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Editorial

The authority of political power

The notions of 'authority' and 'political power', which are subject to successive challenges of history and the dynamics of evolving societies and states, seem to be of continuing interest to researchers. In the social sciences, both authority and political power have always been extensively analysed and discussed. Similarly, the authority of political power, closely tied to the legitimacy of power, in the past often linked with internal sovereignty and nowadays also with variously defined separation of powers (from separation of powers to interdependence and cooperation of powers), has been a topical area of consideration for centuries and requires deeper answers. Every public authority, being an entity endowed with sovereign powers and thus with the ability to decide and produce very concrete consequences, relies on certain authority without which state power would be entirely coercive. Of course, a distinction must be made between political authority and public authority, which will also result in differences between defining the authority of political power and the authority of public power. However, leaving aside purists who refer to Hans Kelsen's pure theory of law (for whom public power "has nothing to do" with politics), should not we consider these concepts together? Reflecting on the concept of authority allows the relationship between its legality and legitimacy to be reconsidered. Despite the passage of time, in the 21st century it must be acknowledged that the explorations of this issue undertaken in ancient Rome have not lost their relevance. What does the authority of political power (linked with the authority of public power) stem from and what are its foundations? How is the authority of political power (linked with the authority of public power) strengthened, and when can it

be weakened or diminished? What factors are nowadays associated with the authority of political power (linked with the authority of public power)? Is a contemporary society and a contemporary state conducive to the strengthening of this authority or does it weaken it? An additional factor that makes the analysed issues more attractive (or more complicated) is their transnational and supra-state dimensions. The analysis of the authority of power in general (although it remains on the margins of the main thread), which exceeds the research area of the social sciences, can reveal the multidimensionality of the issues discussed. Moreover, philosophical and psychological perspectives add a deeper dimension to our reflections, and clearly demonstrate why it is impossible to conduct research within the social sciences without an interdisciplinary approach.

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theme issue editor