Symposium

Tariq Modood.

Essays on Secularism and Multiculturalism.

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Secularism and Multiculturalism: A Distinctively British Perspective

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I. INTRODUCTION

In *Essays on Secularism and Multiculturalism* (2019) one of the UK's leading scholars in the field, Professor Tariq Modood, brings together 12 essays on political secularism and multicultural citizenship. These essays are the fruit of an impressive and lifelong reflection on the topic. Few authors will have inquired so deeply into the very complex issues of religion-state relations in the context of a multicultural society. Everyone who wants to take part in the discussion will have to read Modood, and this collection provides a very good overview of his approach and standpoints.

However, to fully understand Modood's philosophy, the reader needs to take into account that he is working in Bristol, UK, and that his views are to a large extent based on his British experience. The British context is the one he is most acquainted with and which mainly informs his analysis. Modood is passionate about the British model, which he seems to prefer by far over all other European models (230). Of course, this is not a criticism: after all, social scientists will always be embedded in a specific tradition. There is nothing wrong with this, and even if there were, it would still be unavoidable.

In my critique of this book, however, I will not so much address the fact that the author wrote from a specific national perspective. My point rather is that in contrasting the British model with other models, the latter – and mainly the French model – are not always represented in a nuanced way. To be clear, I do not think that this will change Modood's conclusions and preferences, yet I think it might contribute to the quality of the debate.

Given the limited space of this review, I will focus on three aspects that particularly raised my interest: comments on France, the concept of Islamophobia and the issue of freedom of speech.

II. France: The Specter of Laïcité

A first point that struck me while reading the essays is how much the French model of *laïcité* serves as a negative model for Modood's own ideas. It is a pity, however, that he did not take the time to describe the distinctive French way of separating religion and state affairs in more detail. The author does not describe it comprehensively, nor does he address the underlying rationales or its historical context. Whoever reads Modood's collection of essays without knowing anything about France, can simply not understand how reasonable persons could ever have developed such a model, let alone how moderate people today can still defend it.

We need to question, in any event, whether it makes sense to speak of the 'French model', since, as Jean Baubérot (2016), one of France's leading experts in the field, has demonstrated: at the time of the adoption of the famous 1905 Law on the separation of Church and State, there were 4 models of *laïcité*, and in today's France he underscores no less than 7 models. Even assuming that, for the sake of useful comparison, it is possible to speak of the (a?) French model, Modood could have been more explicit here. The author decided, however, not to be ore explicit.

I regret this choice, since there is an important literature that could have enriched the debate. Authors such as Henri Pena-Ruiz (2003), Régis Debray (2002 and 2004) or Marcel Gauchet (1998) are not – or not profoundly – discussed, although their views would certainly have brought some nuance to the discussion. Instead, the reader is left with some apodictic and questionable statements on French *laïcité* such as "[…] a religion-marginalising radical secularism, most visible in France" (Modood 2019, 2), "[…] a French-style marginalization of organized religion" (2009, 2) "[…] most evident in France is to use a radical secularism" (2009, 3). In the present volume, the author even suggests that we are dealing with a state, "[…] supported by most citizens in attacking fundamental religious freedoms" (168). It occurs to me that we are dealing here with an overstatement. Just to give but one example: the database of the European Court of Human Rights mentions with respect to violations of Article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights, which protects freedom of thought, conscience and religion, only 9 cases against France. When it comes to the UK, 41 cases are mentioned (I consulted the 'Hudoc' database and searched for 'judgments' and 'decisions', and 'violations of article 9' for both France and the UK). I am aware that these numbers are only indications; perhaps there are more cases in this domain making their way to Strasbourg from the UK than from France because the issue is much more alive in the UK, but *prima facie* the facts would appear to demonstrate that either French law does not infringe that much against religious freedom, or it is not experienced as such by French citizens (who, as a consequence, do not bring cases to the courts). It remains striking, nonetheless, that two countries with a comparable population, whose official languages are both official languages of the European Human Rights Court, have such a diverse track record. I am not saying that freedom of religion is more under 'attack' in the UK than in France, but personally I would be more careful in making such strong claims about France.

Furthermore, the French ban on wearing the headscarf in schools is qualified as 'illiberal' (Modood 2019, 56), without any further explanation. Again, from a British perspective, this may be obvious, but this is less the case in France, where, among many others, people from the left of the political spectrum also defended it, precisely referring to… freedom. Again, I do not want to go into a debate in this short contribution, but integrating their arguments would have been beneficial to the discussion.

A last example to illustrate the sometimes strong statements in favour of the British model, perhaps not fully considering French law, is the following. The author argues that British legislation against religious discrimination, "[…] introduced in 2003, strengthened in 2007 and again in 2010" makes it "[…] much stronger than anything available in the rest of the European Union" (166). I am not contesting that claim *per se*. Nevertheless, it would be interesting to understand the basis on which this claim is made. One should not forget, for instance, that the EU adopted a Council Directive 2000/78/EC on November 27th 2000 establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation outlawing discrimination, among other things others, on the basis of religion. This is common standard for the EU. And France already adopted the so-called *loi Pleven* in 1972, punishing incitement ('provocation') to discrimination, hatred or violence on the basis of race and similar criteria, but also on adhering to a specific religion. I am not denying that the English legislation can be much stronger, but I wondering to what it extent. Where Modood seems to stress its uniqueness compared to rest of the EU, I am more reluctant to confirm such a strong claim.

In sum, Modood's qualifications may not be best suited to describe French *laïcité* and its legal system. The problem here is that – at a later stage in the book – the author seems to criticize the French model for being inconsistent (e.g. when he deals with inauguration of the *Conseil Français du Culte Musulman* [168], or subsidies for French private [mostly catholic] schools [184]). What is not clear is whether we are dealing with real incoherencies and contradictions, or whether the perceived conflicts are only conflicts to the extent that the practice deviates from a conceived theoretical model. This would then be a classic case of opposition between *law in action* and *law in books*, well-known in circles of legal sociologists. Perhaps the French system functions in another, less radical, way than Modood thinks it does.

III. ISLAMOPHOBIA: WHAT'S IN A NAME?

A second point of criticism relates to the concept of Islamophobia. Modood heavily relies on this concept to catch a specific phenomenon of 'cultural racism', which translates into discrimination, hate, violence and the like against Muslims. Few if any will doubt that Muslims suffer from all these forms of prejudice and aggression. However, I am not convinced that it is appropriate to speak here of Islamophobia. The term represents a twofold error. This point has been raised by many in France, not the least by Stéphane Charbonnier, known as Charb, the editor-in-chief of Charlie Hebdo, killed

in the attacks. Two days before his death he finished a book entitled. *Letter to the Islamophobia Frauds Who Play into the Hands of Racists* (Charb 2015: 7).

Where it is supposed to catch forms of discrimination, rejection and hate, it uses *phobia* (fear) as a denominator. Admittedly, this is also the case in 'homo/transphobia', but it remains inelegant to use a term (fear) for another (rejection). But, more importantly, the reference to Islam is problematic. It should be clear indeed that persons deserve protection, but this cannot be extended to religions, ideologies, worldviews and the like. Moreover, I am of the opinion that people are entitled to fear or even reject religions, worldviews and beliefs. Suppose someone were to express her virulent dislike of Scientology: would we find that legally or morally wrong? Perhaps her intellectual analysis of this religion is mistaken, but I suppose few people would contest the right to (firmly) reject a religion *per se*. The term 'Islamophobia' suggests that, in the case of Islam, it is problematic to have negative feelings. I contend that it is not problematic at all that people have negative feelings about any religion, worldview or ideology. *Die Gedanken sind frei.*

I would have preferred therefore a term such as 'Muslim-bashing' or something of that nature. Only to stress that we are drawing a line between attacking ideas, religions and convictions, as a matter of a sometimes vigorous debate of ideas, and attacking people.

I understand that Modood himself is not necessarily very happy with the terminology. It has found its way in the Anglo-Saxon world, however, and it may indeed be almost impossible to change well-established terminology. Nevertheless, there is a serious risk here. I am of the opinion that the label Islamophobia is such a broad term that does not only include acts of hate, rejection, dispraise of Muslims, but potentially also covers criticism of religion and blasphemy. The accusation of Islamophobia may therefore have a chilling effect on freedom of expression. It also makes comparisons very difficult, as is shown by Modood himself, who sometimes draws parallels with Anti-Semitism, sometimes with Anti-Judaism and sometimes even with anti-Zionism. A term that can capture dislike based on ethnicity, religion, or certain political ideologies is simply too general to contribute to a clear debate.

IV. FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

The part of the book that puzzled me most was the chapter on *Freedom of Expression*. Modood accepts the liberal idea that the law should protect human beings and not beliefs. So, *prima facie*, he would reject limits to the freedom of expression on account of attacking religions. He observes, however, that attacks on religion can sometimes – in reality – be attacks on believers, and therefore on persons.

I agree with this, particularly in the case of Islam when religion can serve as a proxy for origin, ethnicity, nationality. Criticizing religion may therefore be a hidden form of racism. However, in my understanding, good faith is supposed, and bad faith needs to be demonstrated. Reading Modood, I get the impression – but maybe I am

mistaken – that although he accepts criticism of religion, he tends to interpret it quite quickly as a form of racism. This is evidenced by the 5 criteria he advances to distinguish "reasonable criticism of Islam and Muslims" from "Islamophobia" (85). These criteria are so overextended that much of the lively present day debate on religion would already qualify as Islamophobia. Moreover, I tried to apply these criteria not only to religious beliefs and world views, but also to political views, ideologies and so on. It then becomes completely clear that what Modood accepts is a nuanced, almost academic debate, but I fear that more outrageous forms of criticism, which we accept in the field of political beliefs, would become impossible in the field of religion. I have the impression that harsh criticism of religion, such as that voiced by some Radical Enlightenment thinkers, would definitely be seen as hate speech under Modood's model.

Modood is not the most passionate defender of freedom of expression. Yet, he seems to prefer to 'censure' rather than to censor. This means that the author does not believe that it is primarily up to the law to intervene. He puts his trust in the wisdom of media-outlets, broadcasters and publishers not to disseminate certain publications. Thus, Modood disregards the Millian (2001) warning that a robust protection of freedom of expression also implies a social context that leaves room for a wide spectrum of expressions. Significant here is Modood's enthusiasm for the fact that the British press did not publish the much debated Danish cartoons. He is satisfied to observe that "[…] there was greater understanding in Britain about anti-Muslim racism and about not giving gratuitous offence to Muslims than in some other European countries" (2019, 120). I am tempted to think that in other European countries there was above all greater understanding of freedom of expression than in the UK.

Others have highlighted that had more outlets published them, the journals that reprinted them would not have been an easy target for violence. I do not insist on the point that this kind of self-censorship may be well-intended, but it can also cover up fear. If the press does not publish cartoons or texts out of fear, this sends a message to those who use violence to avoid publication that their strategy is paying off. It is almost an incentive. I am surprised that this aspect is hardly addressed in the book. Modood does not really address the problem of the heckler's veto.

But, more importantly, there is a huge contradiction in Modood's approach. He states with respect to the cartoons: "We assumed (perhaps because we did not see them), that they were all offensive when they were not" (67). So, people were killed because of the cartoons, and Modood is now easily admitting that the cartoons were all in all not that dramatic. While they caused immense distress and debate, Modood now supposes nevertheless that this was perhaps based on mere assumption, for many people did not see them. What better argument do you need to defend their republication in other media, so that the mild conclusion that Modood now draws could have been drawn back then by many people on the basis of their own judgment and observations? Precisely because many had strong opinions about the cartoons, although they did not see them (Modood's suggestion, not mine), emotions could stir up so dramatically. I can hardly think of a better argument for the press to have informed

its audience instead of refrain from publishing them. Where Modood praises the British media, I can only conclude, on the basis of Modood's own argument that people assumed things they did not see themselves, that the British media dramatically failed to fulfil its task of informing the public. Clearly, they did not learn much, for when Charlie Hebdo published its 'Survivor's Issue', the first after the killings, with the incredibly strong cover page (a cartoon of the Prophet Muhammed saying *"All is forgiven"*, which is an unambiguous message of love), the French journalist Caroline Fourest wanted to show it on the British television news, but the newsreader, embarrassed, prevented her from doing so. Apologies to the audience followed. This no longer had anything to do with being sensitive, kind or thoughtful. This was renouncing the obligation to do your job and inform people about what is going on in the world, however unpleasant it may be, and providing them with the necessary information t allow them to judge for themselves.

I wonder what would be left of freedom of expression if we were to take into account the sensitivities of every group in society, not only those of Muslims. It is this kind of systematic abstraction that is not fully considered in Modood's essays in general. This consideration marks perhaps the big difference between Modood's pragmatic and case-by-case approach, so typical of the English way of thinking, and the French way, abstract and general, that he rejects so firmly.

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Free Speech, Civility, and Islam

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I. INTRODUCTION

In his chapter on civility and the feelings of the hated, Tariq Modood takes up the idea of free speech and religious critique. One of the questions he asks is "Should others enjoy the right of mocking and ridiculing and hurting religious people to the point where some such people lose their self-control? Should that right take priority over the endeavour – of higher priority to me – to create a society in which mutual respect and civic equality prevail over people's right to castigate, ridicule and offend" (2019, 64)? This is an important question that deserves attention from all those who are committed to the shaping of a fair, cohesive and stable society. Let me first say that I fully agree with Modood when he says that incitement to hatred not only involves the danger of immediate violence, but also the production of a climate of opinions or emotions that puts the whole society under tension, whereby the most vulnerable will constantly live in fear and will lack what Rawls (1971) once called the 'social bases of self-respect'. Rawls thought these were "[…] perhaps the most important primary good" (1971, 440) that the basic social structure needs to produce and secure. In this sense, I affirm Modood when he defends the idea of institutional and individual self-restraint, for when cynical and gross humour becomes too mainstream, that humour (or what passes as humour) and verbal aggression will all too often coincide, making it difficult to live together well. A society in which people can say whatever they think *ad nauseam* and where they feel that nothing is 'sacred' anymore is emotionally too dulled to be socially harmonious. In contemporary complex society the last thing we need is people who do not recognize the importance of civility and no longer feel empathy for each other, especially for the most vulnerable. In what follows I will make a few conceptual distinctions in an attempt to underscore, but also to complement and criticize some of Modood's ideas.

II. HATEFUL SPEECH & HURTFUL SPEECH

When it comes to free speech, a distinction should be made between 'hateful speech' and 'hurtful speech' (Maclure 2018). Although it is not always clear where exactly to draw the line, hateful speech is always hurtful but hurtful speech is not always hateful, as hate is not always expressed nor is violence encouraged. Insofar as Rawls argued that the "[…] parties in the original position would wish to avoid at almost any cost the social conditions that undermine self-respect" (1971, 440), he would have supported hate speech laws. However, if we are concerned about the proliferation of 'offending language' and if our idea of justice implies the equal social standing of people, should we then not, in one way or another, also limit or regulate hurtful speech? After all, the sole

focus on hate speech neglects the impact of words to too great a degree in terms of psychological and social harm. From a legal perspective, the answer is clear: laws forbidding hurtful speech would be untenable. Notwithstanding the 'hateful-hurtful spectrum', the extent to which one can be shocked or offended is too subjective to form the grounds on which any policy could rest. Moreover, creating such laws would probably be detrimental for social cohesion, as they would provide everyone with an incentive to take offence – a situation that could be easily exploited by inflammatory politicians or religious leaders who stimulate fear and division in society and therefore encourage people to feel rapidly offended. That could eventually lead to a situation in which even rightful critique would be silenced, being considered rude and disrespectful provocations coming from people who do not know that hurting people is inappropriate under any circumstances. The result is that in such a social context freedom of speech cannot thrive. I will come back to this below.

While there is no justification for the legal prohibition of hurtful speech, this by no means implies that a society would not fare better when people are led by what I call an 'interpersonal ethos' and thus show decency, civility and good manners (Levrau 2018; 2019). People then not only know or feel when something is socially inappropriate, but they are also equipped with a mentality that helps them to cope with hurtful speech. A cohesive society in which people live well together does not presuppose constant feelings of aggression or resentment and intransigence, but rests rather on positive emotions felt and cherished by active citizens who understand that sometimes, for the higher good of cohesion, a number of minimal efforts and sacrifices may be required. The fact that people have to make some concessions at the level of their liberties, rights and habits should not necessarily be dismissed as a moral failure of a liberal society, since this can also be praised as acts of responsible citizens who understand that the good of a peaceful, close-knit and tolerant society sometimes expects efforts and sacrifices from them. In that sense, both self-censorship and developing a 'thick skin' should not be dismissed as 'wimpish' – they might also be seen as acts or attitudes of tact and even of courage. According to Mill (2001), this is "[…] the real morality of public discussion."

III. SELF-CENSORSHIP AND THE HECKLER'S VETO

While tact and self-censorship form social glue, it is not always clear what it exactly entails, nor when to rely on it. A lot depends on the context and the reason for not saying what one wants to say. Take the example of the cartoon controversy that is discussed in Modood's chapter. Modood praises the British newspapers, which, in contrast to many other countries, did not republish one single cartoon after the extreme Islamic reactions on the first publication.

> All the papers in Britain thought the cartoons were unworthy of reprinting; that they would do harm; and in particular, that they would, without satisfying any particular principle, damage the good relations that should exist between Muslims and

non-Muslims. In this there is a more general lesson to be learnt: that editors should exercise responsible judgment which may include a decision not to publish certain things. When the leaders of society and of institutions, alive to what is hurtful, exercise self-restraint, then the law can be minimally and rarely exercised. So an important principle is coming centre stage: to censure rather than censor (Modood 2019, 66).

While the newspapers had the right to publish the cartoons, they chose not to do so, as they did not want to erode or break the fragile social cohesion.

I must confess that I am somewhat doubtful as to whether the British newspapers made the best decision. After all, there are many ways to look at it. On the one hand, there were good reasons for republishing the cartoons (i.e. freedom of speech, condemnation of violence inspired by religion), but there was also a valid reason for not republishing them (i.e. respect for Muslims). Surely, not publishing is the best way to temper social unrest. One could surmise, however, that the British newspapers, recalling the 2005 London bomb-ings, were in the grip of the so-called 'heckler's veto'. This would mean that they did not publish the cartoons because they were afraid of new extreme reactions. The point that I want to make here is that self-censorship can be a wise thing to do, as it is in line with the interpersonal ethos, but in such cases it is a positive decision not induced by feelings of fear. If fear rules, self-censorship is akin to an undesirable restriction of freedom of speech.

As Cliteur (2015) points out, nowadays there are hardly any private individuals who want to play the martyr, so it is likely that anonymous publishing will become more prevalent, reminiscent of the times when philosophers like Spinoza, Voltaire and many others published their religious criticism anonymously or under pseudonyms. Examining the reasons for self-censorship could help us avoid the heckler's veto. The British decision was probably the result of a mixture of 'positive' and 'negative' reasons for self-restriction. However, if one takes a look at the wider picture, one could say that the other countries that republished the cartoons demonstrated solidarity in their plea for freedom of speech and especially in their resistance against religious extremism. After all, imagine if every newspaper had decided not to republish the cartoons. In that case the Danes (who pub-lished the cartoons) would have been isolated and would have become a very easy target for extremists. As it was, the other countries demonstrated solidarity in the sense that they took up a collective responsibility (Kogan 2015). The question then becomes what an interpersonal ethos would expect from moderate Muslims. Should they condone the republication, cope with their hurt feelings, and join a strong and united condemnation of physical violence committed in the name of Islam? Or should they protest against the republication of the hurtful cartoons and, in that sense, join extremists to a degree in their rejection of the offensive cartoons? Moderate Muslims seem to be caught in a catch-22 scenario. Of course, condemning religious violence and asking for a respectful treatment or portrayal of Islam are not mutually exclusive, but apparently some newspapers decided that what was at stake at that particular moment was the spreading of the message that one should not be afraid and that one should not let oneself be blackmailed by hurt feel-ings. The British newspapers, however, thought other stakes were more important. I think there is something to be said for both decisions.

IV. Satanic Verses and Qur'anic Verses

A key idea in the text of Modood is that one needs to consider hurt feelings. "If certain actions are likely to provoke Muslims in ways that are harmful to their status as fellow and equal citizens and that are likely to lead to conflict, then there is a problem we need to address. Islam is not being privileged here; it is just a contingent fact […] that some actions hurt some Muslims just as other actions […] hurt other groups" (Modood 2019, 64). While I do think the recognition of hurt feelings is of importance for living well together, I have the impression that the way Modood protects religion/Islam involves some double standards. If he, for example, makes a strong plea for censuring the cartoons and the *Satanic Verses* of Salman Rushdie, the inconvenient truth is that also Holy Books like the *Qur'an* need to be censured. *Qur'anic* violence should have been given a central place in a full-fledged analysis of censure – especially since Modood is so keen on a 'dialogical give and take approach' (see below). Even a cursory glance at the *Qur'an* reveals that there are plenty of verses imbued with violence, hate, racism, sexism, mansplaining, homophobia, religious segregation, gender segregation, intolerance, slavery, xenophobia and discrimination. Some passages in the Holy Book should not be censured but simply censored, as they not only contain hurtful speech but uncut hateful speech. In discussions about free speech and religion (and I'm afraid also in the book of Modood), this is often the so-called elephant in the room. Modood clarifies the need for some legislation to curb incitement to religious hatred, but that would logically imply the censorship of these highly problematic verses.

One could make this point stronger by saying that there is a tension between 'freedom of religion' and 'freedom of expression'. Compared to the cartoons and the *Satanic Verses* – which is, after all, nothing more than a complex and metaphorical novel read by just a handful intellectuals and bookworms and certainly not a holy book read and followed by millions of people who believe it is the word of their god – the *Qur'an* is a far more problematic and dangerous book, as it might and unfortunately does inspire certain people to extreme acts of violence. Therefore, I think it is important that Muslims univocally confirm the problematic character of the *Qur'an* and that they do not turn intellectual somersaults in their attempts to dilute the violence and hate. Imagine if I were to write a book about Muslims and do so in the same way the *Qur'an* speaks about disbelievers and apostates. People (not only Muslims) would be furious and they would rightfully condemn me for hateful speech. Imagine also if I were to say afterwards that the violent and hateful verses are just metaphors or that people have misunderstood it. Rather than accepting this, people would instead say that I am not intellectually and morally upright. After all, metaphors and reinterpretations are meant to illustrate and clarify ideas and not to distort or obscure things (Rizvi 2016). My point is this: it should not matter whether or not the hateful verses appear in a novel or in a holy book, nor should it be a relevant argument that Muslims happen to be a religious and vulnerable minority in western societies. Under any lens, the violent verses are wrong and deserve to be highly criticized and censured, if not censored. This, however, should not be the final conclusion. Let me make two additional remarks.

First, the fact that many Muslims say that these verses, though dictated verbatim by Allah, need to be interpreted in a specific way, shows, at least indirectly, that they do not agree with *Qur'anic* violence, which can be so rapidly found in unambiguously written verses. This means that they do not derive their full morality from their Holy Book, but that they have a morality based upon universal values and that they use that lens to read/understand the *Qur'an*. These Muslims are moral not *because* of, but at least partly *despite* their religious belief (Rizvi 2016). This provocative assertion (hurtful speech?) can also be put as follows: most Muslims have a secularized morality and do their best to successfully reconcile Islam with modernity and human rights. What connects them to Islam is not the 'holy truth' as such, but probably in the first place a 'holy loyalty' to a culture, a family, a history, or a spiritual way of life. This is why it is important to make a distinction between Islam and Muslims. In the next section I will come back to this.

Second, if moderate Muslims do not openly condemn *Qur'anic* violence, they give 'ammunition' to the real anti-Islamists who can claim that Muslims are not to be trusted. After all, while Muslims may condemn violent acts in general, they still seem to defend violent *Qur'anic* verses (e.g. by saying they are metaphors, or that they need specific and contextual interpretations). This, I believe, is one of the reasons for the ongoing 'wrestling match' between the western world and Muslims who are well integrated, but feel strongly bound to a problematic book, which they (given its divine character) cannot openly renounce. However, apart from the real anti-Islamists, most people in the western world do not expect Muslims to fully abstain from religion – they only want them to openly abandon the problematic aspects. The aforementioned analysis of the cartoon controversy touches on the same nerve. As the republication of the cartoons criticized extremism and blackmail, (moderate) Muslims could have more openly joined that critique and swallowed the pain of the cartoons.

V. ISLAMOPHOBIA, ISLAMOPHOBIA-PHOBIA AND MUSLIMPHOBIA

This leads me to the distinction between Islamophobia, Islamophobia-phobia and Muslimphobia. Modood is particularly worried about the way Islam and Muslims are treated in the western world. This concern is captured in the term 'Islamophobia', which he defines as follows: "[…] an unfounded hostility towards Islam, and therefore fear or dislike of all or most Muslims" (2019, 75). Modood's concern about how Muslims are treated in the West is well-founded, and he also astutely states that Islamophobia must be distinguished from reasonable criticism of Muslims and aspects of Islam. These points bear elaboration, particularly as the term Islamophobia is too broadly employed, lumping together elements that should be differentiated. To conclude this contribution, I put forward – in response to Modood – six considerations regarding why Islamophobia requires more nuancing.

First, Modood says that it is difficult to draw the line between Islamophobia and reasonable critique. That might be true, though I think in many cases it will not be that difficult. In chapter four Modood provides us with a few anchors to make the distinction.

One of the invoked criteria is dialogue. "Is it about Muslims rather than a dialogue with Muslims, in which they would wish to join?" and "Is mutual learning possible" (2019, 85)? Another way of putting it, is that it should not be a matter of a one-sided imposition. Muslims, as Modood says, might be criticized for sexual conservativism, but in that case one needs to be willing to listen to Muslims who think that western societies are over-sexualized and encourage sexual predation and undignified behaviour. While I do think that dialogue is indeed often a good (and even the best!) strategy to bring people together in a spirit of mutual concern and respect, I am not sure if it is always the right strategy. A great deal depends on the type of dialogue and on the subject. The example of Modood is, I think, not the best one. I fail to see why we should refer to the sexual mores of western societies when, for example, discussing and condemning sexual mores that do not accord women as much freedom as men. What would the comparison add to the discussion? This type of comparative critique reduces discourse to a conditional acceptance of critique only after the other proves him or herself equally guilty. One could also make the point that Islamic mores are arguably as sexualized as the western variety, insofar as the repression of sex, as Freud would call it, is directly proportional with the obsession with sex.

Second, Modood writes that while Muslims do not constitute one sole group (there are many groupings), all of them are affected by Islamophobia. There is indeed no agreement about what it means to be a true Muslim – hence the notion of *tafkir* (declaring that a fellow Muslim is guilty of apostasy). However, some Muslims are so dogmatically fixed on their interpretation of the religion that they become hostile towards other Muslims who do not share that interpretation. Does that hostility not count as Islamophobia? After all, black people who discriminate against people with other skin colours are also racists. An interesting question and an as yet untested hypothesis is whether 'intra-Islamic violence' is one of the reasons for non-Muslims' scepticism regarding Islam.

Third, 'phobia' refers to an irrational fear. Given what we have said about violent *Qur'anic* verses, I do not think it is always unreasonable to be afraid of Islam. I think it would even be disrespectful toward all the (Muslim and non-Muslim) victims of Islamic violence to say that their fear was irrational. Like it or not (hurtful speech?), the *Qur'an* is a potentially explosive source: it contains dangerous verses that deserve to be criticized, condemned or made the topic of humour. The same goes for some of the behaviours and words of the prophet Mohammed that can be found in the Hadith. One should, for example, be able and allowed to criticize and condemn child marriage, or at the very least, the sexual consummation of such marriages. Some practices or ideas are simply wrong, and it should not matter whether they are written in a holy book or proclaimed by a holy person. This is why I took issue with the European Court of Human Rights in its 2018 ruling (Case of E.S. v. Austria, no. 38450/12) that gave Austria the authority to punish a woman who portrayed the prophet as a paedophile. According to the Court, the woman who made the accusation should have known that she would evoke indignation, and therefore the imposed punishment by the Austrian judges (payment of 480 euros) was proportionate. Remarkably the judges not only referred to the margin of appreciation, but they also pointed at the protection of

Muslims' feelings and the maintenance of religious peace in Austria. I find this to be problematic because there is nothing wrong with condemning paedophilia, even when it is committed by a person whom Muslims believe to be a timeless example of perfection that deserves to be imitated. One should be careful not to end up with a misunderstood kind of tolerance. Critique and even mockery are not synonymous with intolerance; if such a distinction cannot be made, a moral vacuum will emerge that will be filled by real anti-Islamists, inflammatory politicians or religious leaders who set people against each other. Again, and Modood is right to also emphasizes this, this is not an invitation to become unnecessarily rude; one should strive to disagree without being disagreeable.

Fourth, Islamophobia is different from Muslimphobia. While the former refers to a general fear of the religion and what the various interpretations of its religious texts mean for the world, Muslimphobia refers to negative feelings towards all the individuals participating in that religion. However, someone can attack specific *Qur'anic* ideas or condemn the religion but still have Muslim friends and thus not be considered muslimphobic. When this distinction is not made, it becomes difficult to uphold the distinction between those who are really anti-Islam and anti-Muslim and those who only criticize *Qur'anic* ideas that cannot be brought in line with universal rights. Furthermore, this distinction between Islamophobia and Muslimphobia can be helpful when discussing the difference between what Modood (2019, 85) calls reasonable criticism and Islamophobia. According to Modood, one of the elements that needs to be considered is the extent to which Muslims are stereotyped in the assumption that they all think the same. I would say that such forms of stereotyping are akin to Muslimphobia and not to Islamophobia, as the latter deals with a collection of ideas, some of which are prone to reasonable critique.

Fifth, Modood writes about Muslims in terms of an ethnoreligious group. What I want to add here is that if Islam critique is associated with racism, those who rationally criticize Islam can also be called racists. The upshot is that, as nobody wants to be associated with racism, free speech will decline. Self-censorship will instead become the hallmark of cultural critics because of their fear of being called racist when expressing what are actually reasonable critiques. Again, the very fact that all sorts of critiques are lumped together, and that critique of Islam in general can be associated with racism, can give inflammatory politicians or religious leaders an incentive to create more fear and division in society. Muslims may then dwell in self-pity and resentment, convinced that reasonable critique is also a form of racism. Muslims therefore should accept that, no matter how strong their bonds with their religious group and despite the fact that they have been raised in a family in which the *Qur'an* was central, critiques can and sometimes should be raised. Moreover, if we are worried about the repression of the so-called 'minorities of the minorities', sealing our lips is the worst thing we could do (Nawaz 2012). Therefore, what should be avoided at all costs is what Benn (2007) has called Islamophobia-phobia: being reluctant to say anything critical of Islam because of the fear of being called an Islamophobe or racist. We should not shy away from critical or humorous analyses and portrayals of Islam (and other religious, political, ideological doctrines).

Sixth, the discourse is clouded. On the one hand, there is the extreme-right, which takes up a real anti-Islamist position that demonizes everything that has to do with Islam and Muslims. On the other hand there is what Maajid Nawas (2012) has coined the 'regressive left', which rejects all (legitimate) criticism of Islam. In both cases, Muslims are victimized: while the far-right thinks Muslims should leave the country or, if they stay, should give up their religion at once, the regressive left thinks that Muslims should first and foremost be protected against all forms of critique and racism. Both reactions, however, are problematic, particularly when exploited by inflammatory politicians and conservative religious leaders who argue that Muslims are constantly suppressed in western societies – a message that will only lead to more societal cleavage and that undermines a key ambition of Modood: the creation of a shared sense of belonging together.

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What Can Multiculturalism Learn from the Second Wave of Anti-Racist Activism?

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I. Introduction

Debates on multiculturalism have hit the headlines during the last two decades in continental Europe and Britain. While criticism of multiculturalism as a policy approach existed from the outset, it has increased and became more virulent. In 2010 and 2011, three prime ministers of three major European countries, David Cameron (BBC News), Angela Merkel (The Guardian), and Nicolas Sarkozy (Libération) all claimed that 'multiculturalism had failed'. While their understanding of what multiculturalism actually is about differs, and while Germany and France have never really implemented multiculturalist policies, the criticism by these three powerful leaders set the tone. Multiculturalism was under attack as a policy approach. Criticism of multiculturalism is partly caused by conceptual confusion surrounding the notion. Some even say the conceptual confusion on multiculturalism is such that "[…] the beauty of it, for its opponents, is, that it can mean whatever you want" (Lentin and Titley 2011, ix).

In this context, Tariq Modood's new book *Essays on Secularism and Multiculturalism* is a very welcome offering. The book presents a collection of essays from his earlier and more recent work that summarize well his positions and arguments. In addition, the book brings conceptual clarity regarding – one has to admit - at least one particular strand of multiculturalism, as there are strands other than the one Modood represents (Levey 2019). Modood can be considered one of the founding fathers of what is called the 'Bristol School of Multiculturalism' (BSM; Levey 2019). There are at least three notable features to this particular strand of multiculturalism. First, Modood and the other authors of the school justify the need for a multiculturalist policy approach in order to foster national belonging for minorities, or in other words, to allow minorities and their cultural and religious practices to be a part of the national narrative. This differs from the liberal defenders of multiculturalism who promote multiculturalism for developing a sense of self-worth. The work of Modood and other BSM authors also distinguishes itself from other liberal defenders of multiculturalism for its bottom-up approach. It derives legitimacy for multiculturalism from the resistance and the struggle of minorities who are seeking recognition, and not merely from a top-down engagement for values such as autonomy and equality (Levey 2019). This commitment to minority agency makes it into a less paternalistic account of multiculturalism.

Essays on Multiculturalism and Secularism is a sharp and well-argued defence of multiculturalism, of multicultural citizenship, of multicultural nationalism and of moderate secularism as a means to equality and justice. It is even, in several instances, a patriotic book, showing pride in being British, and in Britain's superior multiculturalist approach as compared with other European countries. Modood importantly defends the inclusion

of religion – which is often the stepchild of multiculturalist advocates – in the endeavour for recognition. He argues, rightly, that Islamophobia should be considered a form of cultural racism. The need to recognise specific forms of racism, including, importantly, Islamophobia, is now well embedded as one of the principles for effective anti-racist policies in anti-racism organizations (see, for example, ENAR 2019, 13-20). No effective anti-racist practice is possible without considering and understanding the way in which racism affects different groups (see ENAR 2019). For Muslims, currently, this is often through religion, or supposedly so, particularly since 2001.

As a defender of a multiculturalist policy approach as the only means to full equality for minorities whose identities and cultures are institutionally subordinated (Fraser 2003, 29), I agree with many of the arguments in the book. However, the objective of this critical review is not to say that I agree with it all. I particularly do not agree with the following: Modood argues that, in striving for equality and justice and the promotion of national belonging for all, anti-racism is not enough. He thinks multiculturalism, or multicultural nationalism is the answer.

I think anti-racism should fully include multiculturalism because if not, it does not do what it is supposed to do, namely foster equality. But I also think that multiculturalism, as such, is not enough, unless it includes anti-racism and fully addresses questions of power and privilege, or the problem of 'maldistribution' (as Nancy Fraser calls it). Multiculturalism addresses the problem of misrecognition, but, in its most prominent forms, it only addresses the problem of maldistribution to a minor extent. Redistribution or the need to tackle structural inequalities based on illegitimate criteria, is only moderately present in Modood's work, which mostly focuses on fostering belonging for minorities and writing an inclusive national story. It is completely legitimate to justify multiculturalism on that basis. Belonging is important. However, if Modood's work is to be fully faithful to its bottom-up approach to multiculturalism, it would benefit from including a response to the increasing claims of what has been called "[…] the second wave of anti-racist activism" (Essed 2014, 135). Activists do not reject multiculturalism. However, they blame multiculturalist policy approaches for not being transformative enough, for not addressing structural inequalities and issues of power and privilege. In the remainder of this contribution, I argue that as a response to the claims of the second wave of anti-racist activists, Modood should minimally enter into a dialogue with Nancy Fraser's approach to multiculturalism, or the politics of recognition, which she sees as entwined with the politics of redistribution.

II. The Second Wave of Anti-Racist Activism and its Criticism of Multiculturalism

Since the 2010s, we have been witnessing what Philomena Essed (2014) has called a 'second wave of anti-racism' in Europe. Essed talks about this new wave as "[…] sharp, sophisticated and solid", a new wave "[…] that gives hope to the veteran critical race scholars of the 1980s" (2014, 141). Essed mentions the events around the tradition of

'Black Pete', among other things, as indicators of the genealogy of the second wave of anti-racism in the Netherlands. While Essed's paper is about the Netherlands, it can be easily shown that similar evolutions are taking place elsewhere in Europe. As observed by Essed, "History shows that it takes generations for immigrants to feel sufficiently grounded and confident about their rights as human beings to resist collectively" (2014, 140). Therefore, it is not surprising that this second wave of anti-racism is taking place in what are called the 'old immigration countries' in Europe: the UK as a precursor, the Netherlands, France and Belgium, and to a lesser extent Germany and Sweden. The UK has followed a different path, with a far older history of a similar type of anti-racism in the 1980s already, heavily influenced by the US civil rights struggle and black radicalism (Modood 2019, 4-5). However, the 2010s also seem to expose a new dynamism in anti-racism in the UK with an increased presence of black and minority voices in the public debate on race, with best-selling books by journalists such as Renni Eddo-Lodge (2017) and Afua Hirsh (2018) and the hip hop artist and writer Akala (2018), as well as increasing discussions on racism in 'stop-and-search' and immigration policies. More recently, after the death of George Floyd – a black American man who was killed by the police during an arrest in Minnesota (USA), on 25 May 2020 –, the claims made by racialized anti-racist activists of the second wave for more than a decade already, were now finally heard. The Black Lives Matter movement extended far beyond the US, to include Europe and the rest of the world, and reinvigorated protests more so than any local cases of racist police violence or other racist incidents. In the weeks and months thereafter, the problem of structural racism that minorities face finally and prominently entered political and media agendas in Europe.

What unites most of the activists of the second wave is that they are often racialised themselves and that they wish to move beyond the individual conception of racism as a 'bad act by bad' (read: radical right-wing) individuals, and tackle institutional or systemic racism. They demonstrate the clear links between the slave trade and the colonial past of the states they live in, or old traditions of orientalism and contemporary racism. They denounce absence of the history of the slave trade and colonialism in the dominant definition of racism in Europe, which is focused on the more recent history of the holocaust (Maeso Rodriguez 2018). They have no faith in existing anti-discrimination legislation, which departs from this individual conception of racism they criticize and excludes tackling institutional or structural racism. The movement is also, as Essed mentions, 'sophisticated', or intellectual and erudite, making strong use of critical race theory (Crenshaw *et al.* 1995; Delgado and Stefanic 2017) and post/decolonial authors with sometimes very divergent positions like Frantz Fanon, Aimé Cézaire, Edward Said, Hannibal Quijano, Walter Mignolo, Sylvia Winter, Sara Ahmed,… American black scholars and activists like W.E.B Du Bois, Martin Luther King, Malcolm X,… and Black or Muslim feminist writers like Fatima Mernissi, Audre Lorde and Toni Morisson. When talking about this 'second wave of anti-racism' in Europe, we also need to define what the 'first wave' then was. In her short article on the 'second wave on anti-racism' Essed does not define 'the first wave'. I would refer to the first wave as the mostly white activism of the 1980s and 1990s, more focused on radical right-wing extremism and

mobilizing for the anti-discrimination and hate-speech legislation we have today, which is mostly based on an individual litigation model. Most emblematically, this refers to the famous 'starting line group', a network of over 250 mostly white and pro-migrant NGOs, which successfully lobbied for EU competency on anti-discrimination and for the 2000/43 Race Equality Directive (Geddes and Guiraudon 2006). In France, one could refer to 'SOS Racisme' as representative of the 'first wave'.

The claims of the second anti-racist wave parallel with what has been coined by Michaël Möschel the "five main tenets of Critical Race Theory" (2011: 1649). The first and most important tenet of critical race theory is that racism is not a deviation from the norm by deviant individuals, but endemic. On this issue, CRT deviates from multiculturalism, which does not engage in defining racism, or does not take a strong position concerning the need to tackle institutional racism. The further tenets of CRT sometimes parallel those of multiculturalism and sometimes differ from them. CRT and multiculturalism, for instance, likewise critique colour-blindness as a strategy to engender equality and favour colour-conscious policies and the representation of minorities in institutions (albeit in different ways and for different reasons). In contrast to multiculturalism, CRT insists on the need for intersectional approaches to injustice and to a historical and contextualized analysis of the law so as to show how the effects of past racial domination linger on today.

From this short presentation of CRT's main tenets, it might seem clear that several claims of second wave anti-racism echo the post/decolonial criticisms of multiculturalism, which also intellectually inspire the second wave of anti-racist activists. Scholars writing from this perspective are often critical of multiculturalism or the politics of recognition for not challenging, or even reinforcing inequalities (see, for example, Coulthard 2007; 2014; Ahmed 2007a and 2007b; Gorski and Goodman 2015). Multiculturalism, they argue, might have the potential to challenge structural inequalities, but often seems used in ways that replicate existing systems of power and privilege. It can even become "[…] a way of doing advantage within the context of globalisation", argues Sara Ahmed, and if it is detached from any social justice agenda, (it can) just maintain social advantage (2007a, 244). The post-/decolonial critique of multiculturalism does not mean that multiculturalism is thrown overboard altogether by the authors. Solutions are proposed for building a "[…] transformative multiculturalism grounded in equity and social justice" (Gorski and Goodman 2015, 2), to "[…] interrogate our own socialisations, our complicities in a system of oppression, and our power and privilege", like "[…] the dominant Eurocentric paradigm of modernity" and "[…] the hierarchization of knowledge and practices that result from that" (Gorski and Goodman 2015, 3). Other authors like Sara Ahmed (see, for example, 2007a and 2007b; 2012 on being included) propose 'uneasy policies' that challenge power and privilege, by talking about (institutional) racism, white privilege, classism, Islamophobia and not just diversity; by sharing the "histories that hurt" (2007b, 135) as a means to reach "an alternative social promise." This is indeed what multiculturalism has not done so far. For most post/decolonial critics of multiculturalism, it should challenge structural inequalities. They blame multiculturalism for not doing so or not even aiming to do so. Justifications for multiculturalism depend on the authors in question, but they have indeed addressed structural inequalities very little. Also for Modood and his colleagues

of the Bristol School for Multiculturalism, socio-economic redistribution is not the central aim and objective of multiculturalist policies. I argue that a multiculturalism that is loyal to the bottom-up approach of the Bristol School of Multiculturalism should listen to the claims of the second wave of anti-racist activists and its critique of the lack of the transformative nature of multiculturalism, as well as to its proposed solutions. In my view, a response to that critique should discuss how multiculturalism should not only foster belonging, or inclusion in the national story, but also just redistribution. Are these two (belonging and redistribution) not tied together anyway? Are feelings of belonging possible in a world in which religion, ethnicity and race are predictors of socio-economic positions as they are today (see, for example, OECD 2018 and FRA). In my view, Nancy Fraser's view on the politics of recognition is one that might achieve this exercise.

III. Taking Nancy Fraser's Approach as a Starting Point to Respond to Minority Activists

Nancy Fraser (2003; 2000) sees redistribution of economic resources and recognition of identities not as mutually exclusive alternatives, although they are portrayed as such by many authors (Fraser 2003, 11-16). In line with intersectionality theories (Crenshaw 1995), Fraser argues that redistribution is as much about gender and race as it is about class, and that recognition is also about class. Fraser talks about two-dimensionally subordinated groups that suffer both maldistribution and misrecognition in forms where neither of these injustices is an indirect effect of the other, but where both are primary and co-original. For these groups, neither politics of redistribution nor politics of recognition alone will suffice. Two-dimensionally subordinated groups need both, argues Fraser, redressing racial (or other status related) injustice(s) requires both recognition and redistribution (Fraser 2003, 19; 23). There is no recognition without redistribution, nor redistribution without recognition. Misrecognition, for Fraser, is not so much an impediment to self-realization (as for Charles Taylor and Axel Honneth) or a hindrance to full citizenship and belonging (as for Tariq Modood and the BSM), but "[…] an institutionalized relation of subordination and a violation of justice" (Fraser 2003, 29). To be misrecognized, according to Fraser, is not to suffer from a distorted identity, it is to be constituted by institutionalized patterns of cultural value that prevent minorities from participating 'as a peer in social life'. Fraser calls this the status model of recognition. And in that status model, she argues, "[…] misrecognition is relayed not through depreciatory attitudes or free-standing discourses, but rather through social institutions" (2003, 29). This view on misrecognition is aligned with the central claim of the second anti-racist wave or critical race theorists, namely that racism is not about 'bad acts or discourses of bad individuals' but as systemic and embedded in institutions.

Contrasting with most defenders of the politics of recognition or multiculturalism, Nancy Fraser takes the question of redistribution seriously and elaborates on how to relate it to the politics of recognition. She does not argue, like Brian Barry (2001) and others, that the politics of recognition distort redistribution. On the contrary, she defends recognition as a necessary means to just redistribution. Modood justifies multiculturalism as a means to

foster inclusive nation building, and that is legitimate. However, he remains vague on how multiculturalist policy approaches relate to just redistribution.

IV. CONCLUSION

Let me conclude by considering my main critique of Modood by means of a thought experiment. What if minorities are, and feel included in the national story, but structural inequalities continue to exist between the majority and minority groups: their employment opportunities, university education, the possibility to rent the houses they want and the value of the neighbourhoods in which they can afford a house continue to be determined by their ethnicity, race, religion or gender as all OECD, EU and national statistics demonstrate. This is currently the case, also in big cosmopolitan cities. Brussels and London, to name just a two, make an effort to build inclusive local citizenship narratives and policies, and minorities feel more attached to their city than to their nation, just because of that inclusive discourse and the inclusive policies. However, redistribution continues to be ethnically, racially and religiously biased in these cities, structural racism continues to exist (André *et al.* 2020). Is everything fine as soon as minorities belong? How can multiculturalism be fully transformative without also considering how it relates to redistribution? And will an inclusive national story not collapse as soon as people realize redistribution still follows ethnic, racial or religious lines? Is this then not simply 'happy multiculturalism' or 'happy diversity talk' as Sara Ahmed (2007a and 2007b) describes? I would like to invite Tariq Modood to further develop his views on the relationship between multiculturalism and redistribution, in an effort to take the claims of the second wave of anti-racist activists and the bottom-up approach to multiculturalism of the Bristol School seriously.

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A Sociological Reflection on Tariq Modood's Contextual Political Theory

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I. INTRODUCTION

In the past decennia, western European societies have witnessed an increasing unease with the realities of post-immigration ethno-religious diversity. While some observe a broader pattern of anti-religiosity (e.g. Ribberink *et al.* 2013), it is particularly the public discourse on Muslims that has hardened and became increasingly framed around the alleged incompatibility of Islam and generalized notions of 'western', 'liberal' or 'secular' values. In this collection of *Essays on Secularism and Multiculturalism*, Tariq Modood provides us with some exceptionally nuanced and multifaceted insights into how our thinking on multicultural societies can be reshaped to better address questions of religious equality and equal citizenship for citizens of all faiths, including Islam. Modood's main message is that the core political democratic concept of secularism has to be reconsidered because the dominant – and in his view 'radical' – interpretation of it is not sufficiently attuned or accommodated to the realities of a multifaith population. Furthermore, while a 'radical secularism' argues for the strict separation of church and state, the factual existing relationships between religion and politics are much more complex. Modood (e.g. 2019, 146-150) argues that most West-European countries have already developed *"*moderate forms of secularism", in which organized religion is treated as a public good and many ties exist between states and religion. The main challenge is to further pluralize this moderate conceptions of secularism so that previously marginalized religious groups become incorporated into the various national forms of civil solidarity. In some countries, this process is well under way, and is mainly driven by the increasing assertiveness of Muslim activists and their claims for equal recognition.

Drawing on academic political theory, the essays in this collection constitute a subtle intellectual intervention in the public debate. Modood aptly terms his approach "contextualised political theory" (2019, 19); by this he means that political ideas always get their meaning from the specific institutional and historical contexts in which they were developed and, accordingly, have the potential for further accommodation to changing contexts. In fact, the different essays show that our basic democratic terms and institutions have enough flexibility to accommodate the realities of a diverse society, and that there are thus grounds for guarded optimism about the future. This is why, at the present moment, I find Modood's book particularly useful as a tool for thinking more systematically about how our institutions have already partly accommodated to the existing religious diversity, but can and should, indeed, go much further along that road.

As with any significant book that addresses such pressing and complex issues, which have a public as well as a philosophical and legal dimension, anyone can find specific points to criticise. From my own background as a sociologist studying ethno-cultural and

ethno-religious diversity, I would like to critically engage with two different issues. I shall do so in the spirit of a sympathetic critic who sees potential for further theoretical elaboration of some of the core arguments and for an extension of the 'research agenda' – if I can use the expression – that is set out in the different essays. I will first discuss some of Modood's sociological arguments and suggest that they need to be opened up to critical scrutiny and the empirical exploration of alternative, more fine-grained interpretations. Second, in line with Modood's 'contextualized political theory', I will position some of his insights in the current political context, and discuss to which extent ideas of 'moderate secularism', 'religious equality', and 'public religion' can be saved in the current climate of ethno-populism.

II. A Too Broad Sociological Brush

It is well known that some of the more sophisticated discussions of multiculturalism are framed in terms of normative political theory, tackling questions such as whether and under which normative conditions group or minority rights should be granted over and above more classical individual rights. While these discussions between egalitarian liberal theorists (e.g. Brian Barry), liberal multiculturalists (e.g. Will Kymlicka) or more communal multiculturalists (e.g. Charles Taylor) have been very stimulating, they have arguably lessened the potential utility of multicultural theory as a tool of empirical sociological analysis (Kivisto 2014, 158-159; Saeys *et al.* 2019).

What I appreciate in Modood's book is that it makes a serious effort to combine normative political theory with more sociological analyses. Modood investigates, firstly, actual claim-making by religious minorities – especially by the British Muslim community – and how the political system has accommodated these claims (or not). Secondly, he looks at processes of racialization of Muslims. Yet, as partly predicted by the author himself, this combination of normative theory and sociological analysis remains a bit of an uneasy marriage, leading to argumentation that sociologists will find too "[…] normative and subjective, while political theorists will object that it is too descriptive of certain times and places and not sufficiently justificatory or universal" (Modood 2019, 20). Predictably or not, I will indeed argue that some of the sociological arguments in the book are not analytically specific enough, and leave quite a lot of empirical variety and complexity undiscussed. I hence make a plea for a more fine-grained analysis of processes of racialization of Muslims and of Muslim political mobilization or claim-making.

In the first six chapters of the book, Modood argues that European Muslims as a religious group have suffered a form of cultural racism. Drawing on cases in different European countries, he demonstrates how Muslims have been racialized as a homogeneous, single group with uniform and negatively valued characteristics. This has not only created space for discrimination and unfavourable treatment, but has also boosted the efforts of Muslims to mobilize, rally against unjust treatment and make claims for equal recognition of Muslims as a religious group. These findings are in line with a good deal of social science research showing that the collective labelling of Muslims within current

political rhetoric not only simplifies the diversity among Muslims, but in fact has reinforced a shared sense of identity and community among a range of Muslims within in a country, but also cross-nationally (e.g. Beaman 2016; Maliepaard and Verkuyten 2018). While I agree with the broad contours of this story, I also think it is sometimes painted with too broad a brush.

In the case of the 'racialization of Muslims' argument, it is not always clear who exactly is racializing Muslims (and who is not), in which contexts Muslims are being racialized and in which not, and also whether processes of racialization of Muslims equal 'Islamophobia' (as Modood sometimes seems to suggest). Several of the essays mention the existence of a general climate of hostility toward Muslims in western Europe. While these tendencies exist as broad patterns, it is also clear that there is tremendous empirical variety. All national societies, for instance, consist of competing actors and not all of these engage in racialization, some of them actually oppose it and struggle against it. For instance, some newspapers are fuelling racialization of Muslims; others are engaged in combatting it. Similarly, some policy measures contribute to racialization, while others try to buttress legal guarantees against it. Looking at national policies and policy documents can be instructive, but one should remember that they are the outcome of competitive struggles between these groups and often contain contradictory policy schemes and are not necessarily implemented as such. When reading, for instance, Modood's positive and negative assessment of respectively the English and French national models of inclusion and secularism, I could not help feeling that the policy approaches were presented as more internally uniform and consistent than reality would indicate.

Furthermore, it is not always easy to disentangle negative attitudes or emotions directed at Muslims from other types of ethno-centrism or racism; neither is it easy to assess why and how such hostility is selectively directed at religious group membership, rather than, for instance, specific intersections with different ethnic or national-origin groups. We know, for example, that immigrants *qua* immigrants are often the object of hostility, or that specific ethnic or national groups, irrespective of their religion, can be targeted. Consequently, if specific cohorts of immigrants are predominantly Muslim, it is not self-evident to disentangle their religion from their migration status. More generally, religion is just one of the markers of group membership, social status and belonging. The so-called 'intersections' of religion with other group markers such as nationality, age, sex, gender, socio-economic differences, and other forms of difference are obviously also important when discussing the racialization of Muslims. A female, highly educated and wealthy Muslim professional with Kosovar parents will probably be less targeted than a male, poor Muslim from rural Sudan. Trying to determine the precise weight of all these factors in different contexts of racialization is fraught with difficulties.

As regards Modood's sociological argument about the growing assertiveness and claim-making of Muslim minorities, an analogous plea for a more fine-grained analysis can be made. While I largely agree with the overall diagnosis that intensified claim-making from European Muslim minorities has led to more attention for ethno-religious equality in the broader equality framework, I was (again) asking myself questions about the comparative relevance and importance of Muslim mobilization (e.g. it might be

important in some countries but relatively unimportant in others) and about the exact constitution and limits of Muslim communities as political actors. In the latter case, the assumption seems to be that individuals of the same religious background – whether they are Indonesians, Iranians or Iraqis, Shiites or Sunnites – represent groups of shared political destiny and common political interests. Yet, this cannot be taken for granted; hence, there is a need to show, in more detail than Modood does, how common interests are perceived and shaped, how coordination between different subgroups is being achieved, to what extent Muslim spokespersons and activists represent these differences (or not), and so on. In his short treatment of this type of question, Modood mentions that he has "a preference" for a form of Muslim representation that is bottom-up, "[…] less corporatist, less statist, and less churchy […] and more comfortable there being a variety of Muslim voices, groups and representatives" (2019, 129) than most approaches, yet it remains a question to what extent such a loosely directed choir of voices can be effective in making political claims. While I realize these questions go beyond the scope of a collection of essays, probing further into the complexities of processes of claim-making and racialization of Muslims would bring to full fruition the book's theoretical innovations and research agenda.

III. Moderate Secularism, Cultural Majorities and Populism

Let me then move to the second issue I would like to engage with, stemming from Modood's assertion that concepts such as 'moderate secularism' should be assessed against the horizon of current (political) contexts. As Modood rightly highlights, a 'moderate secularism' and a more equal recognition of Islam in the public space will require a more positive public understanding of religion as well as some rebalancing of the relationship with established religions such as Christianity, not in the sense of de-Christianising western European states, but rather in the sense of adding new faiths next to old ones, in a spirit of equal respect. What is called for here is an expansion of the national imaginary, in which the identities of once marginalized groups "[…] come to be viewed both as legitimately and importantly different from the core group's and, at the same time, as fundamentally the same", as variations on a shared identity (Alexander 2006, 544). From Talcott Parsons onwards, sociologists and historians have been arguing that such 'inclusion' of minorities within an expanded national imagined community is in fact possible, as demonstrated, for instance, by "[…] the perceptual and discursive shift in the middle of the past century from viewing the United States as a Protestant nation to seeing it as a Judeo-Christian one", a shift by which Judaism was included "[…] under the sacred canopy of American religion and in so doing represented an expansion of that canopy" (Kivisto 2014, 160; see also Alexander 2006, 496-547).

All this means that analogous contemporary calls to adapt European regional or national imaginaries (so that there is room for Muslims within them) are not only fully legitimate but also possible (and this without requiring Muslims to become clones of those already accepted inside the imagined community). Yet, whether such calls for

expanding national imaginaries will be successful seems to depend on a host of factors, such as the imposed images, stereotypes, and understandings of the larger non-Muslim population, the specific idioms of nationhood, the domestic strength of Muslims as a political actor, how Muslim claim-making is accommodated by the existing institutional landscape, and so on. As Modood rightly points out, there are significant national differences here. Arguably, the inclusion of Islam will be easier in Belgium, the Netherlands and other countries where the nation has for some time been imagined (and organised) as a collection of various, religiously defined social pillars. Adding another, non-Christian pillar to a consociational or pillarized state does not seem to present an insurmountable difficulty. It will probably be more difficult in Poland, for instance, where the national imaginary is constructed around a more restrictive Catholic identity, or in France, where the nation is conceptualised through republican and laicist ideals of democracy.

Yet, especially relevant for our purposes here, is a common European factor, which makes the pluralist integration of Islam more challenging today. Fuelled by the emergence and, to some extent, normalization of right-wing populism all over Europe, there is a broad resistance against any expansion of the national imaginary, especially among important sections of the native middle classes and labour classes, or anybody else who feels threatened by a loss of social status. While these population groups felt fully acknowledged by the national imaginaries of post-war European welfare states - which guaranteed their economic security –, changing economic fortunes and a transformed cultural environment (partly due to immigration) have made them feel increasingly vulnerable, "[…] evoking feelings of hostility to outgroups, especially if the latter can be associated with the status threat" (Gidron and Hall 2017, 63). Yet, the main issue today has perhaps less to do with racialization or racism in the classic sense – e.g. people being opposed to Muslims as such – and more with the claims of majorities (i.e. native majorities) on national imaginaries. The cultural anxieties that are fuelled by the populist right mainly concern changes to these national imaginaries; that is, the ethno-nationalist, anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim platform of these parties appeals to 'natives' worrying that it is no longer 'their country', that 'their attitudes' and 'their values' are no longer the dominant ones in our post-immigrant societies.

All this raises the question of how the claims of majorities who wish to retain and defend 'their' national cultural and religious traditions can be combined with minorities' claims to reshape national civil solidarities to equally include all cultural and religious groups. This question becomes indeed urgent in the current political climate in Europe, in which ideas about a civilizational threat from Islam and a 'conflict of civilizations' have been gaining ground (e.g. Brubaker 2017). For our purposes here, the emergence of a 'radical secularism' in Europe should be looked at from the vantage point of populism. While radical secularism does indeed have longstanding roots in a republican and French laicist tradition (e.g. Modood 2019, 2; 167), it has made significant inroads into the European public debate because of the efforts of ethno-populist parties. The latter make increasing references to 'our traditions' of secularism and the strict separation of church and state (e.g. making pleas for banning the headscarf in public offices). At the same time, and seemingly contradictory, they increasingly refer to the 'Christian

roots' of our societies, in an attempt to 'culturalize' religion and pit 'us' (Christians) against them (Muslims). In this way, for example, the populist strategy allows for the display of the cross in classrooms or other public settings to be defended as a symbol of European culture and identity, while at the same restricting Muslim religious practices as they allegedly challenge our public culture of secularism and the separation of church and state.

From the point of view of 'contextualized political theory', the positioning and development of 'radical secularism' in the current historical conjuncture should hence be further explored. This will probably be as sociologically informative for understanding the dynamics of inclusion of religious minorities in post-immigration societies as the dynamics that are so masterfully explained in Modood's essays.

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A Comment on Modood's Essays from the Perspective of a Belgian Political Philosopher

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I. INTRODUCTION

Essays on Secularism and Multiculturalism offers a good overview of Tariq Modood's work, method and ideas. Modood thinks and writes from a British perspective and his approach is a combination of descriptive sociology and normative political theory. I will elaborate on these two characteristics of the book from my perspective as a Belgian political philosopher. The first part is a general comment, while the second part is an exercise in applying Modood's approach in the Belgian/Flemish context.

II. AN INTERESTING BUT NOT ALWAYS SATISFYING METHODOLOGY

The book is – in the words of Modood – "[…] a hybrid of normative political theory and empirical political sociology, sometimes more of one than the other" (2019, 17). On the one hand, this interdisciplinarity is a strength. Modood's ideas and conceptual framework about multiculturalism and secularism do not start from scratch; his starting point is a description of the ways in which secularism and multiculturalism already exist in different European countries, especially Britain/England. Different from many post-Rawlsian political theorists, Modood is not working on ideal theory. He theorizes about real-world cases (not about all kinds of thought experiments) and his method is rather inductive than deductive. I support his plea for contextualized and empirically grounded political theory, because this approach helps us to bring the sometimes very theoretical, technical and sterile discussions about the different 'isms' more down to earth. It has, for instance, been argued by political (ideal) theorists that the weak and symbolic establishment of religion x is not in tension with the basic principles of political liberalism, if it does not alienate minorities and non-adherents of religion x from society, and does not construe a disparaging insider-outsider civic status (Laborde 2013, 84; Laborde 2017, 135; Eisgruber and Sager 2007, 164). Well, here Modood (2019, 12-13; 206-207) enters the discussion with empirical data to give evidence that British Muslims, for example, do not feel alienated by the Church of England establishment. This kind of sociological intervention is interesting, and we need more of this type of empirical input in political theory. However, Modood himself can also do better on this point (see also the contribution of Verschraegen and Lemmens in this symposium). Modood is very negative about the French *laïcité* model, for example, but it is not clear if he has enough empirical evidence for his verdict. The sociological data with which he underpins the British/English model is completely absent when it comes to the French model.

On the other hand, as a political philosopher, I agree with Modood's self-critique that sometimes his book "[…] does not sufficiently justify what ought and ought not exist, in the way that liberalism does" (2019, 20). Take again French *laïcité*: what is the political philosophical argument to be so negative about this model of 'equality of citizens secularism'? The French church-state model may not be his favourite, but it is a legitimate one and, moreover, is inspired by important liberal normative principles (Laborde 2004; see also Lemmens in this symposium).

Modood writes that, especially in the English context, we "[…] should equalise upwards, not downwards" (2019, 189). Christian states should not be de-Christianised, but appropriately add new faiths alongside the older ones in the national narrative, the establishment and recognition policy. This strategy has been criticised by Laborde (2004, 98; 2010) and Laegaard (2008; 2015): too much in favour of the status quo. Moreover, sometimes the majority religion has clearly indefensible historical privileges and equalizing downwards is then the right course of action. There can be practical difficulties in implementing the strategy of equalising upwards (when there are, for instance, too many religions), but in some cases there are also normative arguments against such a strategy. In the nineteenth century, the struggle for egalitarian citizenship often took the form of disestablishment of majority religions. If one religion has indefensible privileges, we do not have to privilege all other religions in the same way, but rather, must remove that privilege. Modood may be aware of this, but he does not provide clear normative criteria regarding how to determine whether to equalise upwards or downwards.

In line with this, Modood (2019, 10-11; 188) provides no decisive normative arguments for his claim that 'religion is special' for liberal secularists and therefore should be defended, supported, recognized or established in special ways by the secular state. The claim that religion is special is far from evident for liberal political theorists; most of them deny the claim or make the claim more nuanced – and they present good reasons for doing so (Laborde 2017; Dworkin 2013; Eisgruber and Sager 2009). Modood, however, simply posits without further argumentation that the view that religion is not special is "[…] odd because the whole point of secularism is that religion has to be treated specially and as a unique problem" (2019, 193, note 35), Moreover, Modood then refutes the idea that religion is special with his idea of multiplex privileging (see chapter 10). According to him, the secular state can privilege religious activities, just as it privileges various social activities and public goods. This implies that religion is not special, or at least not *uniquely* special (cf. Laborde 2017).

In sum, Modood uses two different ideas. On the one hand religion is special, on the other hand religion is not. Does religion deserve special politico-legal treatment as a unique discrete sphere of life, or only in virtue of features that it shares with nonreligious beliefs, conceptions of the good, social activities and identities? The answer to this question, however, is crucial if we are to engage in normative discussions about state neutrality, establishment and justice, and requests for reasonable accommodation and religious exemptions (cf. Vallier and Weber 2018; Eisgruber and Sager 2009; Laborde 2017).

III. A BELGIAN EXERCISE

Modood writes from a British perspective, but his method and ideas are also relevant for other countries. In the following paragraphs I will make a preliminary exploration of how the Belgian/Flemish situation would appear in the eyes of Modood.

In general, it is easy to agree with the idea that also in Belgium "[…] the challenge to political secularism […] lies not in any slowing down of secularization, but in the presence of Muslims" (Modood 2019, 164; see also chapter 9). After 9/11, public and political discussions about multiculturalism were more and more focussed on the place of Islam in our western secular society and on Islam finding ways to cope with the basic principles of liberal secularism (cf. Bousetta and Jacobs 2006; Vanparys, Jacobs and Torrekens 2013). Also more recently, it was mainly the issue of 'Muslim radicalization', the approximately 500 Syrian fighters who turned their back on Belgian society, and the Islamic terrorist attacks in 2015 (Paris) and 2016 (Nice, Brussels) that were catalysts for public discussions about the importance of secular liberalism, the value of democratic citizenship education, the existing state-religion connections, and particularly the importance of critical religious literacy, dialogue and mutual respect (Loobuyck forthcoming; Franken and Loobuyck 2020). The mix of difference-sensitive accommodation (cf. Adam and Rea 2015), muscular/radical liberalism and Christianist responses is also present in Flanders. Flemish nationalists and radical-right party militants in particular employ a mix of Christian and Enlightenment discourse to define 'our norms and values' and 'our national culture' against non-Christian and non-enlightened Muslims (cf. Benhaddou and Loobuyck 2019).

What Modood (2019, 85-86) calls 'cultural racism against Muslims' and 'Islamophobia' can be recognized in Flanders/Belgium. A *stereotyping* discourse *about* Muslims without the openness for mutual learning and inspired by ulterior motives is common, especially on social media and in the discourse of some Flemish nationalists and radical right politicians. The discussions on headscarves and burkinis are paradigmatic illustrations. However, it seems to me that the use of the concepts 'cultural racism' and 'Islamophobia' is much more contested here in Flanders than in Britain (see also Levrau and Lemmens in this symposium). Nevertheless, how to fight these kind of cultural racism discourses is still part of the discussion.

Modood argues that we "[…] should handle the offensive portrayal of racial and religious minorities through censuring rather than legal bans" (2019, 229). With respect to the Danish Muhammed cartoons (2005) and *The Satanic Verses* (1989), Modood professes no wish to prohibit publications by law, but he is in favour of censuring people/authors who are gratuitously offensive (see chapter 3). His plea to 'censure not censor' is not unproblematic (see Levrau in this symposium), and it would not easily be followed in Flanders. In contrast to the British newspapers and *The New York Times,* the Belgian newspapers published the Danish Muhammed cartoons in 2005. There was also a recent appeal by three academics involved in the study of antisemitism to censure (not to censor) the Jewish caricatures at Aalst Carnival (*De Morgen* 18 February 2020, 23). The Belgian media did not give a positive response to

this request. The argument was that critical journalism cannot cover discussions if they cannot show the items under discussion. It seems that Modood would have a problem with this decision of the media?

Finally, what would Modood say about Belgian church-state relationships? Belgium is mentioned several times in his book (Modood 2019, 55; 182; 183; 198). The Belgian church-state system is clearly a good example of what he calls weak establishment, moderate secularism and (to a certain extent) multicultural nationalism (for more details and discussion see Franken and Loobuyck 2013; see also Modood 2017). Since the first constitution in 1831, Belgium has worked with officially recognized religions, which are indirectly paid by the government (among other things: salaries and pensions of clergy). Besides Roman Catholicism, Protestantism, Anglicanism and Judaism, which were recognized from the beginning, Islam was recognized in 1974, Christian Orthodoxy in 1985, and the humanistic freethinkers in 2003. Since 1988, the seven recognized worldviews also have the constitutional right to organize their own religious education course in state schools.

This seems to be a good example of a pluralist thickening of the national culture/identity and of equalising upwards. However, there are also examples of equalising downwards: crucifixes are no longer allowed in court rooms, radio broadcasting by the religions and worldviews was stopped in 2015, the *Te Deum* is no longer a political activity, religious symbols are forbidden for teachers and pupils in state schools, the Flemish government wants to ban religious symbols for state officials, etc. More and more political voices argue that the Belgium model should evolve in the direction of French *laïcité*. During the legislation of the 2014-2019 government, hearings were organized in the Belgian parliament to deal with the question to what extent the concept *laïcité* could be introduced into the Belgian constitution. These discussions will be continued, but they go in another direction than Modood would advise, because disestablishment – in the eyes of Modood – devalues religion and could make religious minorities "[…] like Muslims more alienated than the status quo" (2019, 13; 207). However, besides the normative issues that play a role in Belgium, it is not certain that there is sociological evidence for this claim of alienation in a system that leans more towards French *laïcité* (cf. *supra*).

Despite the official state-church relationships and a version of what Laborde (2013) has called 'multi-faith establishment' that can be found in Belgium, Modood may be disappointed when he hears the public discourse and national narrative – especially of many nationalist politicians. Their narrative is often less inclusive toward Muslims than can be expected from a study of the Belgium church-state system. It is not common, for instance, for politicians to attend an *iftar*, and reasonable accommodation toward Muslims is often and much too easily framed as *soumission*, a capitulation to Islam. Moreover, the concrete implementation of the recognition of imams and mosque communities has been difficult (Loobuyck and Meier 2013). Fewer than twenty imams in Flanders are paid by the government now and there is still no academic training programme for imams. Modood (2019, 140) would also disagree with the fact that the existence of Muslim faith schools in Flanders is actively opposed by society and politicians. Muslim

schools are a contested issue in Flanders. In my opinion, interculturalism (in favour of mixed school populations) is in tension here with the multicultural approach that tends to give support to schools organized and run by religious organisations – like Jewish, Catholic or Muslim schools (cf. Loobuyck 2013).

Concerning religious education in state schools Modood's (2019, 15-16) ideas are fully in line with our so-called LEF-proposal [LEF = Levensbeschouwing, Ethiek & Filosofie (Worldviews, Ethics & Philosophy)] to introduce a common, non-denominational and compulsory subject about religions, ethics, citizenship and philosophy in the Flemish school system (Loobuyck and Franken 2011; Modood 2017). In addition, the government can make an effort to accommodate religious instruction (only) for these pupils whose parents really want this kind of instruction in the curriculum in state schools. Since we launched this idea in 2009, several initiatives have been taken aiming to improve the religious education system (Franken and Loobuyck forthcoming), but a more radical change of the current segregating, (semi)confessional religious education system has yet to appear.

IV. CONCLUSION

Modood combines normative political theory and empirical political sociology. Although there is a risk that this approach is not sociological or not normative enough, it should be encouraged because it gives nuanced and down-to-earth insights about the implementation of abstract principles such as separation of church and state, freedom of conscience, equality and recognition.

Modood did the job for Britain, but it is interesting to apply his approach in other national contexts. I gave a first idea of how it could be done for Belgium and Flanders, where the discussion between multiculturalism and *laïcité* is still part of the political agenda. Further elaboration requires a full-fledged paper. Any takers?

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Islamophobia, Free Speech and Multicultural Equality

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I. INTRODUCTION

I thank the five other participants to this symposium for taking the trouble to study and comment on my book. I am pleased that several commentators see value in my interdisciplinary political theory-sociology approach and how it helps to illuminate developments in at least one country, Britain. I am particularly grateful that Gert Verschraegen believes that despite the reservation that he has about the broad-brush approach, he believes my collected essays have a power to push beyond the existing frontiers of inquiry (674). I have learnt from these commentaries and am aware that sometimes the criticisms are all too accurate. I think the criticisms fall into three categories. Firstly, there is one criticism about which I can only plead *mea culpa*. The second set of criticisms take the form of 'innovative and promising, but…'; I take most of Verschraegen's and Loobuyck's remarks to be of this sort. Finally, there are points raised by Koen Lemmens and François Levrau on hate speech, Islamophobia and by Ilke Adam on the connection between redistributive justice and multiculturalist recognition, and on our respective understandings of racism that require detailed discussion. I begin with what I have least to say on and progressively move to where more needs to be said.

II. THE CASE OF FRANCE

Several participants note that I have a very negative view of how French secularism and principled anti-multiculturalism is responding to the issues of equality and respect in relation Muslim citizens, public space for their identities and practices and the place of Islam in the Republic. They criticise me, however, for failing to provide anything like adequate sociological detail to support this view or normative engagement with the French concepts and principles. Lemmens presents this most fully, but he is not alone in expressing this criticism, which concludes that my references to France end up being a straw man to knock down in the promotion of what I take to be the superior British approach. I have to plead guilty as charged. The only thing I can offer in my defence is that sometimes a caricature can throw light on the original (on the principle of political cartoons) and be of heuristic value, if not in understanding the real world cases, then at least in understanding more clearly what the author is arguing for. I accept, however, that this may not be enough in escaping the charge. Though in mitigation, I offer this remark from Patrick Simon on comparative discrimination cases: "The number of cases in UK is far above the one in France, and it is reflecting two different things 1) the general organization of the law (common law vs roman law) 2) the lack of sensitivity of French courts to racial and religious discrimination, which make it hard to bring cases to the court."[1]

III. Calling for More Sociology, More Political Theory

As a sympathetic critic, Verschraegen appreciates the value of my combining political theory and sociological research in order to bring out the norms and politics present in our political institutions, explore and justify in what ways they can be developed further and identify and deal with the normative difficulties. As a sociologist, however, he notes that this means that my sociology operates at a broad brush level and some of my conceptualisations and generalisations may need to be qualified when research is undertaken at a more fine-grained level. For example, he makes some complimentary remarks about my concept of moderate secularism and how it can serve in the inclusion of Muslims and shares my sense that expanding national imaginaries to achieve this will be more difficult "[…] in France […] and easier in other parts of North Western Europe", specifically mentioning Belgium and the Netherlands (678). It should be clear that I share his differentiation between the different national cases, and in particular that France is a 'hard' case. At the same time, he – showing that he is not averse to large scale generalisations – notes that there is "[…] a common European factor […] a broad resistance against any expansion of the national imaginary" (678) from a right-wing populism. Here too, I am in agreement and it is why, focusing on religion and national identity, I argue that multiculturalism must now engage with the identity claims of majorities and the place of majorities in multiculturalism (Modood 2019a, 8; 14-17 and Modood 2019b). Moreover, I have been exploring how multiculturalism can contribute to the current depolarisation, the poles being those who live in diverse areas and value diversity and those who do not (Modood 2019c).

Verschraegen cautions me against speaking "[…] of a general climate of hostility to Muslims in Western Europe. While these tendencies exist as broad patterns, it is also clear that there is tremendous empirical variety. All national societies, for instance, consist of competing actors and not all of these engage in racialization, some of them actually oppose it and struggle against it. For instance, some newspapers are fuelling racialization of Muslims; others are engaged in combatting it. Or, some policy measures contribute to racialization, while others try to buttress legal guarantees against it" (676). Again, I agree and do try to recognise the countervailing forces. Chapters 1 and 2, for example, reveal how different anti-racists – and not just theorists – have different conceptions of what the problem is and what the solution is; and if some chapters are about the current negative climate of opinion and policy, chapter 5 focuses almost entirely on some positive trends as intimated in its title, "Pointing to a Multicultural Future"; indeed, I could be criticised for a rather optimistic view there.

My last example is his feeling that I over-generalise the nature of Muslim political agency and so he wonders about "[…] the comparative relevance and importance of Muslim mobilization (e.g. it might be important in some countries but relatively unimportant in others) and about the exact constitution and limits of Muslim communities as political actors" (677). Moreover, that "[…] there is a need to show, in more detail than Modood does, how common interests are perceived and shaped, how coordination between different subgroups is being achieved, to what extent Muslim spokespersons and activists represent these differences (or not), and so on" (677). Both points are valid. In

relation to the first, it may be interesting to know that my work on Muslim assertiveness has been found useful in framing debates in Norway (Stokke and Lybaek 2018; Stokke 2019). In relation to the second, I have tried to capture that not all politically active Muslims share a common agenda in my idea of "a democratic constellation" (Modood 2013, 133-134 [2007, 144-145]), which has been used by Dobbernack (2019).

Loobuyck also welcomes my sociological interventions into political theory debates but as a political philosopher, he feels that my normative arguments are under-justified.[2] I am sure there is some truth in that, but the main example that he gives is actually a misreading on his part. He says that I claim that 'religion is special' for liberal secularists without providing any arguments and ignoring the arguments of liberal political theorists who actually deny or heavily qualify special treatment for religion; and finally, I contradict my first claim with my idea of 'multiplex privileging' and its corollary that religion is not uniquely privileged (681). A couple of things, however, have got jumbled up here. Firstly, I do not argue that religion is special *per se* or that it is special for liberal secularists. I say that it is special for all secularists, whether they be moderate or radical, pro or anti-religion, because secularism as a normative politics is only interested in the relation between politics and religion (and not, for example, ideology, science, art, economics and so on). The claim that 'religion is special' (including that it is a special problem) is a secularist not a religion-ist claim. I go on to argue that as a culturally neutral state is impossible, the liberal state may and does treat many activities as deserving of public funds, institutional status, symbolic prestige and so on. So, when it offers something similar to one or more religions, it is not uniquely privileging religion. In so doing the state treats religion similarly to say privileging art or science; but its method of privileging religion will not be the same as the ways in which art or science are privileged. Hence, I speak of 'multiplex privileging'; not just of religion but of many activities, each of which may be considered special in their own way but are of no interest to a secularist, whose only concern is about religion. No doubt the normative implications of what I say can be more deeply pursued than I do, but this clarification may at least remove the alleged contradiction.

I am, however, pleased Loobuyck feels my concepts can be used to analyse similar issues in Belgium, though he does not think I would uniformly be happy with the direction of debates and public opinion (Actually I have done this and am grateful to the Royal Academy of Flanders (KVAB) for giving me the chance to do so [Modood 2017]).

IV. ISLAMOPHOBIA, HATE SPEECH AND FREE SPEECH

Lemmens and Levrau each have some overlapping criticisms to make of my discussion of Islamophobia and its relation to racism, hate speech and free speech. They argue that what is at stake is hostility to and exclusion of Muslims. 'Phobia', meaning irrational fear, is not the right term (Levrau 664), especially as there can sometimes be good reasons to fear Muslims and/or Islam (Levrau 664). Lemmens allows that terms like 'homo/transphobia' are now used without controversy but does not think that

'Islamophobia' should be allowed the same legitimacy (656). No one really knows where the term 'Islamophobia' comes from or who invented it; it was once inaccurately attributed to me (Mr Moo 2006). My feeling is that the term may have been modelled on 'xenophobia', a term that came into British public discourse from continental Europe, as a catch-all term used by organisations like the Council of Europe and the European Commission and which has not really caught on in Britain as it is regarded as a weaker term than 'racism' and also because it does not apply to the prejudice directed at all those British citizens who are not white. In any case, I hope the differences between us are not just semantic for, as Lemmens notes, I have been reluctant to use the term 'Islamophobia' and only do so by clearly defining it as anti-Muslim cultural racism.[3] Not as a fear of Muslims derived from a fear of Islam, but a hostility to and racialisation of Muslims in the same way as antisemitism is anti-Jew racism, not a fear of Jews derived from a fear of Judaism.

However, Lemmens and Levrau object to this because they believe we need to keep separate hostility to beliefs, such as Islam, from hostility to a people such as Muslims. However, while this is an important distinction it is complicated by the fact that sometimes a people's feelings or beliefs can be so tied up with a people's identity and social standing that attacking those beliefs can be a form of racism. For example, the IHRA definition of antisemitism, that has been adopted by so many governments, includes holocaust denial (which is a criminal offence in 16 European countries) and of the legitimacy of the creation of Israel on Palestinian land, i.e. a rejection of this aspect of the political ideology of Zionism, as examples of racism (IHRA).[4] I have used a similar kind of argument to argue that the Prophet Muhammed – contingently, in certain times and places – can be so central to the identity and sense of self-respect to some Muslims that certain kinds of inflammatory attacks on him can be forms of anti-Muslim racism (Modood 2019, chapter 3 and 1993).

Given that some ideas such as a religion or a political project can be associated with a 'race', i.e. a racialized group, it does mean that not all critical or unfriendly remarks about that group should be automatically dismissed as racism. For example, I believe it must be possible to criticize the creation of modern Israel in a non-racist way and to criticize Muslim views and practices – e.g. in relation to gender and sexuality – in a non-racist way, so I endeavour to offer some considerations or tests to distinguish between reasonable criticism of Muslims and Islam from racism. Lemmens and Levrau find fault with my tests, but not only do they not offer any substitutes, they seem rather to suggest that the idea that there is a racist and a non-racist way of making a criticism is misguided. Levrau, for example, says that he believes in civility as a virtue and to be encouraged amongst citizens and persons, but he cannot agree with me that its absence should be censured. While I (and I believe Lemmens and Levrau) believe that at least some hate speech should be banned and should be a criminal offence (in my case, not only that which incites violence but also based on its effects on the victims, e.g. the distress caused to many Jews by Holocaust denial); I thought I was working quite hard to keep the category of banned speech fairly narrow by restricting the latter to those cases that really inflame the victimized group and having an intermediate category

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between reasonable criticism and (incitement to) hate, namely where censure rather than censorship is appropriate. Their concern seems to be that my three categories of banned speech, censured speech and reasonable criticism will either lead to some censured speech sliding into the banned category, when it should not be banned; and/or some reasonable criticism being self-censored out of fear of being censured as racist. They refer to the latter, especially where the media exercises this self-restraint as a victory for 'the heckler's veto' and a defeat for free speech.

The suggestion then is that my tripartite categories give the victimized group too much power by in effect giving it a veto on what can be said about it in public. I actually think I am following the logic of the incitement to hatred legislation, which I believe all three of us support in principle. The point is that over the last few decades it has developed beyond that which incites violence against the victim. Indeed, as in my example of holocaust denial, the speech, which is most severely punished in continental Europe, the worry is not simply its effects on the majority of the population or its emboldening of anti-Semites, but also its effects on Jewish people: the fear that it could provoke the distress, especially to the survivors and their families, of Jews feeling that they are not accepted and do not belong in those countries and so on. The same kind of considerations, albeit it a much lower level of criminal offence, are found in the UK in relation to incitement to other forms of racial and religious hatred (Modood 1993). I am accepting that this victim-subjectivity is relevant to hate speech, both that which should be banned and of racist speech in general. That such speech can create an unacceptable, even threatening climate of opinion and a racist society and so we need to identity it (through concepts such as Islamophobia) and to publicly and institutionally (e.g. at schools, universities, workplaces) discourage it and to censure its worst expressions. This is part of an understanding of racism, without which we may end up with a shrunken view of racism, perhaps as, to paraphrase Adam, 'bad acts by bad folks', though oddly she thinks – the mirror image of Lemmens and Levrau – that I am in danger of ending up with such a view of racism myself. I do not, however, want to suppress the criticism of minorities and so I actively do what few authors do, and here I believe I may differ from Adam and the authors she commends, I try to sketch out a dialogical space in which criticism can take place. Adam is right to point out that the structural power relations will be relevant here – after all, racialization and victimization are forms of power – but I try to conceptualize the discursive conditions that can allow non-Muslims to reasonably criticize Muslims. What I offer is very sketchy and just a beginning so I am very open to discussions of where it does not work and can be improved, but that is not the approach that Lemmens and Levrau take. They write as if the very attempt to distinguish speech that should be banned and speech that should instead be censured as racist; and to distinguish between racist speech and reasonable criticism of Muslims is misguided.

Lemmens and Levrau have a number of other specific criticisms on these topics. I do not have the space to discuss all of them, so I will discuss one more from each of them, taking the one where they believe my mistake is greatest. Lemmens believes there is a 'huge contradiction' in my view that not all of the Danish cartoons were offensive and yet

commending the British press for not publishing them. One of the steps in his conclusion is that "[…] Modood is now easily admitting that the cartoons were all in all not that dramatic" (657). But he ignores that I say of one of them (the 'turbomb') that it was racist in the way that cartoons targeting Jews in the Nazi newspaper, *Der Sturmer*, were (Modood 2019, 67). Moreover, I argue that to understand anti-Muslim speech and how Muslims in Europe and elsewhere respond to highly public instances of it, we need to factor in "[…] a set of domestic and geopolitical circumstances in which […] Muslims feel that they are being targeted and harassed as culturally backward, as disloyal and as terrorists – in short, as not belonging here, as unwanted and under threat" (Modood 2019, 63).[5] So, that is the cartoon the republication of, without any accompanying critical comment and at a time of inflamed passions, in some many countries is what I was praising British newspapers for not having done (while acknowledging that such actions can be based on mixed motives). The republication was not simply about the supply of information. Given that anyone who wanted to see the cartoons could have accessed them by internet, what message did the republication send out to Muslims? It was that the sensitivity and vulnerability of Muslims was not uppermost in the minds of the editors; that Muslims mattered less than the Christians, given that the Danish paper in question, Jyylands-Posten, had chosen to reject cartoons of Jesus in order not to offend a few months earlier (Fouche 2006).

Levrau says that I exercise double standards because while I want to censure criticism of Islam I do not acknowledge that there is much in the Qur'an that is worthy of criticism, including hateful speech and exhortations to violence, and should be censored (662). As should already have been apparent I am not an enthusiast for censorship where censure preserves freedom of inquiry and is educative about the racism at work and the vulnerabilities of minorities. I think this case readily falls in line with that. The context is important in two ways. Firstly, we need to understand how *prima facie* violent or hateful or even hurtful passages in religious scriptures (including the Qur'an) are understood by all the religious believers, including those who do not take them to be offensive, hateful or violent.[6] Secondly, what is their effect on vulnerable groups and aggression against them? By these two criteria I do not think the Qur'an or most holy books need to be censored, but where some people interpret any of them in a violent way, e.g. ISIS, then I do think there is a duty on other, especially learned Muslims to expose and condemn such deviant interpretations and a duty on those within the media to publicise that to Muslims and non-Muslims alike (including to prevent deviant interpretations being used to reinforce Islamophobic attitudes). As for censure, of course some people may choose to and I make space for reasonable criticism and Levrau advocates civility, and he should be guided by that rather than propose censorship of the Qur'an. Similarly, I do not want to stop him condemning child marriage (this arises as there is some uncertainty about the age of Aisha at the time of her marriage to Muhammed; on some accounts she is said to be nine) but he asks why should such condemnations have to take, as I propose, a dialogical, a give and take, form. Because if the giver of criticism, let alone of condemnations, is always the dominant group and the taker always the subordinate group, the conditions for reasonable criticism among fellow citizens will be precarious and the domination-subordination relationship will be reinforced.

V. Recognition, Redistribution and Anti-Racism

Ilke Adam identifies herself as a multiculturalist too, but one whose multiculturalism is integrated, perhaps even encompassed by a redistributionist theory of social justice and critical race theory. I have three different responses to her critical points about absences in my book:

   i. In relation to charges of not addressing structural inequalities [+ power and privilege]
   ii. In relation to not working with Nancy Fraser's approach
   iii. In relation to her commendation of Critical Race Theory (CRT)

In relation to the first two of these I have a three-part answer:

At a Sociological Level

I have from a very early point in my entry into this field done work on employment (Modood 1991, Modood *et al.,* 1997; Khattab and Modood 2016) and on entry into higher education (Modood 1993; Shiner and Modood 2002; Modood 2004). In this work I have sought to bring out issues of equal opportunities and ethnic disadvantage; unequal outcomes and their progressive reduction; and for the multiculturalist character of the issues, showing how different minorities pursue different strategies or target different occupations and can possess advantages as well as disadvantages. This has meant highlighting racial discrimination, institutional racism, socio-economic disadvantages by race and ethnicity but also that ethnic groups have their own agency and distinctive strategies and orientations, including differential sets of preferences, which can lead to certain educational/employment choices being prized above others, resulting in uneven presence in different occupations (Modood, Metcalf and Virdee 1998; Modood 2004; Modood and Khattab 2016). To bring out the latter I have developed the concept of 'ethnic capital' (Modood 2004). The work, then, is a multiculturalist engagement with the structural inequalities in employment and entry to higher education rather than simply an anti-racist one and so does bring together issues of racialization and socio-economic disadvantage with ethnic minority identity and agency.

At a Policy Level

For example, I was the academic adviser to the Commission on Multiethnic Britain (CMEB), which argued that ethnic equality is not possible with large socio-economic inequalities. As its chair, Professor Lord Bhikhu Parekh stated in the Preface to our report: "The principle of equal moral worth cannot take root and flourish with a structure of deep

economic or social inequalities" (CMEB: viii). Nevertheless, multiculturalism has its own differentia, namely the pursuit of equal citizenship as the challenging of racisms, respect for 'difference', the pluralisation of the cultural and religious dimensions of the public sphere and the re-making of national identities to include minority identities and belonging. While I favour a version of multiculturalism that works with social democracy, I want others to also use the Bristol School of Multiculturalism (Levey 2019) or another version of multiculturalism if they can. I do not, therefore, want to be identified with just one kind of socio-economic politics.

At a Theoretical Level

I have not attempted to unite Recognition and Redistribution but I can see a limitation in the theory that Adam enjoins on me, namely that of Nancy Fraser. The limitation of the latter for me is that it has too restricted an understanding of recognition. Her understanding of recognition is tied to an idea of status, i.e. to what society thinks of your group, how it treats you, the status or identity it confers on you (Fraser 2003). It is thus designed to identify a cultural status as a form of inequality (which in effect is her understanding of misrecognition) and to connect it to a wider political project of reducing inequalities. My problem with this is that it is too 'external' an understanding of recognition. It can proceed and end without an understanding of what the cultural practice in question means. Or, to put it another way, it makes the meaning of a cultural practice makes what the majority thinks it is. For example, if a police force does not allow its officers to wear a turban as part of its uniform, then it is clear that Sikh culture has not been valued. But it may be that no one else's culture or religion is incorporated into the police uniform either, so there is not a cultural status inequality. Or, more sophisticatedly, we may say that a police uniform already reflects the dress norms of the majority culture but fails to incorporate those of the Sikh minority and that is a form of cultural inequality or misrecognition. So, what would recognition be here? On a status view, all we need to do is to give Sikh dress requirements the same consideration as that of the majority (and go on to connect this status [in]equality with other [in]equalities). The multiculturalist, however, begins with the meaning of the turban, not for the police force or the majority society but for the minority. Recognition consists of understanding the minority and the place the turban has for Sikhs. A status argument is – theoretically, even if not always in practice – indifferent to minority inter-subjectivity and agency, and to the minority culture, attending only to what standing it is or is not given in the wider society. Fraser's theory may connect such minority status to other forms of inequality – including those shared by many groups – but it is not a recognition of Sikh identity and distinctiveness and so falls short of a multiculturalism which seeks to weave minority meanings and respect for those meanings into the larger public culture (Taylor 1994 as interpreted by Modood 2014 [2007], 47-52 [51-56]). In short, multicultural recognition is a recognition of *something* (where this identity is likely to be internally plural, contested, subject to change and adaptation), it is not just a removal of an inequality. So, the prob-

lem in Adam's suggestion that I should connect my understanding of recognition with Fraser's understanding of redistribution is that Fraser's theory of social justice has no space for my understanding of recognition (cf. Lewicki 2014). To Adam's commendation of Fraser, I would say, have a look at Parekh (2004). It is not a systematic theory but nicely brings out the multiple ways that issues of Recognition and Redistribution are entwined in practice by the foundational political theorist of the Bristol School of Multiculturalism (Levey 2019).

As for power relations, in one sense the whole of my book is about power relations, whether that is racialization or anti-racism, marginalization or the re-making of national identity and so on, all of these processes, actions and movements involve power. It is true that I do not treat power as a single thing or something abstracted from these socio-political phenomena and I deal with it only in the form of specific issues, inequalities, conflicts, programmes of reform etc. Perhaps the only general point I will make here is that Adam's phrasing suggests that there is something wrong and undesirable about power and power relations. That is not my view at all, though I appreciate that liberalism is built on the idea that power is problematic and so needs to be minimized. I take the more realistic view that while power is productive of racism, oppression, maintenance of inequality and so on, it is equally necessary in order to challenge and reduce racism, oppression and inequality.

I turn to the third of Adam's criticisms, namely that I do not engage with CRT-type anti-racism. Its limitation for me is that it is still centred on colour-racism. While acknowledging my debt to the 'first-wave' anti-racism of the US and the UK of the 1960s-90s I went on to centre on cultural racism, initially anti-Asian, then anti-(Asian) Muslim racism. In terms of these developments, CRT, at its core seems to go backwards. It picks up the anti-racism of the US and UK of the 1970s and 1980s without, in my opinion, benefiting from or even engaging with the multiculturalism since then. So, we have once again an over-generalising of racism with a priority on colour-racism. This means, as was the case in the earlier period but is less excusable now, the marginalising of cultural racism (including Islamophobia), identity, identity-recognition and misrecognition and distinctive ethnic capital; and of how all this leads to distinctive ways of coping with, responding to, challenging or circumventing the multiple forms of racisms that different groups experience; and are at any particular time of different magnitude (e.g. the scale of Islamophobia in western Europe today compared to antisemitism today). This may not be true of all practitioners of CRT but it is at its core in so far as it is different from a multiculturalist understanding of racism as I present, with specific reference to Islamophobia, in my book. As I have already explained multiculturalism involves a macro-symbolic conception of society that cannot be reduced to individual choices, individual integration, local multi-culture or local cohesion, so I share with her the imperative to move beyond the individual litigant or "bad acts or discourses of bad individuals" (671) model of racism but this does not require CRT or adopting the views of the authors she refers to.[7]

I will conclude by adding that, as will have been evident from the earlier discussion, that I approach Islamophobia as a discourse or as something capable of propositional

content. Of course, Islamophobia can also take a structural or institutional form, e.g. discriminatory practices in employment. The latter, however, presupposes the discursive form I am analysing; and so I am studying Islamophobia at its most fundamental level. So, those who argue that Islamophobia must be understood in terms of the structures of the state (Massoumi, Mills and Miller 2017) overlook that we must first, and independently, know what Islamophobia is before we can identify it in state or any other structures (the same point applies in relation to those who see Islamophobia in terms of neo-liberalism, capitalism or global hierarchies). My claim is that if the analysis presented here is correct, it holds independently of what social, political or economic structures Islamophobia can be found in.

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NOTES

1. Private Communication, Patrick Simon, Directeur de recherche,Institut National d'Etudes Démographiques, France.

2. Both he and Verschraegen, as political theorist and sociologist respectively, note that I anticipated in advance that sociologists would find my book not sufficiently empirically detailed and political theorists would find its arguments not sufficiently justified (Modood 2019a, 20).

3. Levrau writes that I define Islamophobia as "[...] an unfounded hostility towards Islam, and therefore fear or dislike of all or most Muslims" (Levrau 663); actually, that is the Runnymede Trust (1997) definition that I contrast mine with (Modood 2019, 75).

4. I presume that having reservations about the foundation of the state of Israel is no more racist than having reservations about the founding of Pakistan or the European Union, but could become so on the basis that some Jews connect it to their Jewishness and Jews are to be understood as a victimised 'race'.

5. Relatedly, in relation to those who argued that *Charlie Hebdo* is a consistent satirist, I pointed out the importance of distinguishing between the satire of the powerful and satire of the vulnerable (Modood 2015).

6. Perhaps of relevance here is Levrau's question of why is sectarian hostility amongst Muslims not to be counted as Islamophobia (664). Because they are unlikely to be racializing Muslims as one victim group. Of course, Muslims have their own racial prejudices against various ethnoracial groups, but that is not Islamophobia.

7. This was written before the international protests following the murder of George Floyd by a Minneapolis policeman in May, 2020. This latest version of Black Lives Matter anti-racism is showing mixed signs in relation to encompassing cultural racism and Islamophobia. For an early Bristol School of Multiculturalism engagement with BLM, see Sealy (2020).