On Canaries, Icebergs and the public sphere: The pragmatic compromise of religious pluralism

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Abstract

The return of religion in western society has resulted in the expression of what is often termed post-secular socio-politics, closely linked to increasingly pluralistic societies that result from globalization. While the public sphere has, in the West, tended to follow a 'WASP'- derived model of post-Westphalian secular public sphere and the privatization of religion, this model is increasingly under critique and complaint. How might pluralism and the expression of religion be re-thought and re-encountered? This paper, engaging with the work of Ulrich Beck (2004) on "realistic cosmopolitanism" argues for a more localised, urbanised approach and understanding. The public sphere is actually a series of everyday pragmatic engagements and experiences that require a more nuanced evaluation. Critiquing the utopian agendas of much cosmopolitan theory, this paper asks two questions: Firstly, what can the return of religion tell us about late modern society? Secondly, what changes may be necessary to re-engage (with) pluralistic public spheres – and societies? Arising in response to the increasing discussion and debate as how societies can seek to engage with growing religious pluralism, using the central metaphors of 'the iceberg' and 'the canary' as hermeneutic tools, undertaken within a wider Taubesean hermeneutical reading, it argues for a rethought, pragmatic cosmopolitics that is intermestic; that is, both international and domestic in focus and response.

Keywords: Bruno Latour; cosmopolitanism; David Held; diversity; religious pluralism; secular space; Ulrich Beck.

Abstrak

Kembalinya agama dalam masyarakat Barat telah menghasilkan ekspresi dari apa yang sering disebut sebagai sosio-politik pasca-sekuler (*post-secular socio-politics*), yang terkait erat dengan masyarakat yang semakin majemuk sebagai akibat dari globalisasi. Sementara ruang publik, di Barat, cenderung mengikuti model 'WASP' yang diturunkan dari ruang publik sekuler pasca-Westphalian dan privatisasi agama, model ini semakin banyak dikritik dan dikeluhkan. Bagaimana mungkin pluralisme dan ekspresi agama dapat dipikirkan dan dihadapi kembali? Penelitian ini, yang melibatkan karya Ulrich Beck (2004) tentang "kosmopolitanisme realistis" berargumen untuk pendekatan dan pemahaman yang lebih terlokalisasi dan urban. Ruang publik sebenarnya merupakan serangkaian keterlibatan dan pengalaman pragmatis sehari-hari yang membutuhkan evaluasi yang lebih bernuansa. Mengkritik agenda utopis dari banyak teori kosmopolitan, penelitian ini mengajukan dua pertanyaan: Pertama, apa yang dapat dikatakan oleh kembalinya agama kepada kita tentang masyarakat modern akhir? Kedua, perubahan apa yang mungkin diperlukan untuk melibatkan kembali (dengan) ruang publik yang pluralistik - dan masyarakat? Muncul sebagai tanggapan terhadap meningkatnya diskusi dan perdebatan tentang bagaimana masyarakat dapat berusaha untuk terlibat dengan pluralisme agama yang semakin berkembang, dengan menggunakan metafora sentral 'gunung es' dan 'burung kenari' sebagai alat hermeneutik, yang dilakukan dalam pembacaan hermeneutika Taubesean yang lebih luas, ia berpendapat untuk pemikiran ulang, kosmopolitik pragmatis yang intermestik; yaitu, baik internasional dan domestik dalam fokus dan respons.

Kata Kunci: Bruno Latour; kosmopolitanisme; David Held; keragaman; pluralisme agama; ruang sekuler; Ulrich Beck.

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INTRODUCTION

As our societies become increasingly religiously and culturally diverse, there is a growing sense amongst many, including religious people and thinkers, that the old multi-cultural options may need to be either rethought, or in fact rejected in favour of cosmopolitan possibilities.[1] Yet in any attempt to engage with issues of pluralism, secularity, religion and public space we need to consider the actual and contextual environments in which these debates, actions and issues are played out. For at heart we are dealing with people in praxis. What follows could be described as a series of pragmatic, ground-up - and grounded- responses and possibilities. It is a defence of the secular state and the secular society, perhaps not as it has been traditionally imagined; but perhaps the way it is - and can be - increasingly experienced.

Gabriel Vahanian has traced the secular back to *saeculum* - the world of shared experiences. As he states, "in a pluralistic world, what we have in common is not religion. It is the secular" (Vahanian, 2005, p. 21). However what we do and say and how we act within this world of shared experience raise a series of issues regarding the limits of pluralism in public space.

In New Zealand, the first debate of the first Parliament in 1854, concerned religious identity and pluralism (Oxholm, Rivera, Schirrman, & Hoverd, 2022). Ostensibly a debate concerning the opening of the House of Representatives with prayer, it raised deeper issues as to the *saeculum* and what are the limits of public space. The background to the debate was a European history of religion as social and political problem. Would public religious identification, allied with politics, have the potential to derail governance and the wider *saeculum*? For as noted in the debates, even within the small, and on the face of it uniform membership of this colonial legislature existed a variety of religious identities. To formally associate the House of Representatives - and via this, the wider colony - officially with any religious identity and institution would be to potentially import old world divisions into the new world society. The debate was couched in terms of individual identities and beliefs, and the freedom to believe or not believe according to one's individual conscience. In the end a pragmatic compromise was reached - "the House distinctly asserts the privilege of a perfect equality in all religious denominations" (Davidson & Peter Lineham, 1987, pp. 85–87) - and so New Zealand was constituted as existing without a formal religious identity that did not "confer or admit any pre-eminence" to any Church or religious body. The resultant and developing public space was therefore, on the face of it, neutral and secular. Yet of course most of the settlers existed within a particular series of religious identities closely tied to culture, class, ethnicity and education. The indigenous Maori were not included in this legislature and their beliefs - from pre-contact tribal beliefs, to varieties of missionary Christianity and/or indigenized Christianities - were not represented (Jackson & Wood, 1964). Nor were women included (Curtin, 2008). So this pluralism - and the wider secular society - was a white (White & Tadesse, 2007), male, European (and

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[1] At the start of the 21st century there was a rapidly expanding body of work- and debate- on cosmopolitanism across a variety of disciplines. As well as the texts directly referenced below, other writings that influenced the pre-history of article include: Kwame Anthony Appiah (2006), Ulrich Beck (2002, 2006, 2007), Robyn Eckersley (2007), Catherine Edwards & Greg Wolf (2003), Ulf Hannerz (1990), Walter Mignolo (2000), Mica Nava (2002), Bryan S. Turner (2002) and Jeremy Waldron (1991). Of course there is in fact a *cosmopolis* of texts and views on cosmopolitanism. It could also be argued that the engagement with Paul's *Letter to the Romans* by Agamben, Badiou and earlier, Taubes- and with input from Zizek- were part of a wider enagement with cosmopolitanism and its links into the universal claims of Christianity. See Giorgio Agamben (2005), Alain Badiou (2003), Jacob Taubes (2004), and Slavoj Zizek (2000, 2003).

Protestant-derived) construct- and its forms of accepted plurality reflected these preferences. For one form of the modern state is to develop a society whereby public secularity exists as a series of pragmatic compromises and silences.

How was this possible? It is my contention that over the past 250 or so years, most people did not become atheist nor did they continue to be pre-Enlightenment believers. Rather most became types of romantics whereby religion was increasingly seen and located as a form of internal and private truth that was best kept out of public discussion and critique. In effect we almost all became, in various ways, the descendents and continuation of Schleiermacher's 'cultured despisers of religion'- and tended to see public expressions of religion (especially of other faiths and denominations) in cultured despiser terms. It can be argued this was a good thing in the main, for in increasingly religiously (and culturally) diverse societies, we required - and probably still do require - the necessary illusion of public secularity for the state to effectively work. However, this is what I term the WASP (White Anglo-Saxon Protestant) version of modern society (extending WASP from its North American, primarily political *habitus*), a creation and claim of public space and public secularity that can be seen to arise out of and support a white, Anglo-Saxon Protestant identity and claim to power. For the interiorised essence of Schleiermacherian liberal romanticism drew on a WASP self-regard as the cultured despiser of religion - and as cultured despiser generally of all that challenged a WASP preference - or later, of all that challenged European-derived Enlightenment claims of modernity. However, over the past 40 years in particular, the WASP-dominated version of modern society and modern secularity has come under increasing challenge and critique - and not just in North America. The challenges of pluralism - and the reflexive response to the limits of multiculturalist pluralism - have all forced a rethinking of WASP-derived secularity - and the attendant necessity to rethink pluralism and public space in western democracies.

RESEARCH METHODS

As an interdisciplinary scholar working in the fields of radical theology, continental thought, and social theory my central research methodology draws upon what can be termed Taubesan hermeneutics, that is the type of hermeneutics undertaken by Jacob Taubes (1923-1987), the Jewish scholar, Professor of Hermeneutics at the Free university of Berlin, whose thought and also correspondence with the legal and political theorist Carl Schmitt enables, I claim, a way to re-think many issues of contemporary modernity.

Tabuesan hermeneutics was described as drawing "from authors such as Nietzsche, Freud, Benjamin and above all Carl Schmitt. The rule of thumb is this hermeneutics reads: "Against whom is this text written?" or "what key sentence was this text written to conceal?" It is the matter of a hermeneutics on the trail of the implicit and the marginal because it assumes that that which is disguised governs a text more than that which is articulated. It further assumes that the trace of a decisive truth proceeds diagonally toward an encoded communication" (Taubes, 2010, p. xix). It therefore proceeds as critical reading of modernity and the way religion and society has been thought, expressed and experienced looking to discern the hermeneutical underpinnings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. To rethink pluralism, I want to propose two metaphors: the iceberg and the canary.

In considering the first metaphor, I tend to think of religious groups as icebergs - in that the visible expressions are only that small percentage (around 10%) existing above the waterline. This expresses what I call the iceberg fallacies of religion. The first fallacy is that of inter-faith dialogue. The second is that of what can be termed problematic and politicized religion. Both are fallacies because what is responded to comprises a very small percentage of each group that tend to act publicly - and claim to represent the wider, submerged iceberg. In the case of interfaith dialogue small, often self-selected groups undertake dialogue with other similar groups, claiming often to represent the wider religion. In many cases, they seek to express perceived, pan-religious commonalities, often in forms of perennial philosophy and denying the realities of strongly felt differences (Taylor, 1979). In such cases the tips of each iceberg of faith have far more in common with each other tip than they do with their own unseen and unrepresented majority - which are themselves deeply divided as to what constitutes the real body of faith and true belief. Yet the tips are the ones allowed a voice in the public square because they are seen to be working toward the goal of a peaceful and controllable pluralistic society.

Yet what is it that they offer? For what occurs is a bland expression. Let me explain with an example. I once attended a National Interfaith forum in new Zealand as an observer. When I left home to attend, my children knowing there was to be a dinner were most upset and jealous that I would be getting to have some tasty, exotic food as would befit such a pluralistic grouping. However my expectations were cruelly dashed. An official at the meeting proudly announced they had thought long and hard about what type of meal they could offer that would represent the diversity, and explaining that it would consist of rice, pasta, chickpeas and fried onion. My heart - and stomach – sank; for that it what it was: plain boiled rice with plain boiled chickpeas, plain boiled pasta elbows, and a couple of overcooked onion rings - topped off with a squirt of ketchup. They had, it seemed, taken the blandest basics of each culture and designed a dish that lacked interest, spice, taste or meaning. While the interfaithers devoured it, those of us who were observers - from NGOs and other groups - tried valiantly to consume the unappealing concoction. Late that night, after hours of platitudes going back and forth, I escaped and, stomach rumbling, called into McDonalds for a Big Mac. The mass-produced fast food of consumer culture was actually tastier and fuller of flavour than the interfaith offering. And that is an issue of concern. Because when you go to eat with those who know what their faith means, you will get hospitality and food that is full of taste and flavour. The submerged icebergs know what they are and who they are: what is of flavour and taste to them. The interfaith meal was, for me, a strong expression of the iceberg fallacies of interfaith dialogue in public space. Consider the alternative if each group had brought a dish from their religious culture - there would have been a delicious smorgasbord of possibilities that importantly would have been offered for all to choose amongst. You could try from them all, perhaps not liking some - or having some not agree not with you - but there would have been choice, new possibilities, flavour and meaning. So in considering the iceberg, perhaps we need to stop tyring to have interfaith dialogue by iceberg tips, for the submerged bodies of the faith-bergs are

interacting everyday in the alternative public spaces of the *saeculum* - at schools, at sports, at work, in shops, in relationships and in expression and consumptions of food and popular culture.[2]

The second iceberg fallacy concerns an alternative tip of the iceberg: the public expression of what can be termed problematic and political religion. This is a different iceberg; if the interfaith one is far too bland, these groups would provide meals of mouth-scorching, stomach-crunching, eye-watering cuisine that again are not representative of their wider icebergs of faith and culture. Like the inter-faithers, these proclaimers of true faith are primarily a self-selecting minority who claim to represent and speak on behalf of the majority. Further, like the inter-faithers, the problematic and political tips have far more in common with the other pro-active tips in the public square than they do with their submerged majorities. While the inter-faithers deservedly struggle to get any media coverage for their banalities, the ultra-faithers (as I would term them) get too much attention from the media - and too little analysis. For they make an easy story that further confirms the wider suspicion of a WASP-derived secular public square and socio-political society that religion is problematic and is composed of problematic people all just biding their time.

Now perhaps I am just being, to both groups, one of those WASPS who is the late modern expression of the cultured despiser of religion; but let me add a qualifier in the metaphor of the canary.

In thinking about the public square and pluralism, I argue we need to consider the rise, intrusion and claims of religion into the public square as analogous to the canary that was carried down coalmines to warn of possible deadly gases. If the canary died this was warning that something was wrong. I want to raise the possibility that the late-modern rise and intrusion of religion into the public square is a warning to the secular socio-political state that the democratic society of the pluralistic state is not working - or perhaps, not working as well as it could be. To rework the secularization thesis, it is not that perhaps religion will die out, but rather that for most religion will become a private, interior concern if secular, modern, democratic society is achieving all it should for its citizens. Therefore the intrusion of religion into the public squire signals areas of concern for those religious citizens, but also, allied areas that should be of review and consideration for the media of the secular, democratic society - and especially of concern for the state itself. I am not arguing that the state should accede or agree with the concerns made, but rather raising the point that such expressions, complaints and actions are symptomatic of wider 'gasses' at work- often yet unseen by the majority.

We tend to operate on that necessary myth of public secularity where we expect citizens to subdue, submerge and, in reality, compartmentalize their religious beliefs and identities when they enter public space. We do so because religious faith raises particular issues for a secular, or at least ostensibly, non-partisan religious democracy. For in democracy the ultimate authority is meant to be the state and the laws that it enacts through its government (Held, 1991; O'Donnell, 2004). Yet the reality of a pluralist state is that it is composed of a great variety of citizens (and residents), many of whom will, if pushed on a certain issue, cast off the necessary myth and proclaim that true and final authority lies within the structures of their faith- and their god. This is when religious claims and identities, often interwoven with cultural claims and identities, enter the public square - often in what can sound like (and can often be) anti-democratic rhetoric- and also sometimes expressed in action.

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[2] In 2021, as participant in a series of responses to the horrific March 2019 mosque attacks in Christchuch, New Zealand, (see https://communityofstrangers.org.nz/) I had a conversation with a local Muslim academic who had attended the same event, remembered it and independently, had come to the same conclusion as me regarding the meal and what it symbolized.

This is the canary singing – often loudly. The questions that need to be asked in such pluralistic societies are: is there a single canary- or many canaries?; and – to totally mix metaphors, how representative are the canaries of the icebergs?

Such canaries do raise an issue for democratic societies because in societies that experience either lowering voter turnouts, or increasing non-alignment with political parties, such religious-culture blocs, by being organized to participate, can influence an election. The question that democratic states need to ask is how do they ensure the participation of those who religiously and culturally might be opposed to what can be loosely termed the progressive social legislation of a society that seeks to extend equality to those who, in religious and cultural groups, may be marginalised or discriminated against. Perhaps the real problem is that too often, in a pluralistic society, the cultured despisers of religion are also increasingly, the cultured despisers of politics? The canaries are therefore a necessary part of pluralism but not for what they are saying or arguing but rather in a wider context, for what they are expressing as to participation and involvement - or the lack of it- in modern, contemporary, society.

In short, the return of religious and cultural claims over and against the transcendent claims offered (it was thought) by a secular democratic society expose the central fragility of public space as constituted by such a socio-political environment - unless it continually seeks to express and re-express not only its warrant for existence but also the benefits of such an existence. Pluralism of private individuals in public space does continue, but in situations whereby the befits of a secular public space - as extended throughout the wider democratic society - fail to be properly articulated, or the benefits fully extended, then the icebergs start creaking and the canaries start singing. Pluralism thereby needs to be re-engaged by a new type of secularism, a secularism of the *saeculum* - the world of shared experience - but I would argue, a world of the necessary myth of public secularity. If society cannot successfully articulate the benefits of a *saeculum* secularity- equal access to education, equality before the law for all, the rights of women, children, gays and lesbians protected and promoted, the recognition of the right to faith and culture, but faith and culture subservient to a *saeculum* of participatory secular democracy- then we could find ourselves repeating the bleak and nihilistic secularity as articulated by Adorno and Horkheimer in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* of finding ourselves not "entering into a truly human condition …[but instead] sinking into a new kind of barbarism" (Peukert, 2005, p. 355) - a barbarism of iceberg tips of banalities, intolerance and restriction of full personhood.

Of course central to all of this is what is allowed to be 'religion' and its formal and informal institutional and para-institutional representations and representatives in a pluralistic society. Religion is, within secular modernity, the claim of an alternative - but in a pluralistic society religions (plural) become a series of claims of alternatives both to each other and to the society within which they are critically embedded. The tension for a pluralistic society is how to engage with religion, how to allow the expression of religious claims and identities in a way that does not involve slipping into either hard or soft forms of pathology and totalitarianism in attempts to exclude, deny or eradicate religion or varied expressions of faith communities. The tension is therefore that pluralism is not a settled condition nor a given state but rather a series of contestations and statements whereby private citizens in the *saeculum* may choose or feel forced to act as public citizens in the secular public square. As Claude Lefort notes:

> Can we not admit that, despite all the changes that have occurred, the religious survive in the guise of new beliefs and new presentations, and that it can therefore return to the surface, in either traditional or novel forms, when conflicts become so acute as to produce cracks in the edifice of the state (Steinmetz-Jenkins, 2009, p. 111).

Yet in the face of the cracks, a counter challenge is laid down to the democratic, pluralistic society: can democracy, if it is to be 'democratic' ever succeed in unravelling the entangled claims of religion as pluralistic religions as active and public voices in the public sphere, without becoming, or risking becoming itself a type of universalizing totalization as it is often wont to critique that (religion) which it opposes? The challenge of pluralism is therefore at least twofold; a pluralistic challenge from within its own, primarily Christian-derived religious tradition, and an emerging series of counter-challenges of pluralistic claims from those faiths and culture communities who increasingly, when pushed, may not recognize even the authority and claimed legitimacy of the democratic and secular public spaces - especially as these are seen to privilege a type of para-Christian, and increasingly para- and post-Protestant society.

The central issue for pluralistic societies is therefore one of sovereignty- which is why there is that reengagement with the, for many, troubling assertion of Carl Schmitt that "all significant concepts of the modern theory of the state are secularized theological concepts" (Schmitt, Schwab, & Strong, 2005, p. 36; Steinmetz-Jenkins, 2009). Perhaps for pluralist societies what is needed is a paradoxical extension yet rejection of Schmitt; a new late-modern theory of the state as secularized religious concepts - what may be termed a type of para-secular sovereignty that all claims to identity and public space can be included under. What I am arguing for is what can be termed a cosmopolitan *saeculum* that recognizes claims of difference and identity yet articulates a transcendent identity. In short, an identity that rethinks the seas that icebergs float in. The reality of icebergs cannot be denied, nor can the existence of singing canaries. Yet most people in a pluralistic society are neither tips nor canaries, but rather private individuals who hold the potential of public and collective claims, actions and identities.

Perhaps we need to remember that both modernity and plurality do not involve a singular attitude but rather a series of negotiations, practices and responses; therefore as the *saeculum* changes so do the responses to and within it. The trouble is perhaps that of claims of fixed states and therefore fixed responses. Today the central issue is how does a secular culture respond from position and situation of plurality - and who acts on its behalf- to what is presented as a singularity? The state cannot go back to a previous time that accepted or at least tolerated only a certain type and number of icebergs of faith. Those icebergs are themselves cracking, fracturing, and realigning. Public space is not what it was, because those in it are not those who were. Neither however is democracy what it was, for those who participate are not those who once did. The central point is that of whether in an emerging, publicly pluralistic society, are we seeing the end of the secular *saeculum*? Can we, indeed should we, expect most people to continue to be versions of romanticized WASPs keeping an interior essence and acting publically as privately religious? The answer I believe lies in the secular state itself, in the degree to which it can negotiate and balance the competing claims of those who see no other recourse but to public religious identities and expression in the *saeculum*. Perhaps the way is to view such critiques as anti-modern, but anti-modern in the sense as the expression of creative impulses in modernity (Versluis, 2006, p. 96). If public pluralism is channelled into creative expressions as to re-articulating a democratic, participatory *saeculum* that continues to allow full humanity for all members, then any new pluralism will be seen as progressive. Yet as the father of daughters, as the friend and family member of gays, lesbians and transgender persons, as a husband and son, I will staunchly defend the necessity of the continuation of a para-WASP society in the name of full personhood. So in the end, the problem of pluralism is not actually the icebergs or the singing canaries. Rather it's the fault of a democratic, secular, western society that has seemingly come to believe it can serve up the political, intellectual and cultural equivalent of that bland interfaith dinner. As much as in being an intellectual I might like and be able to

critique and criticize the problems of secular modernity, however much I might find it politic to keep quiet amidst the icebergs, perhaps I too may need to become a canary and start singing a rethought claim of the necessity of a private identity in the *saeculum*, a *saeculum* that refuses to limit personhood, a *saeculum* that refuses to retrench rights in the names of faith or culture.

2. The factors that shape the new possibilities of thinking of private-public actors pluralism

Firstly the recognition that religion is not going to disappear- nor is it ever going to just stay within the private realm. Yet conversely, the intrusion of religion into the public realm does not have to be the voices of the limitation of secular rights and identities. The problem is that that the liberal religious citizen is more likely to operate on a private religion/public secular dichotomy because they are the true heirs of the cultured despisers. Religious identity is still often a form of public embarrassment for the liberal (Calhoun, 2008) and so in the face of conservative public statements, the liberal believer is unsure what to say - and the media are unsure and unwilling to listen. For what is spoken – but is not spoken - is secular democratic humanism, yet with a transcendent voice and history embedded. As such it is too religious for the secular - but not religious enough for the religiously (and often politically) conservative. Yet the failure to speak out strongly for what is a type of religious secular, democratic humanism just gives the public square over to the voices of religious intolerance and the identity politics of collective imposition and demand.

Secondly, it needs to be restated that no tips speak for any iceberg- and the icebergs themselves are necessary myths. Pluralism is first and foremost about people as individuals, not as collectives or designated taxonomies. Therefore in seeking a way forward, a cosmopolitan pluralism of individuals, who operate across a series of pluralities - race, class, ethnicity, education, culture, gender, secular identities, politics, faiths and non-faiths needs to be articulated. This needs to be a cosmopolitanism that operates along the possibilities of a civil sovereignty that all can find some commonality within and under. Perhaps central to this is a claim of the universal human subject whereby being human takes precedence over all other claims of identity and difference. As Appiah notes, the twin foci of cosmopolitanism are that everybody matters and that there are different, local ways of being human (Appiah, 1997, p. 621). Appiah's version rejects the homogenization of subjects, supports basic human rights but respects the autonomous desires for self, even if 'we' think they are mistaken- and vice versa. Central to such a liberal cosmopolitanism is that people have a state-protected, civil protected and political protected right to exit from any 'voluntary organization'. In contrast, pluralism is too often the attempts to enforce particular, designated difference onto our collective humanity.

Being cosmopolitan is often taken to be internationalist- and while this legacy can be traced back to Kant (1991; 1795) we need to actually start on a much smaller scale. In our contemporary pluralist societies, what is needed is first and foremost a series of cosmopolitan public spaces and a series of cosmopolitan civil sovereignties that articulate a universal humanity within public space and within civil sovereignty. The appeal cannot however be to universal reason, which is too tied to a particular Enlightenment and Western derived model, but rather to a claim of universal humanity and personhood. For reason has been too implicated in various projects of modernist domination and exclusion. What we require is a cosmopolitanism of the *saceulum*- a cosmopolitanism that identifies pluralism but refuses to allow its singular varieties to be binding either on pluralistic actors or on others in the world of shared experience. We do need to keep quite amidst the icebergs - and hear the canaries singing. If they sing against claims of universal humanity and personhood they need to be opposed - while at the same time

recognition is made of the exclusions that led to such recourse. In short, like religion, pluralism is a necessary problem for a modern, secular democratic state that seeks to be a *saeculum*. For it is only when democratic states themselves comprise a *saeculum* that we can begin to even think of the possibilities offered by more global and glocal cosmopolitan public spheres.

The rethought cosmopolitan option also involves a degree of giving up for those like me who are the WASP. Most explicitly, it is about the allowance of exteriorized, public religion in the public square - but as a dialogue partner not as demand. The dialogue should not be of those seeking inter-faith dialogue, but rather - and more difficultly- with those who wish to claim and express difference. So what occurs is a type of constructive cosmopolitanism that can include pluralism within it, partly by giving the space for public identities. The recourse to public religion should be taken as an acknowledgment that there are issues that I as a particular individual may not see as issues; the question becomes how can dialogue occur that does not undo the inclusion of participation and personhood that may be objected to. Of course I will be open to critiques and challenges of Eurocentrism, but this is where my argument of located, specific cosmopolitanism occurs. The cosmopolitanism within countries and cities with a predominant European history and legacy will quite self-evidently be different to that which develops in other spaces and places that arise from other traditions, cultures and religious backgrounds. So this is location specific cosmopolitanism - even if that is a type of paradox.

A possibility is offered by Ulrich Beck's model of what he terms 'realistic cosmopolitanism' which seeks to address the question of "how ought societies to handle 'otherness" and 'boundaries' during the present crisis of global interdependency"? (Beck, 2004, p. 430). Yet before we engage with Beck, we need to consider the sites of pluralism. For we too often leap to the national, or even more so the global, without considering the more everyday and workable possibilities of urban society. In Appiah's cosmopolitanism, "people are free to choose the local forms of human life in which they live" (Appiah, 1997). This involves, by necessity I would argue, the primacy of urban life, because for Appiah, "the freedom to create oneself...requires a range of socially transmitted options from which to invent what we have come to call out identities" (Appiah, 1997). It is in urban environments that there exist a variety of locations, formats, groups, cultures, sub-cultures, individuals and institutions that provide 'ready-made identities', and these also provide the language to not only express them but also to rethink new ones. As Anderson notes in his discussion of cosmopolitan canopies within urban life- those places of intermingling and the "positive acknowledgment" (Anderson, 2004, p. 16) of the existence and difference of others, often around sites and forms of consumption and cultural production, "[i]f nothing more, through constant exposure, such environments can encourage common, everyday, taken-for-granted civility towards others who are different from oneself" (Anderson, 2004). So while cosmopolitanism is firstly an urban experience, too often I feel we conveniently overlook or even wilfully ignore this and shift the debates into those of national and global politics.

Against such utopian expansion, I want to limit my consideration of cosmopolitanism and pluralism to that of urban environments, for this is not only the real experience and working out of cosmopolitanism, it is also where pluralism tangibly operates in the *saeculum* of the world of shared experience. So via Beck I want to argue for what could be termed, grounded and situated urban realistic cosmopolitanisms that will occur primarily in urban public spaces and that can be extended via workplaces, educational providers and institutions and the everyday engagements in the *saeculum*. Beck proposes a series of universalist minimums of inviolate substantive norms: no woman or child should be sold or enslaved, everyone should be free to speak about God or government without the risk of torture or death and this is what he terms "cosmopolitan common sense" (Beck, 2004). Central to such a project

is nonviolent coexistence with the culturally (and I would include religiously) different as a mark of civilized society, a recognition of otherness and an acceptance of difference - as the expression of *saeculum* expressed as "the reciprocal correction" of identities located in universalism, relativism, nationalism, ethnicism (Beck, 2004) (and I would add faith/religion). Such realistic cosmopolitanism is therefore the possible location and expression of that aimed for new civil sovereignty that operates as a transcendent option over yet within pluralism- specifically the pluralism of specific urban environments and the *saceculum/s* within them. This civil sovereignty also, via Beck, defines itself in part by what it does not include or affirm: "dictatorial standardization, violation of human dignity, crimes against humanity such as genocide, slavery and torture" (Beck, 2004). Beck notes that the relationship between religiosity and cosmopolitanism need to be clarified (Beck, 2004) yet religious actors are not singularly religious in identities or actions any more than ethnic, cultural or political actors are. In fact to raise religion as a separate 'special category' is to revert to essentialist claims such as defined and limited within multiculturalism; therefore to concentrate on religiosity could be to subject religions and people of those religions to the rejected 'dictatorial standardization."

Therefore we are now past the time of keeping quiet amidst the icebergs, past the time of dealing with icebergs - whether it is the visible 10% or the unseen 90%. In urban life, the canaries will continue to sign - and warn; but to respond to them as if they are representatives of the icebergs in totality is perhaps to claim them to be limited, flightless, penguins?

Therefore a rethought pluralism, a rethought public space could be re-established and re-imagined upon what already occurs in the everyday *saeculum* of our urban environments. We should stop trying to imagine and impose national and international solutions and rather engage with and support those ground-up, everyday realistic cosmopolitanisms that are being slowly worked out in our urban *saeculum*, in its various public spaces and public lives in complex and nuanced expressions and interactions. This is the challenge of Beck's cosmopolitanism which critiques multiculturalism for not only its lack of reflexivity but also its entrapment within nationalism and essentialism, noting "the diversity that multiculturalism celebrates is a diversity amongst identities lacking in ambivalence, complexity, or contingency" (Beck, 2004); in effect postulating and a series of rival essentialisms (Beck, 2004). The option of cosmopolitanism seeks to free actors from essentialisms and also from the limitations of nationalities and nationhood - and the attendant nationalist assumptions. Urban cosmopolitanism recognises cities are composed of and constantly created by actors who are international - and part of a series of international and transnational networks. Here I would insert David Held's neologism "intermestic"- describing those issues and activities that "cross the *inter*national and do*mestic*' (Held, 2004, p. 371), as such intermingling of identities and cultures is what occurs in the pluralistic public and private spheres of cities, but not in ways that can be – nor should be – easily legislated or controlled. Certain basic human rights act as covering civil sovereignty, but in a reflexive, cosmopolitan mode that acknowledges the centrality of praxis and the necessary pragmatic changes that reflect and develop within cosmopolitan spaces - both public and private. This is especially so regarding the question of religion and religious actors who, depending on the issue and context, will also (in fact always) be social, political, gendered, cultured, economic and class actors and so on. While within a western framework religion may be regarded as a voluntary identity, it needs to be reconsidered as to what being voluntary means, both from within religions and from views outside.

Bruno Latour's response to Beck- not in opposition but rather as "an argument among friends" (2004, p. 450) argues that society has never been the equivalent of nation state. Latour (Latour, 2004), arguing that the choice is "between cosmopolitanism and cosmo*politics*". Drawing on the work of Isabelle

Stengers, Latour argues for a cosmopolitics wherein both compounds - cosmos and politcs - act at their strongest against the premature closure of each other, becoming, 'a cure for' what Stengers calls "the malady of tolerance" (Latour, 2004). Therefore perhaps in order to be cosmopolitan, the public sphere and the actors within must be first be considered and responded to as cosmopolitic, which is, by necessity, also intermestic. Such intermestic cosmopolitics is also one in which religion and religious actors are central participants; for within both cosmopolitanism and cosmopolitics sits the cosmos - a cosmos that is as varied as the actors participating.

As Latour pithily observes: "when men of good will assemble with their cigars in the Habermas club to discuss an armistice for this or that conflict and they leave their gods on their hooks in the cloakroom, I suspect that what is underway is not a peace conference at all. There are Versailles that beget Munichs that beget apocalypse" (Latour, 2004).

For as he further notes, "a freight of gods, attachments, and unruly cosmos make it hard to get through the door into any common space " (Latour, 2004). In short, you get the Habermas club of iceberg tips eating and providing taste-free, offensively inoffensive meals of commonality.

Therefore, in a claim of *realcosmopolitik,* I argue that any re-evaluation of public space, the public sphere and/or pluralism needs to start from a praxis, embedded, ground-up engagement with actors in networks within the existing urban *saeculum*, whereby actors participate in a series of on-going, everyday negotiated cosmopolitanisms and cosmopolitics. Such a grounded, located, urban approach recognizes not only the challenges to the Westphalian-derived state of nation-focused public spheres based on bounded and common interest citizenship, but also challenges elite cosmopolitan theory that articulates the utopian hopes, desires and demands of 'global citizens' who eschew the mundane and those who inhabit it. It is more than 30 years since Dick Hebdige coined the phrase 'mundane cosmopolitanism' (Hebdige, 1990, p. 20) as a dismissive descriptor, in tellingly the last years of *Marxism Today*. I want to reclaim and rework the phrase, situating the mundane as the location of the everyday *saeculum* in which we all participate. For everyday cosmopolitanism, cosmopolitics and being intermestic provide a series of options that keep the cosmopolitan project as a defiantly and deliberately mundane option of possibilities. In fact, Hebdige foretold this, noting that in the 1990s everyone "is more or less cosmopolitan" (Hebdige, 1990). What Hebdige does remind us is that the lived-out experiences of this mundane cosmopolitanism are "simultaneously political *and* cultural" and the lines of distinction were and are increasingly difficult and perhaps unnecessary to discern. I say unnecessary, for often an imposed distinction occurs when we wish to distinguish between political and cultural. As Beck notes in his response to Latour: "What begins as cosmopolitanism can turn easily into its opposite: the anticosmopolitan claim that the interests of others, properly understood, can and must be asserted against their own understanding and preference" (Beck, 2005, p. 7).

This is the central issue of pluralism and public space - the tips must not be taken or enabled to speak for the rest of the iceberg and while the canaries can sing, the response should not be an anticosmopolitan reduction and imposition. As political theorist Nancy Fraser has noted, we are, at the very least, moving into a post-Westphalian world, yet most of our thinking in the West - and often by extension - is structured on the Eurocentric, and post-Protestant-derived Westphalian system (Fraser, 2007). Central to this is whether public opinion is viewed as primarily- and in terms of legitimacy and efficacy - as either individual or collective? Further, is such public opinion binding via multiculturalism as the expressions of what could be viewed - and experienced - as 'essentialist' impositions? I would argue that in a cosmopolitan frame, while collectives can speak into the public square they should be responded to - and given equal weight as other *individual* voices - such as occur already in the everyday

civic urban negotiations of daily and public life. Such negotiations are an already existent, everyday, pragmatic cosmopolitan by-passing and soft-negation of the Westphalian state and its associated apparatus. It is when the hard voices of the canaries sound that we should become aware that not only is the Westphalian state- as a type of traditional necessary myth - not working, but neither is multiculturalism nor indeed cosmopolitanism. Further, any attempts to legislate the public sphere via laws and policies are now, in a globalized, mass media world, only binding on those who recognize not only the legitimacy and efficacy of such laws and policies, but also the legitimacy of a nation state constructed on a Westphalian system. Therefore against any use of transnational public spheres, I would posit intermestic cosmopolitan public spheres that restore and return agency to actors as beings. For the public sphere is anti-democratic when it becomes a place of multi-cultural collectives, for such collectives act to both include and exclude actors from being individuals when the collective is taken as binding representation and opinion. This also means, in related debates on the continuation or otherwise of transnational and post-national spheres, that perhaps we should re-conceptualize them as para-national spheres that enable a multiplicity of responses and spheres alongside national spheres, spaces and identities. The public sphere is itself now a series of possible cosmopolitan spaces - as long as it is the realm of bio-social-politics and not imposed policies.

Therefore, in our thinking or public spheres and pluralism I would argue for a praxis-driven response, taking as its starting spot the constantly negotiated and shared experiences of intermestic actors that occur in the everyday *saeculum* of cosmopolitan urban engagements. We need to stop thinking of and responding to icebergs - whether tips or hidden depths - but continue to listen to the canaries; not so much for what they are specifically saying, but rather for why they feel the need to say it – and in that way. Only then can we strip the Westphalian blinkers and the multicultural blinkers from our eyes and engage with actors as pluralist, cosmopolitan individuals living intermestic lives in the *saeculum*. As Gerald Delanty offers: "A post-universal cosmopolitanism is critical and dialogic, seeing as the goal alternative readings doings of history and the recognition of plurality rather than the creation of a universal order…[it] should be seen in terms of the tensions within modernity" (Delanty, 2006, p. 35).

Therefore we need to remember that pluralism is itself a cosmopolitan series of intermestic pluralism lived in the *saeculum* and expressed and re-imagined in both public and private spheres wherein the cosmopolitan imagination - that which views society as an ongoing process of self-constitution (Delanty, 2006) - is performed and played out. This occurs often as an act of resistance to impositions and essentialisms - and as Delanty emphasizes, as resistance to 'globalization and nationalism' (Delanty, 2006). To that degree, civic, urban cosmopolitanism and its associated cosmopolitan imaginaries, is where the intermestic reimagining of a post-Westphalian state is already being engaged with, celebrated, debated and negotiated. It is a reminder to look at people and personhood before we impose policies.

CONCLUSION

The question of living in diverse democracies is recently getting renewed attention. Perhaps the most pertinent and insightful is that being undertaken by Yascha Mounk who takes seriously the tensions between diversity and democracy and is attempting to work out possible ways forward. His thinking aligns with the pragmatic, person-based, space-based approach I have outlined, that takes the every-day, loved experiences as the building blocks to rethink and offer renewed cosmopolitan futures within diverse democracies. Moving past both what he terms 'a melting pot' and a 'salad bowl' approach

to diversity, Mounk offers a new vision of 'a public park', as a society and democracy open to everyone, giving options and variety of expression and activity and identity, freedom from both external oppression and group coercion, providing a vibrant space for encounter – especially the chance encounters that sit at the heart of space in diverse democracies (Mounk, 2022, pp. 161–167). In conclusion I would suggest that such 'public park' thinking, encounters and experience is where the intermestic *saeculum* truly occurs in a diversity of expressions, identities and activities. For it is when public space is used to limit and discriminate that cosmopolitan possibilities for diverse democracies start to unravel.

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