Politica.eu

RIVISTA INTERDISCIPLINARE ON LINE

REVUE INTERDISCIPLINAIRE EN LIGNE

INTERDISCIPLINARY JOURNAL ON LINE

http://www.rivistapolitica.eu/

*Rivista scientifica accreditata da ANVUR per le aree 11, 12 (classe A), 14 (classe A per 14a1, 14b1, 14c1, 14c2)

CALL FOR PAPERS 2026

Religion after Secularization
Modernity, Democracy, and Forms of Religious Experience

In his recent work *Democracy Needs Religion*, Hartmut Rosa examines the resources that religious experience can still offer to democratic life, arguing that religious traditions preserve forms of experience and relational dispositions that democracy continues to need. His contribution represents the latest chapter in a much longer-standing debate on the relationship between religion and modernity, a debate that has progressively crystallized around the category of secularization.

Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, this relationship emerged as one of the central problems in the self-understanding of Western societies. Even before «secularization» became an overarching theoretical category, different processes were examined through distinct conceptual vocabularies. On the one hand, Weber interpreted the transformations of modern society in terms of rationalization and the «disenchantment of the world». On the other, from a more explicitly genealogical perspective, Schmitt investigated the persistence of theological structures within modern political categories, while Löwith traced modern philosophies of history back to the matrix of Christian eschatology. The possibility of interpreting modernity through the genealogical framework of secularization subsequently became the subject of a major controversy, culminating in Blumenberg's critique of the reduction of modern concepts and achievements to transformations of their theological antecedents.

In the field of social theory, particularly from the 1960s onward, secularization became one of the principal paradigms for interpreting the transformations of religion in modern societies. In the work of scholars such as Bryan Wilson, Peter L. Berger, and Thomas Luckmann, modernization was variously associated with the differentiation of social spheres, the privatization of religion, and the decline or transformation of religious beliefs and practices.

The crisis of this paradigm, together with the growing difficulty of treating the specific trajectory of Western societies—and European societies in particular—as a universal model for the relationship between modernization and religion, opened up a new phase of reflection in the final decades of the twentieth century. A decisive contribution came from José Casanova, who in *Public Religions in the Modern World* (1994) challenged the assumption that modernization necessarily entailed the confinement of religion to the private sphere through the concept of «deprivatization». Along similar lines, Jürgen Habermas's reflection on the «post-secular» society, initiated in *Faith and Knowledge* (2001) and developed in subsequent writings, placed at its centre the question of the continuing presence of religions in secularized societies and the conditions governing their relationship with public reason.

As Rosa's work, discussed at the outset, illustrates, developments in the contemporary world lend these questions renewed urgency. The resurgence of religious nationalism, the role of faith in the formation of collective identities and the legitimation of power, and its significance in conflicts and geopolitical dynamics coexist with the transformations brought about by migration and confessional pluralism. Beyond the West, different historical trajectories and configurations of the relationships between religion, state, and society also call into question the purported universality of the categories of «secularization», «secularism», and the «post-secular», opening them up to comparison with other forms of modernity and different religious and political traditions.

A further field of inquiry concerns the relationship between religion, ritual practices, and the transformations of modern individualism. Digitalization, for instance, intensifies certain dynamics of individualization while simultaneously opening up unprecedented spaces for the emergence of new forms of ritual practice and belonging. The persistence or reinvention of religious rites thus raises the question of their capacity to generate social bonds, shared affiliations, and collective temporalities that are, at least in part, insulated from economic rationality and social fragmentation.

The public presence of religion also invites reflection on the resources that religious traditions and communities can offer to collective life. Against the backdrop of the crisis of political cultures and the presentist orientation of contemporary societies, the question of transcendence has likewise returned to the fore, along with that of the capacity of religious traditions to reach beyond the existing order and provide languages through which to interrogate its contradictions, aporias, and unfulfilled promises. This possibility, however, coexists with the opposite function that religion may perform in legitimizing and sacralising the established order. Religious pluralism, finally, reopens fundamental questions for legal theory and theories of the state, ranging from freedom of religion and freedom of conscience to secularism and institutional neutrality, and extending to the relationship between the state legal system and religious forms of normativity.

Building on these premises, this call for papers seeks to foster interdisciplinary debate on the multiple configurations of the relationship between politics and religion, examining its historical transformations, theoretical and normative implications, and contemporary manifestations. Contributions drawing on political philosophy, moral philosophy, philosophy of religion, philosophy of law, the history of political thought, and the social sciences are welcome. Particular attention will be paid to the plurality of religious and political traditions and to the diversity of historical and geographical contexts in which this relationship takes different forms.

November 2026

The deadline for article submissions is **30 June 2027**.
Articles should be sent to: redazione.rivistapolitica@gmail.com.

Languages: Italian, English, German, and French.