

On Legal Pluralism and Multiculturalism

Pluralismo y multiculturalidad: Tribunal arbitral musulmán y consejos islámicos (Sharia courts) en el Reino Unido is the title of the last paper by professor V. Camarero Suárez and professor F. Zamora Cabot, both from the University of Castellón. The paper, written in Spanish, has been published in the *Anuario de Derecho Eclesiástico del Estado*, 2012; professor Zamora will kindly send a pdf copy to those interested (just send him an email to this address: zamora@dpr.uji.es)

Here is the abstract:

This study explores the interface between legal pluralism and multiculturalism, taking as reference British Muslim minority *nomoi* groups and the alternative means of solution of controversies embodied in the Sharia Councils and the Muslim Arbitral Tribunal (MAT). However, before dealing with this matter in the United Kingdom, our study makes insights from a comparative point of view both in Canada and the United States, where, in spite of no minor similitudes, the status of the aforesaid means of alternative solution of controversies is, at present time, far more different, given a deeper degree of religious pluralism and more reliance in arbitration at large in the United States. These two factors, and the widely known pragmatism and tolerance of the United Kingdom result, although there have been rounds of controversy about it, in the acceptance in that Country of the workings of the Sharia Councils and the MAT, in the twilight of British law- in the first case- or taken under the rule of that law, covered by the Arbitration Act of 1996, in the case of the MAT. Conceived on these terms, we agree on the acceptance of these types of controversies's solutions - specially in case of the MAT- that we think are in full accordance with the modern State's duty to preserve minorities' rights and freedom of religion and beliefs as examples of a genuine commitment towards the fulfillment of Human Rights.