Anja Hennig, Mirjam Weiberg-Salzmann (eds.)

Illiberal Politics and Religion in Europe and Beyond

Concepts, Actors, and Identity Narratives

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Illiberal Politics and Religion in Europe and Beyond

Advance Praise

"(…) The book illustrates in much detail, how different religious beliefs are mobilized in exclusionary and far-right populist rhetoric and practices (…). This book is a must-read for scholars, students, and laypeople alike."
Ruth Wodak. Emeritus Distinguished Professor of Discourse Studies, Lancaster University / University Vienna

"(…) A very well needed conceptual approach to the rise of illiberal politics, based on in depth case studies."
Olivier Roy. Professor, Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, European University Institute

"(…) The book fills major gaps and offers important lessons for both policy makers and academics."
Manuela Caiani. Associate Professor, Scuola Normale Superiore, Florence, Italy

"(…) It is a must-read for anyone interested in one of the most significant political developments in recent years."
Jeff Haynes. Emeritus Professor, London Metropolitan University

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Cover design: Campus Verlag GmbH, Frankfurt-on-Main
Cover illustration: Graffiti on a wall in Jersualem @ www.shutterstock.com (14324899)
Typesetting: publish4you, Engelskirchen
Printing office and bookbinder: CPI buchbücher.de, Birkach
Printed on acid free paper.
Printed in Germany

For further information:
www.campus.de
www.press.uchicago.edu

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Preface

The world of today, when the final editing of that volume is coming to an end, is quite different to that one when we started the project end of 2017. Liberal and authoritarian democracies, every government, every society, has been more or unfortunately less successfully trying to cope with the crisis of the corona pandemic and its multiple effects on society, the economy, politics, culture, and the environment. In this extraordinarily difficult context, on 26 May 2020, a racist act of police violence caused the death of George Floyd, an African American citizen of Minneapolis and the rise of country-wide (and global), partly violent, protests against racism. Just in the midst of that unpredictable development, our volume, which investigates questions and case studies generated in pre-corona times, finds itself unexpectedly confronted with a new and unparalleled case of religion and illiberal politics: On the evening of 2 June 2020 the daily news show how authorities used riot control tactics to disrupt peaceful protests outside the White House to clear a path for President Trump's walk, accompanied by his wife Melania, to St. John's Church in Washington. They stop, turn around and Trump poses for a photo shoot, ostentatiously holding a Bible in his right hand; silent at that moment, but after having threatened to send the military to shut down the protests. Further studies will interpret that grotesque performance, where a Christian symbol is used to demonstrate white supremacy, law and order. In more general terms it fits with our collection of cases in which Christianity becomes mobilized for illiberal purposes.

Anja Hennig and Mirjam Weiberg-Salzmann

I. Concepts and Theory

Introduction:
Liberal Democracies under Assault

Mirjam Weiberg-Salzmann, Anja Hennig

1   Illiberal Politics on the Rise

Growing international migration flows and the social challenges of the recent financial and economic crises have fueled a pronounced increase in anti-democratic movements and illiberal parties in Europe and across the Atlantic. This poses one of the major challenges to contemporary Western democracies, which ideally rely on the normative consensus of granting rights to freedom, rights to equality, and minority rights and protecting them against discrimination. Confronted with the rise of right-wing populist parties, movements and networks, liberal democracy is struggling to survive (Wodak et al. 2013, de la Torre 2015, Müller 2016, Rovira Kaltwasser et al. 2017, Heinisch et al. 2017). Depending on the type of political system, the constitution and the welfare state models, illiberal tendencies in countries like the USA—with a government model that is characterized by strong power sharing and power limitation—show up primarily at the level of an emotional discourse, while in other countries—such as Hungary or Poland—they come to the fore in the form of actual restrictions on liberal-democratic structures (e.g. visible from restrictions on the opposition, on the freedom of the press or the independence of the judiciary) (Czada/Musch 2019). Attacks on the liberal project occur in the field of state law, through nationalism, hostile attitudes towards minorities and (Muslim) immigration, LGBT rights and liberal concepts of the family and increasingly against climate-friendly movements and politics.

Another illiberal trend is caused by the infusion of secular politics with religion. Although there is some sort of separation of religion and politics in all liberal democracies, secular constitutions give no guarantee of a secular culture.[1] In many countries religious institutions are still among the most

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trusted actors in their society and religion remains relevant to modern politics by providing moral frameworks for politics (Fox 2012, Joas 2014, Cohen/Laborde 2015, Grzymała-Busse 2015) although paternity and sex abuse scandals have undermined the church's credibility as an authority in moral and normative questions (Yallop 2010, Weiberg-Salzmann/Willems 2019). Religious doctrines and traditions, however, can be interpreted in liberal or illiberal terms. Illiberal interpretations may not dominate the scene but constitute a still, or even increasingly, relevant ideological source for opposing central elements of liberal-democratic politics (Almond/Appleby/Sivan 2003; Minkenberg 2018).

Taking these developments into consideration, the major aim of our book is to theorize and to empirically analyze the complex entanglements of religious (here: Christian) and political actors, ideologies or identity narratives striving for illiberal political processes and policy outcomes in European democracies and beyond. Our focus on illiberal politics is concerned with the rejection of the liberal-democratic value project through exclusivist nationalism, racism, anti-pluralism, Islamophobia, and genderphobia. Core battlefields concern migration, religion, identity politics, education, reproduction, and sexuality. While permissive legislation argues in favor of an open pluralist society and equality of treatment—regardless of race, religion, gender or sexual orientation—right-wing populist and conservative (religious) forces increasingly oppose the liberal principles of universalism and diversity (Lesch 2017, Willems 2019, de Neve 2012, Pally 2012, Schieder 2012, Fukuyama 2018, Gutsche 2018). They feel that their societies have lost their moral/traditional compass and wish to re-normatize the public sphere or to re-shape it by promoting nationalist values and identities. While proponents of liberal democracy still emphasize its achievements, like greater equality and liberty, a pluralist society with different cultures and religions and the protection of human rights; opponents are criticizing its negative effects of destroying traditional society and the local culture as well as of producing selfish individuals and spiritual emptiness (Deneen 2018, Hazony 2018, Zielonka 2018, Mounk 2018).

These developments have been boosted by illiberal politicians and civil society actors who tried to (mis)use the debate to build their power base. Right-wing populist actors hijack religion for illiberal purposes or political

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church, support for religious communities). On alternative approaches regarding individually negotiated forms of separation see Stepans 2001 "twin tolerations."

gains, for example, when Christianity is framed as the only spiritual foundation of Europe and equated to Western values. They strive for political influence by utilizing the institutional arrangements of the democratic system. Instead of promoting a radical change of the political system, they try to reshape the liberal discourse by means of illiberal ideas (Marzouki et al. 2016, Hillebrand 2015, Priester 2007, Decker 2006).

The split between supporters and opponents of liberal values, rights and ideas does not only run through political parties and their electorates but also through parts of civil society—in particular religious institutions. Religion is becoming increasingly relevant in two ways: Whereas mainstream traditional Christian Churches tend to support liberal rights protection, ultra-conservative and fundamentalist branches more and more promote illiberal visions of democracy e.g. to enforce specific morality policies. Religious actors, too, try to exert an illiberal influence on the people, when framing faith with identity or national issues or by defending non-negotiable religious positions to preserve or restore a society where minorities and LGBT rights as well as a modern understanding of the family and women's control over their bodies and lives do not fully exist (De Lange et al. 2015, Abi-Hassan 2017, Brubaker 2017; Hennig 2018). Both prove to be contrary to one of the historically outstanding indicators of liberal democracy, the coexistence of competing systems of values and beliefs. In the end, there are reasonable concerns that illiberal principles could be applied to the democratic system more generally.

If one differentiates among studies on populist right-wing movements and religion in politics, it becomes apparent that while for the United States lots of relevant studies have emerged, there is still room for improvement concerning systematic research on Europe. The American Christian Right is an obvious example of the reciprocity of religion and illiberal politics and one of the best-researched cases (Liedhegener 2007, Minkenberg 1990, Kuru 2009, Rayside/Wilcox 2011, Williams 2010). On the contrary, systematic research about how religion challenges the liberal order in Europe is still rare. Similarly, much research has been done in separate research areas such as morality politics (Hennig 2012, Engeli/Green-Pederson/Larsen 2012), religious fundamentalism (Almond/Appleby/Sivan 2003, Brekke 2011) gender studies (Kuhar/Paternotte 2017; Verloo 2018) and political theory (Stepan 2000, Hidalgo 2018), but without adequately trying to integrate the different findings. In addition, despite empirical findings underlining the importance of religion for political and social processes, it is primarily looked upon as a

symbolic or instrumental resource rather than as an independent or structurally defining factor. It is deemed to be a phenomenon derived from power-political, social and economic situations.

The majority of research has limited itself to the question of the origins of the rise of religious ideas and actors (fundamentalism and terrorism) and directed itself less towards the influence that religion has had on organizations and through decision makers (e.g. through religious orientations, values and norms). Actors that act primarily out of religious motives have been considered marginal, even though religious groups are among the oldest transnational actors in spreading knowledge, culture, material aid and support (Hildebrand/Brocker 2005, Anderson 2006, Banchoff 2008, Rowe 2012, Esposito/Shahin 2013, Cohen 2016). Moreover, Western social science research dealing with religion and politics tends to presume a clear distinction between a religious and a political sphere with their own functional logics. The underlying assumption often is, that religion and politics originally were two clearly separable entities (Joas 2017). Under investigation are how states govern religious diversity by law or regulate church-state relations (Bramadat/Koenig 2009, Fox 2013), and how religious traditions or doctrines shape political parties and their politics (Minkenberg 2010). Religion may influence politics by what religious actors and institutions do, through lobbying for religious education, stricter abortion rules or more permissive asylum politics or through the impact religiosity has on voting behavior. Normative approaches discuss the boundaries of religious utterance in liberal democracies or reflect on the limits of the secularization paradigm in the context of increasingly pluralistic societies. To date, however, there have been too few (cross-national) studies on the effects on liberal democracy per se. The relationship between illiberal actors and especially the religious ones, their reactions and the effects on the overall public discourse has not yet been systematically analyzed although some case studies do exist (Orth 2017). Although the positions are generally known, there is too little work on the arguments used (Appiah 2008, Mehta 2008).

Several studies show an increasing transnational homogenization has been taking hold since the beginning of the 2000s. The most powerful issue is the construction of the national culture/identity, its defense and purification. People of Muslim faith and radical Islam are advancing to become the main enemy, the identitarian/cultural/religious other (Wodak et al. 2013, Pauwels 2016). The favorite theme today is about who belongs to "our" nation/society, who are the "real people" or what are "our" values while blam-

ing "the others" (elites, non-citizens, diverse beliefs and traditions) for threatening what is perceived as "natural" or what resembles an alleged "will of the people". Accordingly, exclusivist identity narratives, the construction and promotion of fear against what is defined as the other (Bauman 2016) or is perceived as a threat are central elements of illiberal politics (Müller 2016).

2   Exploring the Complex Links Between Religion and Illiberal Politics

The aim of our book on illiberal politics and religion is to bring these different strands together and fill the gap by theoretically and empirically exploring the complexity of ideological, structural, and historical linkages of religion and illiberal politics under the central question of how, why and under which conditions religious and political actors, ideas and doctrines interact or are involved in illiberal politics. The term "illiberal politics" seems appropriate for more than one reason. First, by placing "illiberal politics" at the center, the boundary between the religious and the political sphere gets blurred without dissolving. And second, we want to contribute a dynamic, democracy-theoretical concept to the rather fuzzy debate on right-wing populism, that is able to grasp the ambivalent developments of our times, such as the spread of liberal values, and their simultaneous objections. As a result, the conceptual focus is on illiberal politics, on political processes and programs, through which actors with or without religious affiliation defend an anti-pluralist, authoritarian or nationalist agenda. Actors and their strategies, institutions, ideas or ideologies involved in these processes may by affiliation, belief or tradition be religious, political or both. Thus, whereas we assume two normatively separated spheres of politics and religion in liberal democracies, we acknowledge also several overlaps between religious and political beliefs and ideas, actors and institutions (Hennig/Minkenberg/Yanasmayan 2017).

The book is structured in three major parts: The first section offers three theoretical approaches, which elaborate the relationship between illiberal politics and religion from different angles. Sections two, three, and four includes a range of case studies situated in Catholic, Orthodox, and mixed-denominational countries, where political and/or religious actors invoke Christianity as an identity narrative to mobilize for anti-Muslim politics or

strive for restrictive morality politics. The fifth section invites the reader to reflect on terms and research agendas and summarizes major patterns of interaction between religion and illiberal politics.

2.1   Theoretical and Conceptual Reflections

The theoretical reflections within the first section should be understood as starting points for the discussion and not as a conceptual master-frame for the empirical contributions of the book. However, as the later interview with Michael Minkenberg reveals—who is critical of the abundant usage of the term "populism"—we invite our readers and authors to reflect on the concepts circulating in the debates on the rise of the radical right in general and the role of religion within these in particular.

In Chapter 1, Anja Hennig and Oliver Hidalgo offer a perspective that focuses on ambivalence as a meta-condition for the rise of illiberal politics and the involvement of Christianity, in particular cultural Christianity, in European democracies. The concepts of post-material or post-secular societies exemplify such ambivalences in a globalized world. To grasp similar tendencies in religious and political activities against the liberal consensus of contemporary democracies they conceptualize the "illiberal" as inherent in the democratic system: The opposite extreme of the "liberal" can, if overemphasized, threaten a democratic order. Therefore, it needs to be balanced. In a similar vein, religions entail both extremes, illiberal and liberal interpretations of doctrines. In more abstract terms, the ambivalent relationship between the liberal and the illiberal is considered a relevant socio-cultural condition for the linkage between illiberal religious and political actors and ideas.

Two more theoretical contributions define the terrain of religion and illiberal politics at the beginning: In Chapter 3, Manon Westphal concentrates in her contribution on the agency of the populist radical right, considering populism as a strategy. The chapter uses the concept of a chain of equivalence to develop a theoretical model of the politics of the populist right and examines the role of religion in such a politics. It is argued that actors of the populist right articulate a criticism of the discourse of liberal democracy by pursuing a multiple form of oppositional politics. They oppose different liberal policies and articulate their criticisms through distinctive discourses, which enables them to create discursive alliances with different groups of society. By using a populist rhetoric, actors of the populist right

suggest that their political struggles are equally targeting the rule of 'the elite' and thereby create the appearance of their policies amounting to "the only real alternative to the 'system'" (Mouffe 2005). The Alternative for Germany (AfD) is used as an example to examine the role of religion in this form of politics. It is shown how the AfD, by referring to the notion of a natural order of the sexes, creates chains of equivalence especially with conservative religious actors in the field of education policies and, by referring to the notion of a Christian tradition, with other right-wing political actors in the field of culture and migration policies.

Through the lens of political theory and political theology Oliver Hildalgo looks, in Chapter 2, at the ambivalences of religion. The article contributes to certain theories and approaches from the history of political ideas in order to argue that, in particular, religious patterns of thought might become the intellectual guide to a complex hybrid between democratic and authoritarian principles, which can be subsumed under the concept of illiberal politics in democratic societies. In this respect, the argument refers to the works of Alexis de Tocqueville, Carl Schmitt and Louis Dumont to unveil the commonly hidden intertwinement between traditional religious thinking and the concepts of authority, hierarchy, and inequality along with its specific (and paradoxical) appeal to democratic equality. Moreover, it will be discussed to which extent the belonging to a certain religious group offers a widely used option not only to define social and political identities based upon the idea of exclusion but also to underpin politics in terms of right-wing populist rhetoric and programs such as anti-pluralism, nationalism, ideologizing images of genders due to natural law, or even racism. Finally, it will be exhibited why such political-religious identities tend towards imagining of an international system whose entities are marked by existing cultural polarities and are constituted by antagonistic communities.

2.2   Examples and Notes from the Case Studies

The following second, third, and forth sections are dedicated to case studies on religion and illiberal politics in the Catholic countries of Poland, Italy, Spain, Austria, the Czech Republic, France, Ireland and Hungary, the Christian Orthodox countries of Romania and Greece, Protestant Norway and denominationally-mixed countries of Switzerland, Germany, Brazil and the United States of America. The rationale for our case selection follows a

Pan-European perspective with selected non-European exceptions that include various Christian contexts. Moreover, instead of sorting the cases according to classical categories such as the dominant Christian tradition, we take a cross-denominational perspective and look for similarities in regard to actors, identity narratives and illiberal politics. Such an approach seems also appropriate given that globalization processes confronted the global Western (Europe, US) world with similar phenomena: increasing migration, cultural pluralization, and a growing gap between city and peripheral regions. The Europeanization of politics, moreover, helped spread and institutionalize liberal norms that challenge traditional patriarchic structures and moral views.

Whereas the breakdown of Communist regimes led to particular transformations of the religious landscape in Central and Eastern Europe with an increase of religious institutions and practices (PEW 2017), in Western and Southern Europe, too, one can observe similar forms of radicalization of Christian actors. In this vein, the case studies vary in their focus. The first sample concentrates on right-wing actors who construct Christian traditions as exclusionist anti-Muslim politics; a perspective that is prominently covered also by Marzouki, McDonnel and Roy 2016. As is to be seen, however, morality policy issues, such as opposition to gay-rights, are often part of such Christian-colored, radical right agendas. The second section focuses on cases where political and religious actors work closely together or where religion and illiberal politics are intertwined. Here, too, Christianity is evoked to create an exclusivist sense of national belonging but not necessarily with anti-Muslim resentments. The third sample centers on how religious actors evolve as illiberal players and search for political allies in public policies with a particular focus on moral-political conflicts. All case studies address at least one of these sub-questions: How do political actors use religion for illiberal purposes? How and why do religious actors promote illiberal policies and/or ally for that purpose with political actors?

2.2.1   Tracing Christian Identity Narratives and Anti-Muslim Politics

The first group of case studies, which is concerned with political actors who use Christianity for an anti-Muslim agenda, includes Hungary, Spain, France, Austria and Switzerland. France, Spain, Austria, and Hungary share a tradition of Latin-Catholicism, but they differ in regard to their legacies and current outlook of political-religious entanglements: France has a historically strong tradition of integrist Catholic actors and their presence in

political parties on the one hand and its tradition of strict Church-State separation (Laïcité) on the other. Spain, meanwhile, carries two relevant legacies from Francoism, a strong anti-clericalism on the left, and an affinity with religious conservatism and fundamentalism on the Centre-right, where a right-wing populist party has now established itself. Traditionally Catholic and increasingly multicultural Austria was always known for its open, cosmopolitan approach to religious minorities, something that is changing, as it is in Hungary.

Hungary has been leading the wave of anti-democratic and anti-European developments. Robert Sata in his chapter shows how illiberal actors use religion to support their exclusivist identity politics. Using a systematic content and discourse analysis of the official speeches of Prime Minister Viktor Orbán from 2010 to 2018, he examines the creation of this new discourse that is not only populist in being anti-establishment or anti-Europe but also increasingly ethnocentric in being anti-migrant and uses religious references in defining itself as anti-Muslim. This culminates in Orbán's proposed illiberal democracy, within which the identity of the nation rests on the discursive processes of 'othering' that stand for a contestation of diversity and liberal equality for the sake of saving the nation. Migrants and refugees stand for culturally deviant people, and the liberal rationalism of EU institutions as well as progressive gender rights are threatening the traditional nativist conception of society. This refusal of equality and diversity brings back references to Christianity into secular Hungarian society. Yet, religion is hijacked as a civilizational marker to distinguish and unite against 'the other' and to (re) create a more nativist/cultural/religious version of Europe in contrast to the secular, liberal EU, where the ethnic nation becomes sacred and absolute and identification with the nation resembles religious credence.

Jakob Schwörer, Xavier Romero-Vidal and Belén Fernández-García focus on the religious dimensions of the Spanish Radical Right. Until the rise of Vox, which entered the Spanish parliament in 2019, radical-right parties in Spain had not been able to attract a significant share of the vote in national elections. The chapter analyzes the religious dimensions of the new established radical-right party Vox. The analysis starts by exploring its ideological traits and the party's electorate; it then considers Vox's national and European election manifestos and its communication on Facebook, using content-analytical approaches. Focusing on two religious dimensions, the authors first address the classical secular-religious cleavage, which establishes whether secular or religious principles and institutions should guide politics.

Second, they concentrate on the distinction between "native" religious in-groups (Christians/Christian values) and "non-native" religious out-groups (Muslims). The results reveal that even though Vox calls into question secular principles in Spanish politics, its leaders criticize the preponderance of religion in Muslim-majority countries. In the same vein, the party refers to Catholicism and Christian traditions in a very positive light and excludes "non-native" religious groups—in particular Islam—from the "native" society. In the end, Vox presents itself as a defender of Christian values against a "Muslim threat".

For France, Ives Bizeul[2] (†) shows how the right-wing Front National and now Rassemblement National programmatically not only shifts over time from one to the other extreme. The text also reveals, how the current leader Marine Le Pen is able to use Catholicism and laïcité for legitimating her anti-Muslim politics. In this vein, it is focusing on the National Front (Front National, FN)—since 2018 called National Rally (Rassemblement National, RN)—which is one of the most successful right-wing populist parties in Europe, and shows that after a long period of close ties between this party and the Catholic Integrists, today leading persons of the party emphasize a special type of laïcité—the French concept of secularism—for strategic reasons. Marine Le Pen uses the concept of laïcité as an instrument for combating Islam, which she considers as hardly compatible with the republic and for that reason sees it as a foreign body in the French nation. For right-wing populists in France, religion is primarily an instrument for strengthening the national collective identity. It is expected to be a contribution to create a strong sense of belonging. For French right-wing populists, it is the Catholic tradition and its conservative moral conceptions and not the personal faith that is paramount, in other words the catholicity and not the Catholicism.

In her study on religion in Austrian politics Astrid Mattes found that for a long time the governance of religion has been characterized by inclusiveness and a certain mode of tolerance towards religious communities. Since World War II, neither ongoing secularization processes and an overall declining numbers of believers, nor far-right parties in government and the politi-

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2 We mourn Prof. Dr. Ives Bizeul, who suddenly and unexpectedly passed away on August 8, 2019 at the age of 63 of complications from a heart operation. Professor Bizeul's diverse research priorities included questions of identity, changes in values and the interplay of religiosity and politics. He also dealt with political and national myths, with new forms of community and solidarity, and with migration and integration. We will miss him very much as a person and as a scientist!

cization of difference have had a negative impact on this mode of governance of religion. Recent political developments introduced conflictual modes in the governance of religion. The mingling of immigrant integration and religion politics is at the center of these developments but it does not stop there. Mattes' article investigates recent changes in Austrian governance of religion, followed by the evaluative question if the turn we are observing is an illiberal one. Starting from sketching the traditional mode of tolerance towards religion in Austria, the article analyzes the new conflictual pattern and contrasts these two modes in the governance of religion. The focus of the empirical study is on the politics and policies of the Austrian Freedom Party and the conservative Austrian People's Party over a period of three years (2014–2017). It is argued that these political actors on the right can be considered as drivers of a changing governance of religion, but the extent to which they pursue illiberal goals differs.

For Switzerland, Antonius Liedegener and Laura Lots investigate an outstanding example of illiberal governance of religious diversity. In April 2016, the so-called "handshake-affair" made headlines in Switzerland and in the international media. Two Muslim brothers had refused to shake hands with their female teachers. The instance caused an intense national debate about Muslim demands. Starting from the background of the anti-minaret referendum of 2009, the article puts the case in its larger context of illiberal politics against religious minorities. It unravels the course of events by using a process-tracing approach. The analyses highlight the complexity of processes of agenda setting and decision-making, which took place in a heated context of populist sentiments and arguments. Although the political output in terms of legislation on religion was meager in the end, the effects of the handshake affair on public opinion and the consequences for the Swiss approach to social integration and religious diversity were severe. Within a very short period, the Swiss made up their minds: an overwhelming majority defined the handshake as an indispensable part of "Swissness" and a non-negotiable requirement for integration. Possible legal arguments about religious freedom for Muslim students remained untested. Instead, a strong emphasis on assimilation triumphed. Hence, the handshake-affair made nationalist populism really popular.

2.2.2 Connecting Christian Identity Narratives and Nationalism

The second section includes case studies of Italy, Greece, and (albeit with a particular focus) the Czech Republic, in all of which Christianity is evoked for creating an exclusivist sense of national belonging in more general terms. Investigating the growing influence of Catholicism on the politics of the Northern League (Lega Nord, LN) since the foundation of this party in 1991, Fabio Bolzonar shows in his chapter how the LN has increasingly invoked conservative Catholic values to support discriminatory policies on gender questions and to sustain anti-gender campaigns. He outlines that this ideological development has been the outcome of the LN's adaptation to the Italian politics that provided a window of political opportunities for a party to defend widespread moral conservative values bearing the imprint of Catholicism. Through presenting itself as the better defender of Catholic morality values and the Catholic identity of Italy, the LN consolidated its ideology, distinguished its political offer from that of other parties, and attempted to attract the vote of Catholic electors.

Konstantinos Papastathis and Anastasia Litina show how in Greece the Orthodox Church has long had an influential role in Greek life, where a large number of Greeks see national identity and religion as inextricably linked. Until the 1990s most researchers of religion and politics had not included Orthodoxy in their field research nor analyzed it theoretically as a functionally specialized, institutional system. Since then much research has been done, though the historical and institutional relationship between orthodoxy, the Orthodox Church and politics and the ideological and institutional role of the church in modern Greek society is still underinvestigated. The chapter aims in particular to elaborate both theoretically and empirically on how the Greek radical-right party family and the Orthodox Church intertwine in terms of actor coalitions, discourse, and electoral behavior. In particular, the parties under investigation are the Golden Dawn (GD), Independent Greeks (ANEL), and Popular Orthodox Rally (LAOS). The research questions to be addressed are: How is religion conceptualized by the radical-right parties; has the religious discourse contributed to the de-stigmatization of the RR agenda; and what is the correlation at a micro-level between religiosity and RR voting? The data for analysis derives from party literature, church documentation, and the EES 2009 and 2014 Voter Study dataset. The paper suggests that there exists a significant diversification between the radical-right parties regarding the religious agenda; still, they all define it as a substantial part of their program. Moreover, it argues that the

religious discourse played a role for the development of the radical right. On the other hand, the empirical evidence suggests that the religious electorate has not aligned itself to any of the RR parties since 2009, despite the structural change of the Greek party system under the financial crisis.

A very different and often neglected case is the Czech Republic. It is one of the most atheist countries in the world with only 10.4 % Roman Catholics, 1.1 % Protestants (includes Czech Brethren and Hussites), 54 % others and unspecified, and 34.5 % not belonging to any religion (2011 est.). In spite of the historically important role of Protestantism, today the most politically relevant Church is the Roman Catholic one, which is indirectly connected to the Christian Democratic Party (KDU-ČSL). Whereas in the past the most discussed "religious" topic was the restitution of church property, recent debates centered on migration, Islam, and Islamophobia, especially voiced by the head of the Czech Catholic Church, Archbishop Dominik Duka, supporting the xenophobic President Zeman. Duka tried to present the church as a guardian of cultural and national values and to strengthen its influence. The leadership of the largest Protestant church (the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren) has taken up rather liberal attitudes when it comes to questions of migration and Islam. Miroslav Mareš deals in his paper with the subject of "Hussitism", a specific phenomenon with historical religious roots in Czech history and with a strong impact on modern Czech politics, including illiberal parts of the political spectrum. The historical development of the Hussite movement in the 15th century and its historical legacies are described. Positive perceptions by Marxist-Leninists, by Pan-Slavic nationalists, by the so called Chalice skinheads and their successors are analyzed in contrast to negative perceptions of the same issue by dogmatic Catholics and conservative activists. The author comes to the conclusion that Hus's legacy can be used by liberal, democratic as well as by illiberal (or even extremist) political streams, and within this context it has been interpreted or misinterpreted in many ways by recent illiberal political forces.

Beyond the European perspective, Katja Freistein, Frank Gadinger and Christine Unrau compare the instrumentalizing of religious symbols and the use of anti-liberal narratives in the US and Brazil. Studying two cases of recent turns to illiberalism in established democracies, they are looking at the United States and Brazil as examples of state leaders' use of anti-liberal narratives. It is argued that a focus on these narratives (in cases of fundamentalist branches of Christian churches, i. e. evangelical Protestants, in combination with right-wing populist storytelling as employed by leaders

such as Trump and Bolsonaro) shows the close linkage between religious patterns of thought and nationalist myths, which can be appealing for a wider audience by triggering affective registers (such as pride, superiority, rightful indignation), however, depending on distinct cultural repertoires of storytelling. Religious symbolism in right-wing populist storytelling is thus an instrument of illiberal politics that serves to address a specific audience while remaining politically vague and thus easily appealing to those who might characterize themselves as apolitical but clearly religious. While several reasons for the general support exist, the authors trace how the use of religious symbolism has allowed for the interlinkage between religion and politics to generate nationalist, religious tropes that supporters of Trump and Bolsonaro can get behind.

2.3   Entering Public Policies on the part of the Religious

The third section of the book focuses on the role of religious actors in public policies, migration and morality politics in particular. Although Poland, with its strong tradition of National Catholicism and Church-State entanglement, could also represent the other two sections it is placed here because Anja Hennig and Madalena Meyer Resende concentrate on the Catholic Church as a socio-political actor and in particular on how the spectrum from liberal to illiberal Catholic actors relates to the governmental migration politics since 2015. In Poland the PiS government won the 2015 presidential and parliamentary elections on a platform of, among other things, the defense of Polish Christianity from Islamic invasion. Even though the greater relevance of religious tropes in the rhetoric and political action of the Law and Justice government has been welcomed by the nationalist Catholic wing, by mid-2016 it was facing increasing opposition by the Vatican and mainstream conservative Catholic bishops. The authors argue that the church's conduct results from a polarization of existing disagreements within the clergy. Since transition to democracy the Polish church has been divided by different attitudes towards liberal values, such as the separation of church and state, the alliance with political parties, democracy and human rights. The PiS government's policies on refugees and its authoritarian backslide have deepened these divisions. While National Catholics, maintained the alliance and support for the government, the liberal faction, including the Episcopal Conference, has also opposed the government's disrespect for Human Rights. These

divisions, however, are less striking when it comes to moral-political conflicts about abortion or gay rights.

Morality politics are also on the agenda of the Romanian Orthodox Church, which may have an even stronger position as a privileged "national Church" than the Catholic Church in Poland. Radu Cinpoeş in his contribution aims to assess the impact of actors outside of electoral politics on influencing a slide to what Zakaria called illiberal democracy (Zakaria 1997, 2003). The Romanian Orthodox Church (ROC) is a relevant case for two reasons. First, Romania does not currently have any radical-right, illiberal parliamentary representation, although the EU has raised concerns about the current Social Democrat Party—Alliance of Liberal and Democrats coalition government. Second, the long tradition of illiberal tendencies and close ties with the state, as well as its portrayal as a guarantor of national identity and morality make the ROC a powerful political ally and a vehicle for illiberal politics. In order to demonstrate that the ROC plays an active role in shaping illiberal politics in Romania, the chapter provides some clarification about how the notion of illiberal politics is conceptualized and about where religion sits in this setting. It then briefly contextualizes the role of religion and the position of the ROC in contemporary Romania. Drawing on official narratives, it then looks at how aspects of the ROC public engagement can first be considered illiberal in nature and second political in their scope.

The subsequent study addresses the case of Germany, where Christianity is of identitarian relevance only for a small minority. Anja Hennig investigates the role of religious actors in the conflict about the introduction of gender-sensitive (sexuality) education reforms in Germany's federal educational systems since 2013. Arguing against "gender mainstreaming" or the "sexualization of children", religious and non-religious actors jointly defend a naturalist heterosexual gender order. Framing the pluralist socio-cultural meaning of gender as "gender ideology" and an enemy for "our society", they promote a politics of fear (Wodak 2015). Whereas in Europe such illiberal activism against gender-equality policies—here conceptualized as political genderphobia—prevails in Catholic-majority countries, it surprises in the denominationally-mixed and secularizing German context. Analyzing the relevance of religion for genderphobic opposition, the study reveals that in Germany right-wing Christians, side-lining mainline Catholicism and Protestantism, took the lead in organizing genderphobic protests and helped include their demands in the party program of the radical right "Alternative for Germany" (AfD). Their narratives, however, emerged out of a merely

non-religious conservative and right-wing milieu, for which objecting to the reforms initiated by the 1968ers is a central marker of identity.

At least, the role of religion in formatting public policy is compared by Mirjam Weiberg-Salzmann with regard to embryo research in four European countries (Germany, Italy, Norway and Ireland) and the United States of America. Many countries have imposed legislation on biotechnological and embryonic procedures. However, the way the debates have developed, as well as the degree to which embryo politics have been restricted differ widely from country to country. Within these debates on embryo politics, the churches and religion have played an important role. By means of a comparison she recognizes the debates on embryonic stem cell research, human cloning and preimplantation genetic diagnosis. Interestingly, practices of illiberal politics (e.g. the intermingling of religion and politics and a strong influence of particular religious' convictions/actors for generally binding laws) could be found in nearly all researched states. It seems to be less the question if, but to what extent and with which intensity the influence of religion exists. Representatives of liberal democracy theories claim that religious arguments and actors should not have any decisive part in political debates and laws, but as this study on embryo research demonstrates, religion plays an important role in the formation of moral policy even in liberal democracies.

2.4   Comprehensive Perspective on Religion and Illiberal Politics

The final sections invite the reader to reflect on some terms and research agendas and concludes with a more comprehensive perspective. As the volume centers around the concept of "the illiberal", we asked Michael Minkenberg, a scholar on religion and politics and the radical right, to discuss the widely used term populism or to suggest issues that seem underinvestigated. He clearly stated that there is an overuse of the term populism, if not an overstretching of the concept. "Populism" is now seen as almost anything we don't like that is politically right of the centre or new and in some ways politically threatening. In addition, if we are so intensely focused on the populist radical right, we lose sight of what happens in the mainstream, where the seeds are sown in the first place.

In conclusion, Anja Hennig offers a more systematic view on dominant patterns of interaction between or entanglement of religion and illiberal politics. She draws attention to four partly intertwined aspects: Besides comment-

ing on the cases collected here, she discusses the issue of Cultural Christianity, a contemporary phenomenon of belonging without believing discussed in chapter 1, in the light of the sample showing that, notwithstanding the different religious traditions, denominations or degrees of religious practice, Christian self-identification is a notable feature, which according to empirical data correlates to a certain extent with less liberal views. The third aspect concerns the character of policy at stake: Relevant for such intermingling seems the arena of collective identity politics. Finally, the main point is that based on a more synthetic view on the empirical chapters, one can systematize and generalize three major patterns of *how* illiberal religious-political actors and ideas are entangled. The typology pays particular attention to the supply side of illiberal politics, and, thus, to ideologies, actors, and their strategies. The first pattern refers to right-wing political actors who mobilize the illiberal potential of religion by invoking Christianity as a marker of identity against Islam and Muslim migration as well as by utilizing morality policy issues to attract Christian voters. The second pattern concerns religious actors who mobilize illiberal aspects of democratic politics, which is similarly directed against Islam and/or in favor of Christian migrants and against permissive moral-political regulation. The third pattern refers to the religious and political appropriation of liberal arguments (gender equality, religious freedom) against Islam or to legitimize religious interference in politics. In the concluding reflections on the challenges for future research Hennig suggests paying more attention on the effects of illiberal politics on the mainstream, to include further and rather unlikely cases and to cross-denominational patterns of religious polarization on the national and transnational level.

In sum we believe that—as we did with our volume—bringing together research on morality politics, on right-wing populism and religion and politics as well as political theory enables a more comprehensive analysis of what is in need of a clear response not only from politics but also from (social) science: the multifaceted attempt to undermine what characterizes a democratic order that is open, pluralistic, and respects minority rights.

3   Conclusion: Liberal Democracies under Assault

Authoritarian tendencies and (right-wing) populist movements have taken hold in many democracies worldwide. Depending on the approach, the re-