

Adam – introduction

- I've proposed three driving forces behind the re-emergence of public faith
- The first sees faiths as providers of services
- Where thousands of community and neighbourhood projects emerge from faith communities across the country and indeed the world and where faiths provide other kinds of services, notably in social enterprises, large scale NGOs and faith schools
- A second understands faiths as contributors in new forms of participatory governance.
- In plain terms this means things like Neighbourhood Management Boards and Local Strategic Partnerships – though you may not think this is plain terms at all!
- Various data suggest that faiths are pretty good at taking part in these sorts of settings and this is valued by policy makers and other civil society actors.
- The third driver sees faiths as agents of community cohesion,
- Community cohesion is an interesting one because, whilst these other two 'drivers' raise challenging questions about public policy and civil society generally, cohesion does so with some particular contentions.
- I would argue that the re-emergence of faiths at the public table presents everybody else with a load of questions which they thought had been largely settled:
- About what is public and what private – where should we draw the line between performing our faiths in public and keeping them private out of respect for other people's beliefs (or fear of offending them)
- About who and what are legitimate at the public table - if faiths then why not Humanists, Secularists. What about Satanists? Or just people with really strong views about anything at all?
- And once faiths – like anyone - are offered places at the public table, they have to decide who will lead or represent them. How do they decide? Can they really be represented in all their diversity? How do they deal with disagreement and dissent?
- And when it comes to faiths and community cohesion we arrive at some of the biggest questions of all.
- For decades we've been talking about multiculturalism. This resonates most in the public imagination with questions of race.
- But increasingly it is not just race that is understood as a marker of identity but also faith
- People's religions have grown in cultural significance as migration has increased and people have had greater exposure to each other's traditions.
- One of the challenges of this is to remember that race, ethnicity and faith are not the same things. What are the differences?

- And at the same time, the policy wind seems to have turned away since 9/11 from a rhetoric of toleration and difference – multi cultures – and more towards a preoccupation with how multiple cultures can be got to cohere rather than fall apart and divide.
 - And to cohere they need something to cohere around – and this has been a source of controversy in itself.
 - One response has been a somewhat timorous growth in ‘Englishness’ – for example in citizenship ceremonies and an impetus for learning the English language. This is very much the sort of thing to put the cat amongst the pigeons.
 - At the same time there is a growing awareness that for many people, especially migrants, faith may well be one of the strongest markers of identity – the thing that they most identify themselves with.
 - And where that faith is minority or newer to Britain, its relationship to other markers of identity – such as citizenship, ethnicity and nationhood - might be tense and the extent to which such faith minorities share in the power and wealth of society perhaps echoes the experience of black and minority ethnic people too.
 - So faiths are regarded as potentially significant in whether communities cohere as different identities and cultures rub up against each other.
 - And this is fragile territory.
 - It was noted some years ago the speed with which the race riots in Bradford and Burnley in 2001 were to some extent recast as ‘faith’ riots after 9/11 later that same year – the lines of division were, perhaps, rapidly redrawn along boundaries of faith rather than race.
 - And at the international level, in the US, President Bush invoked the language of a ‘war on terror’ which was bad enough – but which was deemed tame by comparison to the talk of crusades which were invoked in the weeks immediately after 9/11.
 - So this seems to be something of a moment of transition, as Ted has noted – from multiculturalism to community cohesion, yes.
 - But also in terms of how the idea of ‘community cohesion’ beds down in the long run.
 - The place of faiths in this is one key part.
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- Delighted to welcome Ted and Dilwar to discuss and explore these issues
 - I’m going to put questions to them which explore them
 - And to invite contributions from all of the participants as we go through
 - Please raise your hand to indicate if you would like to comment or interject
 - I’ll invite questions at certain points through the interview, too
 - We’ll start with brief position statements from Ted and Dilwar to begin
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- Ted – position statement (5 mins)

- Dilwar – position statement (5 mins)

'Interview' questions:

1. What do you see as the difference between race, ethnicity and faith?
2. Does the growing policy concern with faith imply a critique of multiculturalism?
3. Is the increasing importance of faith identities a good thing?
4. Are stronger faith identities associated with segregation and 'parallel lives'?
5. Did policies of multiculturalism encourage a splintering of identities?
6. What might public policy learn from that in relation to faith?
7. How do you explain the turn to faith in public policy?
8. How does this turn to faith relate to other aspects of British politics?
9. How do faith groups relate to a democratic political system?
10. How far should faith be present in public life and in civil society?
11. Is multiculturalism being replaced with a new policy model?
12. How do you see the contribution of inter faith work to community cohesion?
13. What about the contribution of faith to civil society more generally?
14. Critics argue that multiculturalism offered undue respect to certain 'negative' aspects of minority cultures. Do you agree?
15. DCLG has published Face to Face, Side by Side: a framework for partnership in our multi faith society. How do you see the relationship between a multi-faith society and a multicultural one and what does the shift to community cohesion imply for this?