

Secularity vs. Secularism: A Conceptual Map

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21st Annual

Law and Religion Symposium

BYU Law School

October 7, 2014



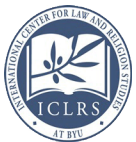
Secularism versus Secularity

- ❖ The secular
 - The idea of the “secular” is relational concept: always defined in relation to religion
- ❖ The concept “secular” is subject to varied conceptions
 - Secularism versus Secularity
- ❖ Distinction between secularism and secularity remains in need of clarification – there are many secularisms
- ❖ My goal in this presentation



Secularism vs. Secularity: The basic distinction

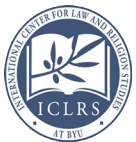
Secularism	Secularity
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Substantive normative ideology• Seeks to promote a secular order	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Framework for liberal pluralism
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Seeks to overcome religion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Avoids state identification with any particular religion or ideology (including secularism itself)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Normatively and theoretically ambitious: thick	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Less ambitious: thin
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Constitutional doctrine	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Constitutional “space”
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Emphasizes positive freedom	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Emphasizes negative freedom
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Commensurability of value	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Incommensurability and plurality of values



Secularism vs. Secularity: “Isms” and “Itys”

- ❖ Preference for secularity is related to a more general preference for norms that are less comprehensive and ambitious (“itys”) than “isms” tend to be:
 - Prefer liberality to liberalism
 - Liberty to libertarianism
 - Equality to egalitarianism
 - Humanity to humanism
 - Universality to universalism
 - Community to communism

- ❖ Conceptual overload
 - Transforming important human values into comprehensive doctrines
 - Ignores the multiplicity and irreducibility of values



Secularism vs. Secularity: Disciplinary perspectives

- ❖ Will briefly consider this distinction from seven different disciplinary perspectives
 - Overlapping / parallel discourses
 - Just a sketch
 - Not mutually encompassing, but surprising degree of similarity
- ❖ Greater conceptual clarity

Discipline

1. History

2. Politics

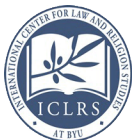
3. Social science

4. Law

5. Philosophy / Morals

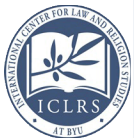
6. Metaphysics

7. Epistemology



1. Historical Perspective

Secularism	Secularity
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Progressive decline of religion• Secularization thesis• Growing obsolescence of religion• May view religion as prejudice, superstition, intolerance, fanatical, pre-modern• Enlightenment values vs. religious values• Can become stridently anti-religious• Susceptible to secular fundamentalism• Triumphalist and defensive	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased religious diversity• Increasing pluralism• Strategies for living together
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• French Revolution<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Laïcité• Anticlericalism• Freedom from religion• Self-sufficiency of the secular	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• American Revolution<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Freedom of religion• Free exercise of religion• Religious roots of liberal values



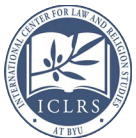
2. Political Perspective

Secularism	Secularity
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Institutional spheres (church and state)• Differentialization• Disdain for power of clergy• Effort to control, limit, cabin religious influence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Religion and society• Emphasis on civil society• Religion as important civil society institution
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can be dismissive of or disdainful for religious believers as backwards or unsophisticated• Objects of toleration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Comfortable with confident and sophisticated religiosity• From toleration to respect
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Secular conception of state; sovereignty in international relations since Treaty of Westphalia (religion is domestic matter) based on religion being irrelevant to relations between states	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Human rights (UDHR and post-WWII human rights instruments makes religion and religious freedom a concern of international law



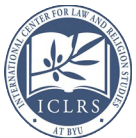
3. Social (Science) Perspective

Secularism	Secularity
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Privatization of religion• In a social welfare state, the public sphere tends to expand and private sphere tends to contract	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Civil religion / folk religion (ritual expressions of patriotism; Robert Bellah: “institutionalized collection of sacred beliefs about the American nation”)• Seeks common ground (U.S. Declaration of Independence’s invocation of “nature’s God”)• Public religion that is not overly sectarian, inclusive, pluralistic
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Anthropology of humans that can be materialist and reductive	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Anthropology of humans that is more ennobling and aspirational



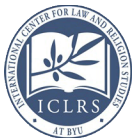
4. Legal Perspective

Secularism	Secularity
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Separation• Establishment Clause<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Lemon test</i>• Graduation Prayer (<i>Lee v. Weisman</i> (USSC, 1992))• Free Exercise Clause<ul style="list-style-type: none">• General and neutral laws (<i>Employment Division v. Smith</i> (USSC, 1990))• FROB<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Emphasis on grounds of limitation (public order, rights and freedoms of others)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accommodation• Establishment Clause<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Entanglement and endorsement• Equal treatment• Legislative Prayer (<i>Greece v. Galloway</i> (USSC, 2014))• Free Exercise Clause<ul style="list-style-type: none">• exemptions• Compelling state interest test (<i>Sherbert v. Verner</i> (USSC, 1963); RFRA)• FROB<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Emphasis on whether necessary in democratic society / proportionality



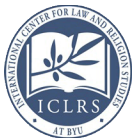
5. Philosophical (Moral) Perspective

Secularism	Secularity
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Public reason<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Publically accessible• All rational people expected to agree• Moral principle of respect and civility• Inclusive vs. exclusive<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Translation (later Rawls)• Habermas' concern about asymmetrical burdens	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sympathetic engagement• Ecumenical dialogue<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Common ground• Dialogue need not lead to agreement, but rather mutual understanding and appreciation• Antidote to infallibilism• Subject views to public scrutiny• Hold to your own professed beliefs• Understanding that all normative orientations depend on higher-order values (Charles Taylor)



6. Metaphysical Perspective

Secularism	Secularity
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Temporal vs. eternal• This world vs. other worldly• Material world is all there is• “Disenchanted” world• Opposed to idea of the transcendent• Charles Taylor: Subtraction theory• God-of-the-gaps (becomes increasingly unnecessary)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Types of religious vocation<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Secular priests• Monastic orders• Orientations to the world and heaven• Questions or rejects physical / spiritual duality• “All things unto me are spiritual”



7. Epistemological Perspective

Secularism	Secularity
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Scientific method: logic and evidence• Can be reductive (physical causes)• Materialism (scientific view that reality is comprised exclusively of physical matter)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Types of knowledge• Ways of knowing in addition to logic and<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Intuition• Emotion• Aesthetic experience• Religious experience• Spiritual discernment• Compassion• Love



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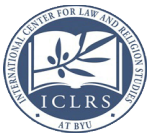
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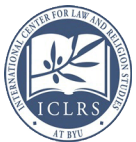
Historical Examples

Secularism	Secularity
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• France• Turkey<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tentative steps towards secularity?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• United States• India<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tentative steps towards secularism?



Secularism vs. Secularity: A Conceptual Map

Discipline	Secularism	Secularity
1. Historical	Progressive decline	Increasing pluralism
2. Political	Institutional spheres	State and society
3. Social	Privatization of religion	Civil religion
4. Legal	Separation	Accommodation
5. Philosophical / Moral	Public reason	Sympathetic engagement
6. Metaphysical	Temporal v eternal	Vocational
7. Epistemological	Scientific	Types of knowledge



Conclusion

- ❖ Reasons for not abandoning the idea of the secular state
- ❖ Confessional state has its own set of problems
- ❖ Care in our development and articulation of the concept of the secular

