

Workshop on “The Secular, Secularizations, and Secularisms”

at the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin, June 7-10, 2006
in conjunction with the Focus Group *Religion and Contingency*
with funding support from the Otto und Martha Fischbeck-Stiftung
and the Arbeitskreis Moderne und Islam

Besides the Fellows of the Focus Group *Religion and Contingency* -- Ingolf Dalferth, Horst Dreier, Hans Joas, Astrid Reuter, Charles Taylor, and Jose Casanova --, Permanent Fellow Friedrich Wilhelm Graf and Fellows Ashis Nandy and Abdulkarim Soroush, the following scholars have agreed to participate in the workshop:

Professor Aziz al-Azmeh, Central European University, Budapest
Professor Rajeew Barghava, University of New Delhi
Professor Karl Gabriel, Universität Münster
Professor Nilufer Gole, École des Hautes Etudes, Paris
Professor Gudrun Krämer, Freie Universität, Berlin
Professor Tariq Modood, Bristol University
Professor Ebrahim Moosa, Duke University
Professor Detlef Pollack, Europa-Universität Viadrina
Professor Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin, Ben Gurion University
Professor Peter van der Veer, University of Utrecht

We envision the workshop as an opportunity to explore and discuss together the contested meanings, the ideological-normative debates and the varied and multifaceted empirical-analytical realities behind these concepts.

All three concepts, “the secular” “secularization” and “secularism”, are obviously related but are used very differently in various academic-disciplinary and socio-political and cultural contexts. One may differentiate between the three concepts simply as a way of distinguishing analytically in an exploratory manner between three different phenomena, without any attempt to reify them as separate realities:

- A) “The secular” as a central modern category - theologico-philosophical, legal-political, and cultural-anthropological – to construct, codify, grasp and experience a realm or reality differentiated from “the religious.” Here we may recapitulate all the debates over the “legitimacy” and “autonomy” of this modern reality, from the Loewith /Blumenberg debate to more contemporary debates between Taylor, Asad and Millbank. Phenomenologically one can explore the different types of “secularities” as they are codified, institutionalized, and experienced in various modern contexts and the parallel and correlated transformations of modern “religiosities” and “spiritualities.”

- B) “Secularization” refers usually to supposedly actual empirical-historical patterns of transformation and differentiation of “the religious” (ecclesiastical institutions and churches) and “the secular” (state, economy, science, art, entertainment, health and welfare, etc.) institutional spheres from early modern to contemporary societies. Within the social sciences, and particularly within sociology, a general theory of secularization was developed that conceptualized these at first modern European, later increasingly globalized historical transformations, as part and parcel of a general teleological and progressive human and societal development from the primitive “sacred” to the modern “secular.” The thesis of “the decline” and “the privatization” of religion in the modern world became central components of the theory of secularization. Both, the decline and the privatization theses have undergone numerous critiques and revisions in the last fifteen years. But the core of the theory -- the understanding of secularization as a single process of differentiation of the various institutional spheres or sub-systems of modern societies, understood as the paradigmatic and defining characteristic of processes of modernization – remains relatively uncontested in the social sciences, particularly within European sociology. We would like to open the debate to explore and recognize the particular Christian historicity of Western European developments as well as the multiple and very different historical patterns of secularization and differentiation within European and Western societies. This recognition in turn should allow a less Euro-centric comparative analysis of patterns of differentiation and secularization in other civilizations and world religions; and more importantly the further recognition that with the world-historical process of globalization initiated by the European colonial expansion, all these processes everywhere are dynamically interrelated and mutually constituted.
- C) “Secularisms” refers more specifically to the kind of secular world-views (or “Weltanschauungen”) which may be either consciously held and explicitly elaborated into historico-philosophical and normative-ideological state projects, projects of modernity and cultural programs or as an epistemic knowledge regime that may be unreflexively held and phenomenologically assumed as the taken for granted normal structure of modern reality, as a modern doxa or as an “unthought.” But modern secularism also comes in multiple historical forms, in terms of different normative models of legal-constitutional separation of the secular state and religion, or in terms of the different types of cognitive differentiation between science, philosophy and theology, or in terms of the different models of practical differentiation between law, morality, and religion, etc.

We propose to structure our discussions into six thematic sessions, each of which would consist of three brief position papers or presentations (no more than 15 minutes each) followed by general discussion. The session on Islam on Friday evening is envisioned as a public forum.

Workshop Schedule

Wednesday, June 7, 2006

Arrival at the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin, Wallotstr. 19, 14193 Berlin

7:00pm Welcome: Dieter Grimm, José Casanova
Reception (Main Building, Wallotstr. 19)

Thursday, June 8

Session I: 9am-12pm (Villa Jaffé, Wallotstr. 10)

“The secular” and its varieties: theologico-philosophico-anthropological debates

Moderator: Hans Joas

Presenters: Ingolf Dalferth, Abdulkarim Soroush, Charles Taylor

12:20pm Lunch (Main Building)

Session II: 3pm-6pm (Villa Jaffé)

Multiple secularizations: comparative historical perspectives on the tensions and patterns of differentiation between “religious” and “secular” institutional spheres

Moderator: Ingolf Dalferth

Presenters: Jose Casanova, Hans Joas, Detlef Pollack

6:00pm Reception (Main Building)

6:30pm Dinner (Main Building)

Friday, June 9

Session III: 9am – 12pm (Villa Jaffé)

Secularisms as state ideologies, legal-constitutional projects and philosophico-historical world-views

Moderator: Astrid Reuter

Presenters: Aziz al-Azmeh, Friedrich Wilhelm Graf, Horst Dreier

12:30pm Lunch (Main Building)

Session IV: 3pm – 6pm (Villa Jaffé, Wallotstr. 10)

Contemporary debates in the West: secular norms, multiculturalism, and immigrant (Muslim) incorporation

Moderator: Horst Dreier

Presenters: Tariq Modood, Ammon Raz-Krakotzkin, Astrid Reuter

6pm Light Supper / Snacks (Restaurant, Main Building, Wallotstr. 19)

Public Session V: 8.30pm – 10.30pm (Main Building)

Contemporary Muslim Debates on Secularization and the Western Discourse on Islam

Moderator: Jose Casanova

Presenters: Nilufer Göle, Gudrun Krämer, Ebrahim Moosa

Saturday, June 10

8.30 am Breakfast (Kitchen, Villa Jaffé, Wallotstr. 10)

Session V: Discussion, 9am –10am (Villa Jaffé)

Session VI: 10am –1pm (Villa Jaffé)

Indian debates on secularism, the nation, and religious pluralism

Moderator: Charles Taylor

Presenters: Ashis Nandy, Rajeev Barghava, Peter van der Veer

April 21, 2006