Politics and Religion, **10** (2017), 242–252

1755-0483/17

Book Reviews

***Beyond Religious Freedom: The New Global Politics of Religion*. By Elizabeth Shakman Hurd. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015. xv + 200 pp. $29.95 Cloth**

doi:10.1017/S1755048316000821

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The "Return of Religion" to international politics and public life during the latter part of the 20th century has come to form one of the mythological foundation stones of religious studies in recent years. In this lucid, succinct, and important book, Elizabeth Shakman Hurd explains why this notion should finally be abandoned. Centering on two interrelated trends — rising levels of religious violence and calls for greater religious freedom —*Beyond Religious Freedom* analyzes the ways in which notions of religious freedom, tolerance, and rights have been incorporated into political projects for dealing with some of the core problems facing the world in the 21st century. It also challenges the objectification of "religion" in this context.

Shackman Hurd is strongly critical of the view, prevalent within scholarly and political circles that religion can be singled out as a basis for foreign and public policy-making (typically conceived as the promotion of "moderate" and "tolerant" forms of religion as a counter-weight to extremism). Central to this critique is an analysis of the complex interplay between "expert," "lived," and "governed" religion, along with a rejection of "religion" as a coherent and reified thing (leading to binary conceptual pairings such as "secularism"/"post-secularism," "establishment"/"disestablishment," and so on). As Shakman Hurd explains: "Religion is too unstable a category to be treated as an isolable entity, whether the objective is to attempt to separate religion from law and politics or design a political response to 'it'" (6).

The argument of the book proceeds through five main chapters, each of which adopts a particular case study as a means of demonstrating these

claims in more detail. Chapter 2 explores the discursive framing of religion in terms of the "two faces of faith." This is a dichotomous separation of religion into "good" and "bad" varieties, driven by an attempt to gain scholarly and political knowledge about religious affairs in the post-September 11, 2001 world. Shakman Hurd shows how the very premise of this framing — the notion that "bad" religion (violent, sectarian) needs to be stopped, and "good religion" (peaceful, humanitarian) promoted — itself produces its own object. The treatment of religion as an identifiable thing with its own causal powers and properties subsequently turns it into an object of securitization, surveillance, and discipline.

Similar arguments provide the guiding thread for the rest of the book. Chapter 3 examines support for religious freedom, highlighting the way in which the political and legal promotion of rights reproduces and reinforces notions of religious-secular difference. Through a process of singling out particular groups and individuals as being worthy of protection on "religious" terms, the advocacy of religious freedom by political authorities gives undue prominence and legitimacy to formally approved varieties of religion (and more: a particular understanding of religion as founded on sets of beliefs) over other forms of affiliation and identity.

Chapter 4 continues the theme through an analysis of the policy trajectory of the United States. Belying the declared ambition of the United States to promote global religious freedom, it is persuasively shown that the actual results of its foreign engagement have served to privilege religious groups that might advance U.S. interests, and to encourage forms of religion that are more "American" (i.e., freer and more tolerant) in their orientation. The final substantive chapter considers the issue of religious minorities and the law. Here, Shakman Hurd demonstrates a number of ways in which attempts to increase religious freedom can prove to be disempowering: promoting an idea of communities and individuals as corporate bodies requiring legal protections to achieve their freedom, depriving minorities that do not fit into official classifications of their religious and citizenship rights, and obscuring broader cultural and religious practices that do not fit preconceived notions and official definitions.

Shackman Hurd's arguments are well marshaled and convincingly made. The case studies are detailed and the book excels in drawing together strands from various angles and in highlighting some of the problems associated with trying to force disparate motivations and activities into the conceptual box labeled "religion." Where the book is not as clear is in setting out where researchers need to go from here. As is rightly pointed out, "It is impossible to determine, once and for all,

what counts as religion with such a strong degree of certainty as to permit the enactment of laws and regulations that discriminate among individuals and groups on those grounds" (121). Clearly, there is a need for greater specificity, along with an awareness of historical and socio-cultural context when examining religious affairs. But what does this mean in practical terms? Shakman Hurd does not go so far as to call for the abandonment of "religion" as a category, and indeed accepts that there are similar problems involved with other categories of politics and law, such as "race," "ethnicity," "class," and "gender" — although the point is slightly weakened by a dubious exceptionalism (the claim that: "Religion is not just any category. It has history" (121)).

The call for scholars of religion and politics to act as "carriers of critical insights that can be brought to bear on how policy is developed and implemented" (120) is both commendable and necessary. But the question of "how" this is to be done, and especially in a social, cultural, and political context in which the notion of "religion" has such a deeply ingrained position, is given less consideration than might be expected. Yet, in the final analysis, such points are of lesser importance. In *Beyond Religious Freedom*, Shackman Hurd has set out to deliver a critique, not prescribe a solution. And in that sense, her book excels.

***Religion and the Struggle for European Integration: Confessional Culture and the Limits of Integration*. By Brent F. Nelsen and James L. Guth. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2015. xiv + 368 pp. $59.95 Cloth, $34.95 Paper**

doi:10.1017/S1755048316000833

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If European integration is "the process whereby political actors in several distinct national settings are persuaded to shift their loyalties, expectations, and political activities toward a new center, whose institutions possess or demand jurisdiction over the pre-existing national states" (Ernst Haas, *The Uniting of Europe: Political, Social, and Economic Forces, 1950–1957*), then it has — as of yet — failed. While Europe's new center, Brussels, does indeed demand and execute jurisdiction in many areas, loyalties at