

Detlef Pollack

Religion und gesellschaftliche Differenzierung

Studien zum religiösen Wandel in Europa und den USA III



The role of religion and church in Western societies has changed fundamentally. In the Middle Ages, Christendom functioned as the social order's cognitive and institutional basis. In modern societies religion and church have become one societal sphere among others and are challenged to assert themselves ahead of attractive secular alternatives. The radical change preceding modernity was set in motion at the beginning of the 18th century; since then, religion and church have been intertwined in a process of functional differentiation that has significantly diminished their social relevance. In this historical analysis, Detlef Pollack investigates functional differentiation's medieval predecessors, as well as the 18th century's religious upheaval and 1960's religious crisis. Chapters devoted to the current religious situation cover not only Europe, but the USA and Latin America too.

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