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PROJECT

Separation of Church and State: An Argument From the Devout. A Case Study in America's Evangelical Communities

Secularization theory has sustained neither its explanatory power in the face of religion's tenacity (consider the US or Korea) nor its predictive power about how people behave in mobile, multicultural conditions. This failure has re-opened classic questions of modernity: how shall societies accommodate religious belief and practice along with liberal, secular government? How shall confessional communities see their relationship to secular government and to other groups in their pluralistic societies?

Left unresolved, these issues lead potentially to societal polarization, with secularists seeking to limit/privatize religion and believers seeking to maximize it in the public sphere. The problem, simply put, is: how shall we agree on a form of governance? The present study searches for a model of agreement between the secular and devout on the benefits of neutral, fair government separated from the Church and the benefits of robust religion in the civil sphere.

Recent shifts in America's evangelical communities suggest such a model. Significant numbers are moving away from the Religious Right and its theocratically-tinged politics toward Church-State separation and pluralistic freedom of conscience. Other features include an emphasis on poverty relief, environmental protection, and Just War theory. This study investigates that shift in a "thick description" based on investigator-participation, interviews, and analysis of books, sermons, blogs, and newsletters, among other source materials.

Recommended Reading

Pally, Marcia. *Lob der Kritik: Warum die Demokratie nicht auf ihren Kern verzichten darf*. Berlin: Berlin-Verlag, 2003, 2005.

___ . *Warnung vor dem Freunde: Tradition und Zukunft US-amerikanischer Außenpolitik*. Berlin: Parthas, 2008.

___ . *Die Hintergründige Religion: der Einfluss des Evangelikalismus auf Gewissensfreiheit, Pluralismus und die US-amerikanische Politik*. Berlin: Berlin University Press, 2008.

Benighted, Befuddled, Fundamentalist and Fascist? American Evangelicals go Progressive

American evangelicalism has been associated over the past 40 years with the militarism of George W. Bush and with proto-theocratic effort to impose evangelical interpretations of Scripture on the body politic. Paradoxical to this heavy use of the state, evangelicalism has also been associated with the "prosperity gospel" and laissez-faire economics. In short, it has looked like the worst of 18th century ancien regime politics-illiberal government-and the most avid post-Milton-Friedman 21st century neo-liberal fundamentalism.

Since Sept. 11th and the increasing power of various religious right wings, a polarized view of illiberal church vs. liberal, secular democracy has been reinforced. Yet secularization theory, which predicted the demise of religion as nations modernize, has failed descriptively and predictively: modernization (outside of Europe) hasn't yielded secularization (consider the US or S. Korea) and secular states don't refrain from war, greed and oppression.

Given that there are today 600 million Buddhists, 800 million Hindus, 1.5 billion Muslims, and 2.3 billion Christians, if we cannot find ways in which the devout support and contribute to liberal democracy, the prognosis for democracy is bleak.

What then are the conditions under which this is possible? What are the religious beliefs and political practices that advance vibrant religious life, liberal democracy, and economic fairness? Are there examples where liberal democracy and faith are robust?

This talk will describe my field work with one group, America's "new evangelicals"-those across the US who have distanced themselves from the Religious Right in self-identification, aims, and political means. They have separated themselves especially from efforts to impose sectarian views on the country. And they have broadened their political focus from stopping abortion and gay marriage towards an anti-militarist, anti-consumerist platform of environmental protection and poverty relief. In short, they are nearly the opposite of the description atop this page.

I'll describe how and why "new evangelicals" are changing their priorities, their political self-positioning and activism, and questions about church-state relations that remain unresolved.

Pally, Marcia (Berlin,2009)

Liebeserklärungen aus Kreuzberg und Manhattan

<https://kxp.k1oplus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=600534596>

Pally, Marcia ([Berlin],2008)

Die hintergründige Religion : der Einfluss des Evangelikalismus auf Gewissensfreiheit, Pluralismus und die US-amerikanische Politik

<https://kxp.k1oplus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=568510348>

Berliner Reden zur Religionspolitik

<https://kxp.k1oplus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=568510348>

Pally, Marcia (2007)

Warnung vor dem Freunde : was Europa über die Außenpolitik der USA wissen muss, um seine eigene zu gestalten

<https://kxp.k1oplus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=1816647381>

Pally, Marcia (2006)

Warnung vor dem Freunde. Aus dem Englischen übersetzt von Michael Haupt : Tradition und Zukunft US-amerikanischer Außenpolitik

<https://kxp.k1oplus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=669197661>

Pally, Marcia (Berlin,2003)

Lob der Kritik : warum die Demokratie nicht auf ihren Kern verzichten darf

<https://kxp.k1oplus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=358058341>

Pally, Marcia (Stuttgart,2001)

Die Invasion der Körperfresser : warum wir die Medien zum Monster machen müssen

<https://kxp.k1oplus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=101447778>

Pally, Marcia (2001)

Skills development in 'sustained' content-based curricula : case studies in analytical/critical thinking and academic writing

<https://kxp.k1oplus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=770088821>