Moderate Secularism, Religion as Identity and Respect for Religion

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One of the features of the ‘cultural turn’ in social studies and identity politics is that, while many think one or both may have gone too far, it is now commonplace that the classical liberal separation of culture and politics or the positivist-materialist distinctions between social structure and culture are mistaken. Yet religion—usually considered by social scientists to be an aspect of culture—continues to be uniquely held by some to be an aspect of social life that must be kept separate from at least the state, maybe from politics in general and perhaps even from public affairs at large, including the conversations that citizens have amongst themselves about their society. This religion–politics separationist view, which is clearly normative rather than scientific, can take quite different forms, either as an idea or as practice and can be more or less restrictive, I shall call ‘secularism’. While acknowledging the variety of forms it can take, I want to argue that one of the most important distinctions we need to make is between moderate and radical secularism. The failure to make this distinction is not just bad theory or bad social science, but can lead to prejudicial, intolerant and exclusionary politics. I am particularly concerned with the prejudice and exclusion in relation to recently settled Muslims in Britain and the rest of Western Europe, but the points I wish to make have much more general application.

The article has three parts. First, I argue at an abstract level that it is not necessary to insist on absolute separation, though of course it is a possible interpretation of secularism. Second, radical separation does not make sense in terms in terms of historical actuality and contemporary adjustments. And third, given that secularism does not necessarily mean the absence of state–religion connections, I explore five possible reasons for the state to be interested in religion, though I will be mainly interested in two of them.

Radical and moderate secularism

If secularism is a doctrine of separation then we need to distinguish between modes of separation. Two modes of activity are separate when they have no connection with each other (absolute separation); but activities can still be distinct from each other even though there may be points of overlap (relative separation). The person who denies politics and religion are absolutely separate can still allow for relative separation. For example, in contemporary Islam there are ideological arguments for the absolute subordination of politics to religious leaders, as say propounded by the Ayatollah Khomeni in his concept of the vilayat-i-faqih, but this is not mainstream Islam. Historically, Islam has been given a certain official status and pre-eminence in states in which Muslims ruled (just as Christianity or a particular Christian denomination had pre-eminence where Christians ruled). In these states, Islam was the basis of state ceremonials and insignia, and public hostility against Islam was a punishable offence (sometimes a capital offence). Islam was the basis of jurisprudence and so was pres-
ent in positive law in a mediated way, and not directly. The state—legislation, decrees, law enforcement, taxation, military power, foreign policy and so on—were all regarded as the prerogative of the ruler(s), of political power, which was regarded as having its own imperatives, skills and so on, and was rarely held by saints or spiritual leaders. Moreover, rulers had a duty to protect minorities. Similarly, while there have been Christians who have believed in or practised theocratic rule, this is not mainstream Christianity—at least not for some centuries.

Just as it is possible to distinguish between theocracy and mainstream Islam, and theocracy and modern Christianity, so it is possible to distinguish between radical or ideological secularism, which argues for an absolute separation between state and religion, and the moderate forms that exist where secularism has become the order of the day, particularly Western Europe, with the partial exception of France. In nearly all of Western Europe there are points of symbolic, institutional, policy and fiscal linkages between the state and aspects of Christianity. Secularism has increasingly grown in power and scope, but an historically evolved and evolving compromise with religion are the defining features of Western European secularism, rather than the absolute separation of religion and politics. Secularism today enjoys an hegemony in Western Europe, but it is a moderate rather than a radical, a pragmatic rather than an ideological, secularism. Indeed, paradoxical as it may seem, Table 1 shows mainstream interpretations of the religion–state connection and mainstream secularism are philosophically closer to each other than either is to its radical versions.

### Is there a mainstream Western secularism?

Having established at an abstract level that mutual autonomy does not require separation I would like to take further the point that I have already begun making that while separation of religion and state/politics is a possible interpretation of secularism, it does not make sense in terms of historical actuality and contemporary adjustments. Rajeev Bhargava argues that ‘in a secular state, a formal or legal union or alliance between state and religion is impermissible’ and that ‘for mainstream western secularism, separation means mutual exclusion’. What does he mean by ‘mainstream western secularism’? His argument is that the secularism in the West has best developed in the United States and France, albeit in different ways. Americans have given primacy to religious liberty and the French to equality of citizenship, but in their differing ways they have come up with the best thinking on secularism that the West has to offer. ‘These are the liberal and republican conceptions of secularism. Since these are the most dominant and defensible western versions of secularism, I shall put them together and henceforth designate them as the mainstream conception of secularism.’ Bhargava is critical of this conception of Western secularism, which

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<th>Religion–state</th>
<th>Radical secularism</th>
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<td>1. Absolute separation</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>2. No separation</td>
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<td>3. Relative separation</td>
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understands secularism in terms of separation and ‘mutual exclusion’: this is common ground between us and so in my terms he is a ‘moderate’, not a ‘radical’, secularist. He has principled arguments about the nature of secularism and believes that the Indian polity today better exemplifies them than any Western polity (points that I do not address here).

My concern is with his characterisation of Western secularism. I believe he is mistaken in arguing that the United States and France are the best that the West has got to offer; nor are they the dominant/mainstream conceptions. His argument is based on a poor understanding of the British experience (which I know best) and of the Western European experience more generally. Most of Western, especially northwestern Europe, where France is the exception not the rule, is best understood in more evolutionary and moderate terms than Bhargava’s characterisation of Western secularism. They have several important features to do with a more pragmatic politics, with a sense of history, tradition and identity, and, most importantly, there is an accommodative character that is an essential feature of some historical and contemporary secularisms in practice. It is true that some political theorists and radical secularists have a strong tendency to abstract this out when talking about models and principles of secularism. If this tendency can be countered, British and other European experiences cease to be inferior, non-mainstream instances of secularism, but become mainstream and politically and normatively significant, if not superior to other versions.

Accommodative or moderate secularism, no less than liberal and republican secularism, can be justified in liberal, egalitarian, democratic terms, and in relation to a conception of citizenship. Yet it has developed an historical practice in which, explicitly or implicitly, organised religion is treated as a potential public good or national resource (not just a private benefit), which the state can in some circumstances assist to realise. This can take the form of an input into a legislative forum, such as the House of Lords, on moral and welfare issues, but also to being social partners to the state in the delivery of education, health and care services; building social capital; and churches belonging to ‘the people’. So even those who do not attend them, or even sign up to their doctrines, feel they have a right to use them for weddings and funerals. All this is part of the meaning of what secularism is in most West European countries and it is quite clear that it is often lost in the models of secularism deployed by some normative theorists and public intellectuals. This is clearer today partly because of the development of our thinking in relation to the challenge of multicultural equality and the accommodation of Muslims, which highlight the limitations of the privatisation conception of liberal equality and sharpen the distinction between moderate/inclusive secularism and radical/ideological secularism. I have in my work expressly related the accommodative spirit of moderate secularism to the contemporary demands of multiculturalism. Indeed, in approaching the reform of institutions multiculturalists should be particularly sensitive to the ways that the historical and the inherited can be valued in a variety of ways, including giving people a sense of belonging and national identity.

Faced with an emergent multi-faith situation or where there is a political will to incorporate previously marginalised faiths and sects and challenge the privileged status of some religions, the context-sensitive and conservationist response may be to pluralise the state–religion link rather than sever it. This indeed is what is happening across many countries in Western Europe, despite critics on the both the left and right, especially among the radical secularists and the Islamopho-
bic populists. In relation to the British case one can see this pluralising or multiculturalising in a number of incremental, ad hoc and experimental steps. For example, some years ago Prince Charles, the heir to the throne and to the office of Supreme Governor of the Church of England, let it be known he would as a monarch prefer the title ‘Defender of Faith’ to the historic title ‘Defender of the Faith’. More recently, in 2004, the Queen used her Christmas television and radio broadcast (an important national occasion, especially for the older generation, on the most important Christian day of the year) to affirm the religious diversity of Britain. Her message was, in the words of Grace Davie: ‘Religious diversity is something which enriches society; it should be seen as a strength, not a threat; the broadcast moreover was accompanied by shots of the Queen visiting a Sikh temple and a Muslim center. It is important to put these remarks in context. The affirmation of diversity as such is not a new idea in British society; what is new is the gradual recognition that religious differences should be foregrounded in such affirmations.’

If such examples are regarded as merely symbolic then one should note how British governments have felt the need to create multi-faith consultative bodies. The Conservatives created an Inner Cities Religious Council in 1992, chaired by a junior minister, which was replaced by New Labour in 2006 with a body with a much broader remit: the Faith Communities Consultative Council. Moreover, the new Department of Communities and Local Government, which is represented in the Cabinet, has a division devoted to faith communities. Or better still, consider an example of a high-level proposal (not yet acted on and may not be acted on) that combines the symbolic and practical at a constitutional level—namely the recommendations of the Royal Commission on the Reform of the House of Lords. It proposed that the principle of religious representation in the United Kingdom’s upper chamber should be maintained, but extended to include non-Anglicans and non-Christsians. Such proposals might be regarded as a form of reforming or pluralising establishment without abolishing it. It suggests that ‘weak establishment’ can be the basis for moving towards ‘multicultural equality’ without constitutional disestablishment. I am not contending that some version of establishment (weak or plural) is the only way or the best way of institutionalising religious pluralism in Britain or similar countries. My point is that a reformed establishment can be one way of institutionalising religious pluralism. In certain historical and political circumstances, it may indeed be a good way: we should be wary of ruling it out by arguments that appeal to ‘the dominant and defensible western versions of secularism’. Stronger still: such institutional accommodation of minority or marginal faiths run with the grain of mainstream Western European historic practice.

Why the state might be interested in religion

Having then established that the separation of state and religion is neither a necessary feature of secularism in terms of abstract logic nor in terms of mainstream practice, I would now like to consider some of the reasons that the state might be interested in religion. I leave aside state attacks on religion such as those by the Jacobins, or Soviet Union or Communist China that are characteristic of totalitarian secularism. I shall confine myself to democratic examples and to affirmative reasons. I offer here five types of policy reasons in a typology of my own devising. The issues I am exploring are: What kind of reason is a particular proposal or institutional purpose appealing to? What distinguishes it? And what kind
of legitimacy might it have? I am not arguing that these lines of reasoning lead to obvious policy results as that would require a much greater degree of contextualisation than I offer here, and I am not trying to determine policies. While I appreciate of course that all actual cases can consist of a mix of reasons, my typology of reasons is as follows: Truth, Danger, Utility, Identity and Worthiness of Respect. I shall discuss them in this order, but will give most attention to the last two.

**Policy based on religion as truth**

If we consider ‘policy’ here to mean the state as a whole—that is, as a holistic structure—then the idea that it is based on a putative truth as understood by a religion is clearly not compatible with democracy and certainly not a democratic multiculturalism. This is not necessarily because it is religious, but because it is a totalitarian ideology; the same would apply to totalitarian secularism. As is the case with Plato’s ideal republic based on the truth as understood by a philosophical Guardian, such totalitarian states would also fail to respect the autonomy and integrity of either politics or religion.

There is a real sense, as Plato noted, that democracy is based on opinions, not truth. Having said that it does not follow that there may be no scope for truth. Consider the famous declaration from the American Declaration of Independence (1776): ‘We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.’ This truth however was not reiterated in the Constitution (1787) itself and so is at least one step removed from specific policies and laws similar to the fact that, as I earlier suggested, most Muslim-majority states have and do conceive of the relationship between Islam and the state—namely as foundational rather than in terms of positive law.

What about specific policies that are alleged to be based on religious truth—for example, policies relating to abortion or genetic engineering? I am not sure, but in principle such policies probably would be acceptable if the policy proposal was subject to a democratic process, was implemented within a framework of individual rights and allowed for exemptions on grounds of conscience. So specific policies based on religious truth are probably compatible with democracy and multiculturalism, but in any case some of the remaining ways in which policies relate to religion are compatible. Thus of any policy proposal based on religious truth, we might want to ask if it is justifiable by reference to any of the others below rather than dismiss it *per se*.

**Policy based on religion as danger**

This might seem odd to include here as I had said I was only interested in ‘affirmative’ reasons. I include it because where religion in general or a particular religion or a particular aspect of a religion is thought to be dangerous and in need of state control—because, for instance, otherwise social peace or unity is at serious risk—control might mean supporting favoured religious institutions. We see this in the case of how one of the most intolerant (semi-)democratic secular states—Turkey—has a whole government department devoted to propagating, funding and staffing a particular version of Islam. The French state does something similar in respect of versions of Catholicism, Protestantism and Judaism, and is trying to do the same with Islam. The British government has for some years been seriously considering whether and how it needs to be involved in the training of imams, and on a more dramatic scale, had to work with Catholics and Protestants, clerics as well as
others, in order to end political violence in Northern Ireland.

Thus one does not have to think religion is benign in order to support it or interact with it; and support and interaction involves regulation anyway.

**Policy based on religion as utility**

Religion may be a very personal thing, but it can produce social outcomes, some of which may be desirable or undesirable in the view of the state and so it might wish to encourage or discourage religion. For example, suppose it were true that religious people are less likely to commit crime or less likely to have a marriage breakdown, with all of its attendant problems, these may be regarded as reasons to encourage the relevant religion regardless of whether one believed in it or not oneself. One may simply want to lessen the scale of certain social problems and reduce the cost of remedies to the public purse. More directly, the state may observe religious organisations as serving the needy (the poor, the aged, the homeless, etc.) either just within their own communities or more generally and these may be economical ways of providing certain services the market could not provide and the state could provide less economically or with more political difficulties. So the state may choose to fund these religious organisations.

**Policy based on religion as identity**

This may work in relation to identity at a number of levels, including the individual level, the public or civic level and the minority level. An example of individual identity is: I am an X (for example, a taxpayer) and so want Y (for example, a certain kind of school). The same identity appeal can be generalised: We are X and so want Y. Public or civic identity may refer to an identity as a polity or a country: We are a Christian country and so Christianity should be taught in schools or be referred to in the constitution and so on. This does not have to be a particularly conservative argument. The same logic is present in the following: We are no longer a Christian country and have to re-make the national identity to reflect new inclinations, or we need to have multi-faith schools or a plurality of schools within the state system and reflected in the national curriculum. Finally, in terms of minority identity, the state may note that certain religious groups and identities are stigmatised. An example is the finding of the recent Pew Survey of public opinion that a quarter of Britons and Americans, nearly four in ten French, and half of the Spaniards, Germans and Poles surveyed displayed hostility to Muslims. As with other kinds of stigmatised, marginalised or oppressed minorities, there may be a project to turn these negative identities into positive ones. This would be particularly important if the minorities in question valued this aspect of their identity and especially if they valued it more than was the norm in that society. This is precisely the case in Britain, for example. The 2001 Home Office Citizenship Survey shows that while those who say they have no religion are disproportionately from the advantaged and the powerful (that is, they are more likely to be white, male and middle class) and only 17 per cent of whites say that religion is important to their self-identity, the numbers for black and South Asian respondents are 44 and 61 per cent, respectively. Religion, then, is clearly an ethnic feature of Britain not just in the sense that most whites are Christians and most people of colour are not, but in terms of the personal, social and political salience and significance of religion.

State action in this context should include anti-discrimination measures in relation to religious groups, but also even-handedness in relation to resources. Moreover, one can imagine that some special provisions may be created for a minority as a disadvantaged group,
perhaps even without there being a corresponding provision for the majority faith. For instance, in Britain certain advisory and consultative bodies have been created in relation to Muslims but not other religious groups because it is perceived that Muslims have certain problems (for instance, ‘radicalisation’) that others do not have. This is comparable to the fact that we have a Minister for Women, but not a Minister for Men. Another example would be that in March 2008 Britain repealed the blasphemy law that only related to Christianity because of the general feeling, shared by many Christians, that it did not need this protection, while an offence of religious hatred has been created because of a perception of vulnerability on the part of some minorities (though technically Christians are covered by it).

It should be noted that minority identity protection or recognition can apply not just where the majority is of one religion, but also where it is non-religious. Some people seem to think that if there is not one populous religion then there is an absence of hegemony or domination, but there could be a secularist or even an anti-religion hegemony in relation to which a minority provision may be sought.

Just we sometimes use gender, race and ethnicity as criteria to test the inclusivity an institution such as a workplace, a university or a legislature, so it may be thought appropriate to use religious identity. Just as a Civil Service under-represented by female managers might need a remedial policy, so similarly it might need a policy to address the under-representation of Muslims in senior posts. The issue is not confined to numerical presence, but crucially extends to the symbolic remaking of public/common/national identities. Minority religious identities may need to be explicitly recognised in our sense of what the country is and will be in the future. This is about minorities such as Muslims as co-citizens and worthy of respect as co-citizens. It is not in any way an endorsement of a particular religion such as Islam (that would be the first case, policy based on religion as truth). The whole process of minority identity recognition should be dialogical, or more precisely, multilogical, because there are many parties and all are entitled to speak. That is the way of finding out about identities, negotiating compromises, the remaking of new identities and so on, but also of identifying the problems and discussing and finding solutions.

Someone might be opposed to minority identity and recognition for a number of reasons and I would like to address one—namely that minority identities are decomposing and becoming privatised and so the kind of identities needed for recognition or accommodation are not available. Actually, I draw on this sociology myself and while I think it complicates recognition, I do not believe it kills it off. In his seminal essay, ‘New Ethnicities’, Stuart Hall argued that there has been a shift from taken-for-granted, singular cultural, ethnic and collective identities to self-conscious identities—the ‘innocent black subject’ is a thing of the past (if that). People are active in identity formation; indeed, racial and ethnic identities are not merely ascribed, they are a form of agency in all senses of the term. Interestingly, this means, though Hall did not draw this implication, that a commonly drawn contrast between race as ascription and religion as choice no longer holds.

Not only are these identities impure, hybrdic, fluid and varied, but for some their significance will be associational rather than merely or primarily behavioural. For example, in the Fourth National Survey of Ethnic Minorities, virtually everybody with an ethnic minority background said their ethnic identity was important to them and large majorities said their religious identity was important to them, but some of these
individuals did nothing distinctively ‘ethnic’ in behavioural or ‘religious’ terms. This can have policy implications—for example, while about 50 per cent of Muslims wanted Muslim faith schools within the state sector, only half of these individuals said they would send their own children to one if it was available locally (in 1994). This may not be just about abstract fairness. Some Muslims can see their own identities in some ways as negativised—that is, there is something wrong with Muslims. A sentiment such as ‘Most Muslims are problematic but you are ok!’ blocks the way for the ‘ok Muslims’, too, for they may think ‘If that is the way you think about Muslims or if joining you is joining that view then I cannot join you.’

Perhaps ‘new ethnicities’ identities are not so radically new. For example, participation in religious activities can be for a variety of reasons, including some that some would regard as less than fully religious. It is interesting that in describing how he came as an adult to embrace the Christian faith, Barack Obama does not mention Jesus or the Resurrection, but rather the hope and dignity it has given to African-Americans to survive their personal and social suffering, to find ‘a way out of no way’. Or consider how some Jewish synagogue attendance or Hannakah or Sabbath observation may be for family and community rather than faith reasons—and so may raise time-off and bank holiday issues for someone who is not a deep believer. In any case, ‘new ethnicity’ associational identities have a particular political force at the moment with some minority identities.

Olivier Roy has applied this kind of sociology to Muslims internationally. He suggests that Muslims, especially younger Muslims and those in the West, are much less likely than their parents or previous generations to do or believe things just because it is the done thing in their faith community. They are less likely to be customary or conventional or obedient Muslims, but rather think about and question what it means to be Muslim and come up with their own answers, which may radically vary amongst themselves as well as with customary or authoritative Islam. I think this is right, but calling it ‘individualisation’, as Roy does, is quite misleading, for in some contexts it is seen as a corollary of ‘privatisation’ and ‘secularisation’. These identities are not private. Increased personal and associational agency is a constitutive feature of these identities, but the questions being asked by the relevant individuals—What does it mean to be a Muslim? What kind of a Muslim am I?—typically are open to public projections of identity commitment and contestations. What is at stake are indeed public identities and so contemporary British and other Muslim assertiveness can at least partly be understood in terms of identity politics and accommodated within a civic multiculturalism and existing secularist institutional accommodation of religion.

Policy based on respect for religion

There is an image of religion as organisations or communities around competing truths, which are mutually intolerant, which perhaps even hate each other’s guts. There is some truth in that in some times and places, but the opposite is more important. Let me illustrate this by reference to a decision by my late father, a devout and pious Muslim, that I should attend the daily Christian nondenominational worship at my secondary school. When I told him that I could be exempted from it, like the Jewish children, if he sent in a letter requesting this, he asked what they did during this time each morning. When I told him that some read comics, some took the opportunity to catch up with homework and some even arrived late, he said I should join the assembly. He said that as Christians mainly believe what we believe I should join in fully, but whenever it was said that Jesus was the
Son of God, I should say to myself ‘No, he is not’. It is a view that can perhaps be expressed as it is better to be in the presence of religion than not and so the value of religion does not simply reside in one’s own religion. One’s own religious heritage is to be cherished and honoured, but so are those of others and the closing down of any religion is a loss of some sort.

I would suggest that historically it has been a prevalent view in the Middle East and South Asia, where respect for the religion of others has extended to joining in the religious celebrations of others, borrowing from others, syncretism and so on. Respect for religion does not, however, require syncretism and can be found among contemporary Muslims in the West. Reporting on a recent Gallup World Poll, Dalia Mogahed and Zsolt Nyiri write of Muslims in Paris and London that their ‘expectations of respect for Islam and its symbols extends to an expectation of respect for religion in general’ and add that recently ‘Shahid Malik, a British Muslim MP, even complained about what he called the “policy wonks” who wished to strip the public sphere of all Christian religious symbols’. Some find this inter-faith fraternal spirit odd. After all, each religion claims to be true, and so why should it instil a respect for those of rival faiths? Well, if religion is about truth, which as we have seen is but one aspect of the meaning and value of a religion, then perhaps it approximates to a scientific community. Scientists can be highly competitive and determined to prove each other wrong—and yet such scientists evince intellectual appreciation and admiration for their rivals and researchers cooperate as well as compete.

Respect for religion is clearly more than respect as recognition or recognition of religious minorities, and while I am mainly concerned to argue for the latter, I am open to the former, especially as I believe that respect for religion is quite common among religious believers and I worry about an intolerant secularist hegemony. There may once have been a time in Europe when a powerful, authoritarian church or churches stifled dissent, individuality, free debate, science, pluralism and so on, but that is not the present danger. Since the 1960s European cultural, intellectual and political life—the public sphere in the fullest sense of the word—is increasingly becoming dominated by secularism, with secularist networks and organisations controlling most of the levers of power. The accommodative character of secularism itself is being dismissed as archaic, especially on the centre-left. Thus respect for religion is a feature of human character just as we might respect truth-seeking, the cultivation of the intellect or the imagination or artistic creativity or self-discipline not just because of its utility or truth. We can think religion is a good of this sort regardless of whether or not we are a believer just as we can think music or science is a good whether or not we are musical or scientific. A person, a society, a culture, a country would be poorer without it. It is part of good living and while not all can cultivate it fully, it is good that some do and they should be honoured and supported by others. This view could be part of ‘religion as truth’ but is not dependent upon it or any kind of theism for it can be a feature of some form of ethical humanism. I think it can be justified within a philosophy of human plurality and multidimensionality of the kind to be found in, for example, Collingwood’s Speculum Mentis (1924) or Oakeshott’s Experience and its Modes (1933).

Respect for religion is, however, clearly more than respect as recognition or recognition of religious minorities, and while I am mainly concerned to argue for the latter, I am open to the former, especially as I believe that respect for religion is quite common among religious believers and I worry about an intolerant secularist hegemony. There may once have been a time in Europe when a powerful, authoritarian church or churches stifled dissent, individuality, free debate, science, pluralism and so on, but that is not the present danger. Since the 1960s European cultural, intellectual and political life—the public sphere in the fullest sense of the word—is increasingly becoming dominated by secularism, with secularist networks and organisations controlling most of the levers of power. The accommodative character of secularism itself is being dismissed as archaic, especially on the centre-left. Thus respect for religion is...
made difficult and seems outlandish but may be necessary as one of the sources of counter-hegemony and a more genuine pluralism. Hence, respect for religion is compatible with and may be a requirement of a democratic political culture.

I appreciate that this may seem to be, and indeed may be a form of ‘privileging’ religion. For in this idea that the state may wish to show respect for religion I am going beyond not just toleration and freedom of religion, but also beyond civic recognition. Nor am I simply pointing to the existence of overlaps and linkages between the state and religion. The sense of ‘privilege’ may not, however, be as strong as it may seem. After all, the autonomy of politics is the privileging of the non-religious, so this is perhaps qualifying that secular privileging. Moreover, it is far from an exclusive privileging. States regularly ‘privilege’ the nation, ethnicity, science, the arts, sport, economy and so on in relation to the centrality they give it in policy making, the public resources devoted to it or the prestige placed upon it. So, if showing respect for religion is a privileging of religion, it is of a multiplex, multilogical sort, and it is based on the recognition that the secular is already dominant in many contemporary states.

In any case, I offer my comments on respect for religion more tentatively than in relation to the other four elements of my typology. While each of them may have a place within a moderate secularism, we clearly need to separate the five positions out and differentiate between their normative justifications and policy implications, but we may still wish to appeal to more than one of them at a time or for different policy measures or perhaps to appeal to some of them without repudiating the others.

Notes

9 Bhargava, ‘Political secularism’, p. 93.
13 Modood, Multiculturalism.

