

This book examines the growing interest in religion among academics, politicians, law and policy makers, and practitioners in the West, particularly in Britain and the European Union. Using an extensive body of research from a range of national and international sources, the authors challenge a number of the most basic assumptions that underpin this turn to religion. These include: the belief that religion is currently enjoying a global resurgence, while the process of secularisation is declining; and that discrimination and prejudice based on religion is so widespread in Western Europe that it is necessary to implement legal measures to protect against it; and that religion is such a central component of minority ethnic identity as to justify the British government's redefinition of ethnic groups as 'faith communities' and the French Government's reassertion of secularism.

The authors analyse some of the reasons for the gap between perception and reality and assess the potential consequences for both minorities and majorities of what they term an 'ideology of inequality'.

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