

Multiculturalism, Secularism, and the State

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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 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 minority groups, among others, 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, finally, 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 strict division between public and private spheres

There is a body of theoretical opinion that 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. 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 (e.g. 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. 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, 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 and to be user-friendly to them. 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, contesting the boundaries of the public, and not simply asking to be left alone and tolerated civilly.

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 the dominant groups, but also on the view that ‘a positive self-definition of group difference is in fact more liberatory’.³

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 conception of the individual, the 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 *amongst* 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.⁴

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. 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.⁵

The radical multiple self has a penchant for identities, but prefers surfing on the waves of deconstruction to seeking reconstruction in multiplicity. It is post-self rather than a multi-self. 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) 'lifestyle enclaves', where the postmodern self can find or lose itself without (much) reference to the character of the public sphere.

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 and temporarily decentred, but the liberal theorist confidently believes they will soon recentre 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 (it is certainly easier to see the USA 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. The state does not promote, either, 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.

Liberals argue that even if the effect of a liberal regime is to bolster dominant groups, its neutrality is not compromised because *in intention* it does not seek to prejudice any group.⁶ 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 procedures that not just occasionally, but systematically prevent the outcomes that their conception of the good directs them towards.

The republic

The ideal republic too, like the liberal state, does not recognise groups amongst 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 that 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; upon the promotion of a national culture; or, as in the case of France, upon 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.

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 that 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 a 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 that it is likely to remain an unattractive proposition to many in contemporary Europe unless a democratic variant can be devised. The system of pillarisation in the Netherlands or Belgium, a moderate version of this type of institutionalised communal diversity within a democratic framework, may be favoured by some.

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, 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 forums. There may be some rights for all individuals, as in the liberal state, but mediating institutions, such as trade unions, churches, neighbourhoods, immigrant associations, and so on, may also be encouraged to be active public players and forums 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 would, as in a republic, invest emotionally and psychologically 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; this 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 ongoing national cultures. 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 and reforming existing forms of public culture and citizenship. This is not about decentering 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 active ingredients and something new is created. For the plural state, then, multiculturalism means re-forming 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 that we must not be too quick to exclude particular religious communities from participation in the political debates 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 of an ignorance-cum-prejudice about Muslims that is apparent amongst even the best political philosophers.⁷

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 ceremonies and insignia, and public hostility against Islam was a punishable offence (sometimes a capital offence). Islam was the basis of jurisprudence, but not positive law. The state—legislation, decrees, law enforcement, taxation, military power, foreign policy, and so on—was regarded as the prerogative of the rulers, 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 in France. In nearly all of western Europe there are points of symbolic, institutional, fiscal, and policy 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 today enjoys 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, mainstream Islam and mainstream secularism are philosophically closer to each other than either is to its radical versions.

Muslims, then, should not be excluded from participation in the multicultural state on the grounds that 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.

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' 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. 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.⁸

It has been argued that even where absolute neutrality is impossible one can still approximate to neutrality, and this is what disestablishment [of officially recognised religions] achieves.⁹ 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 that those who are marginalised by the dominant ethos are given some special platform or access to influence, so that 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 that 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 moderate rather than absolute secularism. In the British context, this would mean pluralising the link between state and religion (which is happening to a degree), rather than severing it.

Autonomy of Politics

Secondly, 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. 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, social life, or historical progress. Conversely, to the extent that politics *can* be influenced by such ideological arguments, e.g. by their setting the framework of public discourse or the climate of opinion in which politics takes place, 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 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 that religion should have no influence on politics. Rather, institutional links between religious conscience and affairs of state (as through the twenty-six 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—not a small benefit given the inherent risks of utopianism in religion, as we see in, for example, Islamic radicalism today.

Democracy

One could argue that organised religion should not be allowed to support electoral candidates, but advocates of this restriction typically fail to explain why churches and other religious organisations are significantly different from businesses, trades unions, sports and film stars, and so on.¹⁰ 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’—seems to more seriously compromise democracy than the maintenance of the current weak forms of corporate representation.¹¹

The goal of democratic multiculturalism cannot and should not be cultural neutrality, but, rather, the inclusion of marginal and disadvantaged groups, including religious communities, in public life. Democratic political discourse perhaps has 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.

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 both necessary and more conducive to social cohesion than other possible 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 that 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 public 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 compromise. Such moderate secularism is already embodied in church-state relations in western Europe (France being an exception). Rather than seeing such church-state relations as an obstacle to multiculturalism and archaic, 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.

APPENDIX

Citizenship and Difference

This piece elaborates on the debate about the public-private divide and how this impinges on ideas of citizenship.

Citizenship

By citizenship I mean something much more than a legal status, such as holding a passport or having the right to vote. I mean membership of a polity where, besides rights and duties, membership is signified through participation in collective activities and public debates with fellow citizens. Moreover, this is not just about participation in politics in a narrow sense. It is engagement not just within the structures of the state, but in civil society too. Activities that are not for personal gain but express an interest in the condition of one's fellow citizens, such as reading a daily newspaper, joining a neighbourhood watch scheme, distributing Greenpeace literature, discussing with friends and work colleagues whether the law should be changed in relation to abortion, or debating in one's mosque what it means to be British, are all activities of a citizen and so are part of what I mean by citizenship. Discussion is central to citizenship: our identity as citizens is most fully felt when we debate, communicate, criticise, argue, consider objections, and learn from each other. This means that citizenship exists in our ideas and perceptions about each other, as well as in the behaviours that can be controlled, regulated, policed, and so on.

The key idea of citizenship is equality: citizens are members with equal rights and responsibilities, without reference to class, race, sex, religion, and so on. Yet this latter set of collective attributes matter profoundly to people, to their ideas of themselves and others, and to how we treat each other. We have become very alive to how our perceptions of groups of people can be demeaning, stereotypical, racist, sexist, and so on, all of which interferes with our perception of those people as our equals and leads to discriminatory actions. Laws are rightly enacted to deal with the worst cases of such actions, and opinion formers are tasked with the responsibility of not reinforcing attitudes that demean fellow citizens and therefore put citizenship at risk.

Difference

In the last couple of decades, we have also become aware that ethnicity, gender, sexuality, religion, and so on matter to people profoundly as sources of positive identities. We have seen the emergence of a politics of 'difference'. Some people, especially those who have been previously marginalised (who have experienced second-class citizenship), are now proclaiming these group identities in the public spaces where citizenship exists. Are they thereby challenging or undermining citizenship, the overarching identity which exists to play down, and whose existence depends upon citizens playing down, identities that divide them?

Earlier anti-racist (anti-sexist, etc.) egalitarians, such as Martin Luther King Jr., did indeed emphasise commonality (we are all the same under our differently coloured skins) and expressly appealed to a common American citizenship in his civil rights movement. Yet, just as in the United States this colour-blind humanism came to be mixed with an emphasis on black pride, black autonomy, and black nationalism (as typified by Malcolm X), so, too, the same process occurred in Britain. Indeed, it is best to see this development of racial explicitness and positive blackness as part of a wider socio-political climate that is not confined to race and culture or to non-white minorities. Feminism, gay pride, Québécois nationalism, and the revival of a Scottish identity are some prominent examples of these new identity movements that have become an important feature in many countries, especially those in which class politics has declined in salience.

Thus, what is often claimed today in the name of racial equality, especially in the English-speaking world, goes beyond the claims that were made in the 1960s. The US philosopher 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 on the view that 'a positive self-definition of group difference is in fact more liberatory'.¹²

The public-private distinction

This significant shift takes us from an understanding of equality in terms of individualism and cultural assimilation to a politics of recognition, to equality as encompassing public ethnicity. This perception of equality means not having to hide or apologise for one's origins, family, or community and requires others to show respect for them. Public attitudes and arrangements must adapt so that this heritage is encouraged, not contemptuously expected to wither away. These two conceptions of equality may be stated as follows:

- the right to assimilate to the majority/dominant culture in the public sphere, with toleration of difference in the private sphere;
- the right to have one's difference (e.g. minority ethnicity) recognised and supported in both the public and the private spheres.

The two are not, however, alternative conceptions of equality in the sense that to hold one, the other must be rejected. Citizenship is compatible with, indeed requires, support for both conceptions. For, the assumption behind the first 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 that groups excluded from the national culture have their citizenship diminished as a result and sees the remedy not in rejecting the right to assimilate, but in adding the right to widen and adapt the national culture (and the public and media symbols of national membership) to include the relevant minority ethnicities. What is required is a less monistic conception of citizenship (which is likely to reflect the norms and identity of the dominant group): one that is not intrinsically hostile to other identities but hospitable to 'hyphenated' identities such as Irish-American or British-Indian. It involves a recognition that there are different ways to be British or Irish, that none are purer or superior to the others; and that they must all be embraced, for citizenship requires us to be inclusive and to respect the ways in which co-citizens express their nationality.

There is then, in the name of equality, an explicit bringing into our citizenship of identities previously demoted as 'private'. So, it can be seen that the public-private distinction is crucial to the contemporary discussion of equal citizenship and, particularly, to the challenge to an earlier liberal position. It is in this political and intellectual climate, in which once 'private' matters have become the sources of equality struggles, that Muslim assertiveness has emerged as a domestic political phenomenon. In this respect, the advances achieved by anti-racism and feminism (with its slogan 'the personal is the political') have acted as benchmarks for following groups such as Muslims. While Muslims raise distinctive concerns, the logic of their demands often mirrors those of other equality-seeking groups: legislation against discrimination, data collection to facilitate equality monitoring, protection against hateful speech and incitement, and so on.

Is Religion an Exception?

While black and related ethno-racial identities were welcomed by, indeed

were intrinsic to, the rainbow coalition of identity politics, this coalition is deeply unhappy with Muslim consciousness. While for some this rejection is specific to Islam, for many the ostensible reason is simply that it is a religious identity and so should be confined to the private sphere. This position has a venerable place in classical liberalism, where it is part of the privatisation of gender, sexuality, ethnicity, and so on in a consistent way. However, it is not compatible with the new view of equal citizenship outlined above, unless it can be shown that there is something uniquely private about religion. But, we would then have the mixed-up situation where the sex lives of individuals (traditionally, a core area of liberal privacy) are regarded as legitimate features of political identities and public discourse, but religion (a key source of communal identity in traditional societies) is confined to the private sphere. That some people, especially the intelligentsia, regard Muslim identity as the illegitimate child of British multiculturalism is undoubtedly true, but the case for the singular privatisation of religion has yet to be made

Belonging

The Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain, the report of the Commission on Multi-Ethnic Britain published in October 2000, is a high-water mark of thinking on these topics. It tried to answer the question: how is it possible to have a positive attitude to difference and yet have a sense of unity? Its answer was that a liberal notion of citizenship as an unemotional, cool membership is not sufficient; better is a sense of belonging to one's country or polity. The report insisted that this 'belonging' requires two important conditions:

- recognition of one's polity as a community of communities, as well as a community of individuals;
- challenging of all racisms and related structural inequalities.

Here, we have a much more adequate concept of social cohesion than that which has emerged as a panicky reaction to the current Muslim assertiveness and which runs the risk of making many Muslims feel that they do not belong to Britain.

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 I. M. Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1990), p. 157.

⁴ These five ideal types and the terms I use to mark them are my own. Given the variety of ways terms like 'liberal' and 'the plural state' are used, my ideal types do not necessarily correspond with how some others may use these terms, including those who use the terms to designate their own perspective. For a similar typology of multicultural states and a similar conclusion, see Commission on Multi-Ethnic Britain, *The Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain* (Profile Books: 2000).

⁵ S. Hall, 'The Question of Cultural Identity', in S. Hall and T. McGrew (eds.), *Modernity and its Futures* (Cambridge: Polity Press 1992), p. 277.

⁶ T. Nagel, *Equality and Partiality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1991), p. 166.

⁷ T. Modood, 'Race in Britain and the Politics of Difference', in D. Archard (ed.), *Philosophy and Pluralism* (Cambridge: CUP 1996), pp. 178–179.

⁸ Young, op. cit.

⁹ A. Phillips, 'In Defence of Secularism', in T. Modood (ed.), *Church, State and Religious Minorities* (London: Policy Studies Institute 1997).

¹⁰ R. Audi, 'The Separation of Church and State and the Obligations of Citizenship', in *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, Vol. 8, No. 3, (Summer 1989).

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 295.

¹² Young, op. cit.