



Christianity, Islam, and Liberal Democracy: Lessons from Sub-Saharan Africa

Robert A. Dowd

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Drawing from research conducted in Nigeria, Senegal, and Uganda, Christianity, Islam, and Liberal Democracy offers a deeper understanding of how Christian and Islamic faith communities affect the political attitudes of those who belong to them and, in turn, prospects for liberal democracy. While many analysts believe that religious diversity in developing countries is an impediment to liberal democracy, Robert A. Dowd concludes just the opposite. Dowd draws on narrative accounts, in-depth interviews, and large-scale surveys to show that Christian and Islamic religious communities are more likely to support liberal democracy in religiously diverse and integrated settings than in religiously homogeneous or segregated ones. Religious diversity and integration, in other words, are good for liberal democracy. In religiously diverse and integrated environments, religious leaders tend to be more encouraging of civic engagement, democracy, and religious liberty. By providing a theoretical framework for understanding when and where Christian and Islamic communities in sub-Saharan Africa encourage and discourage liberal democracy, Dowd demonstrates how religious communities are important in affecting political actions and attitudes. This evidence, the book ultimately argues, should prompt policymakers interested in cultivating religiously-inspired support for liberal democracy to aid in the formation of religiously diverse neighborhoods, cities, and political organizations.

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