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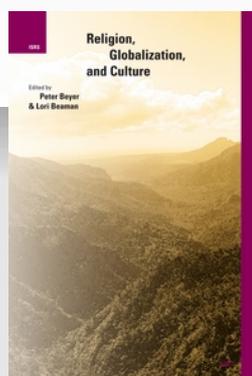
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Rethinking secularization: A global comparative perspective



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Overview

Chapter Summary

This chapter suggests that in order to speak meaningfully of 'secularization' we needed to distinguish three differ

Secularization, as decline of religious beliefs and practices in modern societies, often postulated as a human universal. Secularization, as privatization of religion, often understood both as a general modern historical trend and as a necessary precondition for modern liberal democratic politics. (iii) Secularization, as differentiation of the secular spheres, usually 'emancipation,' from religious institutions and norms. The chapter examines the validity of each of the three propositions and thus to refocus the often fruitless secularization debate into comparative historical analysis that could address secularization, in all three meanings of the term, across societies and civilizations. Yet, the debate between the European and American views of religion remains unabated.

Keywords: American sociologists; democratic politics; European societies; privatization; religious institutions; secularization



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