

e-IR Publication - The Sacred and the Sovereign

Written by Özgür Taşkaya

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<https://www.e-ir.info/2011/08/16/the-sacred-and-the-sovereign-a-compendium-of-pieces-on-religion-and-ir/>

ÖZGÜR TAŞKAYA, AUG 16 2011

In this compendium, you will find seven articles, written by academics who tackle the subject of religion in international politics with diverse approaches. Readers will find intriguing pieces on secularism, religion and politics. This collection will hopefully provide a unique insight for those interested in secularism and the role of religion in international affairs.

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The study of religion has grown into an essential part of modern political studies. With that point in mind, in recent years there has been a proliferation of scholarly literature on the relationship between religion and politics. The global resurgence of religion in the political arena began in earnest in the late twentieth century and if current trends are anything to go by it seems evident that the phenomenon will maintain its growth throughout the twenty-first century.

Religion in a sense did “return from exile” resulting in a blurring of the domains of God and Caesar.

The resurgence of religion primarily shows itself in such debates as the failure of secularism thesis, the emergence of a post-secular society, and the rise of religious diplomacy. A deep fear, or at the very least a high suspicion, of religion’s burgeoning impact on politics is still held by some. That being said, many realize the positive prospects of such a resurgence. It has been suggested by some that secularism is no longer a suitable paradigm to be applied to religion’s role in public life. The fact is that religion has come to a place in society where it is no longer possible to ignore, or exclude it from political debate and scholarship. Therefore, a reconsideration and redefinition of secularism

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is of crucial significance.

Whether one is religious, or a secularist, one should lend an ear to Jurgen Habermas who states that: “both religious and secular mentalities must be open to a complementary learning process if we are to balance shared citizenship and cultural difference.” Only then can coexistence of different worldviews be established.

The effects of religion on the international political arena cannot be underestimated, especially when we consider the fact that the biggest monotheistic religions date back many hundreds of years prior to the emergence of the modern state system in the seventeenth century. Religion has frequently shaped and reshaped state and interstate systems in various degrees. It will continue to be a valuable subject of academic debate among political scientists.

About the author:

Özgür Taşkaya has an MA in Political Studies from Istanbul Technical University. He received his BA in English Language and Literature from Hacettepe University, Ankara. He studied history as an exchange student at Aarhus University, Denmark. His research interest is religion in international relations. Özgür has been an Assistant Editor of e-IR since September 2009