

# Det politisk-teologiska komplexet

## Fyra kapitel om Carl Schmitts sekularitet

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## Abstract

Hjalmar Falk: The Politico-Theological Complex. Four Chapters on Carl Schmitt's Secularity.

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In 1922, the German jurist Carl Schmitt (1888–1985) wrote that “all significant concepts of modern state theory are secularized theological concepts”. He qualified this statement by describing the connection between theology and state theory as being both historical – signifying a process of transition and transmission – and structural-systematic – signifying a structural likeness. How are we to understand Schmitt's particular version of the secularization thesis, and what is the meaning of the concept of “political theology” in his work? This dissertation answers that question through a critical-hermeneutical contextualization of Schmitt's work. Specifically, what is investigated is the way Schmitt himself relates his project to contemporary theology and strands of social theory he designates as inherently politico-theological. A major premise of this study is that earlier studies of Schmitt have treated his secularization thesis within a pre-understanding formed by ideological secularism. They have tended to regard Schmitt's thought as properly belonging to *either* a modern political sphere, *or* a religious sphere, the latter most often characterized as antimodern. This way of reading measures Schmitt against standards formed out of modern liberal preconditions that he intended to critique. This dissertation argues, from a postsecularist view, that Schmitt's politico-theological project is better read in terms of a *both-and* structure. To properly grasp Schmitt's way of thinking, we need to pay greater heed to his own way of constructing the categories he employs throughout his writings on politico-theological themes. The dissertation is divided into four chapters, mapping Schmitt's thought on political theology in a combination of themes and chronology. It follows Schmitt's writings from the late Wilhelmine period, through the Weimar Republic, Hitler's totalitarian regime and the postwar era, basically covering Schmitt's work from 1912 to 1978. One important finding in this study of Schmitt's thought is that he pursues his investigation of secularity in two registers. First, he discusses the impacts of secularization *especially* within the field of jurisprudence and law. Second, he discusses the impacts of secularization *generally* in Western culture. I have called this the *special* and the *general* theory of secularization in Schmitt's work. Another finding is that Schmitt locates his theory of modern law and jurisprudence in a position “in-between” the holy and the profane, a *Zwischenlage* between theology and technology. The traditional European theory of state was created in an attempt to escape the religious wars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but this in turn opened up for a process of profanation. With the decline of theological authority, European thought turned more and more to technology. Eventually, Schmitt claimed, technological rationality is closing down the relationship between jurisprudence and theology. Schmitt's secularity, therefore, is to be viewed as a declining modern position between theology and technology. It names a science and a way of thinking that has been “secularized, though not yet profaned” in Schmitt's words. In this way, Schmitt's secularity challenges established preconceptions of “the secular”, presenting it as a *complex* of interacting tendencies, combining features of historical continuity as well as breaks.

**Keywords:** Carl Schmitt, political theology, secularity, postsecularism, intellectual history, modernity, politics and religion, contextualization, Marianism, occidental rationalism, political Christology.