this.

Analyzing religion within the political context is also not new. Political organizations in ancient Babylon, Egypt or Israel were all intricately connected with one form or another of divinity, i.e. gods. Since gods gave legitimacy to the rulers⁸ the analyses of such political governments and functions of rulers are part of the discipline that is today called *political science of religions*.

The modern, post-World War II political sciences tend to suggest an opposite development. Modern social sciences, in general, take up a secular attitude similar to the teachings of the eighteenth century French philosophers, such as Holbach, Helvetius, Diderot and others. These secular scientists thought that religion was product of economic backwardness and unenlightened social development⁹ and that it would wither away once those social ailments were redressed. Religion was then very rarely taken as subject of political research, and, as a result, political scientists explained political processes, political life, political organizations, political regimes, political parties etc. within a purely materialistic framework, neglecting the influence of religion, even when it should have been acknowledged.¹⁰ One obvious modern example of this is that, in consequence of this approach, a completely incorrect prognosis was made of the impact religion in general and the organized religious right in particular had on the 2004 US elections and the reelection of George W. Bush.

Perhaps by following the arguments Alexis de Tocqueville proposed in the nineteenth century a better political prognostication may be achieved.

The New Sciences of Politics, Chicago, 1952.

⁷ See for example Arthur Bentley, *The Process of Government*, 1949.

⁸ See for example: Trevor Ling, *A History of Religion East and West*.

⁹ See in *Le Petit Larousse*, ibidem.

¹⁰ The case of former Yugoslavia for example. There are no influential analyses which anticipated the role of religion in the dissolution of states. See important interview with the former US ambassador in Serbia, Montgomery, who was surprised by the impact the religious right on the reelection of president George W. Bush. See the liberal daily *Danas* November 13-14, 2004, Belgrade. See also: Harley Schlanger, *Fundamentalism in America*, in *Executive Intelligence Review* (EIR), February 4, 2005, vol.32. no.5, p.12-26, Washington DC.

According to Tocqueville, religion is not a product of economic backwardness and unenlightened social development that will supposedly disappear with economic development.¹¹ Tocqueville died in 1859, and if we analyze the position of religion from that time until today, we can conclude that his approach was a little closer to the best framework for political analysis. Since Tocqueville, education and economic levels have risen and, instead of weakening, religion has become stronger.

The case of the USA is especially important. From the second half of the twentieth century, when the development was at its highest, the religious conviction among Americans has grown steadily. "Clearly the US is a 'churched' nation. In fact, judging from census and other data¹², the last 50 years are the most churched-oriented half-century in the nation's history. For example, 'more than one in three American adults (36%) say that God speaks to them directly, and about half of persons interviewed believe that God speaks today through the Bible and the Scriptures'".¹³

What is especially important concerning the role of religion in the politics of the USA is the fact that religion played a very influential role in the creation of that State. Joseph K. Grieboski, Founder and President of the Institute on Religion and Public Policy in Washington DC¹⁴ says that the "religious freedom is a principal reason for the success of the American republic. It is the 'first freedom' of *The Bill of Rights*... Our founders did not see religion as a 'private matter' with no relationship to public policy. Rather, they saw religion and religious people as the cornerstone of our democracy and representative of our vitality as a nation".¹⁵

Indeed, religion has played a very big role in American political life. A political scientist in the field of religion, Kenneth D. Wald, explained the constructive relationship between the religion and the political and constitutional systems of the USA which is secular, as follows: "The Constitution did clearly establish a secular state or a secular government, but in doing so there was no intent to prevent religion from having an influence in society broadly, and in politics specifically.

¹¹ Tocqueville said " Les philosophes du XVIII siècle expliquaient d'une façon toute simple l'affaiblissement graduel des croyances. Le zèle religieux, disaient-ils, doit s'éteindre à mesure que la liberté et les lumières augmentent. Il est fâcheux que les faits ne s'accordent point avec cette théorie" quoted from Alexis de Tocqueville, *De la Démocratie en Amérique*, Gallimard, Paris, 1961, p.308.

¹² Gallup George, Religion in America, in *U.S. Society & Values, Electronic Journals of the US Information Agency*, vo I.2, no. 1 p. 24.

¹³ Ibidem.

¹⁴ For more information on the Institute see: www.religionandpolicy.org

¹⁵ Testimony of Joseph K. Grieboski, Hearing on State Department Annual Report on International Religious Freedom Before the House International Committee Subcommittee on International Terrorism, Nuclear Non-proliferation, and Human Rights, Report no 2003.

There were religious ideas that had a strong influence on the Constitution itself and the nature of the political system that was created. Religious values have been a very powerful influence on a variety of movements, including those to abolish slavery, and to promote civil rights. So there is no attempt—and it really would have been impossible—to rule religion off the political agenda”¹⁶

Wald further adds that “Churches are important to democracies... [C]hurches... are such powerful schools of political training. In those churches people learn how to give speeches, they learn how to run meetings, they learn how to organize campaigns. They learn a whole host of skills which translate very directly into the political process. So in a sense they are little schools of democratic practice. For many Americans who don't belong to any other organization that gives them these skills, the church is really essential in promoting a broad-based democratic participation”¹⁷

Grieboski's and Wald's analyses testify in favor of Tocqueville and cast doubt on the purely secular, *a-religious* approach to the research in political sciences. Because for many Europeans, the advancement of human liberty that is embodied in a democracy is a result of political struggle against an organized Church, they have mistakenly concluded that the same is the case in the United States.

But one important thing changed the situation.

The awakening of the political role of Islam in the world politics is the variable that may force European political scientists to reassess the influence of religion on politics.¹⁸ In fact other big religions are also associated with politics such as Buddhism in Tibet, the popular revolt in South Vietnam, success of Buddhist political parties Komeito in Japan, role of Buddhism in civil war in Sri Lanka.¹⁹ The success of the Hindu party Baratiya Janata in India signals the rise of the Hindu religion in politics, while in Europe we see a large Roman Catholic component in the politics of Poland.

Undoubtedly, these events did spur the increase in interest in the religious phenomena in politics and there is a growing need in political centers in western capitals for information and analysis connected to the phenomena.

Initially, religion was analyzed in individual works of political scientists but now we see the emergence of institutions dedicated to this particular analytical

¹⁶ *U.S. Society & Values, Electronical ... ibidem p.29.*

¹⁷ *Ibidem. p. 30.*

¹⁸ See for example: Lewis Bernard, *Le retour de l'islam*, Paris, 1985; Lenczovski G., *The Middle East in World Affairs*, New York, 1962 (This book is very important because in it shows the role of religion in the Middle East although the title makes no mention of it); Jevtic Miroljub, *Savremeni dzihad kao rat (Modern jihad as war)*, 3rd edition.

¹⁹ See for example: François Thual, *Les Conflits Identitaires*, Ellipses, 1995, Paris.

framework. For example, a special center, the *Laboratoire: religion et politique* was established at *L'Institut d'études politiques* in Paris,²⁰ then *L'Institut d'études politiques* in Aix en Provence with its research center *L'Observatoire du religieux*.²¹

Finally, the large volume of knowledge acquired in those centers, as well as the need for transmitting, it created a specific scientific discipline whose name is *Religion and Politics*.²² This is a new science in the world of political sciences. This is also a new science among sciences which analyze religion as a phenomenon.

Religion and Politics has a dual academic origin. The first one is rooted in sciences which analyze religion, such as philosophy, sociology, history, geography or psychology of religion. Taken together these disciplines help us understand religion as a general phenomenon and lead to a greater comprehension of society, because it is not possible to understand society without knowledge of religion.²³

The second one is the world of political sciences and the position of religion within that framework, which is the subject of this paper.

The centrality of any science is the subject of its research. If political sciences analyze politics in general, it is clear that special disciplines, designed to analyze one of the particular parts of it, ought to exist within it. In political sciences, the theory of political systems deals with different theories about political systems; political systems deal with characteristics of the specific political organization of a state; comparative political systems deal with comparisons of different political solutions concerning the organization of the parliamentary system and the role of executive power. Having in mind these facts the question is: What is the research subject of Religion and Politics?

As a young science Religion and Politics developed its subject of study in the second half of the twentieth century. Like other sciences, Religion and Politics does not have a final say on the subject of its research because religion, like other spheres of life, is dynamic and developing. Thus far, therefore, we have identified three most important fields of research:

1. Notions, explanations, advice, behaviors and constructs of a religious dogma, doctrine, its teaching and practice which is visibly, directly and openly connected with politics

²⁰ Gilles Kepel, *La Revanche de Dieux chrétiens, juifs et musulmans à la reconquête du monde*, Seuil, Paris, 1991. p. 9.

²¹ See for example www.iep-aix.fr or Mirosljub Jevtić, *Religija i politika – uvod u politikologiju religije (Religion and politics – Introduction into Political sciences of religion)*, Institut za političke studije, Fakultet političkih nauka, Belgrade, 2002.

²² One of the greatest specialists for religion in the 20th century Mircea Eliade said "Sans religion, l'histoire n'est que cendres," quote from *Géopolitique*, Automne, 1994 no. 47, p.3, Paris.

²³ Jevtić Mirosljub, *Religija i politika* ibidem. p.15

2. Religious practices which do not have a visible political message, but provoke directly political consequences
3. Attitudes of participants in political life (state authorities, political parties, pressure groups, lobbies, individuals) toward religions and religious communities.

In the first field belong dogmas that sculpt attitudes toward the state, political power, political legitimacy, political sovereignty, political authority, democracy, political organizations, views of peace and war, religious tolerance, human rights, religious fundamentalism, religious extremism, religious terrorism, role of secularism etc.

In the second field belong religious practices which are on the face of it purely theological without any political intention, but which provoke political consequences. For example ways of worship, religious propaganda, construction of temples, impact on politics of pilgrimages. It is clear that pilgrimages in Mecca do have a big political significance, as do elections of a Roman Catholic Pope or consecrations of bishops in a given state.

The third field examines the relationship between religious communities and the state, such as constitutional solutions, degrees of secularism or theocracy, and presence of religious freedoms in state laws, relations of political parties, religious lobbies and pressure groups.

Up till now, these were three standard features written about in student textbooks on this subject. Recently, however, we have added, for the first time, the fourth feature: social and political acts which have not any visible connection with religion, but which provoke religious-political consequences. For example, tenders for jobs or services have no connection with religions in general,²⁴ but if it happens that in one multi-religious state all contractors belong to a specific religion, that can provoke reaction of other religious communities and lead to political consequences.²⁵

If we consider relations among various research fields of this science and of other branches of political sciences, we can conclude that the subject of research in Religion and Politics is unique and specific. It is so different in regard to the subject of its research from other political sciences that it typically brings in a rather different approach to the process of analysis. For example, while standard

²⁴ With some exceptions. For example, religious communities or states intending to reconstruct some religious monuments can ask that contractors have experience in that job. This is usually connected with religious affiliation.

²⁵ For example, case of Malaysia. Religious structure of that state is: Malays and other indigenous population 59% (all Muslims), Chinese 32% (predominantly Buddhists), Indians (predominantly Hindus) Generally the Chinese are contractors. Quoted from, *Time Almanac 2003*, Information Please, www.infoplease.com , p. 814.

political theory analyzes political power, political science of religion will also do this but with a view to finding and analyzing the nexus between political power and religion. Since the standard political theory does not analyze this nexus in great detail, the political science of religion fills in that gap.²⁶

Another example is the modern political theory on the phenomena of political legitimacy in democracy, democratic political process, freedom of speech and press, free political organization, democratic elections democratic election campaigns etc. Just because a person is freely elected, within specified rules, it does not necessarily follow that the society will accept that person's legitimacy.

There are religions that assign political legitimacy to an elected office if the person elected meets the criteria of the religious convictions that predominate in the community.²⁷ By examining the nature of the religious and political nexus, the political science of religions enriches the political discipline as a whole.

If we want to determine the place of the political science of religion in the world of political sciences, we could say that the political science of religion to the world of political sciences is as the political system of Bulgaria is to the world of political systems. The political science of religions can then take one notion that was studied in political theory, for example sovereignty, and deal with it in the context of religion. For example, how does Christianity, as well as Judaism, Islam, Buddhism or any other religion, view the notion of sovereignty? What, for example, causes the different view of sovereignty in Islam?

Having in mind that the role of religion constantly changes in society and in the world of politics, the role of the political science of religions in political sciences also changes. For example, during the existence of the Eastern Communist bloc a many institutions in the West analyzed Marxist ideology and the influence of Marxism on political organization. Since the collapse of the communist world, the majority of those institutions changed direction and started to look at new fields of research. Meanwhile, political authorities started to seek better analyses of the role of religion, especially analyses connected to the Middle East. In fact, many

²⁶ Jevtić Miroljub, *Religija i politika*, ibidem, p. 17.

²⁷ For example see: *La Constitution de la République Islamique de l'Iran*, janvier 1980. No mention of house or town of publication. Source: Embassy of Iran in Belgrade, see.p.12, Deuxième principe: "La république Islamique est un système reposant sur la foi en: Un Dieu Unique (La Elaha Elallah) en sa souveraineté exclusive, en ses commandements et à la nécessité de se soumettre à son ordre. . ."; Principe XXVI: "Les parties, associations et sociétés politiques et corporatifs, les associations islamiques et des minorités religieuses sont reconnus, à condition qu'ils ne violent pas les principes de l'indépendance, de la liberté, de l'union nationale. **Les préceptes islamiques et les fondements de la République Islamique**", p.20; or Principe 115: "Le président de la République doit être élu parmi les **personnalités religieuses** et politiques remplissant les conditions suivantes: Iranien d'origine, de nationalité iranienne, administrateur expérimenté, ayant de bons antécédents, digne de confiance, vertueux, **pieux et attaché aux fondements de la République Islamique de l'Iran et à la religion officielle du pays**" p.41.

institutions in the USA and in the Western Europe exist to do research exclusively in the area of the Middle Eastern problem.²⁸

If we examine the programs of study of different educational centers in the area of political sciences, we can see an explosion of research and courses on religion, which did not exist before the collapse of communism. For example, in the Republic of Slovenia the School of Social Sciences, which includes the Department of Political Sciences, offers courses such as *Religion and contemporary society, Christianity and Europe, Jewish studies, Islamic studies, India's religions, Contemporary secularisms, Catholic concepts of social regulations, New spiritual phenomena after socialism, Media and religions, Religious cultures and mythologies of the Slovenians, Religions and nationalisms, Symbolic forms in religion and culture, Globalization and changes in world religions, Comparativ religions, New religious movements*.²⁹ If we are to compare the program of studies of that School before the collapse of communism with today's program, we can easily conclude that a great deal of change occurred in the emphasis and the focus of the study of religion and politics. In fact, a similar change happened in other republics of former Yugoslavia.³⁰

The case of the School of Theology of the Roman Catholic Church in Zagreb is a ready example where politics is not the intended subject of study, but where use of religion for political purposes pushes religion to the forefront of political study, so that even the theologians have to grapple with it.

The situation in the Western Europe and the USA is similar to this because those countries had a rather well developed religious study programs already, but

²⁸ The importance of this problem can be seen in the text "European Islam or Islamic Europe" written by Douglas E. Streusand, teacher of Islamic studies, military history and world history, at American Military University. He said: "At present, the population of the EU is approximately 5% Muslim; France is 10% Muslim. Leaving aside the possible admission of the countries with large Muslim populations like Turkey and Bulgaria, the Muslim share of the EU population will probably grow to 10% overall by 2020 if current trends continue. If, however, the rate of immigration increases, the proportion of Muslims will rise significantly faster. Some observers believe that a surge in Muslim population may produce a Christian and Jewish flight from Europe. The controversy in France and elsewhere about the wearing of hijab in public schools is only the current idiom of discourse on the future of Europe" Quoted from :www.neweuropereview.com, volume.1 number 4/2004.

²⁹ See for more information see www.fdv.uni-lj.si.

³⁰ The School of Political sciences in Sarajevo introduced a course in its study program entitled "Religion and politics in contemporary world". See " www.fpnas.edu.ba; Catholic faculty of Zagreb has two scientific disciplines dedicated to our topic "Religion and politics: Christianity and Islam" and "Religious fundamentalism: Christianity, Islam, Judaism", see www.kbf.hr; The School of Political Sciences at the University of Belgrade started with a course of lectures on "Religion and Politics" in 1993 then entitled "Elements of religious studies", and changed the name of the discipline to "Religion and Politics" in 1997. See Fakultet političkih nauka (1968-2003) Belgrade, 2003, p.100-105.

the interest of researchers was oriented more towards the cultural rather than the political impact of religion.

It is clear that the USA takes the lead in the study of religion and politics because, as a superpower in favor of globalization, it has to analyze all the challenges which come across that road... and religion represents the greatest challenge.

A look at the educational programs of departments of political sciences in American universities shows that religion and politics holds a big place in them and that their importance in educational and research programs grows from day to day.³¹ The number of books on religion and politics written and published in the USA is impossible to determine³², and the focus of the subject matter is continually changing. For example, the issue of jihad, which is today very dominant, was a virtual rarity if we are to judge by book titles in the US Library of Congress. Today, there are more than one thousand articles and books whose titles alone contain the idea of jihad.³³

So religion entered politics through the wide open doors, and political sciences have got richer in the field of analysis and can be proud of it. All religions without exception became important political factors in themselves, as well as factors important for the process of analysis itself. Just as the Roman Catholic movement played a big role in the revolt of the Polish people against communist repression, just as Orthodoxy is a powerful factor in all states with Christian Orthodox majorities, just as the influence of evangelical Protestantism in the USA and of the Jewish political parties in Israel is strongly present in the composition of political cabinets, Islam is a significant factor in the political identity of many countries.

³¹ See for example the study program for this discipline at Gustavus Adolphus College called "Religion and politics in America." For more information on that subject see www.gustavus.edu/oncampus/academics/depts.cfm.

³² For example *The Encyclopedia of Politics and Religion*, Washington D.C Congressional Quarterly, 1998, 2 vol.
-Djupe Paula, Olson Laura, *Encyclopedia of American religion and politics*, ed New York, Facts on Files, 2003
-*Politics and Religion in the modern world*, ed Routledge 1991
-Storey John, W, Utter Glenn H., *Religion and Politics: a reference handbook*, ABC-Clio, Santa Barbara, 2002
-*Religion and Politics*. Ed. John T. S. Madeley, Ashgate-Dartmouth, Aldershot, 2002
-*Religion and politics in Asia today*. Edited by Augustine Thottakara, Bangalore, Dharmaram publications 2001.

³³ Situation in the Balkan was even worse. Before 1989 there were no titles with a mention of jihad (normally Turkey was not included). In 1989 two books appeared. One in Greek: *The Holy war of islam "Jihad"* by Ilias D. Nikolakakis, published in Thessaloniki, 1989. The Author has a Ph.D. in theology. This means, that there were no books on jihad in political sciences or history. This year appeared the second edition of Mirosljub Jevtić's "*Modern jihad as war*" (*Savremeni džihad kao rat*), First edition 1989, 2nd edition 1995, and 3rd 2001) That was the only book on jihad in social sciences in former Yugoslavia and in the entire Balkans. And it is the only published doctoral dissertation on that topic in former Yugoslavia as of today.

That is why religion as subject of political research is beginning to surpass other social sciences which may have religion for subject of analysis but are not political sciences themselves. In the broader sense, Religion and Politics may become the most important social science of religion because, in addition to the standard political analysis, it also has to draw on religious sources making its analysis a richer and in, many instances, a better predictor of future political outcomes.

Summary

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POLITICAL SCIENCE AND RELIGION

Political science is in same time old and young science. Old, if we have in mind politics as subject of research, and young if we think about institutions in which politics is only subject of research or education.

Having in mind religion as subject of political science's research, we can easily conclude that all books in early history of mankind, which were dedicated to political topics, had for the first subject religion. That is clear if we remember that firsts forms of political organizations in old Babylon, Egypt. and Israel... were inseparable connected with gods. Gods gave legitimacy to those states.

But so political science's institutions in generally so political sciences of religions, or *politologie des religions* in French, was born late. The firsts subjects of researchs in political sciences's institutions were: state, political regimes, political parties, theory of politics, political systems, etc. Religion was studied very rarely. Modern political science was born under influence of french intellectuals: Diderot, Rousseau, Voltaire etc. They considered that religion will disappear with education and development. Their compatriot Alexis de Tocqueville thought contrary to their prognosis. The time gave right to Tocqueville. In the second part of XX century when the world development was the highest, religion maintained its position in big part of globe and became stronger in a lot of states. That created big challenge for political science. Many of political scientists started with research concerning influence of religion into politics. That create, as the first step, centers

for research of relations among religion and politics as is "Laboratoire 'RELIGION ET POLITIQUE' at "Institute d'études politiques" in Paris or "L'Observatoire du Religieux" at "Institut d'études politique" in Aix EN Provence en France, and finally that created special scientific discipline among political sciences which name is "Religion and politics" or "Politologie des religions" in french.

Key words: Religion, Politics, Islam, Christianity.