



RECODE

RECODE 21-22 October 2011 Workshop
Neuchâtel (Switzerland)

The Public Management of Religion: from State Building to New Forms of Minorities' Mobilization

Final Report

1- Summary:

This workshop was organized by Gianni D'Amato (Université de Neuchâtel, Switzerland) and Francisco Colom González (Spanish National Research Council) as part of the activities of Section 3 of the Network (**Religions in the Public Sphere: Accommodating Religious Diversity in the Post-Secular Era**) and received a support by the Government of Canada in the form of a grant of \$2500 Canadian Dollars for inviting Canadian scholars to Europe. The aim of the seminar was to review the conventional thesis that equates social modernization with secularization in order to gain a broader perspective on the issues and cleavages that have shaped the management of religion in contemporary Europe and Canada. At this initial stage of the project the idea was to show how the political dimension of religion has developed from the *simple complexity* or earlier modernity (i.e., the differentiation and interplay of religious and political authority at the dawn of the nation-state) to the current situation, in which religion does not critically affect the ideological and institutional foundations of the state anymore, but coalesces with other social variables in a way that requires new specific policies. The cases selected for the seminar should help to illustrate that the overlapping cleavages that define modern *complex diversity* do not respond to a general or standardized pattern (whether we call it *globalization* or *modernization*) but to particular historical conditions and social experiences.

2- Description of the scientific content of and discussion at the event:

The seminar was organized around three main theme panels:

Panel 1 - A review of the normative and historical narratives of secularization

This panel was to discuss the classical thesis of secularization as a plausible general account of modern cultural change. This conventional thesis has been challenged by most of the recent literature on the topic. According to the new point of view, European and Canadian largely secularized societies stand out as an exception rather than the

norm at the global level. However, the secularization thesis still serves its purpose as a heuristic tool with which to contrast the historical changes undergone by the functional parameters of religion. The panel also intended to evaluate the meaning of *post-secularism* as a normative and theoretical concept for describing the religious regimes of modern complex societies.

Panel 2 - The relations between state-building and religion

This second panel focused on the different models and regimes for the political management of religion and their historical relation to state-building processes. In early modern Europe the coupling of religious and social identity was held necessary to make the individuals yield to the same moral and political standards. Religious homogeneity was therefore considered a prerequisite for an effective and legitimized political order, and religious diversity a hindrance to it. The establishment of Catholic and Protestant regimes under the principle *cuius regio, eius religio* stood nevertheless on a different kind of political relation with the source of religious authority. The submission of the latter to monarchical control was a distinctive feature of the Protestant Reformation and a historical precondition of modern nation-building. This is why Elizabethan England has been sometimes portrayed as the first expression of *nationalism* long before the republican and romantic ideas of nation saw their time in the XVIII and XIX centuries. Conversely, in Catholic societies religious authority was vested in an external figure (the Pope) who also displayed an earthly power. Nation-building in the Catholic world went through a series of different experiences, from *Kulturkampf* and *Laïcité* to open anti-clericalism and authoritarian religious nationalism. The notion of different Catholic and Protestant paths to political secularization and modernity opens the way for a broader comparative perspective on the relations between religion and nation-building. Canada offers in this context an interesting contrast, since religion did not play here the foundational role for state institutions as it did in Europe, and unlike the United States there is no recognizable *civil religion* to be found in its political culture.

Panel 3- The accommodation of new religious minorities.

International migration and the opening to new forms of spirituality and lifestyle choices have altered the religious landscape of contemporary Western societies. The issues posed by this new religious diversity are of a different kind from those mentioned in the former section. The presence of new religious minorities has sometimes provoked a backlash by mainstream society, as with the *accommodation crisis* in Quebec, but more fundamentally they have occasionally challenged the established legal frame, as with the practice of polygamy by some Mormon groups in Canada and the USA or with the demands by some Muslim communities in Canada and the United Kingdom for officialising some degree of legal pluralism. Accordingly, this panel explored the shifting relations between international migration, the emergence of new religious identities, and the problems for their legal and political accommodation in host societies.

After some last moment adjustments, eight papers were finally presented at the workshop: three papers for Line 1, two for Line 2 and three for Line 3. The Workshop was attended by the Chair of the Network (Peter Kraus), who together with the conveners Gianni D'Amato and Francisco Colom shared the chairing of the sessions, and by two additional discussants (Angel Rivero from Spain and Mathias Thaler from Portugal).

3- Abstracts of the papers presented:

Panel 1:- *A review of the normative and historical narratives of secularization.*

Jocelyn Maclure

What is Political Secularism?

This paper was based on the work that the author did during the public audiences on cultural and religious accommodations that was commissioned by the provincial government of Quebec in 2007-08. The paper views the challenge of religious diversity as a component of the larger issue of moral pluralism in complex societies. The author defines his normative perspective as both *liberal and pluralist*. According to this, a secular state is based on four principles, i.e. two *moral* principles—equal respect and freedom of conscience—and two *institutional* principles—the separation between the state and religion and state neutrality. This perspective is *liberal* because it is a human rights-based conception, since it primarily seeks to protect the equal liberty of conscience for all; and it is *pluralist* because it seeks to adapt to the growing moral and religious diversity of contemporary societies. On the contrary, the republican conception of *laïcité* is more prompt to limit freedom of religion, because it is thought that the common good requires an undifferentiated public sphere, and it may come close, in its most radical version, to being an anti-religious position.

Ingvill Thorson Plesner

State and religion in the Nordic countries: Diverging tendencies and liberal dilemmas.

This paper offers an overview on the apparently contradictory and simultaneous tendencies towards secularisation and de-secularisation in the Nordic countries, with Norway as the main example. The current Norwegian model of state-church relationship is based on two pillars, both enshrined in Article 2 of the Constitution: (1) the right to freedom of religion or belief, which should apply equally for all, and (2) the existence of an *official religion*, which constitutes a particularly close bond between the state and the majority church. In 2008 the Norwegian political parties agreed that the national Parliament should continue giving provisions on the doctrinal identity of the church, its organization and profile. On the other hand they also insisted that the Church of Norway had to implement an internal democratic reform, ensuring a broader participation among its members in church elections before it should be granted the right to appoint its own bishops. This might be seen as interference in the internal affairs of the religious community and be in conflict with the right to freedom of religion, and also with other liberal principles such as the claim for state *neutrality* in relation to religion, in the sense of equal treatment.

Massimo Rubboli

Protestantism and its political implications for state-building in the British colonies of North America: from the Mayflower Compact to the Federal Constitution of the United States.

The ideological origin of the American Constitution of 1787 is a disputed question. Some scholars have found the roots of American constitutionalism in the writings of John Locke, some others in those of David Hume, of Montesquieu or of the humanists of the Italian Renaissance. Still others have argued that what affected the nature of the Federal Constitution more was not an ideological factor but the practical political experience of the revolutionary period. This paper presents an alternative interpretation, almost ignored by many contemporary scholars, but which in the past had many influential supporters: that the origins of the peculiar features of American constitutionalism –government by consent of the people, trust in a written constitution and believe in a superior law– can be traced to the tradition of the *covenant* elaborated by the churches and sects of the Protestant *Dissenters*. This last interpretation was grounded, among other elements, on the conviction that the Constitution represented a new pact with God. From this perspective the American Constitution can be viewed as the secularized culmination of the tradition of the covenant. However, it also represents the higher incarnation of the two traditions of federal thought, the theological and the political, which converged in a notion of government characterized by a separation of powers and a jurisdictional plurality, as well as by a system of constitutional liberties and safeguards.

Panel 2: *Beyond Kulturkampf: Shifting cleavages in Catholic societies*

Francisco Colom González

A Nation of the faithful: the Conflicts of Catholic nation-building in Spain

According to the conventional version of the secularization thesis, political modernity would amount to the loss of institutional function by church and religion in the modern polity. This paper tries to show how this general description has been challenged by the history of many Catholic societies. *Political Catholicism*, i.e., the emergence of a specific Catholic secular ideology pursuing its own social and political goals, was a product of modernity that gave place in Spain to different historical experiences, from nineteenth century confessional liberalism to authoritarian National-Catholicism after the civil war, and the current non-confessional status with some privileges for the Catholic Church. This development reflects the shifting cleavages of Spanish society and the influence of religious interests in a general context of social secularization. Whereas Catholicism still is a prevailing cultural force in Spain, it has lost much of its former clout as a political lever and in some aspects it reflects the features of a *folk religion*. It is rather the organizational skill of the Catholic Church and its mobilization *vis a vis* the state that has compensated for its loss of social grip. However, this also reveals the deep dependency of the Church on state resources and cooperation.

François Forêt

Religion, between nation and Europe. The French and Belgian “no” to the Christian heritage of Europe

In contrast with most member states of the European Union, France and Belgium held a common position of refusal regarding any reference to the Christian heritage of Europe in the now defunct Constitutional Treaty. The two countries were however motivated by two different models of *laïcité* anchored in distinct socio-political historical paths: the all encompassing *laïcité* of the French, supposing the neutrality of the public space; and the Belgian institutionalized *laïcité*, organizing the pluralism of philosophical and confessional worldviews. This paper addresses the dynamics of each national configuration in the wider perspective of the interactions between religion and politics today; the patterns of European negotiations; the effects of this issue on domestic politics and mobilizations of civil society. It concludes that religion in the European integration process is a way of reformulating old symbolic resources and of coming to terms with identity and social adaptations, rather than a source of political cleavages.

Panel 3: *The accommodation of new religious minorities*

Denise Helly

The treatment of Islam in Canada

There are three aspects that determine the social treatment and status of Islam in Canada: 1. Animosity towards Muslims does exist; 2. the organizational power of the Muslim community is very weak and it lacks political influence. This is due to a series of particular features: diverse origins and social background, recent arrival, low degree of religious practice; 3. In Canada there is a strong legal protection of religious minorities, not only through the defense of classical individual rights (like freedom of religion) but also against the notions of cultural majoritarianism, indirect discrimination, and the individual right to equal impact of the law. Muslims therefore constitute a socially and politically powerless minority strongly protected by the law, a situation that increases the level of animosity of its enemies, be they nationalists, feminists, or secular fundamentalists. The Canadian religious regime is not *laïc*. It is closer to a secularity regime where the state grants privileges to the Christian Churches. On the other hand, the backlash against multiculturalism has hindered the intervention of the Canadian government in order to prevent the discrimination of the local Muslim community.

Julia Mourao Permoser

Religious Organizations as Political Actors in the Context of Migration: Islam and Orthodoxy in Austria

This paper investigates how immigration and concerns over integration are changing established modes of cooperation between church and state in Austria. Focusing on the relationship between officially recognized Muslim and Eastern Orthodox organizations and the state, it examines how the mounting politicization of immigrant integration has led the state to collaborate with minority religious organizations as representatives of immigrants and is increasing the opportunities for such religious groups to be visible and express voice in the public sphere. The paper analyzes how the modes of cooperation between religious organizations and the state are moving from a narrow and

institutionalized collaboration on policy issues exclusively related to religion to a broader but more fluid and uncertain form of symbolic cooperation. It argues that recognized minority religious organizations are gradually assuming the function of political entrepreneurs who speak for the entire immigrant community. This, in turn, creates tensions within and between religious groups, and risks overstating religion as a factor in the integration of immigrants. The comparison between Muslim and Eastern Orthodox religious organizations shows that, notwithstanding the greater salience of Islam, they both benefit from the new role of religion in integration issues.

Tuomas Martikainen

Muslim Immigrants, Public Religion and Developments towards a Post-Secular Finnish Welfare State

The focus of this paper is on the incorporation of Muslim immigrants in the context of the changing Finnish welfare state. It takes as its main discussion partner Nancy Foner's and Richard Alba's article *Immigrant Religion in the U.S. and Western Europe: Bridge of Barrier to Inclusion?* Foner and Alba's text summarizes the results and spirit of many studies on immigration, integration and Islam, and engages in transatlantic academic debate of the role of religion in immigrant social integration. The paper argues that Foner and Alba's position rests on problematic theoretical grounds that do not sufficiently take into account the post-1980s changes in welfare state structures and, hence, provides a partial view on the state-civil society-religion dynamics in the era of neoliberal globalization. The role of Islam and Muslim organizations has been, in the case of Finland, one of an accelerating agent. Except for the security concern over Islam, there is nothing that makes the Muslim experience different from those of other religions in the country. It actually seems that the social positions of all religions are becoming closer to each other, including the nationally specific Lutheran and Orthodox Churches, and potentially more controversial. It is in this sense that it can be said that religion has become public and Finland post-secular.

4- Assessment of the results and impact of the event:

The workshop reached a good level of discussion and was able to deal with most of the objectives that had been previously identified by the academic conveners, but we must say that we were surprised by the difficulty in obtaining positive responses for the many invitations to participate that we made. Early autumn seems to be a very busy period in the European academia, which should be taken into account when planning the next meetings. On the other hand, the suggestion of a specific topic for each paper seems to have deterred many potential contributors as well, but we think this is a standard procedure that should be preserved in order to maintain focus on the principal topic of the workshops. Because of this, we expect to complement the papers presented at the workshop with an additional series of contributions from other European and Canadian authors.

Even if there is a wide proliferation of academic studies on immigration and religious minorities, and particularly on issues concerning the Muslim communities in Western countries, we have the impression that the broader social and historical perspective sometimes gets lost. In this sense, it should be one of the goals of RECODE, and of this section in particular, to develop a long range perspective so that the novelty and qualitative difference of the new cleavages can be fully grasped. In this sense, crisscrossing the linguistic and religious variables from a social and historical perspective can help illustrate what is meant by *complex diversity* and the changing roles that language and religion have played in social integration. In contrast to the broad perspective sought for this first workshop, the next meeting to be organized by this section will focus on more concrete issues dealing with the governance of religious diversity, particularly when public space, cultural self-representation and social time are involved.

5- Programme of the Workshop

- Friday, October 21st

Session 1: *Secularisation and State-building: a conventional path to Modernity?*

14:00 – 16:30

Jocelyn Maclure (Laval University, Canada): *What is Political Secularism?*

Ingvill Thorson Plesner (Norwegian Center for Human Rights): *State and religion in the Nordic countries: Diverging tendencies and liberal dilemmas.*

Massimo Rubboli (University of Genoa, Italy): *Protestantism and its political implications for state-building in the British colonies of North America: from the Mayflower Compact to the Federal Constitution of the United States*

Discussant: Ángel Rivero (Autonomous University of Madrid, Spain)

Chair: Francisco Colom-González (CSIC, Spain)

- Saturday, October 22nd,

Session 2: *Beyond Kulturkampf: Shifting cleavages in Catholic societies*

10:00-12:30

Francisco Colom-González (National Research Council, Spain): *A Nation of the faithful: the Conflicts of Catholic nation-building in Spain*

François Forêt (Free University of Brussels, Belgium): *Religion between nation and Europe. The French and Belgian “no” to the Christian heritage of Europe*

Discussant: Gianni D’Amato (University of Neuchâtel, Switzerland)

Chair: Peter Kraus (University of Helsinki, Finland)

Session 3: The accommodation of new religious minorities

14:00 – 16:30

Denise Helly (INRS, Canada): *The treatment of Islam in Canada*

Julia Mourao Permoser (University of Vienna, Austria): *Religious Organisations as Political Actors in the Context of Migration: Islam and Orthodoxy in Austria*

Tuomas Martikainen (University of Helsinki, Finland): *Muslim Immigrants, Public Religion and Developments towards a Post-Secular Finnish Welfare State*

Discussant: Mathias Thaler (University of Coimbra, Portugal)

Chair: Gianni D'Amato (University of Neuchâtel, Switzerland)