
A WORD FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Politology of religion in Political Science curricula around the globe

If we agree that there is a general consensus that a Science is correct and argument-based knowledge on a specific subject of research, it is logical to presume that Political science should offer this kind of knowledge about political phenomena. Thus, the major task of a Political scientist is to keep track with political events, and to analyze them by focusing on major driving forces of politics. For example, one of the oldest political problems in the world is the Palestinian question. The problem is mainly based around a question of who gets to control the holy places: Israel or Palestine? And this problem is important for the whole Islamic world, which counts two billions of people. Why there is a constant clash between India and Pakistan? It's mainly due to religious differences. And finally, it seems that almost no one wants to see the religious dimension of the current conflict between Russia and Ukraine. When the Ecumenical Patriarchate accepted the autocephaly request by the Ukrainian Orthodox Christian Church – which is a political project, just like the Russian Orthodox Church is closely related with the State – directly influenced the relationship between two countries which eventually led to a war. Isn't it logical then for Political Scientist to pay closer attention to religion? Well, obviously not.

Steven Kettell, a member of our Editorial Board, did a study of 20 most-influential Political Science journals from 2000 to 2010, and how they treated religion. As you can see, this is a moment when the USA launched a war on terrorism against Al-Qaida, a self-declared islamic organization. This fact is important as it implies that any sort of analysis of this phenomenon should take religion as one of the most important pieces of the puzzle. However, Kettell's study found that these journals published a total of 7.245 articles in this period of time, and that only 97 articles dealt with religion, which is 1.34%.¹

This means that Political scientist around the globe neglected religion. And that is why it is logical to presume that religion did not find its place within political science departments around the globe. Consequently, there are no attempts towards founding the specific political science discipline which would deal with religion. And this is the case with the major Departments of Political Science around the globe today. There are, of course, some courses which deals with religion sporadically, or doctorates on religion and politics, but there is no such thing as a special political science discipline.

The only exception to this rule is the Faculty of Political Science – University of Belgrade. Since the school year 1993/1994 this institution introduced a subject "Politology of religion", as a new, and specific, political science discipline with a specific

¹ Steven Kettell, Has Political Science Ignored Religion, *PS: Political Science & Politics*, Vol. 45, No. 1, 2012, pp. 93-100.

subject of research. That is how politology of religion is different from other disciplines, like political theory, comparative politics, international relations, etc. And this is a worldwide accepted fact, that Miroljub Jevtic is a founding father of politology of religion.² I have defined the first definition of politology of religion, and its specific subjects of research.³ To the best of my knowledge, no one else tried to define politology of religion in any other way.

Since 1993/1994, this discipline has developed on every level of study – undergraduate, master’s and doctorate level. It educated thousands of students so far, who had to take exams in politology of religion. There are dozens of master’s thesis defended, as well as doctoral dissertations. Part of our students’ continued their education abroad, in the USA for example, and our teachers did specialization on worlds-top universities. What is particularly important is that doctoral dissertation defended at Faculty of Political Science – University of Belgrade has been published by world’s top-publishing houses.⁴

The most important channel for politology of religion to the world is this journal. It is the first ever journal in the world dedicated to this discipline. This means that this journal does not belong to sociology of religion, philosophy of religion, history of religion, etc. but rather to, and for, politology of religion and all authors who wants to keep working in this emerging field. All authors who contribute to this Journal actually contribute to the development of politology of religion. That is why the journal has a respectable reputation in the world, due to the fact that it gathered hundreds of authors, reviewers, and editorial board members. The scientific community is very positively oriented towards the journal, as it opens a room for political scientist who has interests in religion, and consequently works in the interests of the world in terms of better understanding between religions.

However, there are also examples of unnecessary envy. If you simply google “Political science religion”, for years the very first result was a Wikipedia page that refers to the Serbian school of politology of religion. Someone found that this was not okay, and did its best to delete this Wikipedia page. And he/she got nothing. Because if you google the same thing now, the very first results is the article quoted in the footnote 3 of this Editorial.

When it comes to this special issue devoted to the Muslim World League, it is important to mention that another great international Muslim organization – name-

2 According to Stela Marega who said: “I refer to a successful attempt done in the early ‘90s theoretical foundations of a new discipline: political science of religion, or politology of religion. In Eastern Europe, Miroljub Jevtic founded the Center for Study of Religion and Religious Tolerance at the University of Belgrade, Serbia, in 1993”. See more: Stela Marega, “Philosophy, Religion and Politics: Contributions and Perspectives of Politology of Religion”, in: *Two day conference at the University of Chester as a Part of the AHRC Philosophy and Religious Practices Research Network*, 8-9 April 2014, available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/276278161_Philosophy_Religion_and_Politics_Contributions_and_Perspectives_of_Politology_of_Religion (accessed 5.5.2022).

3 Miroljub Jevtic, Political science and Religion, *Politics and Religion Journal*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 2007, pp. 59-69.

4 See for example: Marko Vekovic, *Democratization in Christian Orthodox Europe: Comparing Greece, Serbia and Russia*, Routledge, London & New York, 2021.

ly Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) – received its international reputation because of politology of religion. When I was a graduate student in international relations under supervision of Prof. Vojin Dimitrijevic I have decided to work on OIC. And yet, back in the days when there was no internet, I visited many Islamic embassies in Belgrade in order to find materials and data on OIC. However, I found nothing. My last stop was the Embassy of Algeria, where I found the typewriter edition of the Charter of the OIC's declaration. I keep this document to this day. In 1984 I have successfully defended my master thesis. Once we got internet, I tried to find published works on OIC around the globe. I was very much surprised to find out that until 1984, so 15 years after foundation of the OIC, there were only two works published on this topic – one in German and my work in Serbian – and not a single one more in any of the European languages. Furthermore, it is very interesting that OIC did not get so much attention by researchers. For example, if you take a look into the French Wikipedia page on "Djibouti" you can find the list of all international organization where this country is a member. And yet, there is no information on OIC. This means only one thing – that the authors does not find this fact as important.⁵ And that is how Islam, and OIC, contributed to the birth of politology of religion. Furthermore, that is how one non-Muslim, but a great admirer of Islam and its Prophet, contributed to the affirmation of OIC. That is why I am very grateful to both of them, as they made me study religion and politics in the first place.

Anyhow, it is good to state once more that it is accepted that politology of religion as a specific scientific discipline is born in Belgrade, and that I am its founding father⁶.

Miroljub Jevtic⁷

⁵ See more: https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Djibouti#Organisations_internationales (accessed May 5, 2022).

⁶ See more in: Maciej Potz, Perspektywy badawcze w politologii religii, *Studia Religiosa*, Vol. 52, No. 4, 2019, p. 278, fn 4. doi: 10.4467/20844077SR.19.020.11627; Сергей С. Стрельников, Взаимодействие политической культуры и конфессионального сознания в условиях модернизации в России, Тюмень, 2014, p. 5, available at: https://static.freereferats.ru/_avtoreferats/01007521588.pdf (accessed 5.5.2022); "Anambra's night of desecration By Mobolaji Sanusi", available at: <http://omajuwu.com/2013/11/anambra-night-of-desecration-by-mobolaji-sanusi/> (accessed 5.5.2022).

⁷ Founder and editor-in-chief of *Politics and Religion Journal*. At the moment, prof. Jevtic serves as an Ambassador of Serbia in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Contact E-mail: jevticmiroljub@yahoo.com

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