



# *Economics, Theology and Religion Newsletter #5*

*Erasmus Economics & Theology Institute*

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## New Articles

IN: *THE ROUTLEDGE HANDBOOK OF RELIGION, MEDICINE, AND HEALTH*

### **Religious Entrepreneurs in the Health Market**

Markus Hero

In this contribution the opportunities, strategies, and restrictions of religious providers in the health market will be analyzed from an economics of religion perspective. Attention will be focussed on the plurality of small religious businesses offering health related services that can be individually tailored to the needs of the client. Starting from the special structure of the relationships to their 'patients,' it will be shown which competitive advantages religious enterprises have at their disposal to ensure their existence in the competitive market of health services. The promotion of physical or health benefits of the religious is thus viewed as a special type of client and competitor orientation. The performative act of the provider and the sacralization of the customer supplement the professionalization that can be observed at the same time. The comprehensive goal consists in staying in competition in the health market while the niches and shortcomings of 'conventional medicine' are being filled and met. As central resources for competition, patient-oriented communication, time budgeting, and a customized identity management are highlighted.

IN: *IN THE LEGACY OF HANS NIELSEN HAUGE*

### **Is There Really a Relationship Between Protestantism and Economic Growth?**

Ola Honningdal Grytten

The present chapter discusses the basis of a wide research literature study if there is evidence of a positive statistical link between Protestantism and economic growth. And if there is, do we find statistical links of causality between the two? By conducting both a literature study of quantitative and qualitative research into this field, along with looking at statistical evidence, it concludes that there are significant links. The chapter presents two dependent variables and eight independent parameters of examination in addition to a residual. It finds support for clear links between economic growth and church affiliation. Thus, based on existing data and a huge research literature, one might conclude that there is an obvious historical link between Protestantism and economic growth. A vast majority of research publications on the issue also conclude that there is a causal link. According to these, Protestantism paved the way for institutions and attitudes that stimulated entrepreneurship and economic growth.

*HOMO OECONOMICUS*

### **From Polytheism to Monotheism: Zoroaster and Some Economic Theory**

Mario Ferrero

The prophet Zoroaster founded the first monotheistic religion in history, which once rose to great imperial status and still survives unchanged today despite centuries of Muslim pressure. Unlike the founders of other monotheistic religions after him, he achieved this not through the overthrow of the original Iranian polytheism but through its deep reform—a strategy that made acceptance easier and ensured a continuing role for the priests. Monotheistic reform is thus a third way out of ancient Indo-European polytheism, besides extinction in the Greco-



Roman case and mutation into sectarian theism in the Indian case. This paper surveys the Iranian story and offers two economic models to account for the two key factors that made the transition to monotheism possible: the theological structure and the role of the priesthood.

### *JOURNAL OF WORLD BUSINESS*

#### **On Religion as an Institution in International Business: Executives' Lived Experience in Four African Countries**

Helena Barnard & Anastacia Mamabolo

We use institutional theory to understand how managers in different types of firms make sense of the dysfunction of institutionally weak environments. We interviewed ninety executives working in Botswana, Kenya, Nigeria and Zimbabwe, and found that religion was used as a normative institution when dealing with remediable institutional dysfunction, typically corruption, and as cultural-cognitive institution when dysfunction was perceived as non-remediable (associated with pervasive uncertainty) for those working for domestic firms and so-called nascent multinationals. No executives working for developed country (European) multinationals used religion as a system of meaning-making; executives of emerging market (South-African) multinationals used religion only normatively.

*Keywords:* Religion, Normative institutions, Cultural-cognitive institutions, Africa, International, Business

### *EARLY MEDIEVAL EUROPE*

#### **Seeing the Churches like the State: Taxes and Wealth Redistribution in Late Antique Italy**

Merle Eisenberg & Paolo Tedesco

Two key economic questions tend to be asked about the transformation of the Roman world. First, how did Roman fiscal structures continue, disintegrate and transform? Second, how did emerging churches play a role in the redistribution of wealth through new administrative structures to create a new social system, what Ian Wood has called a 'temple society'? These two processes - one focussing on the continuity or discontinuity of the Roman economic structures and the other on churches within that system - are usually examined separately or assumed to follow, what we call here, a 'Gallic model'. In this article, we first demonstrate that Wood's 'temple society' is far more complex in its emergence in Italy than in Gaul. Second, we argue that the churches of Italy remained embedded within late Roman fiscal structures, even as they transformed during late antiquity. Fiscal arrangements, examined through the churches of Rome and Ravenna, established churches as ever more central economic actors to the state fiscal system by 600 and shaped their long-term wealth redistribution process.

### *MADANG: JOURNAL OF CONTEXTUAL THEOLOGY*

#### **A Theological Criticism of Adam Smith's Ethical Economics**

Sukhun Huh

This paper aims primarily to clarify the theological implications of an "impartial spectator" and "invisible hand," which are the critical concepts of Adam Smith's economic theory. And this study discovers how these concepts support the world's poverty and exploitative economic structures with perverse relations to theology in the contemporary neo-liberalistic-economic system. Through diagnosing problems of the combined structure between the



economics and the theology of Smith, this study pursues to analyze the pathogenesis of the neo-liberalistic system from a theological perspective and to investigate the alternative ways of creating a harmonious economic theology. To this end, a significant question emerges: What relevance does Smith's theory have with contemporary natural theology, or how does his theological orientation impact his two concepts, the "invisible hand" and the "impartial spectator."

### *ECONOMIC ANALYSIS: THEORY AND PRACTICE*

#### **Evaluating the Return on Religious Capital in the Russian Labor Market**

R. M. Mel'nikov

*Subject.* The article addresses the impact of religious confession on wages and the likelihood of unemployment in Russia.

*Objectives.* The aim is to test the hypothesis that religious faith and high church attendance are accompanied by an increase in employment earnings.

*Methods.* Using the Russian Longitudinal Monitoring Survey data, I estimate the Mincer's extended equation with variables that characterize the respondent's religious commitment. To assess the impact of religious identity and the activity rate of attendance at religious services on the likelihood of unemployment and life satisfaction, I use probit models.

*Results.* The estimates demonstrate that the Russian labor market rewards men with moderate and high degree of religious commitment; their wage growth reaches seventeen percent of the level of non-believers with comparable education and work experience. However, faithful Muslim women are employed in the lowest paid areas. Religious faith and regular church attendance have a positive effect on satisfaction with life (significant for Orthodox Christian women).

*Conclusions.* Positive impact of religious capital on income and employment can be attributed to the development of business qualities that are rewarded in the labor market, the mutual support of religious network participants. Therefore, it possible to consider religious capital, along with educational capital and health capital, as a component of human capital and a factor of socio-economic development.

*Keywords:* economics of religion, religious capital, human capital, labor market, subjective well being

#### **New Books**

***Religion and the Medieval and Early Modern Global Marketplace* (Routledge, October 2021)**  
Scott Oldenburg & Kristin M. S. Bezio (eds.)

*Religion and the Medieval and Early Modern Global Marketplace* brings together scholars from a variety of disciplines to examine the intersection, conflict, and confluence of religion and the market before 1700. Each chapter analyzes the unique interplay of faith and economy in a different locale: Syria, Ethiopia, France, Iceland, India, Peru, and beyond. In ten case studies, specialists of archaeology, art history, social and economic history, religious studies, and critical theory address issues of secularization, tolerance, colonialism, and race with a fresh focus. They chart the tensions between religious and economic thought in specific locales or texts, the complex ways that religion and economy interacted with one another, and the way in which matters of faith, economy, and race converge in religious images of the pre- and early modern periods. Considering the intersection of faith and economy, the volume questions the legacy of early modern economic and spiritual exceptionalism, and the ways in which prosperity still entangles itself with righteousness. The interdisciplinary nature means that this volume is the



perfect resource for advanced undergraduates, postgraduates, and scholars working across multiple areas including history, literature, politics, art history, global studies, philosophy, and gender studies in the medieval and early modern periods.

***Religion and the Early Modern British Marketplace* (Routledge, November 2021)**

Kristin M.S. Bezio & Scott Oldenburg (eds.)

*Religion and the Early Modern British Marketplace* explores the complex intersection between the geographic, material, and ideological marketplaces through the lens of religious belief and practice. By examining the religiously motivated markets and marketplace practices in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in England, Scotland, and Wales, the volume presents religious praxis as a driving force in the formulation and everyday workings of the social and economic markets. Within the volume, the authors address first spiritual markets and marketplaces, discussing the intersection of Puritan and Protestant Ethics with the market economy. The second part addresses material marketplaces, including the marriage market, commercial trade markets, and the post-Reformation Catholic black market. In the third part of the volume, the chapters focus specifically on publication markets and books, including manuscripts and commonplace books, as well as printed volumes and pamphlets. Finally, the volume concludes with an examination of the literary marketplace, with analyses of plays and poems which engage with and depict both spiritual and material markets. Taken as a whole, this collection posits that the “modern” conception of a division between religion and the socioeconomic marketplace was a largely fictional construct, and the chapters demonstrate the depth to which both were integrated in early modern life.

***The Struggle over Class: Socioeconomic Analysis of Ancient Christian Texts* (SBL, October 2021)**

G. Anthony Keddie, Michael Flexenhar III & Steven J. Friesen (eds.)

*The Struggle over Class* brings together scholars from the fields of New Testament and early Christianity to examine Christian texts in light of the category of class. Historically rigorous and theoretically sophisticated, this collection presents a range of approaches to, and applications of, class in the study of the epistles, the gospels, Acts, apocalyptic texts, and patristic literature. Contributors Alicia J. Batten, Alan H. Cadwallader, Cavan W. Concannon, Zeba Crook, James Crossley, Lorenzo DiTommaso, Philip F. Esler, Michael Flexenhar III, Steven J. Friesen, Caroline Johnson Hodge, G. Anthony Keddie, Jaclyn Maxwell, Christina Petterson, Jennifer Quigley, Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, Daniëlle Sloopjes, and Emma Wasserman challenge both scholars and students to articulate their own positions in the ongoing scholarly struggle over class as an analytical category.

***The Order of Value: Christian Theology and the Market Economy* (dissertation, Uppsala Universitet, October 2021)**

Ida Simonsson

This study explores the relationship between Christian theology and the market economy, with a particular focus on value theory. Its backdrop is the scholarly recognition of the historical intertwinement of Christian theology and secular society. I first theologially analyze the historical development of the subjective value theory that is central to the market economy. I begin with its origin in scholastic just price in medieval Europe and follow it through its secularization via the so-called “marginal revolution” that helped consolidate the discipline of economics. The analysis shows that the subjective value theory concerns cosmology. I then analyze the expression of value as a theological-economic problem in contemporary



theological texts. The method is a form of immanent critique, employed in a reading of four theological texts that criticize the market economy. I identify assumptions that are isomorphic to the subjective value theory, and discuss theological consequences of the isomorphisms between theology and the market economy. I conclude that “value” is a problematic concept in those texts. Lastly, I analyze the concept of value. I show that the distinction between the metric meaning of “value” (a numerical quantity) and the normative meaning of “values” (“Christian values”) is conceptually problematic. But those meanings are connected through what I call “the order of value”: measuring value becomes a means of ordering the world. I show how this order of value plays out in relation to the Christian dogmatic structure and the market economy and discuss resulting problems. I argue that the theological study of value theory makes a theological critique of value possible. Unravelling the theological significance of value theory is the main contribution of the present study, both to the interdisciplinary fields of political and economic theology, and to theology proper.

***Essays in the Economics of Religion and Family* (dissertation, George Mason University, 2021)**

Clara E. Jace

This dissertation studies religion and family from the economic point of view. What distinguishes the economic approach from the other social sciences is that it adheres to a set of natural economic laws applying to human action regardless of time and place. Thus, all actors in the following chapters receive alike treatment—priests, parents, autocrats, and so on. The economic anthropology can be summarized as such: agents purposefully choose to maximize net perceived benefits, and in doing so, depend on one another. What further joins these projects is their attempt to understand how both religious and familial organizations relate to the state. What comparative advantage does each organization possess? Why have family and religion persisted throughout time, and what explains their organizational structure? How does exchange occur across these organizations? Though the subsequent questions have been debated before my time and will continue to be debated, it is my hope that these papers represent a small contribution to truth and knowledge. Moreover, as families, religious groups, and states are evolving more rapidly today than perhaps ever before, answering these questions will become only more important for those concerned with flourishing and peace in all corners of society. (...)

### Upcoming Conferences

#### **Introduction to the Economics of Religion Graduate Workshop** □

Association for the Study of Religion, Economics, and Culture

A graduate student workshop - taught by leaders in the field and held in conjunction with the meetings of the Association for the Study of Religion, Economics and Culture [see below]. Faculty leaders will include Dr. Laurence Iannaccone and Dr. Jared Rubin (Chapman U.), Dr. Jean-Paul Carvalho (Oxford U.) and Dr. Avital Livny (U Illinois Urbana-Champaign).

*Date/location:* April 21-23, 2022, Chapman University (Orange, CA)



**2022 ASREC Conference** □

Association for the Study of Religion, Economics, and Culture

The Program Chair (Mark Koyama, George Mason University) will consider papers on religion and culture from across the Social Sciences, including Economics, Political Science, Sociology, and Anthropology.

*Date/location:* April 22-23, 2022, Chapman University (Orange, CA)