Editors᾽ Note

This issue of *Politics and Religion* brings together some interesting research from international academics. Linking the first three pieces here is the theme of secularism. Perhaps more precisely, each of the authors expressed concerns about the definition and analytical deployment of secularism which, as defined by the Oxford English dictionary is "not connected with religious or spiritual matters." This binary construction of "the religious" and "the secular" prove, for the authors here, to mask nuances of culture, history and political engagement.

For example, Shabnum Tejani argues that understanding the emergence of secularism in India must be contextualized historically, specifically the first half of the 20th century. She challenges the contemporary binary frames of secularism/religion and, reflecting on the work of Charles Taylor and Juergen Habermas, she considers how the historical experience engenders a redefinition of secularism in a "post-secular" age.

Renaud Fabbri explores the dialectics of counter-secularization arguing that the choice between Schmitto-Huntingtonian and a Habermassian future is particularly complicated. Attempting to shed some light on these complications, he attempts to recover a common root of contemporary civilization in the Axial Age and concludes that this heritage could lay a foundation for a truly shared global ethics.

Similarly, T. Randolph Beard, Robert Ekelund, George Ford, Ben Gaskins, and Robert Tollison, criticize definitions of secularism as "an absence of religion." Focusing on the United States electorate, they argue for a more nuanced, multifaceted understanding. Their empirically based analysis demonstrates that secularism can be represented and used to evaluate social trends, for example. So while they agree that secularism is complex, it is a "manageable complexity" with at least two key components: Religious Secularism and Social Secularism.

Working in what could be described as a related terrain, Marcus Schulzke considers "The Politics of the New Atheism." In particular, Schulzke reviews the political goals of writers such as Richard Dawkins, Christopher Hitchens, and Sam Harris arguing that when considered as political theorists, these writers are largely defenders of

liberal values. The primary concern of new atheists is not to challenge religious beliefs but to criticize the political and social consequences of religious beliefs.

Stratos Patrikios offers a distinct thesis regarding the importance of political context. Patrikios' analysis challenges the presumption that a voter aligns his/her religious identity with his/her partisan identity. Instead, his work indicates that partisan cues lead to an internalization of a composite religious-partisan identity.

In "Promoting Critical Islam," Nicholas Tampio offers a detailed analysis of European Mulsim scholar Tariq Ramadan and asks the question: "Can critical Islam win the battle for Muslim minds against scholars who argue for literalist reading of the sources?" And finally, setting a standard for us all, Ron Hassner guides us in "How to cite a sacred text." In this carefully crafted piece, Hassner challenges political science scholars to note the multiplicity of translations, meanings, and viewpoints arising from a sacred text.

We hope that you enjoy these exciting pieces of research as much as we have and that your own thoughts and research are enhanced through your engagement with them.

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