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Editors' Note

Is religion compatible with democracy? All of the work on religion and democratic politics is concerned with this question at some level, though some much more explicitly than others. We wrestle with the presence and place of religious dictates, the use of religious reasoning at multiple levels, and the democratic goods and externalities produced by religious activism. What is remarkable about this issue of *Politics and Religion* is the confluence of work that brightly illuminates multiple levels of religious and political dynamics at the core of this question.

As the cultural consensus (of "Protestant, Catholic, Jew") begins to fray in the United States, empirical researchers are taking up the threshold conditions of religion and democracy that are hotly debated among political theorists — are people willing to set aside comprehensive claims in order to work on projects of common concern that we can debate on and, once decided, justify in common terms. One of the open questions that political theory does not deal with is the scope condition — how extensive are these concerns? This is certainly not the kind of project that is addressed in one article or a book, but Beyerlein and Eberle start with the baseline — the extent to which people rely on religion solely when shaping their attitudes and thereby violate the "restraint" some theorists claim is necessary in a liberal democracy. Beyond the excellent integration of the normative and empirical work that bear on these questions, Beyerlein and Eberle draw on an overlooked dataset with an atypical question well suited to this investigation. We find violators on both sides of the same-sex marriage debate, though more on the side opposed and distinct minorities of either side's camp.

Still, as Kim Conger adds to her series of examinations of the presence of the Christian Right (and now Christian Progressives) in the states, movements are present on both sides (though more on the right) that have to face difficult strategic decisions about how to best press their religious agenda. Their presence is shaped, almost dictated, by the political and religious environment, highlighting the practical restraints on religious presence.

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If few fail to exercise "restraint," it is hard to overlook the evidence of what overt religious cues from candidates do to electorates — they polarize them. Amidst the growing literature studying religious cue effects, including some by an editor of this journal, McLaughlin and Wise set a useful baseline of how the use of religion to diverse mass electorates may have the intended effects — to pull apart constituencies along a desired axis. While such cues may be helpful for electoral gain, the opinion dynamics they inspire may not be ideal regime reinforcements. That conclusion is only reinforced by Rapp, Traunmüller, Freitag, and Vatter's examination of moral referenda voting in Switzerland, which they find has become divided along religious-secular lines.

These articles belie easy definitions of religion and challenge us to think about religion contextually. If religion's vitality in an open marketplace is linked at all to its ability to meet the needs of its adherents, then we should expect the relationships between religion and core political questions to vary markedly given the needs of the group. Just how much they can vary may surprise you. Verkuyten, Maliepaard, Martinovic, and Khoudja examine the political tolerance levels among religious minorities in Germany and the Netherlands. This is not the usual formulation, which is to look for the tolerance that majorities are willing to extend to unpopular groups. However, examining minorities' commitment to equality is a powerful measure of democratic consolidation, an essential trust in legal recourse over group prejudice and discrimination. This is especially powerful when used cross-nationally as it is here. So while we would probably expect minority intolerance as a protective mechanism, especially among highly religious groups, Verkuyten et al. find the exact opposite. Tolerance varies by national context, but is generally high among people of Turkish origin; moreover, tolerance is *higher* among the more religious Sunnis (compared to Alevis). The call is obvious – we need to consider political status when we think about religious interests and attitudes.

Given the role of Protestant movements sweeping Latin America, which appear to be directed at lower SES people, it is perhaps surprising to learn how Protestant outreach to Latinos in the United States has promoted adoption of an American identity and a tight link between Christianity and Americanism. As the Latino population booms and religious competition for Latino adherents grows, Taylor, Gershon, and Pantoja's research should receive wide airing and researchers should follow their directions for future research carefully.

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In the same vein, status of another sort has long played a role in studies of political tolerance. People with secure personalities, marked by trust, self-esteem, and the embrace of doubt, are more tolerant of even groups at fundamental odds with the individual. Studies of religion and tolerance have had an uneven track record in controlling for security and tend to include proxy measures for, especially, dogmatism (often as biblical literalism). So, as more completely specified models have failed to find direct religious effects on tolerance, our investigations have started to back in the causal chain. Eisenstein and Clark, two researchers pushing hard in this area, work through this logic and assess religion's link to disentangled measures of security. The results, in many ways, complicate this line of work by indicating a complex system of interactions — for one, religiosity only affects dogmatism among evangelicals, though religiosity has effects on other components of psychological security for members of other religious traditions. Therefore, the results may also complicate normative theorizing about religion and religious arguments as there is no easy, undifferentiated way to talk about "religion" in the public square.

This may be consistent with the deal Habermas perhaps intended to strike in the philosophical debate about religion in democratic processes. As Neal describes it, Habermas set an institutional threshold (office holding), a line at which comprehensive justifications must be left behind. But Habermas also imposes a burden that he argues applies equally to very secular as well as very religious individuals to translate comprehensive justifications into secular ones. Neal rejects this deal as overly burdensome without a clear delineation of the gains of institutional prohibitions.

We hope you find these articles as stimulating as we did in the run up to print.

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