

Cambridge University Press  
978-0-521-13273-2 - Reason, Religion, and Democracy  
Dennis C. Mueller  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

---

## REASON, RELIGION, AND DEMOCRACY

The rise of religious fundamentalism in different parts of the world in recent years and its association with terrorism has led to a renewed interest in the nature of religion and its compatibility with Western institutions. Much of the focus of this new interest has contrasted religion and science as two different systems of knowledge. This book also emphasizes the difference between religion and science as a means for understanding causal relationships, but it focuses more on the challenge religious extremism poses for liberal democratic institutions. This book contains a discussion of human psychology, describes the salient characteristics of all religions, and contrasts religion and science as systems of thought. Historical sketches are used to link modernity and the use of the human capacity for reasoning to advance human welfare. The book describes the conditions under which democratic institutions can advance human welfare and the nature of constitutional rights as protectors of individual freedoms. Extremist religions are shown to pose a threat to liberal democracy, a threat that has implications for immigration, education policies, and the definition of citizenship.

Dennis C. Mueller is professor emeritus of economics at the University of Vienna. His main research interests are public choice, industrial economics, and constitutional political economy. He has held positions at the University of Maryland and Cornell University and is the author of many articles and several books, including *Public Choice III* (Cambridge University Press, 2003), *The Corporation* (2003), and *Constitutional Democracy* (1996). Mueller is a past president of the Public Choice Society, the Southern Economic Association, the Industrial Organization Society, the European Association for Research in Industrial Economics (E.A.R.I.E.), the International Joseph A. Schumpeter Society, and the European Public Choice Society.

Cambridge University Press  
978-0-521-13273-2 - Reason, Religion, and Democracy  
Dennis C. Mueller  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

---

# Reason, Religion, and Democracy

DENNIS C. MUELLER

University of Vienna



Cambridge University Press  
978-0-521-13273-2 - Reason, Religion, and Democracy  
Dennis C. Mueller  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS  
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore,  
São Paulo, Delhi, Dubai, Tokyo

Cambridge University Press  
32 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10013-2473, USA

[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)  
Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9780521132732](http://www.cambridge.org/9780521132732)

© Dennis C. Mueller 2009

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception  
and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements,  
no reproduction of any part may take place without the written  
permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2009

Printed in the United States of America

*A catalog record for this publication is available from the British Library.*

*Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication data*

Mueller, Dennis C.  
Reason, religion, and democracy / Dennis C. Mueller.  
p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.  
ISBN 978-0-521-11501-8 (hardback) – ISBN 978-0-521-13273-2 (pbk.)

1. Democracy – History. 2. Religion and politics – History.  
3. Religion and science – History. I. Title.

JC423.M745 2009  
321.8 – dc22 2009010735

ISBN 978-0-521-11501-8 Hardback  
ISBN 978-0-521-13273-2 Paperback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or  
accuracy of URLs for external or third-party Internet Web sites referred to in  
this publication and does not guarantee that any content on such Web sites is,  
or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Cambridge University Press  
978-0-521-13273-2 - Reason, Religion, and Democracy  
Dennis C. Mueller  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

---

*To Laurence, Jacob, and Adrienne*

Contents

<i>Preface</i>	<i>page ix</i>
1 Liberal Democracy	1
PART I. FUNDAMENTALS: EVOLUTION, PSYCHOLOGY, REASONING, AND RELIGION	
2 Evolution, Psychology, and Reason	31
3 Religion	51
PART II. A HISTORICAL LOOK AT THE STATE, DEMOCRACY, AND RELIGION	
4 The First States	79
5 Athens and Rome	93
6 The Caliphate	116
7 The Renaissance	136
8 The Enlightenment	159
9 Religion and Democracy After the French Revolution	197
Epilogue to Part Two	235
PART III. THE INSTITUTIONS OF LIBERAL DEMOCRACY	
10 Democracy and Citizenship	239
11 Rights	271
12 Education, Citizenship, Immigration, and Democracy	316

Cambridge University Press  
978-0-521-13273-2 - Reason, Religion, and Democracy  
Dennis C. Mueller  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

PART IV. CHALLENGES TO LIBERAL DEMOCRACY	
13	Democracy and Religion 355
14	Building and Protecting Liberal Democracy 400
	<i>References</i> 419
	<i>Author Index</i> 437
	<i>Subject Index</i> 442

Cambridge University Press  
978-0-521-13273-2 - Reason, Religion, and Democracy  
Dennis C. Mueller  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

---

## Preface

Shortly after the completion of the final revisions to this book, a front-page article appeared in the Austrian newspaper *Die Presse* reporting estimates of some 250 million Christians worldwide threatened by violence or death for their beliefs. Most of the countries where this repression is taking place are not democracies – for example, Iran, Vietnam, China. Some countries such as India and Turkey are certainly democracies, but cannot be called *liberal democracies* because of the violations of religious freedom rights that occur within them. These instances of religious persecution illustrate a major theme of this book – the incompatibility of strong religious views and liberal democracy.

Most of the countries in which religious persecution is taking place can be characterized as nonmodern, traditionalist societies – for example, Pakistan, Burma, Yemen, Kenya. Traditionalism and religion go hand in hand, as does to a large extent traditionalism and dictatorship. The examples of India and Turkey indicate, however, that democracy is no guarantee of liberalism. Wherever extremist religious beliefs exist, liberalism is at peril. It was the growing importance of religious extremism in the United States, South America, the Middle East, and other parts of the world and the potential for religious extremism to arise even in Europe that led me to write this book. No one who values liberalism and democracy should assume that they are invulnerable to attack from religious extremists.

In several places, data have been taken from Internet websites with the website addresses given as sources. These website addresses change from time to time, so we cannot guarantee that the address given is still current.

Alan Hamlin and an anonymous referee offered some helpful comments on an early draft of the book. Bob Tollison and Roger Congleton read the book thoroughly, and made many suggestions for improvement. Jacob Mueller, my son, also read the manuscript and caught many errors of style

Cambridge University Press  
978-0-521-13273-2 - Reason, Religion, and Democracy  
Dennis C. Mueller  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

---

and substance. Elizabeth Raab gave it a careful reading and made many suggestions for improving word choice and punctuation. To all of these people, I am most grateful. Finally, I would like to thank my secretary for the last fifteen years, Heidi Wurm, for her diligent effort to bring the manuscript into shape for the publisher. She made my side of the project immensely easier.

One often adds a perfunctory disclaimer to such acknowledgments of help to the effect that the previously named do not necessarily share all views of the author. In this case, the disclaimer is definitely needed and is not perfunctory.

If this book has any positive impact, it may alert some people to the dangers traditionalism and religion pose for liberal democracy and help protect it against these threats, thereby producing a better future. With this hope for the future in mind, I am dedicating this book to my children.

Dennis C. Mueller  
Vienna, Austria  
May 2009