

Erasmus Institute for Philosophy and Economics (EIPE)

Ph.D. Graduate: Dr. Joost W. Hengstmengel

Thesis title

Religion and the rise of economics as a science

Supervisors

prof. L. (Wiep) van Bunge

Project description

The last few decades there is a renewed attention for the role of religion in the history of economic thought. Whereas most research in this area focuses on Scholastic economics or Classical economics, my project deals with the early modern period 'before Adam Smith' (1600-1776). It is more specifically concerned with the role of religion in the rise of economics as a science. Existing interpretations often stress the importance of socio-economic and political factors in the development of this 'new science of political economy'. The significance of religious motives in the early modern age should not be underestimated, though. The coming into existence of economics at the end of the eighteenth century with the French Physiocrats and Scot Adam Smith can be understood as the manifestation of a process of secularization, but as well suggests lasting theological influences. My PhD-thesis deals with a particular theological concept in economic thought, namely that of divine providence. In his 1966 lectures, the historian of economics Jacob Viner already pointed at the importance of providentialism in seventeenth and eighteenth-century economic thought and recently political philosopher Charles Taylor in his *Sources of the Self and A Secular Age* drew similar conclusions with respect to the science of economics. In my thesis, I will elaborate on these ideas further.

Curriculum Vitae

<https://hengstmengel.wordpress.com/cv/>

Research interests

History of Economic Thought, Economics and Religion, Normative Economics, Economics in Dutch Neo-Calvinism

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