Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy

Multiculturalism, securalism and the state

Tariq Modood [a]

[a] Professor of Sociology, Politics and Public Policy, University of Bristol

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

shall not be liable for any loss, actions, claims, proceedings, demand, or costs or damages whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with or arising out of the use of this material.

6

Multiculturalism, Securalism and the State

TARIQ MODOOD

Recent migrations have created new multicultural situations in western Europe and elsewhere. At the centre of this multiculturalism are religious groups. I want to address the question of whether the new plurality of faiths requires a deepening of the institutional separation between private faith and public authority. I shall suggest that the political project of multiculturalism, with its reappraisal of the public/private distinction, particularly the relationship between ethnicity and citizenship, poses a challenge to the taken-for-granted secularism of many theorists of multiculturalism.

I shall argue that the strict division between the public and private spheres as argued by some multiculturalists does not stand up to scrutiny and, more particularly, it does not adequately take into account the interdependence that exists between the public and private spheres. Moreover, the assertion of a strict divide between the public and private spheres, far from underpinning multiculturalism, will work to prevent its emergence. I shall argue that, in the light of the interdependence between the public and private spheres, the call for the development of a 'politics of recognition' becomes more intelligible: it explains why, among others, minority groups are calling for the appropriate public recognition of their private communal identities. A brief consideration of how different kinds of states may or may not be able to facilitate this recognition forms the basis of the penultimate section of this paper. And, lastly, I shall conclude by arguing that a moderately, rather than a radically, secular state is the best mechanism through which the claims for recognition put forward by contending religious groups can be satisfied.

Multiculturalism and the Division of Spheres

There is a body of theoretical opinion which argues that the public/private distinction is essential to multiculturalism. Rex, for example, distinguishes between plural societies such as apartheid South Africa and the multicultural ideal. He contends that the fundamental distinction between them is that the latter restricts cultural diversity to a private sphere so all enjoy equality of opportunity and uniform treatment in the public domain.[1] Immigrants and minorities do not have to respect the normative power of a dominant culture, but there must be a normative universality in relation to law, politics, economics and welfare policy.

An important assumption contained in this way of seeing the public/private distinction is found in a discussion by Habermas. Although he maintains that a recipient society cannot require immigrants to assimilate (immigrants cannot be obliged to conform to the dominant way of life), he also contends that a democratic constitutional regime must seek to 'preserve the identity of the political community, which nothing, including immigration, can be permitted to encroach upon, since that identity is founded on the constitutional principles anchored in the political culture and not on the basic ethical orientations of the cultural form of life predominant in that country'.[2] But is this distinction between the political and cultural identities of a society valid? Politics and law depend to some degree on shared ethical assumptions and inevitably reflect the norms and values of the society they are part of. In this sense, no regime stands outside culture, ethnicity or nationality, and changes in these will need to be reflected in the political arrangements of the regime. Indeed, Habermas seems to concede this when he states that 'as other forms of life become established [that is, following immigration] the horizon within which citizens henceforth interpret their common constitutional principles may also expand'.[3] But this concession begs the question of the coherence of his initial distinction. If the political identity of the regime is determined by reference to the 'constitutional principles anchored in the political culture', how can the articulation, interpretation and, therefore, operation of these constitutional principles not be subject to the 'basic ethical orientations' of new (religious) citizens given these orientations provide the fundamental interpretative horizons for these principles? As the fundamental interpretative horizons of the citizenry 'expands' through the immigration of religious peoples, so too the political identity of the regime is inevitably altered. Moreover, the

interdependence between the political and the cultural, the public and the private, is not confined to the level of ethical generalities. On a practical level, as Rex recognises, religious communities may look to the state to support their culture (for example, through support for religious schools and other educational institutions) and the state may, reciprocally, look to religious communities to inculcate virtues such as truth-telling, respect for property, service to others and so on, without which a civic morality would have nothing to build on.

Furthermore, if the public and private spheres mutually shape each other in these ways, then however 'abstract' and 'rational' the principles of a public order may be, they will reflect the 'folk cultures' out of which that particular public order has grown. If this is the case, then there can be no question of the public sphere being morally, ethnically or, indeed, religiously neutral. Rather, it will inevitably appeal to points of privately shared values and a sense of belonging found within the (religious and non-religious) communities which make up society, as well as to the superstructure of conventions, laws and principles which regulate it. And, this will have the further important implication that those citizens whose moral, ethnic or religious communal identities are most adequately reflected in the political identity of the regime, those citizens whose private identity fits most comfortably with this political identity, will feel least the force of a rigidly enforced public/private distinction, though they may become more aware of its coercive influence when they have to share the public domain with persons from other communities, persons who may also wish the identity of the political community to reflect something of their own community too.

There is, therefore, a real possibility that the elaboration of a strict public/private distinction may simply act to buttress the privileged position of the historically 'integrated' folk cultures at the expense of the historically subordinated or newly migrated folk. In this context, therefore, a strict interpretation and application of the public/private distinction, far from underpinning multiculturalism, will work to prevent its emergence.

Public/Private Interdependence and the Politics of Recognition

If we recognise that the public sphere is not morally neutral, that the public order is not culturally, religiously or ethnically blind, we can begin to understand why oppressed, marginalised or immigrant groups may want that public order (in which they may for the first time have

rights of participation) to 'recognise' them, to be 'user-friendly' to the new folks. The logic of demanding that public institutions acknowledge their ways of doing things becomes readily intelligible, as does the whole phenomenon of minorities seeking increased visibility, of contesting the boundaries of the public, of not simply asking to be left alone and to be civilly tolerated.

What is important to recognise here is that the content of what is claimed today in the name of equality is more than that which would have been claimed in the 1960s. Iris Young expresses well the new political climate when she describes the emergence of an ideal of equality based not just on allowing excluded groups to assimilate and live by the norms of dominant groups, but also on the view that 'a positive self-definition of group difference is in fact more liberatory'.[4] She cites the examples of the black power movement, the gay pride assertion that sexual identity is a matter of culture and politics, and a feminism which emphasises the positivity and specificity of female experience and values. (These movements have not had the same impact in Europe as in parts of North America, but are nevertheless present here.)

The shift in the content of these claims is from an understanding of equality in terms of individualism and cultural assimilation to a politics of recognition, to equality as encompassing public ethnicity. That is to say, equality as not having to hide or apologise for one's origins, family or community, but requiring others to show respect for them and adapt public attitudes and arrangements so that the heritage they represent is encouraged rather than ignored or expected to wither away.

There seems, then, to be two distinct conceptions of equal citizenship, with each based on a different view of what is 'public' and 'private'. Broadly speaking, the first equates to the content of the claims for equality proffered in the 1960s, while the second accords more fully with the content of the claims presented by contemporary proponents of a politics of recognition. These two conceptions of equality may be stated as follows:

1. The right to assimilate to the majority or dominant culture in the public sphere and toleration of 'difference' in the private sphere, and
2. The right to have one's 'difference' (minority ethnicity and so on) recognised and supported in the public and the private spheres.

These two conceptions are not mutually exclusive. Indeed, in my view,

multiculturalism requires support for both conceptions. For, the assumption behind the first conception is that participation in the public or national culture is necessary for the effective exercise of citizenship (the only obstacles to which are the exclusionary processes preventing gradual assimilation). The second conception, too, assumes groups excluded from the public or national culture have their citizenship diminished as a result, but proposes to remedy this by offering the right to assimilate while, at the same time, agreeing to widen and adapt the public or national culture (including the public and media symbols of national membership) to incorporate the relevant minority ethnicities.

It may be thought that the second conception of equality involves something of a contradiction: it accepts that participation in national or shared culture(s) is necessary for effective equality, but encourages individuals to cultivate minority identities and practices. There is indeed a genuine tension here, and perhaps it can only be resolved in practice, through finding and cultivating points of common ground between dominant and subordinate cultures, as well as new syntheses and hybridities. For an effective multicultural interaction, the important thing is that this tension should not be heightened by the burdens of change, or the costs of not changing, all falling on one party to the encounter.

The Multicultural State

Having suggested that a strict division between the public and private spheres does not stand up to scrutiny, and having briefly set out in what sense the call for recognition of minority groups (including religious groups) can be seen to be reasonable given the interdependence between the public and private spheres, let us briefly examine the types of conceptions of the individual, community and the state that are consistent with these views, for that may illuminate what is at issue and the sources of disagreement, not least *among* advocates of multiculturalism. More particularly, I suggest that how we interpret and apply the public/private distinction will depend on the extent to which one believes individuals, (ethnic) groups and the (nation) state form coherent unities, are the bearers of ethical claims, and can be integrated with each other. I offer below five ideal types, marking five possible ways in which one could respond to the contemporary challenge of diversity consequent upon immigration in Europe.[5]

1. *The decentred self.* Some theorists describe the present condition as
'postmodern'. Among the many things meant by this term is the
assertion that, due to factors such as migration and the globalisation of
economics, consumption and communications, societies can no longer
be constituted by stable collective purposes and identities organised
territorially by the nation-state. This means that, in its most radical
version, this view rejects not only the possibility of a politically
constituted multiculturalism, but also the idea of a unified self *per se*:

> If we feel we have a unified identity ... it is only because we
> construct a comforting story or 'narrative of the self' about
> ourselves ... The fully unified, completed, secure and coherent
> identity is a fantasy. Instead, as the systems of meaning and
> cultural representation multiply, we are confronted by a
> bewildering, fleeting multiplicity of possible identities, any one of
> which we could identify with – at least temporarily.[6]

The radical multiple self has a penchant for identities, but prefers
surfing on the waves of deconstruction than seeking reconstruction in
multiplicity. It *is* post-self rather than a multi-self. Even in less radical
versions, the self is no more connected to one location, society or state
than another, any more than the typical consumer is connected to one
producer or the goods of one country. Reconciled to multiplicity as an
end in itself, its vision of multiculturalism is confined to personal
lifestyles and cosmopolitan consumerism, and, more significantly, its
vision of multiculturalism does not extend to the state, which it
confidently expects to wither away.

Under this scheme, therefore, the call for recognition and the
contention of the interdependence between the public and private
spheres have little meaning. At most, multiculturalism can mean the
development of ever more different (even bizarre) 'life-style enclaves'
where the postmodern self can find or lose itself without (much)
reference to the character of the public sphere.[7] So long as the public
culture does not use coercive force to prevent the fluidity and
multiplicity of the postmodern person, he or she can have no need or
desire to influence the character of the public culture. The decentred
self is at its most happily apolitical where the state is punctiliously
culturally neutral.

2. *The liberal state.* In contrast, the liberal theorist expects the
integrity of individuals (though not necessarily large-scale

communities) to survive the social changes that are in motion. Individuals may temporarily become disoriented, bewildered by the multiplicity of identities, temporarily decentred, but the liberal theorist confidently believes they will soon re-centre themselves. Lifestyles in their neighbourhoods may change as persons of exotic appearance, large families and pungent-smelling foods move in. The old residents and the new have to adjust (perhaps gradually, certainly repeatedly) their sense of self, community and country as these changes occur, but the liberal theorist contends that no major political project other than the elimination of discrimination is required to achieve this. The state exists to protect the rights of individuals, but the question of recognising new ethnic groups does not arise, for the state does not recognise any groups. Individuals relate to the state as individual citizens not as members of the group. The state is group blind, it cannot 'see' colour, gender, ethnicity, religion or even nationality. In the parlance of North American political theorists (and it is certainly easier to see the USA rather than any European state as approximating to this liberal ideal), the just state is neutral between rival conceptions of the good. It does not promote one or more national cultures, religions, ways of life and so on. These matters remain private to individuals in their voluntary associations with each other. Nor does the state promote any syncretic vision of common living, of fellow-feeling, between the inhabitants of that territory, other than the legal entitlements and duties that define civic membership.

In a liberal regime, therefore, there is no need to recognise the particular identity of ethnic or religious groups. Their equal citizenship is assured, and their equality determined by reference to an overarching political viewpoint whose legitimacy is determined without reference to the particular 'basic ethical orientations' of any or all of the groups within society.[8] Even if it could be shown that a liberal regime was not morally, ethnically or, indeed, religiously neutral in its effect, this would be considered by the liberal theorist to be of no consequence: it would not impinge upon the claim to neutrality presented by the liberal regime. Since any regulatory regime will affect diverse groups differently, what is important to the liberal theorist is the neutrality of the procedure to decide between the various individuals and groups within society, not the neutrality of the outcomes.[9] Liberals argue that even if the effect of a liberal regime may be to bolster dominant groups, its neutrality is not compromised because *in intention* it does not seek to prejudice any group.[10] In the light of this, the question of the public recognition of private

communal identities and so on, does not arise – the liberal state can remain indifferent to such claims. Whatever the coherence of the distinction between neutrality in intention and neutrality in effect, it is naive to expect that those who are not satisfied by the outcomes that are generated will not question the legitimacy of the procedures that do not just occasionally, but systematically prevent the outcomes that their conception of the good directs them toward.

3. *The republic.* The ideal republic too, like the liberal state, does not recognise groups among the citizenry. It relates to each citizen as an individual. Yet, unlike the liberal state, it is amenable to one collective project; more precisely, it is itself a collective project, a project, that is to say, which is not reducible to the protection of the rights of individuals or the maximisation of the choices open to individuals. The republic seeks to enhance the lives of its members by making them a part of a way of living individuals could not create for themselves; it seeks to make the individuals members of a civic community. This community may be based upon subscription to 'universal' principles such as liberty, equality and fraternity; or to the promotion of a national culture; or, as in the case of France, to both. In a republic, the formation of public ethnicity, by immigration or in other ways, would be discouraged and there would be strong expectation, even pressure, for individuals to assimilate to the national identity. In such a situation, it would be difficult to see how the call for public recognition by minority ethnic and religious groups can get off the ground.

4. *The federation of communities.* In contrast to the first three responses to multicultural diversity, this option is built upon the assumption that the individual is not the unit (or at least not the only unit) to which the state must relate. Rather, individuals belong to and are shaped by communities, which are the primary focus of their loyalty and the regulators of their social life. Far from being confined to the private sphere, communities are the primary agents of the public sphere. Public life in fact consists of organised communities relating to each other, and the state is, therefore, a federation of communities and exists to protect the rights of communities.

As with all of the ideal types listed here, one can think of a more radical or extreme version of the model, and a more moderate version which balances the rights of communities with the rights of individuals, including the right to exit from communities. The *millet* system of the Ottoman empire, in which some powers of the state were delegated to

Christian and Jewish communities, which had the power to administer personal law within their communities in accordance with their own legal system, is an example of this model of the multicultural state and has occasionally been invoked in Britain as an example to emulate. The *millet* system offered significant autonomy to communities, but, of course, did not offer equality between communities or any conception of democratic citizenship. The problem with this system of political organisation, therefore, is not that it is unable to give suitable cognisance to the call for recognition by minority ethnic and religious groups, but rather the fact it is likely to remain an unattractive proposition to many in contemporary Europe unless a democratic variant can be devised. The system of pillorisation in The Netherlands or Belgium, a moderate version of this type of institutionalised communal diversity within a democratic framework, may be favoured by some.

5. *The plural state.* In my view, a more promising conception of the organisation of the multicultural state is provided by the notion of the plural state. In this model, again an ideal type of which there can be strong and weak forms, there is a recognition that social life consists of individuals and groups, and both need to be provided for in the formal and informal distribution of powers – not just in law, but in representation in the offices of the state, public committees, consultative exercises and access to public fora. There may be some rights for all individuals as in the liberal state, but mediating institutions such as trades unions, churches, neighbourhoods, immigrant associations and so on may also be encouraged to be active public players and fora for political discussion, and may even have a formal representative or administrative role to play in the state. The plural state, however, allows for, indeed probably requires, an ethical conception of citizenship and not just an instrumental one as in the liberal and federation-of-communities conceptions. The understanding that individuals are partly constituted by the lives of families and communities fits well with the recognition that the moral individual is partly shaped by the social order constituted by citizenship and the publics that amplify and qualify, sustain, critique and reform citizenship.

If the state should come to have this kind of importance in people's lives, it is most likely they will, as in a republic, emotionally and psychologically invest in the state and its projects. The most usual form of this emotional relationship is a sense of national identity. In an

undiluted form, national identity, like most group identifications, can be dangerous and certainly incompatible with multiculturalism. On the other hand, assuming a plurality of identities and not a narrow nationalism, the plural state, unlike the liberal state, is able to offer an emotional identity with the whole to counterbalance the emotional loyalties to ethnic and religious communities, which should prevent the fragmentation of society into narrow, selfish communalisms. Yet, the presence of these strong community identities will be an effective check against monocultural statism.

For the plural state, the challenge of the new multiculturalism is the integration of transplanted cultures, heritages and peoples into long-established, yet evolving, historical national cultures, heritages and so on. It is about creating a cultural synthesis in both private and public spaces, including in education and welfare provision. Above all, proponents of the new multiculturalism are anxious to find new ways of extending, reforming and syncretising existing forms of public culture and citizenship. This is not about 'decentring society' or 'deconstructing the nation-state', but rather it is concerned with integrating difference by remaking the nation-state. In contrast to common political parlance, 'integration' here is not synonymous with 'assimilation'. Assimilation is something immigrant or minorities must do or have done to them, whereas integration is interactive, a two-way process: both parties are an active ingredient and so something new is created. For the plural state, then, multiculturalism means reforming national identity and citizenship.

Secularism and Multiculturalism

If, as I argue, the plural state provides a good model for a viable multicultural state, the question remains whether such a state must inevitably exclude religious communities *qua* religious communities from participating in the political life of the state. More particularly, should the multicultural state be a radically secular state? Or, alternatively, can religious communities play a central role in the political life of a multicultural state?

In order to examine these questions, the first point to note is we must not be too quick to exclude particular religious communities from participation in the political debates and other aspects of a multicultural state. Secularity should not be embraced without careful consideration of the possibilities for reasonable dialogue between religious and non-religious groups. In particular, we must beware an

ignorance-cum-prejudice about Muslims that is apparent among even the best political philosophers.[11]

Charles Taylor makes this mistake in his argument for a politics of recognition. In contrast to Iris Young, he presents a moderate version of a 'politics of difference' and part of his moderation consists in his recognition that not everybody can join the party: there are some groups to whom a politics of recognition cannot be extended within a liberal polity. However, among those he believes cannot be included are mainstream Muslims. While he refers to the controversy over *The Satanic Verses*, the only argument he offers for the exclusion is: '[f]or mainstream Islam, there is no question of separating politics and religion the way we have come to expect in Western liberal society'.[12] Yet, I believe this is an odd conclusion for at least two reasons.

First, *it seems inconsistent with the starting point of the argument* for multicultural equality, namely, that it is mistaken to separate culture and politics. More to the point, it all depends on what one means by '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. In contemporary Islam, there are ideological arguments for the absolute subordination of politics to religious leaders (for example, Khomeni, though even then the ideology is not always deemed practical), but this is not mainstream Islam, any more than the model of politics in Calvin's Geneva is mainstream Christianity.

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, but not necessarily positive law. 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.

Just as it is possible to distinguish between theocracy and mainstream Islam, 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 which exist
throughout western Europe except 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 it is clear that a historically
evolved and evolving compromise with religion is the defining feature
of western European secularism, rather than the absolute separation of
religion and politics. Secularism does today enjoy a 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, the table below shows mainstream Islam and mainstream
secularism are philosophically closer to each other than either is to its
radical versions.

TABLE 1
ISLAMIC AND SECULARIST VIEWS REGARDING THE SEPARATION OF
RELIGION AND THE STATE

Separation of religion and state	Radical secularism	Radical Islam	Moderate secularism	Moderate Islam
Absolute separation	Yes	No	No	No
No separation	No	Yes	No	No
Relative separation	No	No	Yes	Yes

Muslims, then, should not be excluded from participation in the
multicultural state because their views about politics are not secular
enough. There is still a sufficient divide between private and public
spheres in the Islamic faith to facilitate dialogue with other
(contending) religious and non-religious communities and beliefs.

There is a further, alternative argument, however, for a
multiculturalism which explicitly embraces radical secularism. Versions
of this argument are quite popular with reformers as well as academics
in Britain at the moment.[13] This argument recognises that in a country
such as Britain, religion and state are not separate; the constitution
gives the Church of England (and Scotland), with its links with the
monarchy and Parliament, a privileged position, often referred to as
'establishment'. Moreover, it is asserted that an institutional privileging
of one group is *ipso facto* a degrading of all the others, allowing them

only second-class citizenship: establishment 'assumes a correspondence between national and religious identity which marginalises non-established churches, and especially non-Christians as only partial members of the British national collectivity'.[14] It is maintained that if we are to take multicultural equality seriously, the Church of England ought to be disestablished: public multiculturalism implies radical secularism, regardless of whatever compromises might have been historically required. This argument relies upon three different assumptions which I would like to consider in turn.

1. Neutrality

It seems to be assumed that equality between religions requires the multicultural state to be neutral between them. This seems to be derived from Rawls's contention that the just state is neutral between 'rival conceptions of the good'. It is, however, an appeal to a conception of neutrality that theorists of difference disallow, since a key argument of the theorists of difference is that the state is always for or against certain cultural configurations: impartiality and openness to reason, even when formally constituted through rules and procedures, reflect a dominant cultural ethos, enabling those who share that ethos to flourish while hindering those who are at odds with it.[15]

This objection seems to have particular bite for secularism, for, even where it is not avowedly atheistical, it seems not to be neutral between religions. For some people, religion is about 'the inner life', or personal conduct or individual salvation; for others, it includes communal obligations, a public philosophy and political action (for example, as in the Christian socialism favoured by the British Labour Prime Minister, Tony Blair, not to mention the various Christian Democratic parties in western Europe). Radical secular political arrangements seems to suit and favour the private kind of religions, but not those that require public action. It is surely a contradiction to require both that the state should be neutral about religion and that the state should require religions with public ambitions to give them up. One way out of this difficulty is to restrict neutrality to certain kinds of cases. Thus, for example, it has been argued that the liberal state is not and ought not to be neutral between communalistic and individualistic conceptions of the good. Liberals should use state power to encourage individualistic religions over those oriented to shaping social structures; what they ought to be neutral between are the various individualistic religions.[16] But this leaves unclear why non-liberals, in particular those whose conception of the good is not confined to forming a coherent

individual life for themselves, should be persuaded that the liberal state is the just state; and, if they are not, and the pretence of meta-neutrality is dropped, how is the liberal state to secure its legitimacy? Even this, however, is a less arbitrary use of the idea of liberal neutrality than that found among multiculturalists such as Taylor or Amy Gutmann. After recognising that multicultural equality between groups can take a neutralist or interventionist version, Gutmann suggests that the former is more suited to religious groups and the latter to non-religious educational policy.[17] Yet she offers no justification for this differential approach, other than that it reflects US constitutional and political arrangements.

It has been argued that even where absolute neutrality is impossible, one can still approximate to neutrality and this is what disestablishment achieves.[18] But one could just as well maintain that though total multicultural or multi-faith inclusiveness is impossible, we should try and approximate to inclusiveness rather than neutrality. Hence, an alternative to disestablishment is to design institutions to ensure those who are marginalised by the dominant ethos are given some special platform or access to influence so their voices are nevertheless heard. By way of illustration, note that while American secularism is suspicious of any state endorsement of religion, Indian secularism was designed to ensure state support for religions other than just those of the majority. It was not meant to deny the public character of religion, but to deny the identification of the state with any one religion. The latter is closer to what I am calling moderate rather than absolute secularism. In the British context, this would mean pluralising the state-religion link (which is happening to a degree), rather than severing it. It is interesting that Prince Charles has let it be known he would as a monarch prefer the title 'Defender of Faith' to the historic title 'Defender of *the* Faith'.[19]

2. Autonomy of politics

Second, implicit in the argument for the separation of the spheres of religion and politics is the idea that each has its own concerns and mode of reasoning, and achieves its goals when not interfered with by the other. (I am here only concerned with the autonomy of politics.) The point is that politics has limited and distinctive goals and methods, which relate only to a dimension of our social world and can best be deliberated over in their own terms, not derived in a law-like way from scriptures, dogmas or theological arguments. The focus of political debate and of common political action has to be defined so those of

different theologies, and those of none, can reason with each other and can reach conclusions that are perceived to have some legitimacy for those who do not share a religious faith. Moreover, if people are to occupy the same political space without conflict, they have mutually to limit the extent to which they subject each others' fundamental beliefs to criticism. I think such arguments became particularly prominent in seventeenth-century western Europe as people sought to put to an end the religious wars of the time.

I have already suggested that this idea of relative autonomy has shaped statecraft both in the Muslim world and the constitutional structures of contemporary European states. Nevertheless, I do not think the autonomy of politics is (or could be) absolute, nor that it supports radical (as opposed to moderate) secularism. The point I wish to make here is that this view of politics is not just the result of a compromise between different religions, or between theism and atheism, but is part of a style of politics in which there is an inhibition, a constraint on ideology. If politics is a limited activity, it means political argument and debate must focus on a limited range of issues and questions rather than on general conceptions of human nature, of social life or of historical progress. Conversely, to the extent politics *can* be influenced by such ideological arguments, for example, by their setting the framework of public discourse or the climate of opinion in which politics takes place, then it is not at all clear that religious ideologies are taboo. While it is a contingent matter as to what kind of ideologies are to be found at a particular time and place, it is likely that ideologically minded religious people will be most stimulated to develop faith-based critiques of contemporary secularism where secular ideologies are prevalent and, especially, where those ideologies are critical of the pretensions of religious people.

Of course, we cannot proscribe ideology, secular or religious. My point is simply that the ideological or ethical character of religion is not by itself a reason for supposing religion should have no influence on politics. Rather, institutional linkages between religious conscience and affairs of state (as through the 26 bishops who by right sit in the House of Lords at Westminster) are often helpful in developing politically informed and politically constructive religious perspectives that are not naively optimistic about the nature of politics.

3. Democracy

Proponents of a radically secular multicultural state maintain that establishment, even a reformed establishment (for example, a Council

of Religions), is a form of corporatist representation and is therefore
open to the charge of being undemocratic. Advocates of multicultural
equality are skating on thin ice here, for it is not uncommon for them
to argue for special forms of minority representation. While in practice
this often means special consultative committees, the preferred method
is usually some form of constraint on an electoral process (a device, for
example, that reserves certain seats for women or a minority in a
decision-making forum). In any case, there is no reason to be a purist
in polities where mixed forms of representation are the norm and are
likely to remain so. We are after all talking about bodies with very little
power. One would, therefore, have to take a practical view of how
damaging it would be for an institution with such little power to
remain independent of the franchise. There are certainly advantages in
allowing organised religion corporatist influence rather than
encouraging it, or obliging it, to become an electoral player. Some
examples of when a religion deprived of state influence seeks an
electoral intervention and joins the party competition, as in Pat
Buchanan's bid for the Republican Party presidential nomination in the
USA, or the emergence of Islamist parties in various countries or in the
effects of electoral Hindu chauvinism on the Indian state, suggest that
the radical secularist's concern with democratic purity may in the end
be counter-productive.[20] Of course, it could be argued that organised
religion should not be allowed to support electoral candidates,[21] but
advocates of this restriction typically fail to explain why churches and
other religious organisations are significantly different from businesses,
trades unions, sport and film stars and so on. It is also difficult to see
how such restrictions are democratic: denying religious groups
corporate representation while, at the same time, requiring them to
abstain from electoral politics (all in the name of democracy and so
that 'the nonreligious will not feel alienated or be denied adequate
respect')[22] seems to compromise democracy more seriously than the
maintenance of the current weak forms of corporate representation.

    The goal of democratic multiculturalism cannot and should not be
culturally neutral, but, rather, the inclusion of marginal and
disadvantaged groups, including religious communities, in public life.
Democratic political discourse has perhaps to proceed on the
assumption that, ideally, contributions should be such that in principle
they could be seen as relevant to the discourse by any member of the
polity. This may mean that there is a gravitational pull in which
religious considerations come to be translated into non-religious
considerations, or are generally persuasive when allied with non-

religious considerations. What it does not warrant is the relegation of religious views to a private sphere. Neither my intention nor expectation is the demise of secularism. The argument for inclusion is aimed at keeping open the possibility of dialogue and mutual influence. It does mean, however, as pointed out by Graham Haydon, that:

> there is no reason to assume that religious points of view must entirely give way to secular ones. For the entry of non-secular views into the debate does at least make it more possible for secular thinkers to appreciate the force which the other points of view have for those who adhere to them. Secular thinkers may pragmatically be willing to make some accommodation to the views of religious thinkers: movement need not be all the other way (as it would be, by default, if religious viewpoints were to remain only in a private realm).[23]

In arguing that corporate representation is one of the means of seeking inclusiveness, I am not arguing for the privileging of religion, but recognising that in the context of a secular hegemony in the public cultures of contemporary western Europe, some special forms of representation may be necessary and more conducive to social cohesion than some other scenarios.

Conclusion

The strict divide between the public and private spheres suggested by some theorists of multiculturalism is overplayed. There is an interdependence between the public and private spheres which must be taken into account in any adequate characterisation of a multicultural state. In particular, I contend that there is a theoretical incompatibility between multiculturalism and radical secularism. In a society where some of the disadvantaged and marginalised minorities are religious minorities, a public policy of multiculturalism will require the public recognition of religious minorities, and the theoretical incompatibility will become a practical issue. In such situations, moderate secularism offers the basis for institutional compromises. Such moderate secularism is already embodied in church-state relations in western Europe (France being an exception). Rather than see such church-state relations as archaic and as an obstacle to multiculturalism, we should be scrutinising the compromises that they represent and how those compromises need to be remade to serve the new multicultural circumstances. Multiculturalism may after all not require such a break

from the past, but may reasonably be pursued as an extension of ideas associated with the plural state.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

NOTES

1. J. Rex, *Race and Ethnicity* (Milton Keynes, Open University Press, 1986), Ch.7.
2. J. Habermas, 'Struggles for Recognition in the Democratic Constitutional State' in A. Gutmann (ed.), *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1994), p.139.
3. Ibid. pp.139–140.
4. I. M. Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1990), p.157.
5. These five ideal types and the terms I use to mark them are my own. Given the variety of ways in which terms such as 'liberal' and 'the plural state' are used, my ideal types do not necessarily correspond with how some others may define these terms, including those who use the terms to designate their own perspective.
6. S. Hall, 'The Question of Cultural Identity' in S. Hall and T. McGrew (eds.), *Modernity and its Futures* (Cambridge, Polity Press, 1992), p.277. Hall does not always argue as if the contemporary self was radically decentred: see S. Hall and D. Held, 'Citizens and Citizenship' in S. Hall and M. Jacques (eds.), *New Times: The Changing Face of Politics in the 1990s* (Lawrence and Wishart, 1989).
7. R. N. Bellah, R. Madsen, W. M. Sullivan, A. Swidler and S. M. Tipton, *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1985), p.72.
8. Charles Larmore, Joshua Cohen and Thomas Nagel (in his early work at least) argue that the arguments and reasons advanced in favour of a political regime must be neutral, for if they are not neutral, then these justifications do not (in the words of Larmore) present a solution 'to the political problem of reasonable disagreement about the good life ... They have themselves become simply another part of the problem': see C. Larmore, 'Political Liberalism', *Political Theory*, 18 (1990), p.345. This is not a view held by, among others, John Rawls who maintains that the arguments in favour of a regime can be non-neutral, though the arguments that are advanced in the operation of the justificatory regime must be in some sense neutral as between different conceptions of the good: see J. Rawls, *Political Liberalism* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1993).
9. B. Ackerman, 'Neutralities' in R. B. Douglass, G. M. Mara and H. S. Richardson (eds.), *Liberalism and the Good* (London, Routledge, 1990), p.39; J. Rawls, *Political Liberalism* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1993), p.194; C. Larmore, *Patterns of Moral Complexity* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1987), p.44.
10. T. Nagel, *Equality and Partiality* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1991), p.166.
11. T. Modood, '"Race" in Britain and the Politics of Difference' in D. Archard (ed.), *Philosophy and Pluralism* (Cambridge, CUP, 1996), pp.178–79.
12. C. Taylor, 'Multiculturalism and "The Politics of Recognition"' in A. Gutmann (ed.), *Multiculturalism and 'The Politics of Recognition'* (Princeton, Princeton University

Press, 1994), p.62.

13. T. Modood, 'Establishment, Multiculturalism and British Citizenship', *Political Quarterly*, 65/1 (1994), pp.53–73; T. Modood (ed.), *Church, State and Religious Minorities* (London, Policy Studies Institute, 1997).

14. N. Yuval-Davis, 'Fundamentalism, Multiculturalism and Women in Britain' in J. Donald and A. Rattansi (eds.), *'Race', Culture and Difference* (London, Sage, 1992), p.283.

15. Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference*.

16. J. Waldron, 'Legislation and Moral Neutrality' in R. Goodin and A. Reeve (eds.), *Liberal Neutrality* (London, Routledge, 1989), pp.78–80.

17. A. Gutmann, 'Introduction' in A. Gutmann (ed.), *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1994), pp.10–12.

18. A. Phillips, 'In Defence of Secularism' in T. Modood (ed.), *Church, State and Religious Minorities* (London, Policy Studies Institute, 1997).

19. J. Dimbleby, *Prince of Wales, A Biography* (Little Brown, 1994), p.528.

20. M. Sandel, 'Review of Rawls' *Political Liberalism*', *Harvard Law Review*, 107 (1994), pp.1765–94.

21. R. Audi, 'The Separation of Church and State and the Obligations of Citizenship', *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 8/3 (Summer 1989).

22. Ibid. p.295.

23. G. Haydon, 'Conceptions of the Secular in Society, Polity and Schools', *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 28/1 (1994), p.70.