

Religion, Economy, and Welfare: Universal Values, Plural Interpretations, and Local Politics

Panel Chair: Xabier Itçaina (CNRS, Centre Emile Durkheim, Sciences po Bordeaux) x.itcaina@sciencespobordeaux.fr

Abstract

While contemporary religious campaigns on issues related to family policy, educational policy and civilizational issues enjoy high visibility in the media and the public sphere, this is not the case for socio-economic campaigns led by religious actors. Yet religious social thought continues to inspire conceptions of economic and welfare linkages and of local and regional socio-economic configurations. These experiments have even undergone a silent process of renewal since the 2008 economic crisis, which particularly hit Southern Europe. The hypothesis assumed in this panel is that the elective affinities (Weber 1991) existing between religious thought and economic and welfare approaches are to be numbered in the plural, and that this pluralism can be fully grasped only at the local scale. In other words, and rather than repeating the sometimes ideologically-marked post-Weberian controversy over the respective economic impact of the Catholic and the Protestant ethics, this panel instead emphasizes the internal diversity of the various religious ethics on economy and welfare. Significantly, the Catholic entrepreneurial repertoire tends to oscillate between a straightforward discourse on the need to raise the moral standards of capitalism and a search for utopian alternatives to the market economy, with an infinity of nuances in between. Local observation provides an opportunity to grasp the concrete dimension of these different interpretations as well as, in a comprehensive approach, the doctrinal and ethical interpretations made by the social actors concerned.

This Panel will welcome Papers presenting monographic or comparative case-studies concerning the contemporary socio-economic and socio-assistance role of the religious actors, ranging from the purely charitable initiatives to the most entrepreneurial ones. Papers should take into consideration – among others – some of the following aspects: the economic ethics and practices displayed by religious actors, the relations with public authorities, and the interactions with social movements mobilized on socio-economic and welfare issues.

If you have a Paper you think might fit in this Panel, please contact the Panel Chair by 10 February 2017. Please ensure you inform the Panel Chair of your email address as registered with your MyECPR account. If you do not have a MyECPR account, you can create one [here](#).