

Book Project: Religion and Politics. Transnational Approaches to the History of Religion and Political Order in Europe and the United States of America

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Description:

The different set-up of the relationship between religion and politics has been one major reason of why Europe and America developed apart since the beginnings of European expansion to North America. The book, whose chapters bridge the early modern and modern periods, aims at an interdisciplinary and historically informed understanding of the relationship between religion and politics in the U.S. and Europe in terms of convergence and divergence, entanglements and transfers.

It consists of five subsections. The chapters of the first section “Religion, Power and Legitimate Rule” concentrate on the time from 1750 to 1850 and address the very different role that religion played in American democracy and European monarchy to justify legitimate rule. The contributions to the second section “Religion, Law and Punishment” deal with the religious underpinnings of capital punishment and its continuing influence in the emerging secular states. Taking the history of the death penalty on both sides of the Atlantic as a test case, the contributions to this section specifically address the problem of moral certainty in capital punishment. In critically assessing the relationship between religion and science/technology, the chapters of section three expose the highly complicated and multi-directional exchanges between the two seemingly antagonistic fields. In elaborating on the different experiences of modernity in Europe and America, the chapters will shed new light on the relationship between religion and politics. The fourth section “Religion, Ethnicity and Heterogeneity” focuses on the history of Jews in Europe and America. It will elucidate the question of how and to what extent religious minorities had the opportunity of participating in the processes of political rule and decision-making. Furthermore, the question will be addressed to what extent religion defined concepts of ethnicity and race, and how these categories defined political agendas. The fifth and final section on „Religion, War, and Terror“ is inspired by the current international situation but aims at establishing a historical deep-perspective on the problem of religions in conflict.

The book is a truly transnational endeavor. Chapters will be provided by scholars from the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, and Austria.