Field

SECULARIZATION IN LONG 1960S C

Secularization in the Long 1960s: Numerating Religion in Britain provides a major empirical contribution to the literature of secularization. It moves beyond the now largely sterile and theoretical debates about the validity of the secularization thesis or paradigm. Combining historical and social scientific perspectives, Clive D. Field uses a wide range of quantitative sources to probe the extent and pace of religious change in Britain during the long 1960s. In most cases, data is presented for the years 1955-80, with particular attention to the methodological and other challenges posed by each source type. Following an introductory chapter, which reviews the historiography, introduces the sources, and defines the chronological and other parameters, Field provides evidence for all major facets of religious belonging, behaving, and believing, as well as for institutional church measures. The work engages with, and largely refutes, Callum G. Brown's influential assertion that Britain experienced 'revolutionary' secularization in the 1960s, which was highly gendered in nature, and with 1963 the major tipping-point. Instead, a more nuanced picture emerges with some religious indicators in crisis, others continuing on an existing downward trajectory, and yet others remaining stable. Building on previous research by the author and other scholars, and rejecting recent proponents of counter-secularization, the long 1960s are ultimately located within the context of a longstanding gradualist, and still ongoing, process of secularization in Britain.

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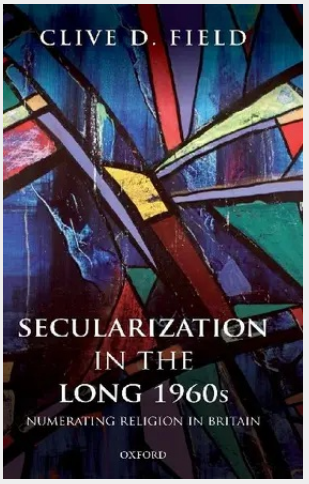

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