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Editorial: Secularization of Political Thought in Russia: from the “Right of Existence” to the Empire and Geopolitics

“This holiday brings joy and awakens pure thoughts. It unites us around ideals of goodness, love and mercy. These eternal values have a special significance for Russia, serving for centuries as a spiritual foundation for our society. It is very important that today the Russian Orthodox Church and other Christian confessions in Russia carry on the traditions of responsible service, helping people to find faith and giving them strength along the way. This great work deserves sincere respect. I would like to wish happiness, peace and success in their good deeds to all Orthodox Christians and all Russians”, said Vladimir Putin, who attended Christmas mass at the Church of the Intercession of the Holy Virgin in the village of Turginovo in Tver Region on January 7, 2016 (www.en.kremlin.ru).

Presidential Christmas greetings can be understood, of course, just as a cultural or political custom but, when given annually, are proof of the important position taken in Russia by the Orthodox Church and religion in general. Quantitative data from the World Value Survey in Russia shows a significant trend (since 1996) towards de-secularization rather than a decline in faith and practice. Contemporary Post-Soviet Russia can be seen, in opposition to classical secularization theories, as a key example of an impulsive

religious revival, an Orthodox renaissance, both at the individual and institutional level. Nevertheless, the relation between religion and politics in today's Russia still raises many questions.

This issue includes two comprehensive thematic articles which are rich in their general theoretical framework as well as in their detailed historical research. Jadwiga Staniszkis, in the opening article entitled *The East-West Split in View of the History of Ideas*, understands secularization as an ideological filter, through which borrowings from the West (Reformation, German philosophies etc.) were interpreted. It means that secularization in Russia did not affect the minds of Russians and did not transform the public (including political) structures into laic ones.

Joanna Justyna Matuszewska, in her text *Russia and Secularization: A Conceptualization of the Field of Research*, investigates the process of secularization in the context of historical developments, especially the Reformation. She understands the titular notion as a production of knowledge which leads to diversity at the level of social macro-structures. The mutual relationship between Russia and secularization is treated here as a continuous translation of modernity in the framework of the power-knowledge junction.

The six diverse articles to be found in the *Varia* are focused on different aspects, but the leading perspective is that they are global and international in their scope. Noralv Veggeland examines the narrative of the modernized regulatory state, Jacek Pera reveals the etymology of risk definition in international relations, Sylwia Machowska-Okrój discusses the relation between economic openness and economic growth in the EU countries, Renata Pęciak tries to explain the essence of megatrends and their implications in the globalised world, Magdalena Tusińska analyses critically competitiveness of the EU in the perspective of 2020, while Michał Młody elaborates the phenomenon of China's strategic challenges on the road to becoming a global superpower.

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