



Democracy and Pluralism: The Political Expression of Religion in the 21st Century

Modernity brought with it, not only a change of economic and political system, but also a renewal in the mentality of man. Such transformation transcended the way religion is conceived. The old conception based on religion being the way to legitimize political power is no longer valid.

With the arrival of this modern concept, many understood that the emancipation of mankind from religion was necessary, so the performance in the social, political, economic and cultural fields would not be biased. This new way of conceiving the world made cultural and religious pluralism begin to take shape in societies. In such a way that, the coexistence of different communities and their guarantees develop in spaces of peace. This is the current demand of the community, which seeks to activate spaces of consensus and social participation, which will only be possible if acting with equity, social justice and democracy in mind.

This cultural and religious diversity is formed within societies based on two manifest phenomena: migratory flows and the emergence of New Religious Movements (NRM). The comprehension of these two figures or phenomena will be important to understand the fundamental role that they both play in the construction of more plural and inclusive societies and democracies.

Migratory flows are part of the current debate of the States, which through immigration policies seek to respond to the different needs and issues that occur within this population group. These migratory flows are one of the reasons why in recent years, diversity has been increasing. Situations such as asylum or refuge, due to political, economic, legal or natural reasons as well as the aspiration to better life opportunities are the most common causes of immigration.

In the context of coexistence between migrants, carriers of other beliefs and customs and local nationals, the great challenge that arises in terms of public immigration policies is not in the recognition of rights, but rather, the recognition of the appropriate instruments for the development of them. That is, the way these migrant people are accessing these rights in the

host countries. Although it is not possible to talk about this subject in depth in this document, it is important to state that, the way in which immigration policies are conceived in most of the States, has led to the justification of discrimination against a group, preventing the construction of a plural and inclusive democracy. This discrimination encourages exclusion, generates more severe spaces of vulnerability and sends a clear message to immigrants, making of them second-class citizens.

Migratory flows not only transfer people physically from one territory to another, but with them travels a wealth of beliefs, traditions, culture, essential aspects of their existence, all understood as identity. This identity allows for a free development and aspirations for the fulfillment of their life expectations, but at the same time, it is a fundamental criterion for the dignification and recognition of their fundamental rights.

The **New Religious Movements** (NRM) come to replace those that at some time were denominated, in a pejorative way "sects". These new movements obey new forms of spirituality. The great novelty of these movements is not in the message that is transmitted, since it is considered to be basically the same in each one of them; its novelty focuses on the presentation of the contents, the way in which the message is transmitted.

These NRM face two difficulties. The first is to identify common elements that allow the recognition of these religious phenomena. The second is the resistance of many of these movements to be denominated as religion.

According to Tamayo (Tamayo & Fariñas Dulce, 2007), several are the classifications or typologies of the NMR that have been proposed. The first classification, according to its religious origin, can identify three types: those with a clear Christian origin, the neo-oriental ones, which refer in one way or another to religious traditions of Hindu, Buddhist or Taoist inspiration; and those of mystical-esoteric character, which accentuates the esoteric over the mystical, like the New Age.

The second classification is based on the attitude of the NMR to the world and its relationship with society. Here a clear distinction is established between those who have a positive attitude and those who have a negative attitude, that is, those who accept the rest of society and those who reject it. It is a distinction to which we want to give a social explanation. On the one hand, those who reject the world to the rest of society would be identified as the losers of the complex society, within which the poor are identified, especially the new poor, those excluded from the system (immigrants, for example); In contrast, there are those who accept the world and are called the winners, according to the criteria imposed by society (people from emerging urban groups, for example).

Attending to that diffusion, three are those that are considered more extended in the West: the neo-orthodox of Christianity, Judaism and Islam; the neo-orientals in Europe and the United States; and those that tend to the empowerment of the human being.

There is a third classification of the NMR more extensive, which distinguishes six currents: neo-Protestant Pentecostal character, far removed from historical Protestantism. Its

missionary proselytism and the enthusiastic demonstrations of its cult brings it closer to the new religious; "Sects" of Christian origin, such as Jehovah's Witnesses or Mormons, who maintain some reference to Jesus Christ but differ from the majority Christianity. "New cults" of oriental origin that are introduced or born in the West, such as the Hare Krishna, are arising from the transformations of Eastern religions in our world. "Movements of human potential", such as Scientology, which do not grant relevance God and focus on human progress; "New magical movements", like anthroposophy, that live a magical experience, rather than religious; "Frontier Catholicism", which are configured around "personal revelations" and "celestial apparitions" not recognized by the ecclesiastical hierarchy.

The concepts mentioned allow us to understand the reasoning of Peter Berger, to the extent that, modernity did not bring about the disappearance of religions, but provided different ways of understanding it. At present it is observed, not only exist different religions, but also philosophical conceptions and ways of channeling that spiritual aspect of the human being. Therefore, it has become a key issue in the agenda of the States, given that the recognition and strengthening of policies on religious freedom or belief, are the theoretical basis for managing the cultural diversity of increasingly multicultural societies.

The rise of this spiritual component means that States must be ready to provide the necessary guarantees so that this right can be exercised without any obstacle, allowing the free development of man and the dignification of the human being.

For this reason, the States are using different formulas that allow them, within their spaces, to attend to the diversity that is increasing. Such formulas are: neutrality, egalitarianism, differentiated citizenship, secularization. In the same manner, the model of the Rule of Law, conceives within its fundamental principles or pillars the protection of pluralism, because it is understood that the its strengthening allows achieving the goals proposed by rule of law. The State is aware that the recognition of this pluralism and diversification is one of the ways to democratize society and promote social inclusion.

Pluralism

A priori, we can say that pluralism is **a complex system that seeks respect for diverse ways of life and the active and inclusive participation for all**. To live accepting and respecting others, managing to reach a point of equilibrium where, surely, it is required to cede certain spaces, is not entirely peaceful.

As explained by Juan José Tamayo and María José Fariñas Dulce "Pluralism refers to the existence of several different intellectual, cultural, religious or juridical conceptions or, even, opposed conceptions"(Tamayo & Fariñas Dulce, 2007).

It is necessary and indispensable this circumstance of opposition and at the moment, excluding, because in this way it can be framed within pluralism, in fact it is what gives existence, life and meaning to it. Therefore, the field where pluralism emerges and will develop is precisely where those irrefutable or non-negotiable circumstances are born, causing as result universals excluding other universals.

In the same way, María José Fariñas explains that pluralism does not have to be considered as that ideal or objective to be achieved, because its requirement goes beyond that. Pluralism implies trying to live together, is the approach to others, is the response of the individual to the impositions of universals; is the way of saying that there are aspects, areas that do not enter into negotiation (Fariñas Dulce, 2014).

Pluralism is considered one of the fundamental pillars of the current Rule of Law since its "execution or materialization" contributes to achieve the aims. However, we cannot ignore the different battles that must be waged, at least to achieve recognition of the Pluralism. Defending the diversity of peoples and the right to have cultural values clashes strongly with the pretension of a system, which seeks not only to unify world market policies but also to transcend and to monoculturate society, in order to hinder or mitigate any destabilizing element of monopolistic structures.

This pretension to maintain a cultural model and implement it in different social groups, without taking into account its internal and external characteristics, generates a greater conflict. This is argued by some authors who believe that "(...) we should not forget, that **social systems, which impose mono-cultural models, often generate violence precisely because of the lack of respect for diversity and, consequently, by limiting freedom (...)**" (Fariñas Dulce, 2014). **This is evident, in the nationalist and patriotic discourses, where it is sought to hide behind the identity aspects of each society, the true interest of restricting liberties and avoiding the increase of pluralism.**

Note then that the challenge goes beyond achieving recognition of pluralism, given that it does not respond to the social requirements of creating awareness of recognition by the individual. Awareness of the existence of differences and the need to learn to live and cope with these, causing them to achieve spaces of equality, guarantees and access to the same level of satisfaction in all areas.

Antonio Carlos Wolkmer, Latin American philosopher, explains that pluralism¹ is a transversal phenomenon to the different stages of Western history. Its concept captures the diversity of interpretations and diverse existing approaches in more than one reality. In this way, it is the different theoretical bases, the different legal systems, the great agitations of collectives that encourage the strengthening of pluralist doctrines.

In this sense, it cannot be forgotten that one of the fundamental pillars of the Rule of Law is pluralism, and that **participatory democracies have pluralism as a fundamental ingredient**, fostering a legality that has been forced to be based on the new subjects

¹ See some of Wolkmer's articles on legal pluralism, where he constructs a notion of pluralism in the current democracies. Wolkmer, A.C. "La función de la crítica en la filosofía jurídica Latinoamericana" (The role of criticism in Latin American legal philosophy). *Red de bibliotecas virtuales de ciencias sociales de América Latina y el Caribe, de la red de centros miembros de CLACSO*. <http://bibliotecavirtual.clacso.org.ar/ar/libros/derecho/wolk2.rtf>; Wolkmer, A.C. (2014). "Mundialización cultural, pluralismo jurídico y derechos humanos" (Cultural globalization, legal pluralism and human rights). *Umbral Revista de Derecho Constitucional* n° 4, pp. 197-212, https://www.corteconstitucional.gob.ec/images/contenidos/Publicaciones/Umbral_4_T-1_2014.pdf; Wolkmer, A.C. (2010). "Una visión crítica de la cultura jurídica en América Latina" (A critical vision of legal culture in Latin America), *Revista El Foro • Colegio de Abogados* • n° 12, pp. 13-19, <https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=4157314>; Wolkmer, A. C y Wolkmer, M. F. (2012). "Pluralismo, nuevos derechos y movimientos críticos en la teoría jurídica de Latinoamérica" (Pluralism, new rights and critical movements in the legal theory of Latin America), *Revista Derecho y Ciencias Sociales*, n° 6, pp. 182-196, <https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=5582553>

collective. Therefore, the great challenge is to achieve a balance between the general will, without ignoring the pluralism of individual interests that may arise.

As this author makes clear, if at present there is **an ethical crisis due to individualisms, relativisms, production, competences, power**, we are advocating **a social context where positions of the State and society can be reordered and emancipated**. For this, **it is necessary to promote and forge a critical thinking** that has the capacity to show the different categories and concepts, that is, **that has the ability to visualise pluralism**.

Now, pluralism has overflowed the scope of plurality, as it has tolerance as the protective mechanism. However, tolerance does not have to face the current requirements of pluralism. Plurality has sought through tolerance to reduce the effects of the clash that different cultures can give, but nowadays the changes suffered in society are constantly forced **to rethink the idea of tolerance** because the results of its application are insufficient. That is, it is necessary to understand that it is not enough to accept the new individuals, rather, that it is essential to step forward to consider those new individuals to have all the rights and be able to participate in all the stages of society.

Hence, pluralism implies something deeper, as it is more than tolerating the different individual. We ask, Who does legitimate an individual to tolerate another one? What holistic foundations does the tolerance of minorities have for minorities and why there is not an inverse relationship? The answers to these great unknowns, suppose new ways and pending scenarios of exploration from the pluralism approach.

More specifically, religious pluralism in societies takes place under two important approaches, according to the considerations made by Peter Berger: an institutional approach and a cognitive approach (Berger, 2005).-

The *institutional approach*, understands that today societies have created a kind of religious market, a competition of different religions to achieve the adhesion of followers, and this competition has been accentuated with religious freedom recognized by many States. This characteristic is closely linked to the concept of ecumenicality² among the churches.

On the other hand, there is the *cognitive approach*, which is one that takes into account the conscience or subjective part of the human being. Then, with pluralism, religion loses its character of reality in consciousness. In other words, it is to understand that what was taken for granted and that in a certain way homogenized beliefs, it comes to be weakened by pluralism because, **in modernity, religion is no longer the given one, but the one that is personally chosen**.

Each day this concept is seen more frequently, as man is in the constant search to find something that identifies him and allows him to develop according to his physical and spiritual requirements. Family tradition is weakened in the younger generations, who seek other alternatives for their spiritual exploration, which is very much in keeping with the changes that society imposes. In this way, religion is subjectivized and, therefore, it no longer answers the question of what *to believe, but how to believe*. In contemporary society, religion

² Implicit or explicit agreements so as not to venture into the field of another. In the United States, the concept "Courtesy" was used. Each Protestant denomination had a certain space to be able to operate, in such a way that it was easy to identify where a person belonged when referring to the place where they congregated.

is given to people to reflect on the religious means they are offered and, based on their religious preference, they adapt, modify, select and / or choose.

By combining these two implications it can be said that pluralism turns religions into a kind of **voluntary associations**. Max Weber and Ernst Troeltsch conclude that there are two ways to channel religion. These two forms are: through church, which is where one is born; and the sect, which is the one the person decides to adhere (Weber, 1978). However, Richard Niebuhr, finds that there is a third way, which has been implemented by the United States, the so-called denomination, which recognizes the right of other religions to exist (Niebuhr, 1922).

So far, it is important to mention that, despite being a current issue and which States cannot ignore, many consider religious and cultural diversification or pluralism as a serious problem, as a danger for the preservation of democracies and a way to disintegrate society. For this reason, many States appeal to models where they can homogenize certain aspects of society, promoting feelings of nationalism and patriotism, which only meant to prevent or stop the opening thoughts of human beings.

So in order to understand a true religious freedom or of belief implies to take into account several concepts that among themselves can be shocking and perhaps at first sight incompatible. However, this is where the State has a fundamental role, as it must achieve through its actions answers to those requirements of society. To speak of religious freedom is to speak of the right to equality, but also of the right to be different and of mechanisms such as secularism and secularization for the harmony of society and the generation of spaces of healthy coexistence.

As a result, it is considered that the harmonious integration of these concepts will allow to find more inclusive dynamics that must be developed and guaranteed not only by the States as an institution, but also by the society that composes it.

Equality and differentiated citizenship

Throughout the text it has been affirmed that modernity brought fundamental changes in the structure of society. One of those changes or phenomena within this modern society has been presented as pluralism or diversity. For this reason, the State has several alternatives to respond to each of the requirements that this phenomenon needs. Several options have been raised throughout the history for the State implementation. Some of them, such as cultural separation and assimilation, are not possible to come to place, as they contravene all the postulates of Human Rights and directly attack that struggle that many States maintain to achieve a coexistence with respect. Other options are presented and are the current reason, why important authors have started to study, in order to understand how the modern State could tend to them, **facilitating the recognition of diversity under equal conditions. These models are: equalitarianism and differentiated citizenship.**

Equalitarianism, unlike assimilationist, does not eliminate the difference but leaves it within the public scenario with an irrelevant role. **It is based on three fundamental principles: legality, universality and formal equality**, which were implemented, in the first place, in religious matters. These principles are transferred to the liberal democracies, in response to concerns about the best model of State to ensure the coexistence of different religions, especially in the same territory. Regarding this matter, some alternatives were given, explaining that through the recognition of tolerance, the protection of religious freedom, and

the respect for pluralism; the neutrality approach would be implemented on behalf of the State.

This aspect of egalitarianism can be addressed, understanding that in the liberal-republican tradition there are two important elements to be taken into account: **popular sovereignty and human rights**. Now, **within liberalism, following the line of Locke, human rights prevail over popular sovereignty**. On the other hand, republicanism considers that **popular sovereignty must prevail over human rights**. **Under these premises, the concept of egalitarianism begins to be constructed.**

Highlighting the point of view from liberalism, identity is understood as the derivation of what citizens consider a welfare state, which is nothing more than aspects of a private nature that will dignify the different concepts of life. In this way, and by virtue of this identity, it is held that the community of citizens is not one that is organised around cultural or ethical values but around shared political structures where the State is an impartial mediator under these structures.

In this sense, Habermas understands that the State is not only a mediator, but it is a common ethical project, which guarantees its existence, not focusing exclusively on the protection of rights, as in the construction of a common will and understanding. That means, the main concerning will be focused on the welfare not individually speaking but collectively.

From political liberalism, John Rawls (Rawls, Political Liberalism, 1995) raised the question of "how to achieve a just, stable, free and equal society, with the presence of different doctrines, which often are incompatible with each other". To answer this, he found necessary to carry out an overlapping political consensus of reasonable comprehensive doctrines. These doctrines will be present in the private sphere of the human being and are closely linked to the concept of a **reasonable citizen**. Citizens will be the ones who, through political consensus, manage to establish the necessary primary goods, and this **in Rawls's theory is known as justice and equity**. However, although culture may be considered by many as a primary good, it is not part of this political consensus and is outside the public distribution of goods. Then, **the political consensus will prevail to the extent that the values are contrary to this, because it is the consensus that opens the way to social cooperation in scenarios of equality**. In other words, the State will be responsible for designing a common space, where the different forms of life will converge and each citizen will join the one that responds to their requirements and have to strive for the survival of those.

From his point of view, **Habermas through the deliberative democracy understands that human rights are the channel that allows the different forms of communication to be institutionalized, in order to guarantee an autonomous legislative process**. The State cannot ignore the economical, social and cultural differences.

For this reason, it is the State's duty to recognise the different cultural identities, without granting favoritism to any, but in addition, it must design the same legal regulations for all.

For this reason, Habermas proposes a recognition's place for the different ones and for it suggests a difference between ethical issues and moral issues. The first ones are understood as those decisions, which are faced by the human being on his own life plan and the second ones, the way in which inter-subjective conflicts are resolved, in favour of the interests of those involved. For this author, **the State is impregnated with ethical aspects, since they are the**

ones that help to interpret the content of rights based on the different ways of life and the historical experience of each people. Thus, the dignity and integrity of the human being can only be protected as this area of shared experiences and life contexts where it is being socialized is as well protected, and it is of vital importance to ensure that all this is done on favor of equality. In short, it is advocating a formal egalitarianism of legal order where differentiated rights do not fit.

From another perspective, the differentiated citizenship can be remarked. This type of citizenship demands the recognition of differentiated rights and, therefore, a different treatment. Citizenship is a legal status of the human being, which is composed of several dimensions namely: civil, political, social and identity. In this last dimension, the identity, is where difference is demanded and the rights are forced to be adapted to the different forms of life. The challenge for identity citizenship requires achieving the integration of identities in the same normativity.

Charles Taylor tends to protect national communities, defending the so-called culture of authenticity. This type of culture, was born in the eighteenth century and has two central ideas. The first of them, understands that morality is the way to self-determine. The second one, understands that each person has a particular style or form of being human. However, this culture of authenticity, Taylor considers, it has been un-configured in such a way that, with the modernity, the individualism has been fueled. For this reason, this author proposes an authenticity culture to claim community ties.

Kimlicka, for his part, proposes a distinction between different societies. Thus, national minorities and indigenous peoples call them multinational and multicultural society; immigrant groups, called multicultural polytechnic society. For this author, the difference between these two societies lies in the freedom of choice that the members of each society have. The first of these multinational-multicultural societies, has no choice, is a condition that is born and therefore, even renouncing it, cannot be completely separated from it, so, the level of protection in this type of society is higher. The second type of society - multicultural polyethnic society - is assumed by its own voluntary decision to be or not in a specific place (however, this statement admits a deeper analysis, since in many cases the immigrant is not so free to choose "where you want to go", if not better to resign yourself to the "where you can stay"). But, in general, according to what was said by this author, in this second society, the power to choose is broader and for that reason, its protection is lower.

The great importance of these contributions is that they put on the table the justification of differentiated rights, which approach achieves a real equality, and not only a formal equality which, in a such a manner, separates the concept of man from the different circumstances that surround him or from he is part from as: sex, race, nationality, religion, etc. Real equality, therefore, is where the different problems come into play. These conflicts will contribute to the recognition's promotion of difference in order to facilitate the recognition of the same citizenship's condition and equal rights acknowledgement.

Secularity and Equality

It is the pretension that, every policy of secularism rests on policies of equality. This intertwining will generate policies that promote social inclusion, participation in democracy, legal equality and will guarantee religious freedom, religious pluralism and access to all

guarantees. Likewise, the State has institutional principles, such as secularism and secularization to guarantee the effective materialization of moral principles, such as religious freedom and equal respect - equal treatment (Maclure & Taylor, 2011).

Now, the rigorous treatment of equality can be translated into mechanisms that allow each day, the constant interaction in the community between different social groups, in spaces of respect, dialogue, consensus and healthy debate. But for this to be carried out, it is necessary not only that the States design policies to be implemented, but no a joint work of each of the spheres of society and no as transformation in the way in which they are being educated.

It is important to consider that, inasmuch the spaces of coexistence are recognized and protected; social structures and a sense of cooperation among social groups are being strengthened. In other words, when it is understood the existence of differences, here the importance is not to promote such differences, but rather to look for meeting points. That is when you are sensitive to others and value them as equals to you. Then, this contributes to the dynamism and progress of society in other spheres such as economic and politic.

This idea is supported in an analysis carried out by Martha Nussbaum about the reality lived today, within the framework of complex spaces, specifically in Western society. This debate is approached from the ethical philosophy (Nussbaum, 2013), understanding that, from the three approaches³ proposed by it, it is possible to build a different society in those spaces. The way in which this author approaches the topic and how within these three approaches highlights the importance of working in the internal sphere of the human being, that is, strengthening their interest and concern towards others to achieve important changes in society. From this point of view, it is understood that, rather than the implementation of policies, it is necessary to promote a **comprehensive education** at all levels of society, which will allow it to gradually adjust to the needs of each member.

Thus, **when the ignorance of equality is incurred, the dignity of the human being is directly attacked.** Then, the effects that cause many circumstances tend to normalise and not be considered a violation of rights, in the particular case, it is considered that it does not affect the materialization of the right to equality and that they directly attack diversity and religious pluralism. However, in aspects of conscience, subtle violence may restrict access on an equal footing to many areas. Roger Williams, defined this as **violence to the soul of men, when people have to affirm convictions that do not share.** This means that the imposition of modifying certain codes of manifestation or expression and the harassment and constant criticism by society, with the only justification that this action is executed because it belongs to a certain religious group, is configured in a serious violence to the conscience, that the participation of these groups in determining spheres of society may be affected.

In order to give equal respect to the conscience, it is necessary to produce environmental and material conditions that protect the freedom of conscience and the practice of it. In such a way

³ Martha Nussbaum understands that the current situation, especially in the West, causes the image of this society to be disfigured by faces of fear and suspicion. For this reason, it proposes a study based on the Ethics philosophy in which three ingredients are combined: 1. Political principles that are the expression of equal respect among citizens; these principles reflect their interpretation to the current religious diversity; 2. A critical thinking that allows us to detect incoherence, which leads us to create exceptions from ourselves; 3. A mental look towards the other, that is, the ability to see and understand a person belonging to a different religion or culture. Nussbaum, M. (2013). The new religious intolerance. Barcelona: Paidós.

that this freedom must be broad, for example, not conditioning the way in which the different religions or beliefs manifest or externalize.

One of the alternatives presented for the scope of this freedom on an equal footing is the secular nature of the States. Secularism becomes the institutional mechanism through which it is guaranteed that the State will act neutrally, promoting equal respect for all people and preventing different social groups from being considered second-class citizens, avoiding unfounded exclusions and favoritism. Therefore, **achieving solid equality policies can be translated into a democratic and inclusive secular State, guarantor of diversity, freedoms and legal equality.** For this, it is necessary for the State to clearly show its neutrality, not maintaining a close relationship with any religion or philosophical current, generating the same spaces for dialogue and interaction and avoiding institutionalizing religious festivals that may obscure their actions.

At this point, it is important to understand that **secularism will never aim to lead people and lead their thinking towards indifference or religious persecution.**

Secularism⁴, defined by Juan José Tamayo, must be seen as a political space, legal framework and ethical horizon, focused on guaranteeing the exercise of human rights, freedom of expression, conscience and religion; in addition, to recognize the different ideologies, beliefs and utopian projects that are defined in a peaceful way (Tamayo J. J., 2012).

Secularization as a space for the protection of diversity and religious pluralism

Diversity and religious pluralism can be promoted and protected through phenomena such as secularization. Secularization, for a long time has been understood as the sharp separation between Church and State, in this way, any religious manifestation is relegated to the private sphere because it is considered incompatible with the public sphere. However, today, this consideration does not adapt the complexity of reality. Secularization can be understood today, as the scenario that the State has to guarantee, so that different philosophical and religious currents can interact.

Therefore, **secularization becomes one of the mechanisms for pluralism to find spaces of action within society.** This is explained by John Rawls (Rawls, 1995), when he understands that talking about the secularization of the State is not the same as talking about the secularization of society. For this, the State must be outside of any belief or political philosophy. That is if the State wants to be neutral and give more participation to pluralism, but can not intend to have society and individuals specifically, to be away from their conscience, their family nucleus aspects that belong to their privacy (such as their beliefs) and that becomes part of its free development.

⁴ It is important to say that, alongside the concept of secularism, there is the concept of secularism. These two concepts are considered by many opposites. When reviewing the definitions that some dictionaries give about them, it is found that in the dictionary of the Royal Spanish Academy and María Moliner, these concepts are synonymous. The RAE defines them like this: "Secularism. 1. M. Independence of the individual or of society, and more particularly of the State, with respect to any organization or religious confession. 2. m. Layman's condition (independent of any religious confession). Secularity 1. f. Layman's condition 2. f. Principle that establishes the separation between civil society and religious society ". The María Moliner dictionary gives these definitions: "Laicism. Doctrine that defends the independence of man or society, and more particularly of the State, of all ecclesiastical or religious influence. " For its part, the Larousse dictionary places these concepts as opposed; he understands that secularism is the conception by means of which the absence of religion, philosophies or any obligatory truth in the State is sought. It implies a neutrality of the State in doctrinal matters and opposes the secularism promoted historically.

In this way and as a consequence of the above, we can not forget that, independently of ideas, beliefs and worldviews, of being a believer or not, we have the status of citizens part of civil society and, as such, have also civil rights. This allows us to say that as a citizen, the individual is fully enabled to be part of democratic processes, which are intended to legitimize the established power.

Juan José Tamayo in his book “Invitation to Utopia”, explains how, religion does not become an alienating aspect for the human being. **On the contrary, it considers that religion becomes an important vehicle, to also channel social problems**, as, for example, in some Latin American countries, where prophetic movements have developed important contributions in problematic social contexts.

In this way, it can be said that, in scenarios of secularization, interreligious dialogue becomes the ideal mechanism for interaction and protection of difference. Dialogue is part of the structure of the human being. As part of this structure is one of the essential elements when interacting with their peers. Thus, in the dialogue expressions such as “proximity” are strengthened, as Juan José Tamayo and María José Fariñas affirm: "The moral-being of the person implies alterity and can not be understood without dialogical mediation: ethic begins when the others enter on stage "(Tamayo & Fariñas Dulce, 2007).

Dialogue is an indispensable mechanism for the fight against fundamentalisms and social / cultural integrisms that give rise to acts of harassment and extreme violence. In addition, dialogue will not enter a field of winners and losers, but will be the way to find points that are transversal to all and also in the spaces where it is generated, it will find the possibility of creating a shared language. In short, it is the process where one is constantly learning from one another.

This conception of dialogue is perfectly intertwined with the deliberative democracies explained by Habermas. In these schemes, it is necessary to have a deliberative discourse, which will allow each and every one of the social actors to influence and participate in the different issues and spheres of society. This participation will be carried out under the natural and proper language of each one, and the State will be responsible for designing an institutional filter (Habermas, Taylor, Butler, & West, 2011), which allows all those opinions, speeches and points of view to be taken into consideration and part of the legal norm.

Keeping the above in consideration, dialogue becomes the proposal that will allow the construction of transcultural values that respect cultural and religious diversity. It will also allow debate of fundamental problems that become the current breaking point of democracies. Points such peace, distribution of wealth, the fight against poverty, sustainable development, respect and guarantee of individual and collective rights and freedoms such as immigration, among others (Tamayo & Fariñas Dulce, 2007).

Interculturality, scenario of interreligious dialogue.

Interculturality is the necessary formula not only to guarantee a dialogue but also to allow social cohesion and integration. From a philosophical perspective, it must be considered as a relational concept, meaning that its foundation is in the inter-relations between individuals. To accept the transversality of thought and the contextualization of diversity, cultural and ethical pluralism, is to understand **the need to encourage relations between different cultures based on equality**.

This concept, if we dare to say, is something revolutionary, because it is the way to approach aspects that are approached from the outside, aspects relegated only to centrality. It is therefore sought, with a perspective of protest and criticism, to overcome dualistic myths, in order to achieve a transverse dimension of the plurality of rationalities and conceptions.

Interculturality⁵, seen in this way, finds space in this process of access to citizenship. However, one must consider the meanings of citizenship and the conception from which the term is understood, since traditionally it is part of a legal status, where it is understood that being a national is the same as being a citizen and thus, it is excluded pluralism and the inequality gaps are widened. The consideration of citizenship by nationality, is the way of grouping the "likeness", either by criteria of race, culture, religion or language; in a supposedly universal identity, which causes the separation of nationals and immigrants who do not meet the criteria set by them.

For this reason, it is considered essential that current democracies rethink the concept and application of citizenship, so that it includes the different, that allows the individual to adapt within society and work on an equal footing to achieve their goals and life plans. A concept that facilitates spaces of interaction between all, and policies that allow to reduce inequality gaps.

Conclusions

Ultimately, pluralism or diversity is an aspect of immense importance in the construction of harmonious, democratic and just societies. Due to its very character and realities, its study becomes delicate and becomes an inexhaustible challenge. This is so, due to the presence of constant changes which demand to cover needs and respond in a timely and efficient manner to the different requirements. Never forgetting or overlooking fundamental principles and rights, which are an intrinsic part of the human being.

It is necessary for the different States to create effective policies of protection and guarantee of rights both for migratory flows and for different religious movements, which become the main causes of diversity. Therefore, inclusion policies and where democratization and legal equality for all are promoted would be ideal, as this would guarantee plural, free and fair spaces for all.

⁵ There is a concept that is also used in these contexts, but that tends to be opposed to interculturality. Multiculturalism is the way the dominant culture reacts. Under the pretext of obtaining a claim to the right of difference, fosters spaces of indifference, isolation and lack of communication between different cultures. Therefore, their efforts are focused on maintaining and keeping differences, which means that meeting or consensus points between them can be lost. The multiculturalism what it does is to pigeonhole each culture generating cultural, community, urban and religious ghettos, locating the differences in parallel but with lacking of communication. Thus multiculturalism becomes the way to strengthen fundamentalisms and cultural integrisms. Tamayo, J. J. and Fariñas Dulce, M. J. (2007). Interculturality and multiculturalism. In Cultures and religions in dialogue (pp. 171-185). Madrid: Dykinson.

It is necessary to give a greater scope to egalitarianism, since its simple consideration as equality before the law, limits its field of action and the way in which it can be developed. In other words, it is necessary to achieve a harmonization with real equality, which allows the inclusion of difference, not relegating it only to the private sphere but understanding that in order, to build a strong social fabric and true cooperation between different societies, it is necessary, to make minorities as part of society. Then, proposals such as those made by Rawls from his political liberalism, where he encourages the creation of spaces of political consensus; or Habermas with its deliberative discourses, where its central point is to achieve, through the different methods of communication, to reach a legal norm for all, allows us to understand that, in order to have true norms abided by all individuals, it is necessary that, they are allowed to be part of the regulatory design process.

In other words, both majorities and minorities should be part of the different debates on important aspects within their environment, since both majorities and minorities have the same quality of citizens. Hence, all are empowered to make decisions and be an active part of society. It is important to clarify that there are some exceptions to what has been said previously and that will not be discussed in this document. Thus, for example, people with disabilities who have some of their rights restricted because they can not act autonomously and independently; the immigrant population, as seen in the text, who suffer from restrictions on some of their rights in the host countries.

The differentiated citizenship proposes an approach to the reality of society. Through real equality or known by many as material equality. This differentiated citizenship seeks to open up space through differentiated rights. In fact, it is important to say that at present, it is the way most States act and within their political letters have recognized the protection of this type of equality. However, it is worth to determine the extent to which this equality is beneficial. The results can be two-way street. On one side, differentiated rights can become at some point extreme guarantees, paternalism and benefits. On the other side, you can run the risk that many of these rights are recognized but from a perspective of condescension made by the majority and, as a consequence, minorities are relegated to the will of the majority, which causes them to be considered second-class citizens.

The States have the possibility of creating and strengthening within their system, policies of secularism, which are no more than solid policies of equality, where the effective participation of all the members of society is permitted, regardless of race, colour, religion, sex or political affiliation. In this way, secularism as a neutrality of the State will allow equality of treatment to materialize from the perspective of political governance and promote different visions, and to avoid unjustified favoritism and counteract biased actions.

Secularization is the space currently being promoted where different visions, convictions and religions can come together. The promotion of an interreligious dialogue is the beginning of the construction of an intercultural society, where it is not only recognized that there is a difference, but that it interacts with it, where there is concern for its welfare. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen ties despite our deep differences. There is something bigger that makes us unite and work for a common welfare, and is the fact of having the quality of being human, holders of rights and of a common dignity which deserves to be defended in diverse scenarios of debate, in order to benefit the community.

Finally, based on the analysis from an ethical philosophy to the complex spaces, carried out by Martha Nussbaum, it is important to insist on the need to work in an integral education and formation to all the citizens, having as starting point the small generations. These new generations, from an early age, must develop an awareness of respect for the other. For this, it is necessary to encourage their training in different religions, where they know in detail the fundamentals of the same. This process must be followed throughout its school stage, so that when the adolescent age comes, the young man has the tools and criteria to decide, what conviction or religious current he wants to follow. What is proposed, in the last analysis, is the design of a transversal educational program that includes principles and values that can be predicated on all and the neutral teaching of different doctrines, beliefs and philosophical currents.