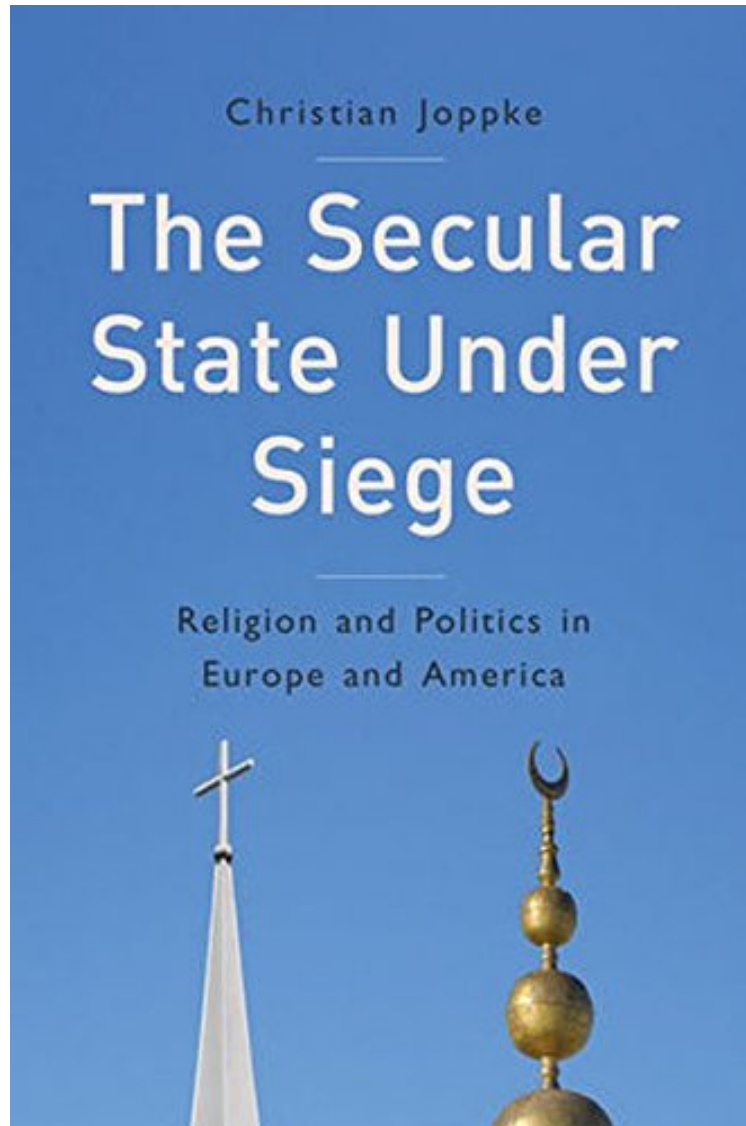


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The Secular State Under Siege: Religion and Politics in Europe and America

Christian Joppke

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Christian Joppke : The Secular State Under Siege: Religion and Politics in Europe and America before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Secular State Under Siege: Religion and Politics in Europe and America:

Throughout human history, religion and politics have entertained the most intimate of connections as systems of authority regulating individuals and society. While the two have come apart through the process of secularization, secularism is challenged today by the return of public religion. This cogent analysis unravels the nature of the connection, disconnection, and attempted reconnection between religion and politics in the West. In a comparison of Western Europe and North America, Christianity and Islam, Joppke advances far-reaching theoretical, historical, and comparative-political arguments. With respect to theory, it is argued that only a substantive concept of religion, as pertaining to the existence of supra-human powers, opens up the possibility of a historical-comparative perspective on religion. At the level of history, secularization is shown to be the distinct outcome of Latin Christianity itself. And at the level of comparative politics, the Christian Right in America which has attacked the wall of separation between religion and state and Islam in Europe with the controversial insistence on sharia law and other illiberal claims from some quarters are taken to be counterpart incarnations of public religion and challenges to the secular state. This clearly argued, sweeping book will provide an invaluable framework for approaching an array of critical issues at the intersection of religion, law and politics for advanced students and researchers across the social sciences and legal studies, as well as for the interested public.

"In this impressive work, dealing with a theme of persistent (indeed, on some counts, increasing) public significance, the author follows up a sustained historical and conceptual discussion of the relations between political and religious power with a penetrating analysis of some of their major contemporary problematics. Throughout, the scholarly intensity of Joppkes argument is matched by his capacity for clear, literate exposition, rendering the book a very valuable contribution to the literature on its topic." Gianfranco Poggi, University of Virginia "The Secular State Under Siege takes on large and controversial questions with Joppkes characteristic verve and lucidity. Even those who disagree with parts of the argument will find the book engaging and illuminating." Rogers Brubaker, University of California, Los Angeles "Highly recommended." Choice "The Secular State Under Siege is a timely book that unpacks the relationship between religion and politics from a historical and institutional perspective with a dual focus on Western Europe and Northern America, Christianity and Islam. It makes an important contribution to the growing literature on the role of public religion in society and politics. I would recommend this book to those who are interested in the idea of secularism and the relationship between religion and state in Europe and the USA. NJMR "Joppke succeeds in presenting a densely packed, yet highly readable, scholarly introduction to two of the most important topics concerning religion and politics in the West today. This is no small accomplishment and he exhibits a remarkable facility with scholarly material in multiple fields as well as larger contexts on either side of the Atlantic." Reading Religion About the Author Christian Joppke is Professor of Sociology and Political Science at the University of Bern.