Thomas Schwinn*
Paths to Modernity and the Secularization Issue

Abstract: In the lively debate of the last two decades about the validity of the 'secularization thesis', the comparison between Europe and the USA plays a central role. The high level of religiosity beyond the Atlantic has put under pressure the assumption of the loss of importance of religion in modernity, which had been prevalent for a long time. In this debate, the connection between the differentiation theory and sociology of religion, which has already been discussed by the classics of the discipline, has attracted too little attention. This article takes up this desideratum and proposes, following Max Weber, a theory of differentiation which is able to cover the variety of religious processes. This proposed analysis will be made concrete with reference to the different paths to modernity of Europe and the USA and the related importance of religion.

Keywords: Secularization, differentiation, religion, modernity, Europe, USA

1 Secularization and Differentiation: A Relation That Needs to Be Clarified

In the last decades, the Secularization thesis has come under high pressure. While the loss of importance of religion was a foregone conclusion for a long time, there is a general course correction in the current debate. Besides the so-called re-islamization of many countries, especially the USA seem to have a paradigmatic significance, since there, modernity and religiosity are mutually promoting each other. A lively discussion has been triggered by the religious market hypothesis, according to which the rich offer of religious denominations in the USA stimulates a certain demand, which in Europe succumbs to the monopoly of the Church. This attempt at explanation has met with justified critique (Pollack/Rosta 2015, 367ff.). The plurality of the religious market in the USA is overestimated; especially in the so-called 'bible belt', there is a high degree of religious homogeneity and a majority of believers belonging to one single religious community. In search of

*Corresponding author: Thomas Schwinn, Universität Heidelberg, e-mail: thomas.schwinn@soziologie.uni-heidelberg.de

an explanation, the recent discussion on sociology of religion surprisingly has not brought the theory of differentiation into the focus, although it has been the basis of the secularization thesis since the time of the classics of the discipline. Differentiation is a category of development (diachronic) and of structure (synchronic). In both categories, the previous theory of differentiation has predefined a certain pathway and a certain pattern of religion: secularization (diachronic) and privatization (synchronic). The sociology of religion tries to free itself from this Procrustean bed. The assumptions of the theory of differentiation appear too narrow to cover the variety of religious phenomena. In the dimension of development, the paths of religion into and in modernity have multiplied. Thus, some talk about secularization*s* in the plural (Wohlrab-Sahr/Burchardt 2012; Pohlig 2012, 250f.; Liedhegener 2012, 485). But it is also difficult to grasp phenomena of de-secularization up to religious totalitarianisms with unilinear trend statements.

> "The theory of secularization, as a well-known mocker of the discussion of sociology of religion notes, is similar to an elevator that can only move downwards. […] Its highly complex theoretical distinctions are substantially fixed. Therefore, it is necessary to structure the theory of religious change in a way that its concepts help to explain the downward as well as the upward movement of the elevator […] and that it is able to reflect the diversity of religious realities." (Pollack/Rosta 2015, 458)

But how should such a theory of religious change be conceptualized to set the 'elevator' in motion in both directions? Sociology of religion and the theory of differentiation should get into a conversation and open up to each other. Unfortunately, this is not, or not sufficiently the case. To highlight two important voices of the discussion: José Casanova (1994; 2006) criticizes the assumptions of the theory of differentiation, but in a very superficial way, i.e. without an intensive and state-of-the-art exploration of this theory. Detlef Pollack consistently refers to the topic of differentiation in his works. In his latest publications (2015; 2016), he also opens up to the action-theoretical critique of the system-theoretical understanding of differentiation, without, however, developing a consistent synthesis.[1] On the other hand, as a differentiation theorist I do not know any work in this field that takes up the discussion about the secularization thesis, reflects conceptual consequences and develops alternative models.

　　In this article, I would like to take up this desideratum and present conceptual reflections about the relation between processes of differentiation and the development of religion, allowing to get away from the meanwhile deadlocked debate about 'Secularization yes or no'. To this effect, the theory of differentiation has to

---

1 Cf. the review of the author, Schwinn 2017.

be structured in a way that it is open for the variance of religious processes, not committing itself to only one pattern. Following Max Weber, I propose a program of cultural sociology that will be outlined and specified in a first step by using the example of the European development (2). The comparison with the USA plays an essential role in the debate. In a second step, I will trace the American development, which is different from the European one (3). The conclusion will discuss the systematic consequences of the analysis pursued in this article (4).

2 Devaluation and Domination of the World: Modernity in Competition with Religion

The image of a 'functional differentiation of the societal system', which is difficult to eradicate, leads the ideas in a wrong direction. It evokes connotations with bio-organic concepts or with an economic model of division of labor. Subsystems are fulfilling special tasks that form an overall system, or this overall system, the society, has functional requirements that are arranged collaboratively. In this image, the path of the religion is predetermined: The loss of function and the need to content itself with a niche existence. The elevator allows only one direction for religion: downstairs. Since many empirical phenomena do not really go with this, some sociologists of religion are willing, in return, to question the whole theory of differentiation (Casanova 2006, 9f.). But they perceive only one specific model, albeit yet dominant. In the stock of theories of differentiation, besides biological sources and those referring to an economic division of labor, there is another thread of sociology of culture (cf. Tyrell 1998), offering completely different analytical opportunities, which could better describe the variety of types of social order that came into sight in the last decades. I perceive this kind of approach in the works of Max Weber. He does not talk about subsystems, functionally composing a social system, but about 'spheres', especially about 'value spheres'. Spheres, unlike systems, do not have clear boundaries, nor do they coalesce into an 'integrated sphere' that could function, so to speak, as an usher. Cultural sociology has to specify the 'concept of sphere' and to make it suitable for analysis (Schwinn 2001, 151ff.). However, this concept leads the epistemological interest in another direction. There is a perspective of tension and conflict moving into the center. The spheres tend to modesty compared to the others neither automatically nor by the pressure of coordination of an overall system, what would create an unproblematic context of division of labor. This program of sociology of culture can be specified with reference to the European development.

The emergence of the occidental pattern of differentiation is not due to the enforcement of evolutionary universals (Parsons) or to the increase of complexity of a social system (Luhmann), but to cultural characteristics of the Jewish-Christian religion. According to his program of an interpretive sociology, Weber differentiates between the great religions by different man-world-relationships (Schluchter 2009, 36). There are world-affirming and world-denying religions, and the latter still can be subdivided into redemptory religions that are facing the world and those that are detached from the world. This causes fundamentally different attitudes of the believers toward the world like adaption to the world, world domination or escape from the world. Thus, different relationships of tension and conflict are related to the secular spheres and social orders. One of these variants had the potential and was the condition for the breakthrough of a pattern of social order that we use to call 'modern'.

In his *Zwischenbetrachtung* Weber (1978; 1958a) starts his analysis of the tensions by noting that they are significantly more pronounced in religions with a strong transcendent potential.

> "[A]n especially important fraction of all cases of prophetic and redemptory religions have lived not only in an acute but in a permanent state of tension in relation to the world and its orders. […] The more religions have been true religions of salvation, the greater has this tension been. This follows from the meaning of salvation and from the substance of the prophetic teachings as soon as these develop into an ethic. The tension has also been the greater, the more rational in principle the ethic has been, and the more it has been oriented to inward sacred values as means of salvation." (Weber 1958a, 328)

From a perspective of the theory of differentiation, this passage has to be interpreted in such a way that the extent and the type of the process of separation must be understood as dependent from the character of the religion. This is the program of Max Weber's sociology of religion:

> "Hence rationalizations of the most varied character have existed in various departments of life in all areas of culture. To characterize their differences from the view-point of cultural history it is necessary to know what departments are rationalized, and in what direction." (Weber 1958b, 26)

This cannot be answered without knowledge of the religion. Weber has developed this especially in the *Economic Ethic of the World Religions* with a focus on the relationship between religion an economy. The genesis is presented as a history of tension and conflict. In his *Zwischenbetrachtung*, Weber reconstructs tensions and conflicts from the perspective of religion. The more rationally and consequently the religious ideas are developed and established as a request toward life conduct and as a benchmark for social orders, the more probably this radical program will

fail and complementarily the rationalization of the other realms will be initiated. Even Niklas Luhmann, who normally is critical of Weber, pays tribute to him here.

> "The yet most impressive exposition of the problem of differentiation of religion is presented in Max Webers' deservedly famous 'Zwischenbetrachtung'. [. . .] The insight, which is absolutely worth preserving, is that rationality is differentiating, and this in a double sense: that rejection releases energies for the construction of an own rationality, and that at the same time the rationality of other spheres makes clear with what one cannot identify." (Luhmann 1989, 259f.; see also Hahn 1986, 220f.; Schluchter 2016)

The reorganization toward a new principle of order is starting from a certain religious conception of the world. The specific combination of *devaluation* and *domination* of the world is a crucial factor for this. Of course, the transcendent potential of Christianity with its aspiration to form the society did not develop automatically. Primarily it was an aspiration remaining in a waiting position, so to speak, and the potential was released only on certain historical conditions. The 'Investiture Controversy' of the 11th century represents such a structure-transforming situation. However, some historians (Althoff 2012; Hartmann 2012) query the wide-ranging significance of this conflict. According to them, it is not the beginning of a separation between church and world in terms of a differentiation of both spheres that can be identified here, but a theocratic claim of primacy, bringing the world completely into the sphere of influence of religion. We can follow this insight and at the same time underline the elements relevant to modernity. It is precisely the combination of de-differentiation and differentiation that gives very important impulses of tension and conflict. The first breakage of differentiation is the one between the church and the world. The church opposes the world and devaluates it en bloc (Tyrell 1996, 442f., 447f.; 2012, 67f.). This devaluation of the world contains a differentiating momentum, which releases a further dynamic, but only because it is related to the domination of the world. Hinduism lacks this differentiating component, it is an escapist, but not a world dominating religion. The Christian church differs from the world, yet at the same time linking it to itself. It is exactly this combination that is relevant for differentiation in the Investiture Controversy as well as in the ascetic Protestantism. Gregory VII radically claimed the primacy of the church against kings and emperors (Schwinn 2001, 262ff.; Pollack 2016, 120ff.). The state was deprived of any autonomous basis of legitimacy that would be independent from religion; this legitimacy was given only by the pope and the church.

> "The papal revolution started with the attempt of the papacy to demote the holy and most Christian emperor—who had played a leading role in the life of the church for centuries—to a simple layman, a position even lower than the least priest." (Berman 1995, 186)

The religious laicization of the secular monarchs is realizing, on the one hand, a typically modern principle of order: the 'taboo of blending' (Gephart 2005, 150). The power of a politician does not guarantee privileged chances of influence and salvation in religion; politics are religiously laicized. Through the devaluation of the world, i.e. the disengagement from the world, both due to the transcendental potential of Christianity, the church is realizing a modern principle of order: Affairs within one order can be dealt with and replied to only among its internal criteria; external criteria are devaluated and external voices are laicized.

On the other hand, the church has transgressed the taboo of blending during the Investiture Controversy. It drew the whole world into its circle of influence and claimed the right to apply religious criteria to secular, and in this case political issues. By doing so, it overstretched its claim of order and provoked, in return, a distancing self-affirmation of the secular side. Already in the 12th century, we can discern tendencies to achieve legitimation of royal and imperial power, which is independent from the pope or the church. This heralded a long process of political laicization of the religious staff and its claims. Moreover, it opened an occidental constellation in which it was not 'functional requirements of a society' but ideational lines of tension and conflict that set in motion the dynamics toward modern differentiation.

This impact of Christianity, resulting from the specific relationships to the world, which are at the same time differentiating and de-differentiating, is also at work in other historical contexts. The ascetic Protestantism is leading to a neutralization of clan relations for economic action. Traditional market relationships are broken by diverse external considerations. As a result of embedding economic activities in clan relations, the profit motive did not become autonomous. Due to the expectations of reciprocity of the clan members and to an internal-external morality, the market activity is oriented toward non-economic objectives. Like the secular emperor in the Investiture Controversy, the impositions of solidarity by clans are neutralized religiously through the ascetic Protestantism. The economic action is determined by market relationships, but not by family relationships. The legitimate indifference of economic action toward the needs of a clan is due to a certain religious ethic: In the ascetic Protestantism, the economic success as itself, but not its consequences are ethically evaluated and appreciated (Lepsius 1986, 28f.).

Here too, the devaluation of the world is accompanied by the domination of the world. Economic action is kept free from miscellaneous concerns, but not from religious claims. On the contrary, the ascetic Protestantism causes a radicalization and an intensification of religion over economic affairs, and by doing so it overstretches its capabilities. As a kind of intolerance reaction, the economic action, which originally was led on its autonomous track by religious impulses, created

a momentum that is no longer controllable by religion. Weber presents this connection between religion and modern capitalism by the theorem of the 'paradox of consequence against intentions'.

In the Investiture Controversy as well as in the ascetic Protestantism, there is a combination of differentiating and de-differentiating effects that both are acting in the direction of a new principle of structure. The radical *devaluation of the world* is a condition for the *differentiation of religion* because it allows to suspend heterogeneous external influences: the religious laicization of the secular monarch, the religious and ethical indifference toward clan members. The *domination of the world* is a precondition for the *differentiation of secular spheres and orders* because the own rationality can be discovered only by freeing from the tight religious clasp. A strong opponent forces to develop the own strengths. At this point, we can link to Margaret Acher's attempt (1988) to conceive the differentiation of ideas through a mechanism of cultural conflict. Ideas and the contradictions between them are not fully developed in the status nascendi, but they develop only in ongoing conflicts with others. Attempts to establish one conception as the dominant one often evoke vigorous efforts of the opposite side to strengthen its own position. Sharp attacks on the opposite position aiming to uncover its weaknesses or to discredit it often give rise to the most efficient efforts to eliminate these weaknesses. The edifices of ideas sometimes come out of such conflicts stronger and more profiled. Differentiation processes are the result of such tense conflicts.

3 Modernity Starts as Religion

The USA are an important touchstone for the secularization thesis, as this country was considered for a long time as the exception among the modern societies because of its religious vitality. However, in the recent discussion Europe is losing its paradigmatic role for the relation between religion and modernity (cf. Casanova 2001, 13790; Graf/Kracht 2007, 21; Kippenberg 2007, 45f.). The cases that served as a model for a long time are exchanged. This is not a quite convincing strategy of analysis. Following Max Weber's methodology of ideal types, similarities and differences can only be found by comparing the types (Schwinn 2016). However, it is not possible to attribute a paradigmatic significance to one type and an exotic character to the other one. We had outlined the combination of religious devaluation of the world and domination of the world as a decisive factor for the European development. The other spheres have to gain their autonomy in confrontational challenges and by distancing from the semantically and operatively leading religious order. But the conflict type is only one variant that Weber uses to explain

the relation between the spheres. Reciprocal or unilateral obstruction, promotion and indifference are forming a wide range of relations between spheres. Though in the USA initially religion was historically dominant too, the relation between religion and the other spheres is not determined by disembedding and releasing, but by mutual promotion. Here, the puritanism is of importance. From an ideational point of view, it is standing in a relationship of 'selective affinity' toward modern capitalism and democracy. In the USA, the two main institutions of the new era did not have to be established against the religious context, but they have grown by support of it. The European confrontation of enlightenment and religion is not characteristic for the USA (Kamphausen 1991, 255f.; Casanova 2006; Torpey 2009; Ostendorf 2010). The protestant economic ethic as well as the anti-authoritarian and democratic feature of the sects could be transferred more or less directly into modern institutions. Religion was not a hypothec or an obstacle, against which modernity had to prevail. This leads to a durable religious impregnation of modern orders.

These explanations should not be misunderstood as an idealistic model of realization of values, as if the form of order was completely inherent in the religious ideas like a semantic DNA, waiting for its development. „Values, including ethical norms, do not prevail directly; to become lifestyles, they undergo an institutionalization that comprises circumstances, which are not necessarily related to the values in question." (Lepsius 1996, 118) The impact of the protestant groups varied, depending on historical and national contexts (Marshall 1980; Schwinn 2001, 284ff.). The founding phase and scene of the American modernity in the New England colonies is fundamentally different from the European one (Riesebrodt 1990, 472; Kamphausen 1990, 226f.; Winkler 2009, 264ff.). Unlike in Europe, the new era does not start in feudalism nor in conflict with it. At the starting point, there is not feudalism with its orders and interest groups, but a religious-chiliastic movement. The religiously oriented settlers did not encounter pronounced orders and authorities; they rather had to create their own. Moreover, religion did not unfold its potential as a clerical organization, as it did in Europe, but as sects and denominations. This context of genesis of modernity, which is almost entirely determined and defined by religion, continues to have an effect until today.

Furthermore, the fact of the emigration was important for the impact of ascetic Protestantism. For the Puritan emigrants, America was the promised land for the chosen people. The ongoing settlement of the New England colonies was characterized by a sense of mission, pressing for the implementation of the kingdom of God on earth. The Puritan settlers considered themselves as a carrier of a divine mission, as a new chosen people that had a covenant with God. As a result, the American modernity, especially politics, has got a religious-missionary orientation, which is present until today. The religious-political images transform

themselves into an "ideology of integration for the new nation. In this process, even the political and economical principles of the American society—i.e. capitalism and democracy—have been religiously elevated. They became a symbol of the chosenness of America and the subject of its divine mission in the world. The participation of the USA in the First World War, for example, was legitimized as a mission for the worldwide establishment of democracy." (Riesebrodt 1990, 472) Also in later wars, e.g. against Irak, the enemy was seen in quasi-religious categories, as the 'evil' that has to be attacked for ethical reasons (Offe 2004, 130ff.; Eisenstadt 2011, 70f.).

How does this match with the insight that there is a strict institutional separation of religion and state and a sober and rational attitude toward public institutions in the USA? This cannot be derived from general theories of differentiation and secularization. We need to get back to specific constellations, which are crucial for the discussion about the durable influence that religious heritages have on modern institutions and motifs. The USA and Europe have different relationships between state and church. The European pattern of secularization was characterized by the monopoly position of the church as a state church at the starting point of the process of modernization (Martin 1978; Höllinger 1996; Casanova 2008). The closer the church was allied to the state and to the aristocratic social elites and later to the conservative bourgeoisie, the more modern ideologies and social movements of liberalism and socialism adopted an antireligious attitude. In return, the alliance between the church and the conservative political forces became more solid to defend the status quo. This led to a division into antagonistic religious and political factions. Such a pattern promoted the religious alienation of a notable percentage of the population, particularly of the classes that newly had emerged in the industrialization. The development is completely different in countries like the USA, which were not and are not characterized by a state church. The clearer separation between the religious and the political sphere has the effect that anticlericalism appears less as a political and ideological movement and is generally less significant. There is no antagonistic cleavage along religious-political factions. The question that Sombart poses, why there is no socialism in the USA, can be answered, inter alia, by the missing of a state church. There is quasi no powerful opponent in opposition with whom the arguments and interests of the workers could develop and become ideologically radical. We can find a lower grade of religious alienation and a greater vitality and variety of religious life. Religious voices are heard and have a great influence in public because they did not forfeit their credit of moral and ethics in long lasting historical controversies with secular ideologies and movements.

> "The relationship of the Americans toward church and state has not been strained by a state church, which was able, due to its privileged position, to apply pressure to conform and to manipulate political decisions by the use of its power. Obviously, this makes it easier for them to assess as positive that the church exerts influence on politics in terms of a democratic participation in political activities. Thus, the historical separation between church and state in America does not mean that religion has been expelled from the public and political domain more than in Europe and that it has become a purely private matter." (Höllinger 1996, 268f.)

The separation between religion and politics in the USA shows a characteristic that is interesting for the theory of differentiation. It is not designed symmetrically: its purpose is to protect the religion from the state, and it is not primarily due to the suspicion, like in Europe, against the influence of religion on politics (Offe 2004, 50ff.; Riesebrodt 1990, 471). Any paternalism and oppression by state authorities, which many of the Puritan expatriates had experienced in Europe before emigrating, had to be avoided. The variety of religious denominations among the immigrating groups was another reason against a state-supporting church. The religious influence on politics is aiming less at the state than at the nation; it is more ideational than institutional. In contrast to the sober, sometimes leery relation to public institutions, there is a quasi idealization of the nation. Political elites express their humility toward religion and the American nation by special gestures and symbols, by 'God bless America' and 'In God we trust'. Given the growing religious variety, the Puritan utopia of being part of a people and a land chosen by God gradually turned into a civil religion that is now an essential element of the American national identity and political legitimation.

> "The symbols, rituals and ceremonies of civil religion helped to 'sanctify' and legitimize the new political order, and to commit the American people to the basic principles and values of republicanism and constitutionalism embodied in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. In this way, the founders succeeded in establishing a secular, progressive political order without alienating the people from the religious sources of their common historical experience. American civil religion, while constantly changing and adapting to new circumstances, kept the original puritan vision alive by demanding, as Robert Bellah has called it, 'an understanding of the American experience in the light of ultimate and universal reality'. Despite the danger of propagandistic abuse, this must be seen as a highly original and effective response to the needs of an immigrant nation as well as to the dilemmas created by the interdependence of modernization and secularization since the Enlightenment." (Heideking 2002, 75; see also Eisenstadt 2011, 60ff.)

This construction makes it possible to transfer transcendent contents of religion into a modern context and to stabilize them. At the same time, issues related to the creation of public institutions are treated with a sober pragmatism. The metaphysical position is filled by civil-religious elements and its transfer into public

organizations, posts or roles is inhibited. Despite all criticism based on the propagandistic possibilities of misuse of this construction, we still have to see its advantages. It makes the American democracy a very solid form of order that has never been threatened by a socialist or a fascist mass movement. The transcendent need, which increases in times of distress and crisis, is sufficiently covered by a civil religion and forces the political religions of left and right totalitarianism out of the market of ideological supply.

Culture finds its institutional expression in a „horizontal mode' of the construction of the political order (Offe 2004, 52ff.; Eisenstadt 2011, 56f., 67f., 99, 105; Heideking 2002, 70ff.; Kamphausen 2002, 281). In the USA, unlike in Europe, the state is not the central focus of political thinking and the origin of the political process. The European processes and theories of modernization are based on a domination and a strong centering of the state. The state authority is an instance that gives social order and integrates the society. However, in the USA we do not find this opposition between the political state and the civil society. The 'civil society' means the politically constituted unity of the citizens, but not the pre-political space of needs and interests. Society has priority over the state. This can be explained by the historical fact that migrants escaped from the European state power and that American communities of settlers advanced to territories with no existing state power. Moreover, the priority of the divine law over the secular right in the Puritan understanding excludes a special emphasis on the secular state. Finally, the variety of immigrating cultures was difficult to bring under one roof by a strong and central state power. The basic social model is characterized by a horizontal voluntaristic involvement of the civil society, based on creed and consent. The vertical authoritarian coercion plays a minor role in this model.

This finds its expression in diverse breakings of the state authority: a horizontal separation of powers with a strong judiciary, and a vertical breaking of the state authority through the federalism with its system of fiscal, executive and legislative autonomies in the individual states. In the executive, the limited state monopoly on the use of force is reflected in a weak police force of the central state and in the citizens' right of gun possession. The system of separation of powers and of federalism that Europeans initially had eyed with suspicion cannot be derived from a general theory of differentiation and modernization. It is due to a specific historical constellation whose order-forming impacts are effective until today.

The conditions of the historical genesis of American modernity are forming its future character. This applies to the system of social order in general as well as to the institutionalization of ideas and rationalities in specific fields and spheres. The characteristic experience of crisis of the first generation of constitutional law experts who began to elaborate a modern constitution of norms in Europe, was the religious civil war (Gutmann et al. 2012, 5ff.; Dreier 2013). It led them to the idea

that the political and legal integration can no longer be achieved on the basis of a comprehensive religion. According to them, the constitution of norms had to start from the premise that its normative principles are valid even if one assumes that there is no God. The project that Thomas Hobbes began and that consists in developing the basic norms of law not on the basis of God's revealed will, but on the basis of secular reasons, has been intensively continued in Europe. The American conception of a constitutional state, in contrast, has not been developed against religious reasoning, but in accordance with them. The contractual concept of democracy, claiming that any government is based on the approval of the governed people, derives from the Puritans' idea of the biblical covenant. The covenant with God has become the model for political constitutions that has to be interpreted in an ethical and juridical way. The contract between free people, the idea of sovereignty of the people as well as the limitation and the control of political authority and power are profoundly influenced by religion.

The opposition of a religiously revealed and a reasonably founded law is not typical for the American way of thinking.

> "Even when in the 18th century the foundation of democracy is more and more based on natural law rather than on biblical and clerical law, this reformulation of the special unique character of the American understanding of politics holds onto the divine setting of the natural law. Reason and revelation are still strongly related, 'divine providence' and 'natural reason' are nearly considered the same. Thus, the civil government seems to be at the same time the result of a divine providence and of free associations. Even during the progressing secularization of the idea of the 'Providentia Americana' in the 19th century, the original intensity of the 'american creed' has been preserved. It merely has transformed it into a democratic theory, giving to the latter a unique character and quality that goes far beyond its European origins." (Kamphausen 1991, 262)

In the USA, the highly valued character of democracy, i.e. the fact that as a political form of order it not only has a cognitive, but also an emotional and motivational component, is due to a religious transfer of values. Its religious roots have never been cut completely, though today, they are more based on civil religion.

Following Heideking (2002, 70), there is an additional factor: "Constitutionalism, the idea that a written constitution spells out the 'supreme law of the land' and sets limits for the ruling authorities, became what was probably the most important element of American modernity." It was neither the British democracy nor the French Revolution that launched the modern concept of the 'rule of law and legislation'. In England, the sovereignty of the parliament was primary, and in France, the 'volonté générale' was dominant. In the USA, the Puritan suspicion against both the public institutions and the overestimate of the collective toward the individual led to a different institutional course. They attempted not to give

predominance to one single element. The legal constitutionalism is providing the crucial balancing element for this.

The historical development of the American variant of modernity also has a long-term impact on other institutional areas like the very incomplete welfare state, which emphasizes the individual's self-responsibility. This originates from Puritan roots and makes the qualification of 'welfare state' disputable for the USA (Franz-Xaver Kaufmann). Furthermore, there is an impact on the American type of a disembedded capitalism, which is less formed 'from above', like in Europe, and more 'from below' out of the economic market dynamics itself (Streeck/Yamamura 2001). Finally, there is an impact on the specific understanding of science and truth of the American pragmatism.

4 Conclusion

The theory of differentiation shows an explanatory deficit in terms of its causal genesis (Schwinn 2001, 22ff.; Schützeichel 2015, 300f.). Obscuring the genesis, the proponents of this theory take a standard model for granted that subsequently determines the importance of religion in modernity. However, the studies on Multiple Modernities have pointed out the close connection between the genesis and the validity or significance of social orders. The founding scenes and phases of the European and the American variant of modernity show considerable differences, which have an impact on its current form and on the role that religion plays within it. From a historical point of view, in both contexts—in Europe and in the USA—the religious order and its groups are semantically and operatively leading. However, in the USA there is no feudal context. The non-existence of feudal powers enabled religious claims to be realized without many obstacles. The European development is characterized by centuries-long conflicts and controversies. Here, processes of differentiation always had and still have the objective to keep the formerly powerful religion out of the other orders, like politics, law, economy, art, family. This modern European view becomes understandable through the historical genesis. The dominating basic idea is, that the differentiated orders are in an *obstructive relation* to each other, and that the rationalities or codes have to be brought into a relation of *indifference* by means of a strict separation. The American pattern and thinking is characterized to a greater degree by the idea of a *mutual promotion*. It is not indifference, but the *legitimate involvement* that characterizes the relation between religion and politics, provided that there is an institutional separation. Besides the specific historical prerequisites of the American modernity, the ideational features of the Puritanism were crucial. Historical con-

texts only facilitate certain developments, but the way in which they are realized does not least depend on the ideas of the actors and groups. As outlined above, the ascetic Protestantism shows affinities with modern central ideas; thus, we can identify a relationship of mutual ideational promotion here too.

The current debate about the issue 'secularization yes or no', which focuses especially on the contrasting cases Europa and USA, is well advised not to proceed according to the pattern 'one model for all'. In the non-western cultures too, the historical conditions of development and the ideational heritages will co-determine the way in which modern systems of social order will develop as well as the significance of religion within theses systems. It is much more fruitful to pursue this perspective of analysis than to pose the pointless question about a general validity of the secularization thesis.

References

Althoff, G. (2012), Libertas ecclesiae oder die Anfänge der Säkularisierung im Investiturstreit, in: Gabriel, K./C. Gärtner/D. Pollack (eds.), *Umstrittene Säkularisierung. Soziologische und historische Analysen zur Differenzierung von Religion und Politik*, Berlin, 78–100

Archer, M. S. (1988), *Culture and Agency. The Place of Culture in Social Theory*, Cambridge

Berman, H. J. (1995), *Recht und Revolution. Die Bildung der westlichen Rechtstradition*, Frankfurt a. M.

Casanova, J. (1994), *Public Religions in the Modern World*, Chicago

— (2001), Secularization, in: Smelser, N./P. Baltes (eds.), *International Encyclopaedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences*, Amsterdam, 13786–13791

— (2006), Rethinking Secularization: A Global Comparative Perspective, in: *The Hedgehog Review* 8, 7–23

— (2008), Public Religions Revisited, in: de Vries, H. (ed.), *Religion. Beyond a Concept*, New York, 101–119

Dreier, H. (2013), *Säkularisierung und Sakralität. Zum Selbstverständnis des modernen Verfassungsstaates*, Tübingen

Eisenstadt, S. N. (2011), *Die Vielfalt der Moderne*, 3. Aufl., Weilerswist

Gephart, W. (2005), ‚Sphären' als Orte der okzidentalen Rationalisierung. Zu einer vergessenen Metapher in Max Webers Rationalisierungstheorie, in: Aretz, H.-J./C. Lahusen (eds.), *Die Ordnung der Gesellschaft. Festschrift zum 60. Geburtstag von Richard Münch*, Frankfurt a. M., 125–159

Graf, F. W./K. G. Kracht (2007), Einleitung: Religion und Gesellschaft im Europa des 20. Jahrhunderts, in: Graf, F. W./K. G. Kracht (eds.), *Religion und Gesellschaft. Europa im 20. Jahrhundert*, Köln, 1–44

Gutmann, T./B. Jakl/L. Siep/M. Städler (2012), Einleitung, in: Siep, L. et al. (eds.), *Von der religiösen zur säkularen Begründung staatlicher Normen. Zum Verhältnis von Religion und Politik in der Philosophie der Neuzeit und in rechtssystematischen Fragen der Gegenwart*, Tübingen, 1–32

Hahn, A. (1986), Differenzierung, Zivilisationsprozess, Religion. Aspekte einer Theorie der Mo-

derne, in: Neidhardt, F. et al. (eds.), *Kultur und Gesellschaft*, KZfSS Sonderband 27, Wiesbaden, 214–231

Hartmann, W. (2012), Gregor VII. und die Könige: Auf dem Weg zur Hierokratie?, in: Gabriel, K./C. Gärtner/D. Pollack (eds.), *Umstrittene Säkularisierung. Soziolo-gische und historische Analysen zur Differenzierung von Religion und Politik*, Berlin, 101–133

Heideking, J. (2002), Fragment of Europe or Historical Innovation? The Emergence of Modernity in the United States after Independence, in: Roniger, L./C. H. Waisman (eds.), *Globality and Multiple Modernities. Comparative North American and Latin American Perspectives*, Brighton–Portland, 66–78

Höllinger, F. (1996), *Volksreligion und Herrschaftskirche. Die Wurzeln religiösen Verhaltens in westlichen Gesellschaften*, Opladen

Kamphausen, G. (1990), Ideengeschichtliche Ursprünge und Einflüsse, in: Adams, W. P. et al. (eds.), *Länderbericht USA I*, Bonn, 219–238

— (1991), Das Bekenntnis zur Selbst-Evidenz. Über das Verhältnis von Politik und Religion in den Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika, in: Thomas, H. (ed.), *Amerika – eine Hoffnung, zwei Visionen*, Herford, 251–276

— (2002), *Die Erfindung Amerikas in der Kultur-Kritik der Generation von 1890*, Weilerswist

Kippenberg, H. G. (2007), Europäische Religionsgeschichte: Schauplatz von Pluralismus und Modernisierung der Religionen, in: Kracht, K. G. (ed.), *Religion und Gesellschaft. Europa im 20. Jahrhundert*, Köln, 45–72

Lepsius, M. R. (1986), Interessen und Ideen. Die Zurechnungsproblematik bei Max Weber, in: Neidhardt, F. et al. (eds.), *Kultur und Gesellschaft*, KZfSS Sonderband 27, Wiesbaden, 20–31

— (1996), Die pietistische Ethik und der Geist des Wohlfahrtsstaates oder: Der hallesche Pietismus und die Entstehung des Preußentums, in: Clausen, L. (ed.), Gesellschaften im Umbruch, Frankfurt–New York, 110–124

Liedhegener, A. (2012), Säkularisierung als Entkirchlichung. Trends und Konjunkturen in Deutschland von der Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts bis zur Gegenwart, in: Gabriel, K./C. Gärtner/D. Pollack (eds.), *Umstrittene Säkularisierung. Soziologische und historische Analysen zur Differenzierung von Religion und Politik*, Berlin, 481–531

Luhmann, N. (1989), Die Ausdifferenzierung der Religion, in: *Gesellschaftsstruktur und Semantik*, Band 3, Frankfurt a. M., 259–357

Marshall, G. (1980), *Presbyteries and Profits. Calvinism and the Development of Capitalism in Scotland 1560–1707*, Oxford

Martin, D. (1978), *A General Theory of Secularization*, Oxford

Offe, C. (2004), *Selbstbetrachtung aus der Ferne. Tocqueville, Weber und Adorno in den Vereinigten Staaten*, Frankfurt a.M.

Ostendorf, B. (2010), Die historischen Ursachen der religiösen Vielfalt in den USA, in: Reder, M./M. Rugel (eds.), *Religion und die umstrittene Moderne*, Stuttgart, 66–88

Pohlig, M. (2012), Religionsfrieden als pax politica. Zum Verhältnis von Religion und Politik im konfessionellen Zeitalter, in: Gabriel, K./C. Gärtner/D. Pollack (eds.), *Umstrittene Säkularisierung. Soziologische und historische Analysen zur Differenzierung von Religion und Politik*, Berlin, 225–251

Pollack, D./G. Rosta (2015), *Religion in der Moderne. Ein internationaler Vergleich*, Frankfurt–New York

— (2016), *Religion und gesellschaftliche Differenzierung. Studien zum religiösen Wandel in Europa und den USA III*, Tübingen

Riesebrodt, M. (1990), Der protestantische Rahmen, in: Adams, W. P. et al. (eds.), *Länderbericht USA II*, Bonn, 469–485

Schluchter, W. (2009), *Die Entzauberung der Welt*, Tübingen

— (2016), Die Antinomien des Rationalismus und der Rationalisierung. Max Webers Skizze einer Entwicklungsgeschichte des Okzidents, in: Lehnert, D. (ed.), *Max Weber 1864–1920. Politik – Theorie – Weggefährten*, Köln, 169–193

Schützeichel, R. (2015), Disbalancen der Gesellschaftstheorie, in: *Zeitschrift für Theoretische Soziologie* 4, 295–306

Schwinn, T. (2001), *Differenzierung ohne Gesellschaft. Umstellung eines soziologischen Konzepts*, Weilerswist

— (2016), Von der vergleichenden Religionssoziologie zur vergleichenden politischen Soziologie. Max Weber und die Vielfalt der Moderne, in: Schwinn, T./G. Albert (eds.), *Alte Begriffe – Neue Probleme. Max Webers Soziologie im Lichte aktueller Problemstellungen*, Tübingen, 421–445

— (2017), Rezension von Detlef Pollack: Religion und gesellschaftliche Differenzierung. Studien zum religiösen Wandel in Europa und den USA III, in: *Soziologische Revue* 40, 430–435

Streeck, W./K. Yamamura (2001) (eds.), *The Origins of Nonliberal Capitalism. Germany and Japan in Comparison*, Ithaca–London

Torpey, J. (2009), The Problem of 'American Exceptionalism' Revisited, in: *Journal of Classical Sociology* 9, 143-168

Tyrell, H. (1996), Religionssoziologie, in: *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 22, 428–457

— (1998), Zur Diversität der Differenzierungstheorie. Soziologiehistorische Anmerkungen, in: *Soziale Systeme* 4, 119–149

— (2012), Investiturstreit und gesellschaftliche Differenzierung – Überlegungen aus soziologischer Sicht, in: Gabriel, K./C. Gärtner/D. Pollack (eds.), *Umstrittene Säkularisierung. Soziologische und historische Analysen zur Differenzierung von Religion und Politik*, Berlin, 39–77

Weber, M. (1958a), Religious Rejections of the World and Their Directions, in: *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, ed. and trans. by H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, New York, 323–359

— (1958b), Authors Introduction, in: *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. by Talcott Parsons, New York, 13–31

— (1978), *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie*, Band 1, 7. Aufl., Tübingen

Winkler, H. A. (2009), *Geschichte des Westens. Von den Anfängen in der Antike bis zum 20. Jahrhundert*, München

Wohlrab-Sahr, M./M. Burchardt (2012), Multiple Secularities: Toward a Cultural Sociology of Secular Modernities, in: *Comparative Sociology* 11, 875–909