



Key Concepts of the Humanities and Social Sciences

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Thursday, 28 November 2013, 18.15 – 19.30
University of Bern, Unitobler, Lerchenweg 36
Room F013

Secularization, Re-Enchantment, or something in-between? Methodical Considerations and Empirical Observations Concerning a Controversial Historical Idea

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Secularization is a contested term within the self-description of modernity. Some scholars describe the theory of secularisation as a 'myth' with the help of which modern society reflects on itself without regard to the 'facts'. Others do not share this sceptical view and try to strengthen the notion of secularisation in various modifications. Against the background of conceptual history, the lecture starts with a brief outline of different concepts of secularization. In a second step, some methodical considerations are made to generate indicators for measuring secularisation, which will thirdly lead to some empirical observations. The data stem from the history of religious development in Germany – with some insight into the 20th century as far as the empirical data permits such an endeavour. The different dimensions of empirical observations are the micro level of individual adherence, the meso level of religious organizations, and the macro level of societal development. In a final step, the empirical material is discussed in order to reach a concept of secularization that covers both a conceptual and an empirical dimension.

Volkhard Krech, born in 1962, is professor of Religious Studies at Bochum University, Germany, and director of the International Research Consortium on "Dynamics in the History of Religions" as well as of the Center for Religious Studies (CERES). His main research interests cover the theory of religion and history of religions, religious pluralisation and globalisation, processes of sacralisation, religion and violence, religion and art, and history of Religious Studies. His publications include *Georg Simmels Religionstheorie* (1998), *Religionssoziologie* (1999), *Wissenschaft und Religion. Studien zur Geschichte der Religionsforschung in Deutschland 1870-1933* (2002), "Sacrifice and Holy War: A Study of Religion and Violence" (in: W. Heitmeyer and J. Hagan [eds.]: *International Handbook of Violence Research*, 2003), "The Religious Field between Globalization and Regionalization: Comparative Perspectives" (with Stefan Huber, in: Bertelsmann Stiftung [ed.], *What the World Believes: Analysis and Commentary on the Religion Monitor 2008*, 2009), a commentary on Georg Simmel's *Die Religion* (2011) and *Wo bleibt die Religion? Studien zur Ambivalenz des Religiösen in der modernen Gesellschaft* (2011).

Related events

Workshops: Working with *A Secular Age*, 5.10. and 7.12.2013
International Conference on the topic, 6.-8.03.2014
Details and CfP on IASH website.

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