

Those looking for rigorous theory-testing or even critical engagement with the existing literature will find little of it here. The lack of connections between the chapters — and the resulting repetitiveness — will also prove disappointing to serious students and scholars. But as an up-to-date introduction to a wide variety of religious and non-religious extremist movements, this should serve well as a classroom resource.

***Religion and Public Opinion in Britain: Continuity and Change.* By Ben Clements. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015. 304 pp. 105.00 cloth**

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This is an extremely interesting, thoroughly researched, and exhaustive account of how religion informs the political activities of the electorate and the impact it has upon British politics more broadly. It demonstrates how faith and politics in Britain, often mistakenly believed to be separate, have a close if nuanced relationship. Ben Clements has presented a worthwhile and important contribution to the scholarship on politics and religion, which relies considerably upon public opinion data from a range of sources. This makes it a highly useful, well informed, and intellectually stimulating account of religion and public opinion in Britain, and one which must be of significant interest to scholars of religion and British politics. Indeed, Clements has shone an important light upon an under-researched area of scholarship.

More specifically, the book considers the role of religion and politics across a range of changing contexts and circumstances since the end of the Second World War. These include religious authority, party choice, ideology, abortion, homosexuality, and foreign policy. Clements considers how the religious values of the electorate have affected their attitudes towards these issues and broader debates within British politics, and why these attitudes have liberalized over recent decades. Of particular note are the differences of the extent to which liberalization has taken

place between the denominations. The extensive data-sets used to inform his analysis drive the conclusions, giving this book a highly detailed and intellectually informed account of the relationship between religion and public opinion.

Of particular interest was the discussion of religion and the left. Before proceeding, it is worth reflecting on the misguided notion that the left tends to be secular. This misunderstanding of how the left in Britain functions has partly been pushed by a conservative desire to claim religion as an exclusively right-wing ideal. This is an attempt to connect Christian values with conservative ideals, which the left has historically sought to challenge. Indeed, Clements shows how left-wing politics has often been driven by a Christian ethic. Furthermore, Tony Benn argued in *Arguments for Socialism* (1980) that his left-wing views were strongly informed by his Christian upbringing, and that Christ was a supporter of collectivism as a means of producing a fairer, more socially just society. Moreover, the left in Britain enjoyed support from the Low Church during the late 19th Century, where the socialist message would be preached to the workers alongside Christ's at the pulpit. Using a data-set of changing attitudes, Clements discusses how the left and the Church functioned as a force for social welfare as well as broader attitudes towards censorship and the death penalty.

Also of particular interest was the discussion over the relationship between religion, homosexuality, and gay rights. The book uses its extensive data-set to argue that attitudes towards same-sex marriage have become more socially liberal in most categories, which run parallel to a broader liberalization in society. This shift, particularly within the contexts of decriminalization and pushes for equality, runs partly in tandem with an apparent decline in Church attendance alongside more socially liberal ideas through the media and in education. It must be noted that this apparent liberalization also extends towards the Conservatives, who are currently led by a Prime Minister who pushed for same-sex marriage whilst in opposition and during the Coalition government. Matt Beech, for example, has argued that this is indicative of a broader liberalization of the Conservative Party; others, however, have suggested that it may simply be an attempt to impose the essentially conservative notion of domesticity upon same-sex couples. And despite David Cameron's push, many within the party retained their socially conservative attitude towards gay marriage, and so it would be too simplistic to argue this represented a wholesale embrace of gay marriage by British conservatives. However, these political issues do not detract from the evidence presented

by Clements of the changing attitudes in society towards homosexuality over recent decades.

A final area of significant interest is the discussion of how religious attitudes have informed party political choices. As a broad discovery, the book noted that Anglicans tended towards the Conservatives, whilst Catholics had a more Labourite tendency. This appeared to confirm the anecdotal idea that the Church of England was “the Conservative party at prayer”; Clements notes, however, that social class was also relevant in determining the religious position of party supporters. The data also drew out the impact of how regular Church attendance affected the political support of various elements of the electorate. This section was of significant interest, since it sought to illustrate directly how religion and party support are connected.

In summation, this book is of significant value to those interested in politics and religion. Using empirical evidence, it shows how attitudes of religious people have changed whilst society evolved over the recent decades. It has made these discoveries through considerable engagement with very extensive data-sets covering a plethora of time periods, social and political issues, and themes. By doing so, Ben Clements has produced a book that must be a core feature of any scholar seeking to understand the relationship between religion, the electorate, and British politics.

***Catholicism and Nationalism: Changing Nature of Party Politics.* By Madalena Meyer Resende. New York, NY: Routledge, 2015. 130 pp. \$135.00 cloth**

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In the last few years, the field of religion and politics has been enriched by a number of important works aimed at providing more rigor and depth to a field that was previously understudied. In the latest addition to Routledge Press’ “Extremism and Democracy” series, Madalena Meyer Resende’s *Catholicism and Nationalism: Changing nature of party politics* adds to