

## RELIGION: INSIDE OR OUTSIDE THE PUBLIC SPHERE? A DEBATE AROUND THE HABERMAS MODEL

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**Abstract:** *This article intends to analyze the role of religion in the public sphere in Habermas' theory. Despite the fact that the concept has been launched in a book published in 1961, only in 2005 the well-known German thinker has dealt explicitly with this issue. Even the critics of his public sphere model do not mention the lack of religion from the whole paradigm. Some of Habermas' writings related to religion prior to 2005 are discussed. The role of religion in the public sphere is, according to Habermas, related with the issue of religious freedom and the State - Church separation, a model opposed to French laïcité. For Habermas, the state must not only be neutral to the religious discourse, but it must also encourage the participation of political organizations to public life. Another issue that is discussed by Habermas is the relationship between religious majorities and minorities. Habermas does assume a middle position between laïcité and the refuse of the modernity-imposed borders, between religion and politics. The article takes an insight into the way Charles Taylor deals with the role of religion in the public sphere, a helpful argument for showing that the debate on this issue is only at the beginning.*

**Keywords:** *modernity; public sphere; religion; secularization; separation between State and Church*

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