

Secular Conversions

Why does secularization proceed differently in otherwise similar countries? *Secular Conversions* demonstrates that the institutional structure of the state is a key factor shaping the course of secularization. Drawing upon detailed historical analysis of religious education policy in the United States and Australia, Damon Mayrl details how administrative structures, legal procedures, and electoral systems have shaped political opportunities and even helped create constituencies for secular policies. In so doing, he also shows how a decentralized, readily accessible American state acts as an engine for religious conflict, encouraging religious differences to spill into law and politics at every turn. This book provides a vivid picture of how political conflicts interacted with the state over the long span of American and Australian history to shape religion's role in public life. Ultimately, it reveals that taken-for-granted political structures have powerfully shaped the fate of religion in modern societies.

Damon Mayrl is Assistant Professor of Sociology at Universidad Carlos III de Madrid. His recent publications include writings in *Sociological Theory*, *Social Forces*, *Social Science Research*, *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, *European Journal of Sociology*, and *Sociological Inquiry*.

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The most enduring and illuminating bodies of late nineteenth-century social theory – by Marx, Weber, Durkheim, and others – emphasized the integration of religion, polity, and economy through time and place. Once a staple of classic social theory, however, religion gradually lost the interest of many social scientists during the twentieth century. The recent emergence of phenomena such as Solidarity in Poland, the dissolution of the Soviet empire, various South American, Southern African, and South Asian liberation movements, the Christian Right in the United States, and Al Qaeda have reawakened scholarly interest in religiously based political conflict. At the same time, fundamental questions are once again being asked about the role of religion in stable political regimes, public policies, and constitutional orders. The series *Cambridge Studies in Social Theory, Religion, and Politics* will produce volumes that study religion and politics by drawing upon classic social theory and more recent social scientific research traditions. Books in the series offer theoretically grounded, comparative, empirical studies that raise “big” questions about a timely subject that has long engaged the best minds in social science.

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*Political Institutions and Religious
Education in the United States and
Australia, 1800–2000*

DAMON MAYRL

Universidad Carlos III de Madrid



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Acronyms

ORGANIZATIONS

ACER	Australian Council for Educational Research
ACLU	American Civil Liberties Union
ADL	Anti-Defamation League of B’Nai B’rith
AEF	Association for Educational Freedom
AHMS	American Home Missionary Society
AII	American Institute of Instruction
AISV	Association of Independent Schools in Victoria
AJC	American Jewish Congress
AJCommittee	American Jewish Committee
ALP	Australian Labor Party
CCES	Council for Christian Education in Schools
CIO	Congress of Industrial Organizations
CSB	Common Schools Board
DLP	Democratic Labor Party
DOGS	Council for the Defence of Government Schools
FCSC	Federal Catholic Schools Committee
HMC	Protestant Headmasters Conference of Independent Schools in Australia
IJ	Institute for Justice
INB	Irish National Board
NAE	National Association of Evangelicals
NBPE	National Board of Popular Education
NCC	National Civic Council
NCWC	National Catholic Welfare Conference
NEA	National Education Association
NSWTF	New South Wales Teachers’ Federation
P&C	Parents and Citizens Association

POAU	Protestants and Other Americans United for the Separation of Church and State
PSS	Public School Society
REA	Religious Education Association
SES	Secular Education Society

ARCHIVES

NBLA	Noel Butlin Labour Archive
NLA	National Library of Australia
SRNSW	State Records New South Wales
UCA	Uniting Church Archive

OTHER

ESEA	Elementary and Secondary Education Act
GRME	General Religious and Moral Education
GRT	General religious teaching
KJV	King James Version
NDEA	National Defense Education Act
SRI/SRE	Special religious instruction/education