Religion and Politics: Debating secular and post-secular theories

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Introduction

The main purpose of this article is to quote part of the extended discussions in recent times concerning the relations between religion and politics in the contemporary world. The changing relation between religion and politics, especially in Europe and the USA, has recently given rise to announcements that we are living in a "*post-secular society.*" Multiculturalism, the numerous migrations of many Muslims in affluent European countries and the religious freedom in many states make many scholars raises the question about the society we are we living in. Although, early sociologists and proponents of modernization theory had predicted a gradual waning of religious power while increasingly rationalized, it would seem that since the mid-twentieth century quite the opposite has happened. Instead of a gradual marginalization and privatization of religion, the opposite is observed in many parts of the world. The preservation and the reaffirmation of religion's presence in public sphere offer a "fertile ground" as far as new statements among scholars of religion, sociologists, sociologists of religion and philosophers are concerned.

One debated reaction touching scholars was Peter Berger's statement in 1999 about the *"desecularization of the world"*. The appearance of increasing religiosity, the growth of many new religious movements and the maintenance of religion through fundamentalistic tendencies lead Berger to the argument that the world is not secularized anymore. However, in *"desecularized world theory"*, Berger excludes Europe and probably the USA from his observation.[1] This theory is used by Berger in order to explain the rise of religious fundamentalist movements, especially in Islam, and does not really describe the condition in the modern world. But, even in the West,

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[1] Sociologist Peter Berger in his analysis about this issue speaks about the "desecularization of the world". In his analysis Berger observes that "conservative", "traditionalist" and "fundamentalist" groups and beliefs have a significant impact upon social and political systems. See P. L. Berger, (1999) "The Desecularization of the World: A Global Overview". In Berger, L. P., ed. *The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and World Politics*. Michigan: Washington Grand Rapids, p. 1-18.

and not only in the Muslim world, religion has retained or even reasserted, as many scholars admit, its presence in public debate.[2] Another really debated statement is the phrase *"we are living in a post-secular age"*. The above theory represents briefly that the secular age may come to an end and that we are entering into a new reality that mainly emerges from Jürgen's Habermas, and Charles Taylor, whose ideas will be analyzed in this article. The theory is relatively new and as a result there are not many bibliographical resources. Most of them are limited to a few publications after 2010 as well as some conferences,[3] dealing with this issue. However, this article attempts to approach briefly the specific term so as to makes understandable what really post-secular means and most importantly what led scholars to make such statements.

To begin with, the diachronic relations between religion and politics will be analyzed. Then, the condition in Islamic states will be discussed on the one hand; and on other hand the condition in Europe and the European Union. For a better comprehension the definition of secularism and the form that secularism takes in the modern world are quoted. Finally, the idea that the secular age may come to an end and that we are entering into a new reality, as it arose basically from Jürgen Habermas in his attempt to describe the situation we experience in Western societies where religions, not only necessarily Christianity, play an important role in the society and in politics, is presented.

Religion and Politics: a brief introduction on interaction theories

Religion and politics are closely related to each other. Diachronically, from ancient world up now, religion intervene in politics, and in many cases religion identifies with the state authority. For instance, Islamic states, even nowadays could be an appropriate paradigm of identification of religious and state authority.

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[2] See G. Moyser, (2005) "Religion and Politics". In J. R. Hinnels, ed. *The Routledge Companion to the Study of Religion*. London-New York: Routledge Taylor and Francis, p. 423-424, 429-435.

[3] After Jürgen Habermas statement that "we are living in a post-secular society" many conferences dealt with this issue. It's worth quoting the titles and the topics of conferences in order to show the interest of scholars in this new reality, or better in this new term. In April 3-4, 2009 a conference was held at Harvard University Conference with title *Exploring the Post-Secular*. One year later, in April 9-10, 2010 it was held at Washington University in Saint Louis (Missouri) religious studies conference entitled *Debating Secularism in a Post-Secular Age*. The same year in May 12-13, 2011 it took place in Faenza, in the Centre for the Study and Documentation of Religion and Political Institutions in Post-Secular Society and the University of Bologna, conference with title *Politics, Culture and Religion in the Postsecular society*.

Theocracies, as those in Saudi Arabia, Iran and to some extent in Afghanistan, during the regime of Taliban, constitute the "opposite camp" of modern secular states, simultaneously affirming that religion plays an important role in the public sphere. The terminology used by scholars to describe the relationship between religion and politics in modern world is really broad. It is not unusual that the scholars who observe the influence of religion in politics through religion-political movements called this phenomenon "religious fundamentalism".[4] However, some others who tend to focus on the societal situation use some more sociological terms like "desecularization" or "post-secularism".

Also, particularly important is to examine the relations that religion and politics develop. Hugh Urban, professor of comparative studies, mentions the eight primary strategic relations between political and religious power proving that intertwining in matters of religion and politics has an exceedingly long history that extends back to the earliest eras of intellectual discussion. More analytically, the relations between religion and politics are: a) religion-political synthesis: the religious as the political, b) political power over religious authority, c) religious and political power as separate (but interdependent or rival) forces, d) political power over religious authority e) religious withdrawal from the political sphere, f) religion in the service of political power: religious nationalism in the modern state, g) the political as the religious: civil religion and h) religion in conflict with political power: resistance, rebellion, revolution and terrorism.[5]

An important question that rises about the theme of this article is: What about religions and politics in the modern world? On the one hand, in Arab world, in many countries in South Asia and in North Africa, the type of government is based on Islamic religious law. To become more specific, there are two features of Islam that are particularly important in order to comprehend the relations between religion and politics in Islam. One basic feature of Islam is the fact that as a religion it combines religion and politics (*Din wa Dawla*). Contrary to Christianity, Islam since the period of Prophet Muhammad achieved political power and it was not necessary for the

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[4] Some others called this religious-political phenomenon "conservatism", "traditionalism", "revivalism", and etcetera. For an academic controversy about the terminology see G. Almond, S. R. Appleby, & Sivan, E. (2003) *Strong religion: The rise of fundamentalisms around the world*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, p. 1-21, especially 14-17.

[5] See H. Urban, (2005) "Politics and Religion: An Overview". In L. Jones, ed. *Encyclopedia of Religion* 11, p. 7253-7257.

Islamic community to set against secular powers.[6] There is no distinction between religion and politics, as religion and social organization are organically connected in the case of Islam. Thus, secularism, or the separation of *din* (religion) from *dawla* (state), was inconceivable.[7] This reality has its "roots" in Muhammad's lifetime. Muhammad's message was addressed in a "race", or a "brotherhood" (*Ummah*). But, in Arab terms the concept of brotherhood was one of the main concepts of Arabian political thoughts. Therefore, from the beginning of Islam, the message of Muhammad addressed to a political body.[8] Consequently, religion is the politically organized community for all Muslims (*Ummah*).

A second feature concerning Islam is the centrality of Islamic law in Muslim's life.[9] The revelations of the Prophet, codified in the Qur'an and in the *Hadith*, sacred stories about the life of Muhammad, combine both faith and morals doctrine and law. Characteristically, Noah Feldman, professor of International Law, points out that Muslims from Morocco to Indonesia argue that *Shari'ah*, the Islamic law, should be the source of law or the only source of legislation. It is also quite common in the Arabic countries to hear that "Islam means the Sharia" or that "Islam is our constitution".[10] As a consequence, many religious leaders in some Muslim countries have attempted to build such states, as found in Saudi Arabia, Iran and Afghanistan.[11]

The European Union, on the other hand, consisted of the twenty-seven member States, is officially secular both in the development of its policies and in its administrations. There is no particular institutional relationship between religions and philosophical creeds, and thus no authority is concluded by them in the decision-making processes of the Union. As Jean-Paul Willaime points out, there is a clear distinction between churches and European public authorities consistent with the three large principles of secularism: a) *Freedom of conscience, thought and religion* which

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[6] See S. Bruce, (2011) *Fundamentalism*. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Polity Press, p. 42.

[7] For comparative studies on state and the three monotheistic religions see L. C. Brown, (2000) *Religion and State: The Muslim Approaches to Politics*. Columbia: Columbia University Press, p. 9-30.

[8] See M. W. Watt, (2003) *Islamic Political Thought*. 5th ed. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, p. 20-30.

[9] See S. Bruce, (2011) *Fundamentalism*. Opp. cit., p. 42.

[10] N. Feldman, (2008) *The Fall and Rise of the Islamic State*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, p. 2-3, 20-21.

[11] See J. L. Esposito, ed. (1997) *Political Islam: Revolution, Radicalism, or Reform?*. Colorado-London: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

includes the freedom to practice or not a religion as well as to change one's religion (subject solely to respect for law, democracy and human rights); b) *Equal rights and duties for all citizens regardless of their religious or philosophical beliefs*, in other words, non-discrimination by the State and public authorities on such grounds; c) *Mutual independence between the State and religions*, which equally means State freedom in terms of religions and vice versa.[12]

As opposed to the ancient world and to some Islamic states as well, issues in Europe such as to be religious or not, to attend church, mosque, or any religious places, to "believe without belonging"[13] or to "belong without believing" are up to individuals' will. Hence, scholars of Religion Studies, examining one religion historically, observe it as a whole system which includes economy, politics, worship, etcetera through the ages.[14] Taking this into consideration, anyone can argue that secularism is experienced differently from state to state, depending on the nature of religion, history and the tradition of every state.

As a result, there are various forms of secularization. Secularization can also take the meaning of the degree of separation between state and religion. State-church relations present us classifications related to countries according to those models of separation which can be identified. Although, it is difficult to delineate classification that is valid for all European countries, there are some factors to be taken into account. For instance, the degree of which the state 'recognizes' religions, taking into consideration discrimination and privileges to certain religions; the degree of which the state gives financial support to religions; the degree of which the state intervenes

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[12] Jean-Paul Willaime, (2010) "Secularism at the European level: A struggle between non-religious and religious worldviews, or neutrality towards secular and religious beliefs?. In Religious Studies Conference. *Debating Secularism in a Post-Secular Age*, April 9-10, 2010. Washington University, Saint Louis (Missouri), p. 7-8. See also article 9 of European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) drafted in 1950 entered into force on 3 September 1953. See also Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms as amended by Protocols No. 11 and No. 14 which is entered into force on 1 June 2010. Article 9 provides a right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This includes the freedom to change a religion or belief, and to manifest a religion or belief in worship, teaching, practice and observance, subject to certain restrictions that are "in accordance with law" and "necessary in a democratic society".
[13] See G. Davie, (1994) *Religion in Britain since 1945. Believing without Belonging*. Oxford & Cambridge: Blackwell.
[14] See B. Lincoln, (1996) "Theses on Method," *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* 8, 3: 225–228.

in religious affairs and the degree of which religions intervene in affairs of public institutions.[15]

Despite the fact that we live in secular states in Europe, religion reaffirms its role in the public sphere. Characteristically, the different ways in which religion appears in the public sphere could be the official religion of the state, civil religion, religious nationalism, public religion, and religious legitimation of political power.[16] Looking at the map of Europe, everyone can see that secularism is spread around European atmosphere. Secularism, briefly, means that faith and beliefs remain in the private sphere of the individual and in the margins of society, but not in the public sphere. Nevertheless, sociologists are divided into two different groups: a category that treats secularization as a loss of faith and authenticity and another that threats secularization as a gain in personal freedom and autonomy.[17]

Giulio Ercolessi and Ingemund Hägg make an interesting distinction concerning the different types of secular states, classifying the systems and the forms of secularization: a) a system without a state church which identifies the ideal model of *laïcité* with complete separation; a model that has no correspondence to the actual world, not even in France; b) a system which requires state support on an equal basis for all religions; c) dominating religion with different kinds of relations involving state support but where also other religions are recognized and can get state support but not on equal terms; d) support to the dominating religion ignoring other religions.[18] Respectively, the prominent sociologist Jean-Paul Willaime distinguishes three concepts of secularism: a) secularism as neutrality towards religions and worldviews; b) secularism as a secular worldview alternative to religious beliefs; c) secularism as a criticism of, or opposition to, religions.[19]

[15] G. Ercolessi, & Ingemund, H. (2008) "Towards Religious Neutrality of Public Institutions in Europe". In F. de Beaufort, H. Ingemund & van Schie, P., eds. *Separation of Church and State in Europe with views on Sweden, Norway, the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Spain, Italy, Slovenia and Greece.* Brussels: European Liberal Forum, p. 8.

[16] I. Furseth, & Repstad, P. (2006) *An introduction to the sociology of religion: classical and contemporary perspectives.* Aldershot Hants: Ashgate, p.101.

[17] B. Duran, (2008) "Islam and Muslims in Post-secular society". In H. G. Ziebertz, & Riegel U., eds. *Europe, secular or post-secular?.* Berlin: Lit Verlag, p.61-62.

[18] G. Ercolessi, & Ingemund, H. (2008) "Towards Religious Neutrality of Public Institutions in Europe". *Opp. cit.*, p. 8.

[19] Jean-Paul Willaime, (2010) "Secularism at the European level: A struggle between non-religious and religious worldviews, or neutrality towards secular and religious beliefs?. *Opp. cit.*, p. 1.

As it is mentioned above, the European Union is officially secular as far as religion is concerned. Despite the fact that we live in secular states, the religion reaffirmed its role in the public sphere. Characteristically, the different ways in which religion appears in the public sphere could be the official religion of the state; specifically: civil religion, religious nationalism, public religion, and religious legitimation of political power.[20] The variety of the twenty-seven Member States of European Union and of their national histories poses some problems in religious diversity. The foundation of many modern Nation-States is closely linked to some religions which now effectively enjoy some privileged status legally, politically and socially. Moreover, this relationship is closely linked to the financial support to religions.[21]

To conclude, European Union generally remains secular. Confessional states have been relatively rare in Europe. Despite the fact that Roman Catholic Church, Orthodox Church, Lutheran Church and Anglican Church are constitutionally church-states, Malta, Greece, Denmark and Britain, recognize and accept the basic principles of secularism. To these four Member-States of European Union, Iceland and Norway are added as countries that recognize state-church and are considered as Western European societies.

Multicultural states in Europe

The distinction between the different types of secularism is a reality among the European countries. European countries are largely affected by the massive immigration of people from all parts of the world, believing in different religions, including Muslims, Hindu, Sikhs, Jews, Buddhist's, and so on. Thus, European countries are not only influenced by immigrants, but also characterized by their behavior to them and their religion. A typical example is the fact that many countries which are traditionally secular for a long time face these kinds of problems in their modern societies. The issue does not appear only in countries that recognize

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[20] I. Furseth, & Repstad, P. (2006) *An introduction to the sociology of religion: classical and contemporary perspectives*. Opp. cit., p.101.
[21] W. Fautré, (n.d.) *Relations between State and Religions in Western Europe: State financing of religions: Implications of Two-Tiered and Multi-Tiered Systems*.
Available at http://politicsreligion.eu/relations-between-state-and-religions-in-western-europe-2/
[Accessed 9 October 2012].

constitutionally state religion, but also in those countries that used to be classical secular states or in them that do not recognize any religion at all. For instance, France does not recognize constitutionally any religion. *Laicite* (secularism) is clearly the 'official religion' of France, and the law that enshrining the principle was passed in 1905 and marked the separation of Church and state. Nevertheless, the issue of headscarf, which arose in France after 1989, made French society to redefine *laicite*.[22] Thus, the growing number of Muslims in the modern Western societies confirmed that religion became a public issue.

Willaime quotes two different kinds of secularization, the example of France where the French state does not recognize or fund any religion, and the Belgium paradigm, where the Belgian State recognizes different religions and subsidizes them. Belgian States practices "active neutrality" towards religions by recognizing certain faiths and funding them. But what does it mean really neutrality? On the one hand, religious freedom entails that government must be neutral in matters of religion. Therefore, religious-free government must refrain from endorsing or disapproving any religious view, or from taking sides among the various competing religious. On the other hand, "neutrality does not mean that public authorities may not entertain relations with religious or philosophical organizations. It is not opposed to financially supporting Churches and religious or philosophical institutions, any more than it is to subsidize the social activities of Churches and organizations having religious or philosophical vocations".[23]

Are we living in a post-secular age?

Publications such as Charles Taylor book *"A secular Age"* (2007) and Jürgen Habermas declarations that *"we are living in a post-secular age"* initiated a debate about the end of secularization and the beginning of a new era in religious revival. It is claimed that Europe has become more secular over the years. It has also been claimed that secularism has come to an end and that an era of post-secularism has

[22] R. Kastoryano, (2006) "French secularism and Islam: France's headscarf affair", In T. Modood, A. Triandafyllidou, & Zapata-Barero, R., eds. *Multiculturalism, Muslims and Citizenship: A European Approach*. Oxford - New York: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, p. 60-61.
[23] Jean-Paul Willaime, (2010) "Secularism at the European level: A struggle between non-religious and religious worldviews, or neutrality towards secular and religious beliefs?. *Opp. cit.*, p. 1-6.

begun. The impact of the role of religion in people's lives and the repositioning of religion in the modern society has played an important part in Jürgen Habermas view.

Post-secularism is a theoretical concept whose central idea is that secularism may have come to an end. Jürgen Habermas argues that the term "post-secular society", "refers not only to the fact that religion continues to assert itself in an increasingly secular environment and that society, for the time being, but also referred to the continuing existence of religious communities".[24]

What is critical about the term "post-secular society" is the effort to narrow this phenomenon in the West. Many scholars argue that this phenomenon can also become a fact in Islamic countries, as it is fundamentally a dialogue between religion and the state.[25] Conversely, Habermas argues that "a post-secular can only be applied to the affluent societies of Europe or countries such as Canada, Australia and New Zealand, where people's religious ties have steadily or rather quite dramatically lapsed in the post-War period". The same could apply for the United States of America, as well, which remain for him "the spearhead of modernization". In Habermian thought post-secularism does not have any relation with fundamentalism, as some scholars unsuccessfully combine the two terms. According to him "post-secular" refers to a change in consciousness which attributed to three phenomena: a) the perception that the religious strife affect the global conflicts; b) the belief that religious organizations are increasingly assuming the role of "communities of interpretation" in the public arena of secular societies, c) the fact of the immigration of "guest-workers" and refugees, especially those coming from countries with traditional cultural backgrounds.[26] Therefore, Habermas supports that the Islamic countries and even the Eastern European countries could not face post-secular era.

More precisely, Habermas excludes Islamic countries from his observation due to the nature of Islam as a religion which cannot allow easy conversion to secular

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[24] J. Habermas, (2006) "On the Relations between the Secular Liberal State and Religion". In H. de Vries - Lawrence S., eds. *Political Theologies: Public Religions in a Post-Secular World*, 251-260. New York: Fordham University Press, p. 258.

[25] See B. S. Turner, (2012) "Post-Secular Society: Consumerism and the Democratization of Religion". In P. S. Gorski, D. K. Kim, J. Torpey & J. van Antwerpen, eds. *Post secular in Question: Religion in Contemporary Society.* 135-158. New York-London: New York University Press.

[26] J. Habermas, (2008) "Notes on a post-secular society" (originally text in German in *Blätter für deutsche und internationale Politik*, April 2008). *Politics and Society* [online]
Available at http://www.signandsight.com/features/1714.html [Accessed 14 March 2012].

states, despite the fact that there are more and more liberal intellectual voices who seek the reformation of *Shariʻah* in order to separate Islam from the state. Furthermore, he also excludes Eastern European countries from his observation. He states that in a post-secular society there are some conditions calling for the participation of the religious communities to the democratic process based on the fact that religious communities have to respect democratic values and the fact that religious communities have to be aware of their living in pluralistic societies.

Basic characteristic of Habermian "post-secular age" is the multiculturalism allowing the coexistence of different religious, traditions and philosophical ideas in one specific era; most of the times this era concerns one Western society. Massimo Rosati, Italian sociologist and analyst of Habermian thought, characteristically mentions that "a truly post-secular society is a multi-religious society, where 'indigenous' traditions are put together with diasporic religious communities. Religious pluralism, in other words, as he argues, is part and parcel of the sociological conditions of a post-secular society".[27] In fact, Habermas attempts to open up a dialogue between religion and secular resolving the conflict between radical multiculturalism and radical secularism proposing a dialogue in regard to the inclusion of foreign minority cultures in civil society, thus encouraging members of the society to participate actively in the political life.[28]

One misunderstanding pertaining to the Habermian thought is the fact that when he uses post-secular terminology, he does not refer to society as post-secular itself, but he refers to the corresponding changes of consciousness in it.[29] For this reason, he refers to three phenomena that caused changes in consciousness of what he calls "post-secular." Firstly, the way in which a global media continuously impress upon global subjects the ceaseless role of religion in fostering both conflict and reconciliation; secondly, the ever growing awareness of how religious convictions shape and direct public opinion through their interventions in the public sphere; and

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[27] R. Massimo, (2011) "Longing for a Postsecular condition: Italy and the Postsecular". In *Politics, Culture and Religion in the Postsecular society*. May 13 2011. Bologna University, Faenza.
[28] B. S. Turner, (2012) "Post-Secular Society: Consumerism and the Democratization of Religion". Opp. cit., p. 144-147.
[29] E. Mendieta, (2010) "A Post Secular World Society? On the Philosophical Significance of Postsecular consciousness and the multicultural world society: an interview with Jurgen Habermas". Translated by Matthias Fritsch. In *The Immanent Frame, Social Science Research Council*, 3 February 2010, p.3. Available at http://blogs.ssrc.org/tif/2010/02/03/a-postsecular-world-society/.

thirdly, the way in which in "European societies" have not yet made the "painful transition to post-colonial immigrant societies".[30]

Sociologist Eduardo Mendieta emphasizes on how modern societies produce ever more diverse forms of experiencing religion by gradually becoming secular. The secular age is thus per force, profoundly religious. And religious fervor as well as freedom, freedom of faith and personal conviction, is the mark of that secularity. Many scholars in order to understand the term post-secularism analyze the Habermian thoughts of secularization and religion. Mendieta characteristically refers that Habermas takes on and challenges the validity of five putative aspects of secularization. First, that religion as a social mechanism to deal with insecurity has decreased. Second, that the functional differentiation of social subsystems has relegated religion to more circumscribed spheres of social interaction. Third, the scientific-technical progress and development have led to the increasing and irreversible 'disenchantment' of the world that has accordingly made appeals to religion less urgent or credible. Fourth, the structural differentiations of the life-world coupled with the functional differential of the social system have led to the liberation of the individual from proscriptive behavioral patrons. Fifth, the evident fact of religious pluralism has made religious comprehensive doctrines less acceptable to larger or encompassing social context. To this point Mendieta focuses on the fact that "as society has undergone processes of secularization, religion itself has been modernized, transformed, to make it more contemporaneous with a growing "secular environment." As a consequence, not only society has been modernized, but also religion has also been modernized, too. And just as there is a post-metaphysical reason of modernity, there is a post-theistic and post-secular religion of world society.[31]

Many scholars argue about how and if the term post-secular corresponds to the new age. It is commonly accepted that there is an admitted tendency to put the term "post" in order to describe a new situation, or a new problematic. Another question that emerges is which world has changed, the real one, or the scholarly one? In recent work *"Post secular in Question: Religion in Contemporary Society"* it becomes clear

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[30] J. Habermas, (2009) 'What is Meant by "Post-Secular Society"? A Discussion on Islam in Europe'. In Habermas, J., ed. *Europe: The Faltering Project*. Cambridge: Polity Press, p. 65.
[31] E. Mendieta, (2009) "Spiritual Politics and Post-Secular Authenticity: Foucault and Habermas on postmetaphysical religion", p. 2, 11-12.

that the question of post-secular poses two lines of inquiry: on the first level, determinations about the state of religiosity in the world, and on a second level, understanding the new ways that social scientists, philosophers, historians and scholars from across disciplines are and are not paying attention to religion.[32]

More analytically, sociologists on one side understand "postsecularity" as the phenomenon of the religious return into secularized societies. Jose Casanova's declaration in 1994 that religion "went to public" raised questions about the western secular societies and reaffirmed the power of religion in politics.[33] Casanova and Peter Berger question whether institutional differentiation must necessarily result in the privatization of religion. Max Weber, Habermas and Steve Bruce, on the other side, question the public role of religion in modern societies, supporting that because of the advanced differentiation in modern societies, religion cannot offer legitimation for a total society.[34]

In addition, politic scientists recognize in post-secular theory the necessity to re-evaluate modes of governance of religion and adapt them to the requirements of religiously pluralist societies. Political philosophers, as Jürgen Habermas for instance, frequently understand "postsecularity" as the normative challenge to define the place of religious viewpoints in the democratic public sphere and to formulate a political ethic that is valid for all citizens, irrespectively of their belonging to different faiths or being religious or non-religious; "postsecularism" for them is defined as a response to ideological "secularism". Theologians look at "postsecularity" as a particular condition for the church that needs to define its place and role *vis-à-vis* the state and a civil society that is no longer determined by exclusively secularist criteria. Finally, historians place "postsecularity" in the broader historical context of modernization and cultural history and ask for historical processes and conditions that determine secularization.

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[32] P. S. Gorski, D. K. Kim, J. Torpey & van Antwerpen J. (2012) "The Post-secular in Question". In P. S. Gorski, D. K. Kim, J. Torpey & van Antwerpen, J., eds. *Post secular in Question: Religion in Contemporary Society*. New York-London: New York University Press, p. 1-2.
[33] See J. Casanova, (1994) *Public religions in the Modern World*. Chicago: University of Chicago press.
[34] I. Furseth, & Repstad, P. (2006) *An introduction to the sociology of religion: classical and contemporary perspectives*. Opp. cit., p. 99-101.

Conclusion

Multicultural societies have provided "fertile ground" for new debates about the role of religion in the public sphere. Many scholars argue that religiosity in Europe has changed drastically because of the existence of many Asian and African immigrants. These changes along with the different religions that appeared in Europe reinstated the religion in public debate. Proponents of post-secular theory argue that secularism has come to an end. Although the differences occurred can cause no change inside the secular states or secular Europe, in fact they can cause changes in matters of consciousness amongst religious communities. As Habermas argues, it is not the state itself that changes, but the consciousness of people. He claims characteristically that "post-secular society must adjust itself to the continued existence of religious communities in a secularized environment". So, it is not the state or the age which turn to post-secular but it is the perceptions of human beings in multiculturalism and rather the coexistence of different and affluent religious communities in the western countries.

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