



# BETWEEN POLITICAL THEOLOGY AND THE ARTIFICIAL DEMIURGE

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The second decade of the 21st century is characterized by the growing centrality of [biopolitics](#) (understood as the political use of biomedical knowledge to control and condition life processes) in public discourse, encompassing both the beginning and end of life and the suspension of personal freedom for health reasons.

The scope of biopolitical elements in today's society proves Pope Francis right when, in his effort to rehabilitate politics, [he argues](#) that everything that happens in the polis concerns the common good and has political significance. However, the emergence of biopolitics—together with the inclination to [therapize politics](#)—has been made possible by the advent of a relatively new ruling class, the technocrats, who place themselves above politics, and make good Paul Valéry's saying that politics consists in "preventing people from interfering in what concerns them." And indeed, technocracy is by definition—and above all—the depoliticization of public affairs, at the cost of moral judgments losing their primacy to gradually give way to the generalization of an uncritical and passive attitude towards the reality of power, as Dalmacio Negro has repeatedly [pointed out](#).

This moral desiccation of the political reflects, in short, the triumph of structural capitalism, in the sense that one of its pillars is that the primary function of the Law (and therefore of the legislator) is independent of value judgments and any teleological aspiration, and is limited to the regulation of realities, so that these can be expressed as free contractual relations, whose mercantile fulfillment is guaranteed by state institutions.

The importance of this conception of the law for the flourishing of Protestant capitalism was pointed out by [Max Weber](#), when he noted that it was precisely the interests of the English capitalist classes and the guilds of lawyers that prevented the development of a codified legal system embedded in the bureaucracy of an administration of justice, creating the appropriate legal conditions—first in England and later in the United States of America—for the successful structural development of capitalism within a legal framework based on an "amorphous, precedent-bound, empirical law" that allowed legal professionals to give legal form to [capitalist business](#) in such a way that the axis of the political shifted to the industrialized economy, making technique the ultimate foundation of modern *politeia*.

The political implications of this divergence from the continental legal tradition were extensively studied by Carl Schmitt in his writings on the [concept of Political Theology](#), which allowed him to draw a series of sociological analogies between the modern State and the Catholic Church, as the legitimate

heir of the Roman legal tradition and the uninterrupted representative of its founder. However, although Schmitt himself called these studies in Weberian terms a sociology of juridical concepts, the truth is that Carl Schmitt's political theology is more than a sociology or a history of ideas, and constitutes rather a methodology for establishing a correlation between concepts of a juridical-political nature and concepts of a theological-metaphysical type. "Method" comes from the Greek μέθοδος ("way to follow to go beyond"), for *Meta* (μετα, beyond), and *Hodos* (ὁδός, way).

Nota bene: throughout his work, Schmitt deploys four theological-political dimensions; one centered on sovereignty, others on representation, and a third on the Katechon, each of which he couples to a given theological-political category. Thus, Schmitt establishes a correlation between sovereign power and divine omnipotence; second, between the mediating capacity between the divine and the human by the Church and political representation; and third, between the idea of the Katechon and real political power.

In the context of apocalyptic literature, the function of the Katechon is to temper the eschatological enthusiasm of the early Christian church that anxiously awaits the return of Christ while at the same time trying to avoid the disorder and anarchy of the last days. Schmitt uses this concept in the key of Political Law, to advocate that it is imperative that chaos does not reach (*nach oben kommt*) the level of the State; for which a *reins* (Katechon) are necessary to restrain (*niederhält*) anarchy. Therefore, the figure of the Katechon as used by Schmitt is to be understood as an allegory of a strong state.

The path followed by Schmitt runs through the historical processes from which the structures common to the theological and the political emerged, characterized by the successive occupation of the central political pole by a social tendency corresponding to a given epochal period, from which a correlation between the spheres of the theological and the political can be derived. The three main phases were the shift from the theological to the metaphysical, from the metaphysical to the moral, and from the moral to the economic, each serving to rationalize a particular worldview that served as legitimization of the ostentation of political power by certain groups and not others. In more concrete terms, the process described by Schmitt encompasses the transition from monarchical absolutism/theism to constitutionalism/theism, which led to liberal democracy/laicism, and, according to Carl Schmitt, moves in the direction of anarchy/atheism.

It is easy to see that the constant element in this transition is the progressive secularization of sovereignty, or, in other words, a process of gradual negation of the principle of sovereignty under the

rule of the economy-technique pair, whose logic (which is claimed to be inevitable and immutable) of the market grants it cultural and political hegemony, a phenomenon that we can characterize as an autopoietic process-progress, which, in addition to reproducing itself, recreates all the conditions necessary to renew itself and expand sustainably according to a technological determinism that requires less and less human intervention. (In ethical terms, the modern financial system is essentially amoral, as it accepts the subordination of production processes to the accumulation of capital without any social responsibility). Naturally, such a system operates without needing the hypothesis of God, because it renounces any transcendent perspective, so that neither religion, nor even politics, are in any way the apex of the whole. At the same time that this happens, the subjective perception of a differential between the temporal and the spatial is dissolved in the shrinking of geography, which, due to technological instantaneity, is on the verge of achieving the end of space before reaching the end of history. And if this system is, besides being self-referential, atheological, because it dispenses with God, it also dispenses with man, because from the systemic prism, the meaning of a conception of human nature is as redundant as that of the transcendent: a person is only a vector, a focal point around which a structure of productive expectations deriving from economic processes materializes. (According to Niklas Luhmann's interpretation, of the concept of autopoiesis as applied to sociology, an autopoietic system is endowed with a self-referential character not limited to the level of its structures, but has the capacity to construct itself the elements that constitute it, which develop by having not only a meaning for itself, but also the capacity to have a meaning—*Autopoiesis, Handlung und kommunikative Vertändigung. Zeitschrift für Soziologie*, Heft 4, 366-379).

As Carl Schmitt said, the new self-made human being is not a new God. Rather, what takes place is the dehumanization of society, and with it, its depoliticization, because history, in the political sense, ends when the eschaton arrives; but, as Walter Benjamin [pointed out](#) ("Capitalism as Religion"), this is an empty eschatology, which does not provide redemption or point to a beyond; on the contrary, because it is immanent to a concrete situation, it can only lead to social entropy. In this way, politics (in the aforementioned key of eticity to which Francis alludes in his eagerness to rehabilitate politics), comes to an end when the expectation of the Schmittian thematization of the eschaton opens up, accelerating the emptying of the political as a struggle for social justice and the defense of human dignity. This vacuum is then filled by technocracy and the cult of technology, which, as [Habermas argues](#), tend to impose an unavoidable instrumental rationality whose result is that, rather than the power of technicians, technocracy is a set of techniques at the service of power. That is, the current crisis of politics, under the parameters set out here, is due to an idolatry that reflects the dominance of the economy and technology in today's world, where politics is reduced to the performance of a merely managerial function, subordinated to the economy and subordinate to the technology that

homogenizes thought and lapses the political conflict inherent to the pluralism of wills, arrogating to itself the sole representation of the objective interests of the majority.

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