

# Multiculturalism: How can Society deal with it?

*Thinkers Programme of the Royal Flemish Academy of Belgium for Science and the Arts*

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## DRAFT REPORT

Prepared for discussion at the conference on 23 June, 2017

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## 1. Post-immigration ethnic diversity in Belgium

Frank Bovenkerk

In 2017 Belgium has a population of more than eleven million. Ten million are Belgians, and one million or 11 % have another nationality. The Flemish region is the most populous with 6,500,000 inhabitants, in Wallonia there are 3,500,000 and in Brussels 1,100,000. The census figures show that the largest groups with a foreign nationality are from France (160,000), Italy (156,000) the Netherlands (150,000), Morocco (82,000) and Poland (68,000). The largest groups of inhabitants not born as Belgians but naturalised there are originally from Morocco (224,000), Turkey (119,000) and Italy (116,000). At the moment, roughly a fifth of the people in Belgium have a migration background. Two thirds of the population of Brussels and approximately half the people of Antwerp have foreign roots.

### Immigration history

The present demography of the country is closely related to immigration (Geldof, 2017; Leman, 2017a). To fully understand it, we need first to go back to their immigration story. After that we use a conventional integration framework to characterize the socio-economic and cultural profile of migrants and especially their second generation. And the effects continuing immigration is having on them. The large-scale waves of immigration of the groups we are most interested in: Italians, Turks and Moroccans, date back fifty years. In traditional migration sociology, half a century is the period needed to complete the integration process in the cycle from the first to the third generation (cf. Duncan 1933 for the U.S. and Price 1966 for Australia). The assumption more or less holds true for an immigrant group like Italians in Belgium, but not for all groups. For some groups, immigration is still going on via family reunification or family formation via marriage. Belgians with Moroccan roots import brides from the Rif Mountains and have them raise their Belgian-born children speaking Amazigh (Berber). The enormous advances in international transportation have greatly facilitated the continuation of immigration. Transnational ties have developed that serve as obstacles to immigration in some senses, e.g. the political interference of a home country undermining civil loyalty to a new country (cf. suffrage for Turks or imams sent abroad by the King of Morocco). It is getting through to the research community and political arena that integration is a question that can be around for a long time to come.

These groups are the result of the spontaneous arrival of labour migrants before World War Two, especially from Italy and Poland, and the organised male labour migration from 1945 to 1974. It started with an agreement between Belgium and Italy to recruit men to work in the mines. In 1964 agreements were also signed with other Mediterranean countries including Turkey and Morocco. Men were needed to do heavy manual labour. This system was terminated by the migration stop when the economy slowed down in the early 1970s. From 1974 to 1990, the borders were closed but family reunification and family formation were allowed for former guest workers. This is still the case, be it under more restrictive conditions. In the period from 1990 up to now, immigrants have been allowed in from European Union members such as Poland, as have refugees from Syria, Afghanistan and other countries.

In this sense, Belgium is generally following the immigration trends in Western Europe. There are however three striking differences. Firstly, there is the ease immigrants were welcomed with up until the 1960s (Martens 1973). Not only were Belgian employers competing with those in other countries for workers, Belgium was the only country where family reunification was actively encouraged. In 1964, new immigrants were greeted with an official welcome brochure, *Vivre et travailler en Belgique*. There was the underlying wish to remedy the country's manpower shortage. Nowadays there are certain integration requirements including a basic knowledge of the language and society, but they are less stringent than in the neighbouring countries. Secondly, there is an international diplomatic elite living in the Brussels region. They constitute a cosmopolitan fraction of the population generally not addressed in discussions on multiculturalism. Thirdly, as a former colonial power, it is striking how few immigrants Belgium has from the Congo, Burundi and Rwanda (the highest estimate is 60,000). As the colonial population never received Belgian citizenship, the immigration remained limited to a select elite of students, diplomats and businessmen. Starting in 1990, Belgium opened its borders to Congolese asylum-seekers, so there is also an immigrant group of a lower socio-economic standing. The Congolese immigrants settled all over Brussels, and more specifically in the vicinity of the Porte de Namur called Matongé.

Up to now, the political and social discussion on the multicultural society in Belgium has mainly focused on people with roots in Morocco and Turkey. These are the largest immigrant groups, the cultural distance to the original population is the greatest, and there have been obstacles to their integration. There has been a drastic change in how these groups are perceived in Belgium and other Western European countries. Once guest workers in the factories, now they are seen as Muslims. Islam is the second largest religion in Belgium and provides young people with an identity dilemma, *Am I Belgian or Moroccan? Or Muslim?* (Benyaich 2013).

Immigration initially only involved male migrant labourers from poor and underdeveloped parts of their countries. An estimated 70 to 80% of the Moroccans come from the Rif mountains in the north and most of the Turks are from Central Anatolia. After the employers' first recruitment campaigns made it clear labourers were needed in Western Europe, most prospective guest workers left of their own accord. Via a system of chain migration, they transplanted entire communities to Belgium, and this process is still going on. Timmerman & Wets (2011) speak of a still thriving *culture of migration* in districts of Anatolia focused on Belgium.

The settlement pattern is a reflection of features of the labour market at the moment of immigration. In the 1960s, most newcomers were employed in construction, the industrial sector or services. The private housing market served as a selection mechanism (Kasteloot 2005). The concentration of immigrants in a few districts of Brussels and Antwerp is striking. Bousetta (2010) calculates that two thirds of the immigrants from Morocco and their children live in no more than ten of the 589 districts in Belgium. These *arrival districts* in the large cities are Stuyvenberg in Antwerp and the southern part of Molenbeek in Brussels. More successful immigrants move on to better neighbourhoods and the result is a process of social disintegration affecting the people who stay behind.

This concentration has a sizable effect on opportunities for intercultural contact. According to the Flemish Migration and Integration Monitor in 2015 (Van den Broucke et al. 2015: 8, 9), despite the enormous diversity of the population as a whole, half the original Belgian population lives in almost exclusively native Belgian neighbourhoods, especially in the barely urbanised areas. A survey on the

attitudes of the original population to the newcomers illustrates the contact hypothesis in sociology. Four out of ten respondents view immigrants as ‘a threat to our culture and customs’, but there is greater tolerance among younger age groups and people living in mixed neighbourhoods.

### **Structural and cultural integration**

In the conventional theory on immigration and integration, a distinction is generally drawn between structural and cultural integration (Junger-Tas et al. 2001). Structural integration refers to the position of minorities in the school system, on the labour market and as regards income and housing. Socio-cultural integration pertains to participation in society’s institutions, the development of interpersonal contact outside one’s own group, and the extent to which the behaviour patterns of the receiving country are adopted. This last aspect also has to do with the acceptance of fundamental Western values such as individual autonomy, respect for human rights, and gender equality.

We know quite a lot about the structural integration of the immigrants who came to Belgium, but much less about the second generation and nothing at all about the third generation, referred to in classic immigration theory as the *generation of hope*.

Throughout Western Europe, the mass dismissals due to the stagnation of the economy was a shattering blow for men who started as guest workers in the early 1970s. It is noted in retrospect that the industrial jobs largely disappeared, particularly at the lowest levels. Many men could not find another job and became welfare dependent.

According to data from the Flemish Integration Monitor, the second generation that grew up in Belgium is doing better economically than the first, but it still considerably behind the rest of the population. Unemployment rates are high and this also holds true for the second generation. An estimated 18% of the young people with roots in the Maghreb are out of work and 17% of those with Turkish roots, though this is only the case with 4% of the original Belgian population. The figures on poverty show a particularly gloomy picture for some immigrant groups. Part of the explanation is the low numbers of working women among the most disadvantages groups. The survey on health showed that the fraction of the population living below the EU-poverty line was as follows (Van Robaeys et al., 2007).

Table 1 living below the European poverty line in percentage by ethnic background, 2001.

|                     |         |
|---------------------|---------|
| Belgian background  | 10,16 % |
| Turkish background  | 58,94 % |
| Moroccan background | 55,50 % |
| Italian background  | 21,49 % |
| Total population    | 12,66 % |

According to figures drawn up by Djait (2015), with the exception of Asiatics, the welfare dependence of the population with roots outside the European Union is high. One possible solution is to open a shop or start some other kind of business. The rules and regulation are not that strict in Belgium, but studies on ‘super-diverse entrepreneurship in Antwerp’ (Lens et al. 2015) do not show

any clear success. The second generation is more successful than the first, but continues to concentrate on traditional sectors that cater to their own ethnic group. As regards school achievement levels, the youngest generation is also doing better but is still lagging behind the rest of the pupils. Van der Bracht et al. (2014) note that the ethnic minorities in Belgium are not doing badly at school compared to the results in other European countries. However, the school selection system serves to replicate the socio-economic inequalities.

To find relevant data on cultural integration, we have to go back two decades to the research conducted by Ron Lesthaeghe and his staff on Turkish and Moroccan communities living in Belgium (Lesthaeghe 2000). It is striking how different the two communities are. The close-knit Turkish community is well-organised and focused on the mother country politically and as regards its values. There is strict social control to keep the youngsters in line. The Moroccans however are strongly divided, individualistic, and it is hard for parents to discipline their children. Since this description is so similar to what we know about cultural integration in the Netherlands, we can safely assume the second generation of Moroccan immigrants is more rapidly adopting the Belgian culture than Turkish youths.

When we talk of integration, we are usually talking about becoming part of the middle class. But it is also very possible for immigrants to become part of the lower classes. American migration sociologists often use the history of fifty years of guest workers in Europe as example of this unfavourable variant (Alba 2005). In this *segmented integration*, a poverty-stricken underclass emerges side by side with a successful second generation. According to Timmerman et al. (2003), this is precisely what happened in Belgium with much of the second generation with roots in Morocco or Turkey. In their view, this trend can largely be attributed to the institutional design of the selection of pupils in the Belgian school system.

### **Discrimination**

This is reinforced by discriminatory obstacles these groups face when looking for a job or housing. Academic research on discrimination and exclusion was launched later in Belgium than other European countries, but that has now changed for the better. How is discrimination studied? Interviews with potential victims and perpetrators produce less convincing evidence than the research method of testing actual practice. What do employers and landlords really do when confronted with ethnic minority applicants? The evidence of discrimination in Belgium is unmistakable, 37% of ethnic minority applicants looking for an apartment are not even invited to come have a look, though native Belgians are very welcome. This research method is currently being debated (Verhaeghe & Van der Bracht 2017). Employer organisations and associations are in favour of solving the problem via self-regulation. Belgium is not yet aware that in the United States and United Kingdom, the results of this type of research method can be accepted in court as evidence of unequal treatment.

## 2. Modes of Integration, Multiculturalism and National Identities

Tariq Modood

The need for integration arises when an established society is faced with some people who are perceived and treated unfavourably by standard members of that society (and typically the former also perceive themselves as ‘different’, though not necessarily or at all in a negative way). This may relate to various areas or sectors of society and policy, such as employment, education, housing and so on. Core to the integration process is equality of opportunity in an unsegmented society, where no channelling into or away from a particular sector of society takes place based on criteria such as race and ethnicity. Integration has a number of components based on opportunities to participate that are context-specific but that need to be secured by law and policy initiatives.

It, however, also has a subjective and symbolic dimension, which again will have some context-specific features, but which also has a more general or macro character: how a minority is perceived by the rest of the country and how members of a minority perceive their relationship to society as a whole. Sectoral integration, even when achieved in a number of sectors, is not full integration without some degree of subjective identification with the society or country as a whole – what the Commission on Multi-Ethnic Britain called ‘a sense of belonging’ (CMEB 2000: Introduction) – and with the acceptance by the majority that you are a full member of society with the right to feel that you belong.

Sectoral integration and the general sense of integration can happen at an individual level. An individual may choose to integrate or not; may be given opportunities to participate or not. But what about such choices and opportunities when viewed at the level of groups or society as a whole? A sense of belonging is dependent on how others perceive and treat you, not just as an individual but also as a member of a racial group or ethno-religious community. Each policy area will have its own imperatives and difficulties (e.g., whether concerning issues of qualification levels or residential segregation), but there is also a general understanding by members of society regarding what their society is and what it is to be a member – a macro-symbolic conception of society and of integration. This informs popular understanding as well as political ideas. Hence, it has been rightly said by a Commission on these topics in Quebec, ‘the symbolic framework of integration (identity, religion, perception of the Other, collective memory, and so on) is no less important than its functional or material framework’ (Bouchard and Taylor 2008; see also Bouchard 2011). This is particularly so because the current sense of crisis about multiculturalism and integration is operating at this macro-symbolic level. This is evident when one considers how few are the policies that could be said to be about integration, or how small the funds involved are compared to the headline importance that the issues regularly achieve. In thinking about a general ethos or policy orientation at a national level, it is therefore important to engage at this macro-symbolic level.

I consider this larger, macro-symbolic sense of integration with its implied policy paradigms in terms of four modes of integration summarized in table 1, namely, assimilation, individualist-integration and two versions of multiculturalism, one of which I will call cosmopolitanism. Each offers its own distinctive take on freedom, equality and civic unity (or ‘fraternity’), the core values of democracy.

The use of this republican trinity highlights that my concern is with ‘civic’ integration: namely, political multiculturalism is about the relations between citizens and their polity in the widest sense, including the public sphere and civil society and indeed between relations between citizens and not just between citizens and the state (Modood 2013). Different interpretations and prioritizations of these concepts suggest embryonic policy models. The issue or ‘problem’ addressed by these models is post-immigration ‘difference’. Those participating in large-scale immigration into the west from outside it have been people marked by ‘difference’. The ‘difference’ is not confined to the fact of migration, or how long the migrants and their families have been in the west, or the fact that they come from less economically developed parts of the world – all aspects that can be stated structurally and quantitatively. ‘Difference’ here primarily refers to how people are identified and how they identify themselves (for example, as ‘white’, ‘black’, ‘Chinese’, ‘Muslim’, etc.), how they identify others (again, as ‘white’, ‘black’, ‘Chinese’, ‘Muslim’, etc.), and how they are identified by others (‘white’, etc.).

These identities will no doubt be classed or gendered in specific or generalizable ways, but the important point from which everything else follows is that these identities are not reducible, or, stronger still, are not primarily socio-economic or ‘objective’ in classical sociological terms; the identities involve subjectivity and agency. The migrants and the ‘hosts’, or, more accurately, given that the migrations in question took place mainly in the third quarter of the twentieth century,<sup>1</sup> minority–majority relations, cannot be understood without the forms of difference. The relevant interactions cannot be explained, the position of different actors cannot be predicted (or even guessed at), and political preferences cannot be expressed without the explicit or implicit use of the forms of difference. It is commonly said that we must distinguish between a multiculturalism as a social description and a Multiculturalism as a political understanding of those social facts. Interestingly, the same could be but is rarely said about class/Class, nation/Nation or gender/Gender. In fact, social description and sociological concepts are not normally politically neutral. The concepts I analyse below are normative and policy-oriented but they presuppose a sociology, an understanding of what the social phenomenon is that needs a political response. The problem, then, is how to integrate difference or, to put it another way, the process whereby difference ceases to be problematic, in the context of national citizenship.

I shall consider four modes of integration (summarised in Table 1).

### **Modes of Integration**

*Assimilation* is where the processes affecting change and the relationship between social groups are seen as one-way, the preferred result is one where the newcomers do little to disturb the society they are settling in and become as much like their new compatriots as possible. We may think of it as one-way integration. This may simply be a laissez-faire approach but the state can play an active role in

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<sup>1</sup> Migration to countries such as those of Western Europe and North America is a continuing phenomenon, and indeed saw new highs at the turn of the millennium but as explained above, the multiculturalism I am focused on emerges with settlement and citizenship, and crystallises with the advent of an adult ‘second generation’.

bringing about the desired outcome, as in early twentieth century ‘Americanisation’ policies towards European migrants in the United States. The desired outcome for society as a whole is seen as involving least change in the ways of doing things for the majority of the country and its institutional policies. By erasing difference it is also thought that the occasions for discrimination and conflict are not allowed to take root. From the 1960s onwards, beginning with anglophone countries and spreading to others, assimilation as a policy has come to be seen as impractical (especially for those who stand out in terms of physical appearance), illiberal (requiring too much state intervention) and inegalitarian (treating indigenous citizens as a norm to which others must approximate). While ‘assimilation’ as a term has come to be dropped in favour of ‘integration’, even today, when some politicians use the term ‘integration’, they actually, consciously or not, mean what here has been defined as assimilation, so the use of these terms in public discourse must not be taken at their face value but critically inspected.

In the three non-assimilative modes of integration processes of social interaction are seen as two-way, where members of the majority community as well as immigrants and ethnic minorities are required to do something; so the latter cannot alone be blamed for failing to, or not trying to, integrate. The established society is the site of institutions – including employers, civil society and the state – in which integration has to take place, and accordingly they must take the lead. The new (prospective) citizens’ rights and opportunities must be made effective through anti-discrimination laws and policies. We need, however, to distinguish between *individualist-integration* and *multiculturalism*. The former sees the institutional adjustments in relation to migrants or minorities as only individual claimants and bearers of rights as equal citizens (Barry 2001). Minority communities may exist as private associations but are not recognised or supported in the public sphere.

*Multiculturalism* is where processes of integration are seen both as two-way and as involving groups as well as individuals and as working differently for different groups (CMEB 2000; Parekh 2000; Modood 2013). In this understanding, each group is distinctive, and thus integration cannot consist of a single template (hence the ‘multi’). The ‘culturalism’ – by no means a happy term either in relation to ‘culture’ or ‘ism’ – refers to that the groups in question are likely not just to be marked by newness or phenotype or socio-economic location but by certain forms of group identities. The integration of groups is in addition to, not as an alternative to, the integration of individuals, anti-discrimination measures and a robust framework of individual rights. Multiculturalism, like most concepts, takes different form in different contexts and at different times. For example, it has been differently understood in the Netherlands than in Britain (Joppke 2004, Koopmans *et al*, 2005) and in Quebec compared to in Anglophone Canada (Bouchard and Taylor, 2008: chapter 6). The meaning of any mode of integration is subject to debate and contestation and its policy originators may start with one meaning, as for example, in relation to race and culture, and others, including late comers to the debate, may push it or extend it in other directions by say, making religion central, as Muslims have done (Modood, 2005).

Amongst what is central to multiculturalism is the concept of equality, as indeed it is to other conceptions of integration. The key difference between individualist-integration and multiculturalism is that the concepts of group and of ‘multi’ are essential to the latter. Post-immigration minorities are groups differentiated from the majority society or the norm in society by two kinds of processes. On the one hand, by the fact of negative ‘difference’ with alienness, inferiorisation, stigmatisation, stereotyping, exclusion, discrimination, racism and so on. On the other hand, by the senses of identity



that groups so perceived have of themselves. The two together are key data for multiculturalism. The differences at issue are those perceived both by outsiders or group members – from the outside in and from the inside out – to constitute not just some form of distinctness but a form of alienness or inferiority that diminishes or makes difficult equal membership in the wider society or polity.

Multiculturalism has recently been defined as ‘where ethno-cultural-religious minorities are, or are thought of, as rather distinct communities, and where public policy encourages this distinctiveness’ (Emmerson, 2011). This, however, is only a third of it. Multiculturalism allows those who wish to encourage such distinctiveness to do so; but it also seeks forms of social unity that are compatible with this, what Hartmann and Gerteis (2005) call ‘new conceptions of solidarity’, grounded in a concept of equality (Bouchard and Taylor, 2008). Each mode of integration must be understood in terms of its interpretation of free choice, equality and fraternity. Characterisations of multiculturalism that subtract its emphasis on unity are extremely common but incomplete.

### **Further unpacking multiculturalism and integration**

Multicultural accommodation of minorities, then, is different from individualist-integration because it explicitly recognises the social reality of groups, not just of individuals and organisations. There may, however, be considerable complexity about what is meant by social reality of groups or ‘groupness’ here, and ideas of groups as discrete, homogeneous, unchanging, bounded populations are not realistic when we are thinking of multicultural recognition (Modood 2013: 85-89). This leads us to cosmopolitanism.

*Cosmopolitanism* emerges by accepting the concept of difference while critiquing or dissolving the concept of groups (Waldron 1991). Disagreement about the extent to which post-immigration groups exist and/or ought to exist and be given political status means that there are two kinds of multiculturalism (Modood 1998; Meer and Modood 2009a). While in public discourse as well as in academia one or both are referred to as multiculturalism, and often without a full recognition that two different ideas are being expressed, I will reserve the term ‘multiculturalism’ for the sociological and political position in which groups are a critical feature. This is how the term has been used by the leading political theorists such as Taylor (1994), Kymlicka (1995) and Parekh (2000) and, by the Canadian government; it is also consistent with CMEB (2000) and other exponents of multiculturalism - see Modood (2013: 13-19) for details.

Where ‘difference’ is positively valorised (or pragmatically accepted) but it is denied that groups exist or, alternatively, exist but should not be politically recognised, I shall call cosmopolitanism. The contention is that in the early stages of migration and settlement, especially in the context of a legacy of racism, colonialism and European supremacism, forms of social exclusion created or reinforced certain forms of groupness such as white and black. However, as a result of social mixing, cultural sharing and globalisation in which dominant identities of modernity (such as of race and nation) are dissolving, people have much more fluid and multiple identities, combine them in individual ways and use them in context-sensitive ways (Hall 1992). For example, the ways that Caribbean-origin Britons have socially blended into a ‘multiculture’ and have sought conviviality and sociability rather than separate communities may perhaps not be fully captured as a form of individualistic integration (Gilroy 2000). While remaining economically marginal and over-represented in relation to the social problems associated with deprived inner city areas, they have become a feature of popular culture in

terms of music, dance, youth styles and sport, in all of which they have become significantly over-represented and so Caribbean-origin people are placed at the centre of British national imaginaries (Hall 1998). Moreover, Britain and most other countries in western Europe have recently experienced and are experiencing a new wave of immigration and will continue to do so, including from within the European Union. Given the diversity of the locations from where migrants are coming, the result, it is argued, is not communities, but a churning mass of languages, ethnicities and religions, all cutting across each other and creating a 'super-diversity' (Vertovec 2007). This may be setting a pattern for the future, and it may be allied to a further argument that globalisation, migration and telecommunications have created populations dispersed across countries that interact more with each other, and have a greater sense of loyalty to each other, than they might to their fellow citizens.

Cosmopolitanism goes beyond individualist-integration in two respects. Firstly, 'difference' is valued, especially novelty and the persons and lifestyles formed through free-mixing of peoples and cultures, with society taking the character of overlaps and fusions between different elements of society. Neither minority nor majority individuals should think of themselves as belonging to a single identity but be free to mix and match as suits each person because communal membership, including in relation to oppressed groups, can be oppressive of individuals and their life-chances (Appiah 1994). Inherited or ascribed identities which slot people into pigeonholes not of their choosing, giving them a script to live by, should be refused. They not only reduce the options of the kind of person one can be, but also divide society up into antagonistic groups. Secondly, and consequently, it follows that groups, or indeed society or the country as a whole, cannot be characterized in terms of dominant or stable identities. Rather, people should be free to unite across communal and national boundaries and should think of themselves as planetary citizens. Cosmopolitanism, then, is a conception of multiculturalism as maximum freedom, for minority as well as majority individuals, to mix with, borrow and learn from all (whether they are of your group or not), so that individual identities are personal assemblages of bits from various groups and heritages and there is no one dominant social identity to which all must conform. The result will be a society composed of a blend of cultures, a 'multiculture'.

Multiculturalism proper, on the other hand, rather than individualist-integration or cosmopolitanism, stretches beyond individuals to accommodate groups. The groups in question, the post-immigration minorities, however, are not of one kind but are a 'multi'. For example, some people will identify with a colour identity like 'black' but there will be others for whom national-origin identities (like 'Moroccan'), or a regional heritage (like 'Berber'), or a religious identity (like 'Muslim') may be much more meaningful, expressing forms of community and ethnic pride that are struggling for recognition and inclusion. And, of course, these minority identities will interact with wider, societal identities – 'woman', 'working class', 'Berliner', 'German' – in differing ways, expressing the varying experiences, locations and aspirations of different groups. So, both the alternative models of multiculturalism as cosmopolitanism, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, one which includes space for ethno-religious communities (for which I am reserving the term 'multiculturalism') have some grounding and meet the political aspirations of some minority groups. Neither works as a comprehensive sociological or political model and they should be viewed as complementary (Modood 1998; CMEB 2000; Modood and Dobbernack 2011). Moreover, while recognition of ethnic or religious groups may have a legal dimension, for the most part it will be at the level of civic consultations, political participation, institutional policies (for example, schools and hospitals) and discursive representations, especially in relation to the changing discourses of societal unity or national identity, and their remaking.

Regardless of the extent to which recognition of minority identities in this way is formal or informal, led by the state or the semi-autonomous institutions of civil society, it does not challenge, let alone displace, individual rights and the shared dimensions of citizenship. Indeed, for the most part, multiculturalist recognition is exercised through individual members' free choices rather than corporately. The legal recognition of the Sikh turban in Britain, for example, confers a right upon individual Sikh men, rather than upon a group entity, to exemption from wearing motorcycle helmets (Jones 1999). There may, however, be genuine concern that some groups at a particular time and in certain areas are becoming too inward-looking. Where the concern is primarily about a lack of positive mixing and interaction between groups at a local level, community cohesion measures – for example, a Christian school offering places to non-Christians or twinning with a non-Christian school – may be an appropriate response (Cantle 2001). Where the concern is about self-conceptions and discourses more generally, the issue will be about the national or societal identity. Whilst such inwardness has never been part of any theory or policy of multiculturalism, it is clear that it is a fundamental anxiety of the critics of multiculturalism, many of whom go as far as to define multiculturalism in terms of such separatism. It is therefore important to emphasize both that accommodation of ethno-religious communities is a mode of integration, and that it, no less than hostility to minorities or other modes of integration, should be examined as a possible contributory cause of exclusion and segregation (Banting and Kymlicka 2008). However, while acknowledging that multiculturalism is 'a deeply (and intentionally) transformative project' (Kymlicka 2012: 9), we have to balance this with its 'conservative' aspect. A basic rationale for multiculturalism is that of protecting minority identities from misrecognition and external pressure to conform, allowing people to be themselves, to assert and live their 'mode of being', the identities that matter to them and that more powerful others should recognize. The sensibility that minority groups have a mode of being that is not wholly chosen, acknowledging the right of such groups to change in their own way and at their own pace, is one that conservatives should be able to appreciate (Oakeshott 1962). No group of citizens has a right to total exemption from the ethical duties of citizenship, but allowing people to be what they already are, showing respect for them as they are in themselves, rather than regarding them as objects of transformative criticism – or, worse still, as materials for a political project – is a requirement of egalitarian integration. Multiculturalism involves respect for historically prior and majoritarian attachments and identities, but seeks to extend the same respect to the new minorities whilst remaking the sense of commonalities and nationality.

Table 1: Four modes of integration\*

|                          | <b>Assimilation</b>  | <b>Individualist-Integration</b>   | <b>Cosmopolitanism</b>  | <b>Multiculturalism</b>  |
|--------------------------|--|--|---|--|
| <b>Objects of Policy</b> | Individuals and groups marked by 'difference'.                             | Individuals marked by 'difference', especially their treatment by discriminatory practices of state and civil society.   | Individuals marked by 'difference', especially their treatment by discriminatory practices of state and civil society, and societal ideas, especially of 'us' and 'them'. | Individuals and groups marked by 'difference', especially their treatment by discriminatory practices of state and civil society, and societal ideas, especially of 'us' and 'them'.   |
| <b>Liberty</b>           | Minorities must be encouraged to conform to the dominant cultural pattern. | Minorities are free to assimilate or cultivate their identities in private but are discouraged from thinking of themselves as minority, but rather as individuals. | Neither minority nor majority individuals should think of themselves as belonging to a single identity but be free to mix and match.                                      | Members of minorities should be free to assimilate, to mix and match or to cultivate group membership in proportions of their own choice.  |
| <b>Equality</b>          | Presence of difference provokes discrimination and so is to be avoided.    | Discriminatory treatment must be actively eliminated so everyone is treated as an individual and not on the basis of difference.                                   | Anti-discrimination must be accompanied by the dethroning of the dominant culture.  | In addition to anti-discrimination the public sphere must accommodate the presence of new group identities and norms.  |
| <b>Fraternity</b>        | A strong, homogeneous national identity.                                   | Absence of discrimination and nurturing of individual autonomy within a national, liberal democratic citizenship.  | People should be free to unite across communal and national boundaries and should think of themselves as global citizens.   | Citizenship and national identity must be remade to include group identities that are important to minorities as well as majorities; the relationship between groups should be dialogical rather than one of domination or uniformity. |

\* In all cases it is assumed that a backdrop of liberal democratic rights and values operate. The features highlighted here are in addition or interaction with them.

Here, it may appear that I am obscuring the central difference between multiculturalism and its political critics, that is, that the latter but not the former emphasizes integration into a common life (discussed in Miller 2008 and Mason 2010). But this is mistaken. The multiculturalism in the writings of key theorists such as Charles Taylor, Will Kymlicka, Bhikhu Parekh and Anne Phillips, and in the relevant documents, laws and policies of Canada, Australia and Britain are all aimed at integration. The difference between the pro- and anti-multiculturalists lies not in the goal of integration but, firstly, in the normative understanding of integration. I have tried to bring this out by reference to the alternative interpretations and prioritizing of the normative concepts of liberty, equality and fraternity (summarized in table 1). Secondly, there are different judgements about contexts and about what will

deliver results and, more generally, how society works or what I have been referring to as implicit sociologies.

### **Social Unity**

The analysis offered here of related macro-symbolic ideas and policy orientations, each of which consists of a model of society and normative political ideas, includes also a sense of unity or fraternity. For modes of integration are not just about sociology (the first level) or politics (second level), but include ideas, however inchoate, of ourselves as a social unity (as displayed at the bottom of table 1). For assimilationists, this consists of a strong, homogeneous national identity. Individualist-integration emphasizes the liberal and democratic character of the national polity. Cosmopolitanism is uneasy with the national, an identity that craves some sort of allegiance from all citizens, whilst creating boundaries between ourselves and the rest of the world. With multiculturalism comes a positive vision of the whole remade so as to include the previously excluded or marginalized on the basis of equality and sense of belonging. It is at this level that we may fully speak of multicultural integration or multicultural citizenship (Taylor 1994; Parekh 2000; Modood 2013). This third level of multiculturalism, incorporating the sociological fact of diversity, groupness and exclusion, but going beyond individual rights and political accommodation, is perhaps the level that has been least emphasized. At least, that is how it seems to many whose understanding of multiculturalism, sometimes polemical but sometimes sincere, is that multiculturalism is about encouraging minority difference without a counterbalancing emphasis on cross-cutting commonalities and a vision of a greater good. This has led many commentators and politicians to talk of multiculturalism as divisive and productive of segregation.

Theorists of multiculturalism such as Taylor (1994) and Parekh (2000), related policy documents such as the Report of the CMEB (2000), and enactments such as those in Canada and Australia, universally regarded as pioneers and exemplars of state multiculturalism, all appealed to and built on an idea of national citizenship. Hence, from a multiculturalist point of view, though not from that of its critics, the recent emphasis on cohesion and citizenship – often called ‘the civic turn’ (Mouritsen 2008) or, better still, the civic-national turn<sup>2</sup> – is a necessary rebalancing of the political multiculturalism of the 1990s, which largely took the form of accommodation of groups while being ambivalent about national identity in some countries, notably Britain (Meer and Modood 2009a). This does not invalidate the analysis offered here that integration without some degree of institutional accommodation is unlikely to be successful. Indeed, for multiculturalists a renewing of national identity has to be distinctly plural and hospitable to the minority identities. It involves ‘rethinking the national story’ with the minorities as important characters; not obscuring difference but weaving it into a common, multi-stranded identity that all can see themselves in and giving all a sense of belonging to each other (CMEB 2000: 54–6). Minority politics are common in the US but most groups, while honouring their origins, seek inclusion in the American dream. They seek to be and have come to be accepted as hyphenated Americans (Italian-Americans, Asian-Americans, etc.), a trend that is also

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<sup>2</sup> I emphasise the national to create a distance from the view that the real movement is a convergence towards liberal values and the vocabulary of nationality is merely rhetorical and does not shape the nature of these values (Meer and Modood 2012: 37-39, Mouritsen 2012).

present in parts of western Europe and, while not yet fully accepted, it may be that hyphenated nationalities will become the norm here too.

### **Multicultural Nationalism**

Two variations need now to be presented in relation to the Multiculturalism in Table 1. Each of them is to do with alternative interpretations of Fraternity, specifically about the role of majority culture in the national citizenship. The first position is that of liberal nationalism and argues that the existing national identity of a liberal democratic country cannot be reduced to political institutions and a public sphere, or what is sometimes referred to as a civic national identity but requires a cultural component consisting of a language, a history, ways of thinking and ways of living (Tamir, xxxx; Miller, 1995). These cultural dimensions cannot be detached from a sense of peoplehood or country and is essential to the solidarity that underpins a liberal democratic national identity, common welfare, willingness to pay tax to help one's fellow citizens and common public services and to all other aspects of social justice (Miller, 1995; Kymlicka, xxxx). It follows therefore that this foundational or national culture is also necessary for multiculturalism and so multiculturalism must not so loosen these bonds of belonging and mutual identification that appeal to national identity is not strong enough to call for individuals to be concerned for the good of the whole.

The second variation of multiculturalism is Quebecan interculturalism (Bouchard, 2007; Bouchard, 2011; Taylor, 2012).<sup>3</sup> It distinguishes itself from Canadian multiculturalism by alleging the latter believes that all cultures are equal and none is more Canadian than another in the eyes of the state, while Quebec, however, is and must continue to be committed to the preservation of its foundational Francophone culture. Hence all cultures are not equal, one of them is the ground upon which all others must be accommodated.

One common ground between these two positions and multiculturalism in Table 1 is that each assumes that the liberal state is not culturally neutral – all states support a certain language(s), a religious calendar in respect of national holidays, the teaching of religion in schools and/or the funding of faith schools, certain arts, sports and leisure activities and so on.<sup>4</sup> If so, that means that the majority culture already has recognition of some sort – that is what is meant by saying the liberal state is not neutral. For multiculturalism, it is a matter of extending this valued condition to minorities. Multiculturalists like me clearly accept that liberal democratic states may promote a national culture (within liberal limits and respecting other group identities) and this would be of benefit to the society

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<sup>3</sup> There are other variations of interculturalism, those who wish to reduce the role of national belonging by focusing on the local, especially cities, and/or the transnational, and so is covered by my category of cosmopolitanism (see also Meer and Modood, 2012; Meer, Modood and Zapata-Barrero, 2016).

<sup>4</sup> Loobuyuk 2017 argues that liberal nationalists support for a thin national identity does not compromise state neutrality: 'The state can implement nation building policies without any interference with state neutrality, because the national identity has nothing to do with ethnicity, religion, or a common way of life' (p. 1 TYPESCRIP). Rather, '[t]he national identity is open, based on a common language, public sphere, and historical consciousness, and shared media and political institutions' (p. 1). It is not clear how the latter has 'nothing to do with ethnicity, religion, or a common way of life'. In any case, it is clearly not neutral between languages, histories and a sense of peoplehood.

or polity as a whole. Moreover, it is not an ad hoc addition but follows from the core of my position which puts a special value on identity. Appeals to majority cultural heritage cannot be described as illegitimate *per se*. The multiculturalist point is that the predominance that the cultural majority enjoys in the shaping of the national culture, symbols and institutions should not be exercised in a non-minority accommodating ways. So, the liberal nationalist goal is legitimate but it should be recognized that the constraints are not just about traditional liberal freedoms of the individual. The latter may be enough to ensure non-discrimination and non-coercive assimilation, but multiculturalism goes beyond that to emphasise respect for post-immigration ethnoracial, ethnocultural and ethnoreligious group identities. This respect is both a constraint on the kind of national cultural identity building that may be pursued but, more positively, it is an opportunity for creating a certain kind of national identity, namely one which is not just constrained by those kinds of group identities but includes them in the revised or reformed national identity, critically reforming but without displacing the narrative of the majority within the national identity. Minorities may wish to contest dominant narratives which exclude them or fail to respect them and their contribution but they do not compete with the majority in a zero-sum game. The process should be seen as a kind of egalitarian levelling up, not a form of dispossession (Modood 20xx). More positively still, that the accommodation of minorities should not be seen as a drag on the national identity but as a positive resource; not as diluting the national culture but vivifying and enriching it. Whilst liberal nationalism is often offered in relation to facilitating the solidarity that enables social democratic redistribution of resources, the distinctive goal of multicultural nationalism is to allow people to hold, adapt, hyphenate, fuse and create identities important to them in the context of their being co-citizens and members of socio-cultural, ethnoracial and ethnoreligious groups. In some ways this brings multiculturalism closer to Quebecan interculturalism but the crucial distinction is that while multicultural nationalism recognizes the legitimacy of the recognition of majority culture, it denies that the majority have the right to deny the accommodation of minorities simply because it runs counter to majority culture or majority preferences and does not breach any liberal democratic rights. The majority and the minorities should stand in a dialogical relationship, in a two-way adaptation, in which both the majority or the minorities may seek to have their core cultural identities preserved; neither has a unilateral right to impose this exclusively upon the other in a way that the other identity is not allowed to co-exist.

There is one other complication that is pertinent here. Integration is not only about fusing minority and national identities; sometimes competing national identities are involved. This is most relevantly the case with multi-national states such as Belgium or Britain or Canada, where state-level national identities may compete with sub-state national identities. Writing of Quebec, Catalonia, Scotland and Flanders, Kymlicka writes: 'In these cases, sub-state regional governments, often in the hands of nationalist parties, have adopted immigrant integration policies that encourage immigrants to think of themselves, not as postnational Canadians, Spaniards, Britons or Belgians, but as members of a Quebecois, Catalan, Scottish or Flemish nation, and as participants in projects of sub-state nation-building (Kymlicka 2011: 294). He is aware that this is often a reaction because 'the dominant group in a multination state may use immigration as a deliberate tool to weaken the claims of historic minorities. This was arguably the case in Canada and Belgium until the 1970s, or in Israel today. The central state encourages immigrants to identify with, and integrate into, the hegemonic national group – to ally themselves with English Canada, Francophone Belgium, or Jewish Israel – and thereby strengthen the hand of these dominant groups in contestations against their French, Flemish or Arab

sub-state nationalist movements' (Kymlicka 2011: 290). Neither is a satisfactory situation from the point of view of multicultural and hyphenated identities. No doubt in different nations within a multinational state there will be some ambiguity and contradiction in the national identity and other identities that are prevalent and this will affect new citizens and ethnic minorities. Different individuals and groups will move in different directions, certainly have different emphases but unless there is to be only a federation of separate national communities tied together by a state organisation, or secession, it is incumbent at both state and sub-state levels to not encourage mono-nationalist identities in favour of bi-national or multi-national identities.

### **Multiculturalism in Flanders**

Beginning with Jacobs 2004 a series of articles has argued that Flanders has developed a form of political multiculturalism; whilst it was mainly set in place during 1988 and 2000, it has continued and been strengthened even while from 2000 onwards there has simultaneously been a policy of 'citizenship trajectories' centred around language and Flemish/Belgium society classes and skills training targeted at non-citizens and prospective citizens. It has been argued that the simultaneous development of these two integration approaches – a multiculturalist and an assimilationist - is not perceived as a contradiction by the majority of the public and politicians of Flanders (Jacobs 2004, Jacobs and Rea 2007, Loobuyck and Jacobs 2010, Adam 2013, Adam and Torrekens 2015, Loobuyck and Sinardet 2017).

From a comparative point of view a value of these analyses is that they show that Flanders is a counter-example to the argument that from the late 1990s multiculturalism has been in retreat across Western Europe (Joppke 2004). Interestingly, Britain too does not fit the 'retreat' thesis (Meer and Modood 2009a, Uberoi and Modood 2012). It is unfortunate that these two critiques of Joppke 2004 have till now been two separate parallel lines, with scholars across the North Sea unaware of the national case on the other side of the water.

Other than a commitment to multiculturalism itself, especially amongst left-wing publics and politicians (Jacobs 2004: 289), the following reasons are given for this above-mentioned paradoxical position in Flanders and the fact that Flanders has kept and even strengthened its political multiculturalism, when there has been a stalling or even a retreat of sorts across much of Western Europe (not every author cited above puts forward each of these reasons below):

- i) Political sensitivity to cultural difference and minority status, a greater sense of national identity and culturally thicker sense of national identity (than say Wallonia, Brussels region or Belgium)
- ii) Avoidance of Francophone 'capture' of migrants and new citizens (Jacobs 2004: 289)
- iii) Pressure from and reaction to right-wing nationalist parties
- iv) Sub-state nation-building.

Adam 2013 argues that 'from 1988 onwards, the Flemish multiculturalist policy grew increasingly interventionist until the end of the 1990s' (p. 5). She summarises the key components of the establishment of the multiculturalist policy in Flanders as thus:



Five policy measures demonstrate this: (1) the expansion and institutionalization of the immigrant integration sector, which consisted of sub-regional and local integration centres offering socio-juridical guidance and socio-cultural activities for the immigrant public;

(2) the public financing of grassroots ethnic minority organizations and the emancipatory role assigned to activities that valorize their cultures of origin;

(3) the establishment of a ‘mainstreaming policy’, which incorporated cultural diversity and immigrant integration concerns within most policy sectors, and was co-ordinated by the Interdepartmental Commission for Ethnic Minorities of the Flemish administration;

(4) the renaming of the target group from ‘immigrants’ to a multiculturalist labelling: ‘ethno-cultural minorities’;

and (5) the creation of the Minorities Forum to allow ethnic minorities’ organizations and their federations to prepare joint policy positions (p. 9).

In the government’s own words, the spirit of the policy is:

We want to achieve social cohesion in which everyone’s particularity and cultural identity can prosper, but in which the current values, norms and rules of our democratic state and the rule of law, remain the corner stone of Flemish society. The Flemish Government judges it to be important that allochtonous Flemings do not give up their cultural and religious values, but rather integrate these as added values to Flemish society. Respect of diversity is one of the fundamental values of Flemish society: just like the equality of all humans, the separation of church and state and the freedom of expression (Flemish Government 2004: 5). [from Jacobs and Rea 2007: 268]

This conforms in ethos and practical policy measures what has earlier been presented as multicultural citizenship or the multiculturalist mode of integration. It is true that from 2000 onwards the above-mentioned integration trajectories were introduced and increasingly became prominent, indeed they targeted more groups and became compulsory for some groups. The compulsion element does not sit well with the ‘Liberty’ dimension of multiculturalism (and other modes of integration), though it is important to note that these measures are for non-citizens and prospective citizens; it would not be appropriate to carry the compulsion over to citizens. The making available of national language classes, especially at the taxpayer’s expense, so as to facilitate an enhanced level of participation in Flemish society and polity is not a detraction from multiculturalism, and indeed may be a condition of achieving multicultural citizenship, as long as citizens are not compelled to participate. In any case, the need for government measures to emphasise commonality, a certain civic thickening, is something which multiculturalism recognizes. It can of course be done in different ways, and the feature emphasized in multicultural nationalism is the national identity at macro and group levels, while it is relatively silent on – but not necessarily opposed to – to it at more individual and employment levels.

In any case, these citizenship trajectories have not only not led to any rolling back of the multiculturalist framework, it has seen its reinforcement and expansion: ‘for example recognition, in the Flemish compulsory education system, of the right to legitimate absence on festive days of all religious denominations recognized by the Belgian Constitution. Other examples include the establishment of a mainstreaming of cultural diversity policy in the cultural, sports, youth and media sectors (Adam 2013: 12). It is true that ‘the multiculturalist terminology was removed in 2009’ but

there has been no policy reversal and the relevant budgets – modest as they are – such as for the Minorities Forum have only risen over time (Adam and Jacobs 2014: 74).

What of the idea of re-making the national identity, which I argued was a central if often overlooked feature of multiculturalism? It is quite clear that the sense of cultural nationhood and how it can be squashed has played a large role in the politics of Flanders and Belgium and – in the shape of right-wing parties – has sometimes felt threatened by new minorities and sometimes been xenophobic – as a Flemish ‘we’ has been valorised and asserted. Paradoxically, the very same sensibility that leads to a more heightened sense of (negative) cultural difference has, when detached from or in reaction to its right-wing manifestation, seems to have led to multiculturalism in Flanders. This particularly stands out, in contrast to Wallonia and the Brussels Region, where there is not such a strong sense of a sub-state regional cultural identity and therefore more (public) cultural blindness and less multiculturalism in relation to the post-immigration minorities. Similarly, a Flemish preoccupation with who ‘we’ are potentially opens the way to more active engagement with the construction of the ‘we’ and to remaking a more inclusive ‘we’. This is an aspect of multiculturalism that seems to be less developed so far in Flanders compared to say Canada or the United States, or a more near comparison, Britain, or as a sub-state comparison, Scotland (Bond 2017, Meer 2015).<sup>5</sup> Whilst I was unable to find much literature (in English) on this rather advanced feature of multiculturalism, it is certainly not absent from Flemish discourses:

In 2007, the Flemish liberals (VLD) proposed replacing the term “allochthonous” (allochtoon)—the official term used to describe someone with an immigrant background—with the term “new Fleming”. Although this group label is far from hegemonic, it indicates a political elites’ concept of a civic Flemish identity that until now has been reserved only for the Belgian identity. Since 2009, the Flemish nationalist party, N-VA, has used this terminology in the description of its annual award to a “new Fleming” who has “contributed by his or her merits to the enrichment of Flanders and is an example for the new Flemings and for Flemings in general” (Adam 2013: 17).

This can be done in a patronising way and may risk alienating minorities but it is clear that the sense of new Flemishness has to be reflected in macro-symbolic ways as well as at the level of policies, especially education. From the perspective of multicultural nationalism, both in relation to ethnicity and religion there needs to be a recognition and space for positive difference, but also the inclusive re-making of a common ‘We’, the nurturing of a multiculturalist sense of national belonging. Moreover, to recall our brief discussion of multicultural multinationalism above, it is important that the Flemish national identity in general, and as well as in relation to the incorporation of ‘new Flems’, should not be mono-nationalist, it must allow, even encourage, Flems – new and old – to identify with Belgium as well as Flanders in a bi-national or ‘nested nationality’ way (Miller 1995). There are at least two reasons for this.

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<sup>5</sup> It may also be the case that post-immigration ethnic minorities have not yet enjoyed the level of socio-economic mobility and levels of participation in public and cultural life, and are not as present and visible in the media, academia and politics compared to the other countries mentioned above – all part of sectoral integration and critical to multiculturalism – but that is not the theme of this report.

Firstly, Loobuyck and Sindardet, summarizing the empirical data from several surveys show that ‘compared with other Belgian citizens, Flemings are less likely to seek social contact with foreigners. They also tend to have a more negative attitude towards the idea of foreign neighbours, especially Muslims (Billiet, 2011: 224; Billiet, Jaspert, and Swyngedouw 2012)... Moreover, in Flanders there is a negative relationship between attitudes towards ethnic minorities and Flemish consciousness. The more people feel Belgian, the more open they are towards newcomers... [Relatedly]... People with a strong Flemish identification based on a rather civic conception of nationalism do not have these negative attitudes (Vanbeselaere, Boen, and Meeus 2006)’ (Loobuyck and Sindardet 2017: 23-24). This reminds me of a similar relationship between the newly emergent ethno-national English consciousness that for example manifested itself in the Leave vote in the Brexit referendum of 2016 and those who also identify, especially if they identify more with being British in England (REF: xxxx). Bi-national identifications in these contexts are more open to and conducive of multiculturalism.

The second reason for Flemish-Belgian bi-nationalism is that it is what a lot of Flemings want. ‘Research on national-territorial identity feelings (Billiet, Maddens, and Frogier 2006: 916–17; Deschouwer and Sindardet 2010; Deschouwer et al. 2015) shows a majority of citizens still identify in the first place with Belgium. Also a large majority does not consider Flemish or Walloon/francophone identity, on the one hand, and Belgian identity, on the other, to be mutually exclusive (Loobuyck and Sindardet 2017: 14).’ An identarian approach must always give some normative weight to the identities that matter to people, that principle is fundamental to multiculturalism, and so it once again supports a bi-nationalism in context of Flanders.

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### **3. Religious Diversity in a Secular Society; with special reference to Education in Flanders**

Tariq Modood

#### **Why is secularism a multiculturalist issue?**

Political secularism has become a multiculturalist issue primarily because of the new post-immigration ethno-religious diversity, especially the presence of Muslims. This is not just about demography, but about claims made concerning shared public spaces, keeping in mind that initial claims were made within newly instituted discourses and policy frameworks of race (Britain), ethnicity (Netherlands), and guest workers (Germany). The majority of this post-immigration ethno-religious population is Muslim, although the shift towards Muslimness was partly facilitated by an evolving and expansive set of identity politics and equality discourses in several countries, and multiculturalism in particular, along with the way that Muslim populations are growing and settling down in their countries of migration (and birth, for the second and later generations). These trends could be said to be part of a more or less global rise in Muslim consciousness, both in relation to religiosity (including public religiosity), and the rise of Muslim identity or Islamist politics. In Western Europe, events of 1988–89, specifically the Rushdie Affair and l'affaire du foulard, were particularly pivotal (Modood 2012).

#### **What religion really means in this context**

While each new generation across the last century seems to be less Christian than its predecessor and so few young people today deem Christianity to be important to their life, this generational indifference is much less amongst post-immigration groups. Indeed, amongst ethnic minorities expressions of commitment amongst the young can be exceptionally high: more than a third of Indians, and two-thirds of Pakistani and Bangladeshi 16–34-year-olds said in a British national survey at the end of the twentieth century that religion was very important to how they led their lives compared to a fifth of Caribbeans and 5 per cent of whites.<sup>6</sup> In the case of young Muslims, the importance of religion has been rising and overtaking their elders (GfK NOP 2006; see also Mirza et al 2007).<sup>7</sup>

Beyond that, religion has a social importance for minorities. For example, in South Asia, from where the majority of British Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims originate, religious identity has a salience much

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<sup>6</sup> Modood, Tariq, Richard Berthoud, Jane Lakey, James Nazroo, Patten Smith, Satnam Virdee, and Sharon Beishon. *Ethnic minorities in Britain: diversity and disadvantage*. No. 843. Policy Studies Institute, 1997.

<sup>7</sup> GfK, N. O. P. "Social Research,(2006) Attitudes to Living in Britain—A Survey of Muslim Opinion."; see also Mirza, Munira, Abi Senthilkumaran, and Zein Ja'far. "Living apart together." *Policy Exchange* (2007).

higher than in Britain, so it is not surprising that during the last few decades religion – rather than say colour or linguistic heritage or national origins – has risen in the individual and community self-identities of these minorities together with their sense of Britishness.<sup>8</sup> This does not necessarily refer to religiosity but is a recent manifestation of the well-known phenomenon that Jews generally and Catholics in locations like Northern Ireland can call themselves and can be called by others as Jews and Catholics respectively even if they are not religious and may even be anti-religious. We are here clearly talking about group identity or ethno-religious community membership not belief.<sup>9</sup>

What minorities are usually unable to do is to control the meaning of terms. This again is most evident in the recent period in relation to Muslims and Muslim identity or public discourses of Islam. Muslims may have demanded recognition qua Muslims and may have propelled that identity into public discourse and popular consciousness but very few Muslims have sought to have ‘Muslim’ mean fanatic, fundamentalist, misogynist, separatist or terrorist, though this is what to many ‘Muslim’ currently connotes in western Europe.<sup>10</sup> This stereotyping of Muslims, part of the phenomenon generally called Islamophobia can be understood as ‘racialisation’. Not simply because that is what happens to groups designated as ‘races’, nor even because non-whiteness is closely associated with being a Muslim<sup>11</sup> but because it is to treat Muslims as if they were a single, racial or quasi-racial group. The dissonance that one might experience here in accepting the idea that a religious group is a ‘race’ can be eased by considering the general case of how the Jews have been racialized (indeed in continental Europe the Jews are the quintessential race), as well as the specific case of Catholics in Northern Ireland or Muslims in the ‘ethnic cleansing’ rampages in the former Yugoslavia.<sup>12</sup> Thus ‘racialisation’ is part of the meaning of ethno-religious diversity.

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<sup>8</sup> It is doubtful for example that most South Asians in Britain ever thought of themselves in terms of colour identities such as black or brown as much as some observers thought to be the case (Modood 1994, Modood et al 1997: 291-297). In relation to Britishness see Modood et al 1997: 338-331, and Heath and Demireva 2014.

<sup>9</sup> Modood, Tariq. "Anti-Essentialism, Multiculturalism and the Recognition' of Religious Groups." *Journal of Political Philosophy* 6 (1998): 378-399. Of course historically speaking it could be said that the Jews were a people who had a religion (which came to be called Judaism) rather than a religious group; the same could perhaps be said of Hindus and Hinduism. The term ‘ethnoreligious’ here is therefore most apt.

<sup>10</sup> Morey, Peter, and Amina Yaqin. *Framing Muslims*. Harvard University Press, 2011.

<sup>11</sup> That ‘Muslim’ is racially coded (as colour, cultural alienness and not being European) in the way that sometimes Britishness is racially coded as whiteness.

<sup>12</sup> Modood, Multicultural Politics; Meer, Nasar, and Tariq Modood. "Refutations of racism in the ‘Muslim question’." *Patterns of prejudice* 43.3-4 (2009): 335-354. Note however the point made in footnote 4. Jews may be considered as a racialized religious group or as a religionised ethnic group or ‘nation’.

The meaning of religion, then, can vary between religions, in particular between Christians and non-Christians, or between being a member of a majority or a minority religion: for Jews, Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs religion is not just about belief but also sometimes primarily about community and cultural heritage or identity, including resisting stereotypes about one's own community or discriminatory treatment. Yet another way in which religion is not just about belief is that it often requires a public performance or a behaviour e.g., in relation to codes of dress or food, and so is much more publicly visible and sometimes requires adaptation on the part of institutions in order to be accommodated. While this is barely a feature of modern, especially Protestant, Christianity, where 'inner belief' can be considered sufficient and it is often deemed unnecessary, perhaps even inappropriate to display markers, even a cross, of one's faith, this is quite exceptional in global, and now western European terms. Most religions require the observance of rules of piety and western Europe is experiencing such practice-based religions re-entering the public space – Muslim dress being the most visible and contentious example - after quite a long period in which such religion has been eroded away or transformed into private belief. Institutions and areas of public life which have given up the need to accommodate Christians are now having to adjust to the needs of minority faiths, and sometimes stimulating Christian reappraisal of its retreat from public piety (eg, the display of a wearer's cross, as in the Eweida case at the ECHR). Dietary requirements, space for worship, and gender relations, besides dress, are also prominent as elements of religious praxis that institutions such as schools, hospitals and prisons, and even workplaces are being asked to adjust to. Adaptations of codes of dress or uniforms, or provision of vegan, vegetarian, kosher and halal meals, places for worship and time off to use them are the kinds of requests being made upon state institutions, universities, employers and so even **when no parallel provision exists for Christians and is not being requested for by Christians**. This praxis-based accommodation is a significant multiculturalist challenge because it is not simply a matter of granting minorities provisions already enjoyed by the majority but a matter of respecting minority religions in ways that Christians may be indifferent to in relation to their own faith. And of course it is not just a symbolic recognition that is being requested as substantive provisions or institutional changes are sometimes necessary.

The net result of what I have been describing is that minority religions have come to have a significant – even if contested – public presence.<sup>13</sup> Public campaigns for inclusion and equality, conflicts over faith schools, women's dress and gender more generally, not to mention all the issues to do with the 'war on terrorism' and Islamist radicalism, has made religion much more politically prominent and in public affairs generally. Public dialogue, representation and leadership is often sought and realised by those who define themselves in terms of religious community organisations.

Having understood what is meant by the ethno-religious diversity, especially in relation to the accommodation of its public character I now turn to secularism.

### **What is Political Secularism?**

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<sup>13</sup> Modood, 'Multicultural Politics'; Dinham, Adam, and Vivien Lowndes. "Faith in the public realm." *Faith in the public realm: Controversies, policies and practices* (2009): 1-20.



Most people will agree the USA and the USSR (when it existed) are secular states.<sup>1</sup> They are of course very different states; one was a Communist Party dictatorship, the other a liberal democratic container for capitalism. They have, moreover, very different relations with religion. The USSR had a self-declared atheist philosophy and actively suppressed religion, whilst the USA, a country with vigorous and publicly active Christian churches, has a constitutional ‘wall of separation’ which is actively, if variably, enforced by its Supreme Court. What is it that makes these two states exemplars of political secularism? It clearly cannot be the separation of religion and state (the USSR was active in controlling and persecuting churches, mosques, etc.), and for the same reason it cannot be about freedom of conscience; and nor can it be the idea that religion is a matter of personal, private belief (religion in the USA is a very public matter). I suggest that the core idea of political secularism is the idea of political autonomy, namely that politics or the state has a *raison d’être* of its own and should not be subordinated to religious authority, religious purposes, or religious reasons. This is a one-way type of autonomy, where secularism can be supportive of autonomy of organised religion and freedom of religion too, as in the USA, but it does not have to be. Autonomy does not mean strict separation of the USA-type. It is consistent with some government control of religion, some interference in religion, some support for religion, and some cooperation with (selected) religious organisations and religious purposes. This is the case in every single West European state, the seed-bed for modern, Western political secularisms. Nevertheless, state control and support of religion must not compromise the autonomy of politics and statecraft: it must be largely justifiable in political terms, not just religious reasons, and religion must not restrict (but may support) political authority and state action.

Political secularism is then a value in itself. It is not some kind of ‘neutrality’, nor is its place above the fray of politics. It is something that one can be for or against, or for it under certain conditions, or for certain variations of it. It has no special connexion with democracy, which it predates. In the West it has mainly been conjoined with liberal democracy (but not necessarily, as the USSR illustrates)<sup>14</sup>, when, amongst other features, it becomes two-way mutual autonomy: the autonomy of both the state and religion is valued and protected in constitutional arrangements. This is a mutual autonomy that Stepan (2000) calls ‘twin tolerations’. Mutual autonomy – but not strict separation – has historically emerged as the liberal democratic version and the one that is most widespread today. For such secularists, religious freedom is one of the most essential and cherished political values. This commitment sometimes blinds them to the fact that religious freedom is not an unlimited good within all versions of secularism – as the examples of how the French and Turkish state control aspects of Islam vividly reminds us. New thinking about political secularism has suggested that secularism is, in its essentials, really about ‘managing diversity’ (Taylor 2010; also Taylor 2014; discussed by Bilgrami 2014). This clearly has a contemporary pertinence, indeed it emphasises what is central yet under-appreciated today, but it cannot be right as a definition of political secularism. If there was no religious diversity in a country or in the world, if only one religion was present, there would still be a question about the relationship between religion and politics and ‘political autonomy’ would still be a suitable answer.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, secularism is not an answer to questions about *any* kind of diversity

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<sup>14</sup> In Muslim majority countries such as Turkey, Algeria or Egypt secularism often has an anti-democratic, anti-popular character but may be more accommodating of minorities.

<sup>15</sup> I owe this point to Bhikhu Parekh.

(such as linguistic diversity). It arises specifically in relation to religion, to the power and authority of religion, and the challenge it may pose to political rule or, say, equality amongst citizens (Bilgrami 2014). Indeed, one can go further and say that the secular and religion are correlative concepts. If there was no religion in the world, not merely that it had passed away, but if it had never existed in the first place, so that there was no concept of religion, then secularism would have no reference point and there would be no concept of political secularism. In that sense, secularism is a secondary concept, dependent on the concept of religion. However, once there is a concept of secularism – with advocates, promoters, supportive monarch, armed militants, and so on – then it has a dialectical relationship with religion. Secularism is not merely being defined by engagement with religion. Secularism also intellectually and politically redefines religion to suit secularist values and purposes (Asad 2003). In this way, in secularist countries what we regard as religion today (an ‘inner life’, a ‘belief’, a private matter) is a much more socially restricted set of activities, relationships, and forms of authority than was the case before secularism’s rise to power, or than what prevails in non-secularist countries today, or, as discussed above, what constitutes ethno-religious diversity in western Europe. Once an outgrowth of religious arrangements (‘secular’ orders of monks were those unconfined to monasteries), secularism has come to define or redefine religion and its proper place in many countries in the world.

So, we must then be open to the possibility that the multiculturalist accommodation of ethno-religious diversity may require re-defining how religion and secularism have come to be understood in western Europe. To get to that point we have to first understand what kind of political secularism exists in Europe.

### **Western European Moderate Secularism**

For many intellectuals, especially political theorists, secularism or Western secularism is understood in terms of the religious-liberty secularism of the USA and/or the equality of citizenship secularism or *laïcité* of France. An example of this approach is Bhargava (2009), where these two secularisms are described as ‘the most dominant and defensible western versions of secularism’ and taken jointly are designated ‘as the mainstream conception of secularism (93).’ As a matter of fact, neither of these models approximates particularly closely to church-state relations amongst West European countries beyond France. In Germany, the Catholic and Protestant Churches are constitutionally recognised corporations, for whom the federal government collects voluntary taxes and grants large amounts of additional public monies so that they between them have a larger public welfare budget than the federal state. Norway, Denmark and England each have an ‘established’ Church, Sweden had one till 2000 and Finland has two (Stepan 2011; cf. Koenig 2009).<sup>16</sup> Yet, it would be difficult to dispute that these states are not amongst the leading secular states in the world – more precisely, one could only dispute that if one had some narrow, abstract model of secularism that one insisted on applying to the varieties of empirical cases. So, the question is how are we to characterise the secularisms of Western Europe? I have argued that despite their distinctive histories and institutional diversity that I have

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<sup>16</sup> The UK too has two state recognised national churches, the Church of England and the Church of Scotland but the latter is independent of the UK state, including of the Scottish state in which it plays no formal role.

referred to, these states can be understood as having evolved what I have called ‘moderate secularism’ (Modood 2007 and 2010). I sketch this conception in terms of five features:

**1. Mutual autonomy, not mutual exclusion or one-sided control.** This is not distinctive to ‘moderate secularism’, as it is central to US liberal secularism too, and to some extent France as well, although it leans more towards one-sided control than the US or other Western European countries.

**2. Religion is a public good, not just a private good.** Organised religion can play a significant role in relation to ethical voice<sup>17, 3</sup>, general social well-being, cultural heritage, national ceremonies, and national identity. This can take various forms, such as: having input into a legislative forum, such as the House of Lords in the UK, or on moral and welfare issues; being social partners with the state in the delivery of education, health, and caring services; or more intangibly, in building social capital and the production of attitudes that create, for example, family stability, a compassionate civil society or economic hope. Of course the public good that religion contributes is contextual; religion can, in other contexts, be socially divisive and can lead to civil and international wars. Hence religion can also be a public harm. The point is that religion’s contributions are not confined to private lives; they are socially and politically significant in many different ways.

**3. The national Church or churches (organisers of this public good) belongs to the people and the country, not just to its religious members and clergy.** All citizens, regardless of membership, can feel that the national church should meet certain national standards not expected of religious organisations in general. For example, when the Church of England’s ruling body, the Synod, failed in 2012 to achieve the two-thirds majority necessary to permit female Bishops, many secular commentators felt that the Church of England had let the country down, while the absence of female Catholic priests or female imams is not part of a national conversation. The loud criticism by those who are not active Anglicans did play a part in the Church’s reversal of its decision in 2014. The Lutheran Church in Denmark, as another example, is almost universally thought by Danes to be an element, perhaps a central element of Danish national identity, even though only a minority say they believe in its doctrines and even fewer worship in the Church (Jenkins 2011). In these and other ‘moderate secular’ countries, even atheists feel that they have a right to use the national Church for weddings and funerals.

**4. It is legitimate for the state to be involved in eliciting the public good that comes from organised religion, and not just to protect the public good from dangers posed by organised religion.** If recognised as public goods, then, depending on the circumstances, it may be decided that they are best achieved through some state-religion connexions rather than strict separation. This is a contingent matter, but the experience of Western Europe is that some connexions are better than none. Of course, as has been said, religion can also be a ‘public harm’, since it may serve as a basis

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<sup>17</sup> Habermas suggests that this is imperative in the twenty-first century (Habermas 2006). He is however mistaken in suggesting that the perception that this is desirable is new to European publics and thus marks a ‘post-secular’ turn. It may, however, be a relatively new idea for some secularist intellectuals, who, like Habermas himself, are qualifying their earlier more radical secularism, in the direction of a more moderate secularism.

for prejudice, discrimination, intolerance, sectarianism, social conflict, violence, and so on, so the state has a responsibility to prevent harm as well as enhance the good (Modood 2010). As with public goods, so with public harms, the interest of the state will not be primarily theological, or taking preferential sides for or against one religion regardless of consequences; the state will be motivated by fostering and maintaining tangible and intangible public – or ‘secular’ – goods. The key consideration for the state will not be secular ‘purity’. Instead, the state shall ensure that the means and ends are consistent with, and effectively serve, secular rationales, without constraint by a fetish for ‘separation’. In recent years, concerns about Islamist terrorism and ‘radicalisation’ have led states to extol and condemn certain kinds of Islam, to co-opt certain Muslim groups into governance, and to engage in matters of imam training and the schooling of Muslim children.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, if religious organisations are supported with public funds, or tasked by the state to carry out some educational or welfare duties, then the state will want to ensure that they do not compromise key policy goals. That is why religious organizations are increasingly subject to certain legal requirements such as equal access or non-discrimination – at least in some European states, such as Britain, more so than others such as Germany (Lewicki 2014).

***5. Moderate secularism can take different forms in different times and places, and not all forms of religious establishment should be ruled out without attending to specific cases.*** State-religion connexions take different forms in different West European countries depending on their histories, traditions, political cultures, and religious composition, which all may change over time. One of the forms it may take is ‘establishment’. Formal establishment is only found in a minority of countries, yet it nevertheless it is one of the forms that moderate secularism takes. Even when it does so, I call this complex of norms and practices ‘moderate secularism’ rather than ‘moderate establishment’ (as Dworkin 2006 labels Britain; see also ‘modest establishment’ of Laborde 2013) because it is secularism not establishment that is in charge: the place for religion and establishment is dependent on secularist institutions and decision-makers referring to secularist values and principles. It is clear that this is what exists in practice. Both in relation to the church-state relations narrowly conceived, or in terms of an expansive sociological analysis, governing power lies with secularist institutions, networks, and individuals employing secular identities, interests, and goals. Moderate secularism is not something to contrast with religion; religion is already a component of it. Moderate secularism is a particular way of relating religion with state power and politics. So, moderate secularism is not an abstract political theory model but is a conceptualisation of a historically evolved set of arrangements and practices, formal and informal.

It should be added that moderate secularism, as a distinctive form of state-religion connexions, exists within liberal democratic constitutionalism (on the latter see Bader 2007), where religious authority does not dominate political authority, where when religious organisations are publicly funded to deliver social services, citizens have options to receive the same services by non-religious organisations, and where religion is not privileged in any uniquely special way. Not uniquely special but because in such countries a large range of non-religious activities such as sport, opera, and banking may also be privileged, albeit each in a different way (see below) (Modood, 2016). Hence, while to some readers it may seem that I am describing some illiberal or archaic privileging of religion, I must stress that I am describing the normative character of aspects of the most liberal democratic states of contemporary Europe.

### **Multiculturalism, Liberalism and State-Religions Connexions**

Before we can begin to consider how moderate secular states should accommodate ethno-religious diversity, we have to face an objection that religion is not an appropriate candidate for multiculturalism. The argument is that religion is chosen while multicultural identities, like being black or Chinese are 'given'. This, however, is a false distinction. One does not choose to be born a Muslim but being of a Muslim background or being perceived as such can be the basis for a diminished citizenship in just the same way as other bases of identity such as being Black or Chinese. Of course, some Muslims may not want to project a religious identity and may believe that religion is a private matter. Yes, but other Muslims may not. Yet, this is not distinctive to religion but applies equally to, say, blackness or to Moroccan identity, and it also applies to gender and sexuality: multicultural identities have an element of 'givenness', which is not only biological but is socially constructed and ascribed, and they have an element of choice about how one relates to that as a self-identity, in particular in relation to issues of privacy and publicity. However, there is one important implication for religion that should be highlighted. Multiculturalist accommodation of groups is primarily as identity or community based on descent and only secondarily about faith; it is based on recognition and inclusivity, not the truth of doctrines. In so far as doctrine comes in, it does so indirectly, for example, protecting Jews from incitement to hatred may mean protecting them from certain insults to their religion (eg., that they are Christ-killers or their rituals involve the sacrifice of Christian babies), or allowing the community to transmit its identity over generations may require public support for Jewish schools in which Judaism is taught and not just or in addition to the national religion or non-religious ethics.

The first and most basic argument, then, for including religious identities, and specifically for the multiculturalist accommodation of a religious minority is not by a comparative reference to Christians but by reference to equal respect; in so far as there is a comparative reference, the initial comparative reference is to the egalitarian accommodation of women, black people, gays etc. Perhaps the most immediate implication for political secularism is that any political norm that excludes religious identities from the public space, from schools and universities, from politics and nationhood – what I call 'radical secularism', which tries to privatise religion - is incompatible with multicultural citizenship. If religious identities face this kind of exclusion but not identities based on race, ethnicity, gender and so on, then there is a bias against religious identity and a failure to practice equality between identities or identity groups. When groups protest against such forms of exclusion, as Muslims have been doing, we should identify what they are asking for and consider whether it is reasonable, and here the argument has to soon become contextual. Do we normally grant such things? If we do, is there a reason to not continue to do so or to not pluralise it? Conversely, if we do not normally grant such things, is there a good reason to do so now? This is not merely about precedent or status quo – it is looking at precedents, the status quo and considerations about what will work and runs with the grain of familiar norms and practices from the point of view of multicultural inclusion.<sup>18</sup> Inclusion may be possible without using state-religion connexions (SRCs) but that may be one way to achieve it or is part of the way to do it.

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<sup>18</sup> Cf. the discussion on the role of 'operative public values' in Bhikhu Parekh, *Rethinking Multiculturalism: Cultural Diversity and Political Theory*, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000/2006).

I will consider two further objections to my suggestion that SRCs that may be justifiable and may be of value in relation to the accommodation of minorities. The first objection is one of principle, whilst the second is more contingent. The first objection is that I am in breach of the liberal requirement of state neutrality, that the state should not be seen to be associating itself with a conception of the good and especially not a religion. I have a number of responses, the first of which is that if by neutral is meant that a state should have no cultural or religious character, then that is an impossible condition to fulfil. There is no such thing as a culturally content-less state or public space. The state will always have some historical-cultural character. For example, there will be an official language(s) in which the business of the state is conducted in and which provides the rhetoric, the collective memories and cultural texture through which civic communication is achieved. Similarly, any state will draw on a specific set of ethical, political and legal traditions, and while they will have some element of universality, they will always have some particularity too. Moreover, this particularity extends to the ways in which the state-religion connexion is expressed. This will be true of its substantial aspects such as the presence of the bishops in the House of Lords as well as of its symbolic aspects such as the ways in which prayers are part of the parliamentary calendar in the UK or a large cross dominates the chamber of the Quebec Provincial Assembly. While it is true that language is essential to the functioning of a state and a religion is not, the question of and therefore making a decision about the state-religion question is not optional. In any case, in respect of being optional, religion is on a par with many things that are unproblematically supported by states. For example, the state supports non-essential but valued activities such as the motor industry or the Olympics. While each of these has its critics few people hold the view that state support should be confined to only those features essential to the existence of a state.

If by 'neutrality' is meant not cultural content-lessness but that the basic structure of the state and its laws and policies must not be derived from or can only be justified by reference to a religion because, say, such justifications must be consistent with what Rawls called a 'political conception of justice', then bearing in mind that Rawls was ruling out not just appeals to religion but to all 'comprehensive doctrines'<sup>19</sup> then SRCs can be consistent with neutrality albeit with two qualifications. Firstly, we must not assume that political justice in this basic sense is cut and dried, that the principles are only consistent with a small set of comprehensive doctrines and susceptible to a narrow set of meanings. Charles Taylor usefully offers a capacious understanding of 'overlapping consensus', namely a flexible and dialogical way of (re)interpreting the core principles of political justice and of how they may be implemented.<sup>20</sup> We can take this one step further by not thinking of 'overlapping consensus' as simply an overlapping set of derivations from discrete comprehensive doctrines evaluated against an independent a priori standard of justice, but rather as an interactive, dynamic process of persuasion and mutual learning, which is always a work in progress and we might better express by calling it 'consensus building'.<sup>21</sup> Rawls' political conception of justice is in effect, as Bader points out, best understood not as an epistemological filter of 'reasonableness' but politically as adherence to Liberal

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<sup>19</sup> Rawls, *Public Reason*.

<sup>20</sup> Taylor, *Meaning of Secularism*.

<sup>21</sup> I owe this point to a discussion with Sune Laegaard.

Democratic Constitutionalism (LDC) – which of course has a substantive political content and so is far from politically neutral in the normal meaning of the term.<sup>22</sup>

Secondly, if we assume LDC as a baseline or a core that we want all politics and political institutions to work from, including SRCs, it means that the state cannot *subtract* from LDC, it cannot be less than LDC. It does not mean that the just state cannot build on LDC; indeed, that is exactly what it must do. On this understanding of ‘neutrality’, the state can pursue socio-political projects such as, say, the elimination of poverty, or to put a man on the moon, or to enhance inter-faith understanding amongst citizens or in the world generally; and can even identify with one or more comprehensive doctrines, socialism or liberal perfectionism – as long as and to the extent that such state identification or projects are within the limits of LDC. A state can identify with a philosophical or religious doctrine but it cannot make citizens conform to this doctrine in ways that violate the norms of LDC. It can in principle declare ‘In God We Trust’ or ‘Islam is the Solution’ but all entailments must be acted upon in ways consistent with liberal democratic constitutional rights and processes. Moreover, there are limits to what we can hope for from the state. For example, religious truth can’t *come from* the state/politics (as Locke pointed out); no more than scientific truth can come from the state/politics, or indeed art or healthy living. Yet that does not mean that the state cannot promote religion any more than it means that the state cannot fund science or art or health care.<sup>23</sup> It is true that the state cannot require any citizen to believe in the truth of any religious doctrine, but no more can it require a belief in any comprehensive or political doctrine. The state may fund science at universities or may fund church-run schools without requiring any citizens to believe in any scientific hypothesis or religious doctrine.

It may sound like I am saying that it is consistent with LDC (what others may choose to call the liberal neutral state) to privilege religion. Yes, a kind of ‘privileging’ of religion is permissible. For example, a particular state may fund church schools teaching the national curriculum but not schools organised around atheism or ‘race’. Such funding is a kind of privileging of religion but in a **multiplex** way. ‘Multiplex’ is a word that conjoins ‘multiple’ and ‘complex’. The Oxford English Dictionary defines it as an adjective describing the ‘involving or consisting of many elements in a complex relationship’. The state typically engages in not merely multiple cases of privileging but moreover the privileging are not all of one basic kind. The state may legitimately choose to give funding and prestige to banking, to opera, to the Olympics and to ‘blue skies’ scientific research but without using the same arguments or the same metrics of calculation. So similarly, with the funding and bestowing of prestige on faith schools within a state regulated system of schooling.

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<sup>22</sup> Veit Bader, *Secularism or Democracy? Associational Governance of Religious Diversity*, (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2007).

<sup>23</sup> After years of arguing that the appropriate liberal response to diversity is neutrality, Christian Joppke now argues that a liberal state may have a Christian identity, though he restricts this to a Christian cultural heritage identity, but interestingly believes it may be more inclusive of religious diversity than a narrowly ‘liberal’ state identity, Christian Joppke, “A Christian Identity for the Liberal State?”, *British Journal of Sociology* 64, no. 4 (2013).

The liberal state may recognise that religion is special<sup>24</sup> and may honour and support it in special ways but this is not necessarily equivalent to simple ‘privileging’. So you could say there is a multiplex privileging or a multiplicity of privileging and that there is no special or unique privileging of religion. What this shows is that the concept of ‘neutrality’ is not very helpful over and beyond a requirement not to subtract from LDC.

So far I hope I have shown that the ‘privileging’ of religion is not in principle inconsistent with LDC. This leaves unresolved many questions about what shape this privileging should take. I cannot resolve them but I would like to identify some of them and offer a couple of comments. There are in fact three separate issues of ‘privileging’:

i) Religion relative to non-religion, eg., ethnicity or nation or economics. The multiculturalist view should be that no one type of identity or social dimension (eg., religion, ethnicity, gender, class) should be privileged at the expense of the others. Moreover, there is no single measure of importance and so a variable geometry is inevitable: how a state will promote the Olympics will be different to how it will promote religion.

ii) Religion relative to no-religion: this is the most difficult issue but not specific to this case, the same applies to sport and no-sport, for just as there are people who think that religion should not be privileged and paid for out of taxes, so people hold the same view about sport. Hence, I suggest ‘multiplex privileging’ may not be a kind of second best – there may be no other way of resolving a ‘bias’.

iii) One religion relative to another. This is not easy either and I do not have a fully worked out view on this but I think some important considerations are as follows. We should equalise upwards not downwards.<sup>25</sup> That is to say, the presumption is that if there is a benefit that one party has and the other does not (to the same extent), then the party with the lesser benefit or without the benefit, should be brought closer to the level of the other party, rather than the other way round. We should not for example ask schools or other public institutions to stop celebrating Christmas because of the presence of Muslims or Hindus; rather, we should extend the public celebrations to include Eid and Diwali.<sup>26</sup> All the evidence suggests that this is what most minorities, especially Muslims want, certainly in Britain. It is not the case that ‘accommodating Muslims in the political sphere, certainly requires abandoning a commitment to the Christian

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<sup>24</sup> Dworkin *Democracy Possible Here?*, denies that religion is special in the ‘moderate secular state’s view of religion, which is odd because the whole point of secularism is that religion has to be treated specially and as a unique problem.

<sup>25</sup> It is specifically in relation to my advocacy of ‘equalising upwards’ that Laborde, *Critical Republicanism* believes I fall into the error of ‘status quo partiality’.

<sup>26</sup> Similarly, in the case of how to extend equality to gays and lesbians in relation to marriage, few have suggested that it should be done by abolishing the institution, one way of placing heterosexual and homosexuals on the same level.



norms that have, historically, defined European states'.<sup>27</sup> The challenge is not how to fully de-Christianise our states but how to appropriately add the new faiths alongside the older ones. This indeed is what is happening across much of western Europe. What is interesting is that those most uncomfortable with this are not Christians or Churches but ideological secularists.

### **Does Moderate Secularism Alienate Muslims?**

The next and final objection to my position that I will consider is the view that what I have labelled as moderate secularism is 'irretrievably flawed' – while it has accommodated Christians, it will not be able to accommodate Muslims.<sup>9</sup> For Rajeev Bhargava, moderate secularism is part of the problem, not the solution, since it cannot be reformed; specifically, it cannot be multi-culturalised (Bhargava 2013: 78). He claims that the Christian bias inherent to any established religion, something akin to the Anglican Church's establishment in Britain, indicates that even a reformed version will alienate British Muslims. Cecile Laborde makes a similar argument. She recognises how the Anglican establishment has relatively little power and holds a largely symbolic significance. Nevertheless, she argues that even when 'establishment is mostly symbolic and cannot be said to put anyone at a serious disadvantage, symbols do matter when the basic identification of citizens with their institutions is concerned' (Laborde 2008: 90). An example she gives assumes that 'Muslims are likely to be alienated by the distinctively Christian religiosity permeating public institutions' (Laborde 2008: 90-91). She evokes a conception of citizenship which I share, namely that 'all citizens should be able to not to feel alienated by their political institutions in light of their deepest beliefs, and that institutions should consequently be framed with that aim in mind' (Laborde 2013: 84). I actually hold a stronger version of this duty of symbolic recognition: not only must the state not alienate, it must make positive efforts to ensure that all citizens are able to feel a sense of belonging. I am interested in Bhargava's and Laborde's claim that British Muslim citizens feel alienated by the Anglican establishment, for which no evidence is offered. Indeed, they ignore evidence about the strong sense of British identification and national pride amongst Muslims in Britain.<sup>28</sup>

British Muslims do include many vociferous political groups, and they have mounted many arguments, not to mention campaigns, in relation to socio-economic deprivation, religious discrimination, incitement to religious hatred, various foreign policies, anti-terrorist policies, and so on (Peucker and Akbarzadeh 2014). So it is the case that Muslims in Britain do seem to feel excluded and alienated by certain aspects of British society, and indeed European society – and this is a critically important datum for multiculturalism to engage with. Yet there is no record of any criticism

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<sup>27</sup> P. T. Lennard , 'What can Multicultural Theory Tell Us about Integrating Muslims in Europe?', *Political Studies Review*: 2010, Vol 8: 317.

<sup>28</sup> An analysis of two Citizenship Surveys has concluded, 'We find no evidence that Muslims or people of Pakistani heritage were in general less attached to Britain than were other religions or ethnic groups' (Heath and Roberts 2008).' This has in fact been the finding of many surveys, with one concluding that 'overall British Muslims are more likely to be both patriotic and optimistic about Britain than are the white British community' (Wind-Cowie and Gregory 2011). In late February, 2015 95% of Muslims in a BBC survey said they felt loyal to Britain (BBC, 2015).

by a Muslim group against the Anglican Church's establishment. On the other hand, many Muslims complain that Britain is too unreligious and anti-religious, too hedonistic, too consumerist, too materialist, and so on. Muslims protest far more vigorously about secularist bans on modest female clothing, such as the headscarf (banned in French state schools since 2004) and the face veil (banned in public places in France and elsewhere in Europe), than they do about 'establishment' or Christian privileges. Muslims and other religious minorities appreciate that establishment is a recognition by the state of the public and national significance of religion. That recognition holds out the prospect of extending state-religion connexions. Disestablishment, by contrast, would foreclose that prospect without conferring any benefits to religious minorities. This appreciation of establishment by religious minorities is partly the result of the fact that the Church of England takes its mission to serve the country quite seriously, including the goal of incorporating new minority faith communities into its vision for the country and for the Church's own sense of its responsibilities (Modood 1997). My own suspicion is that religious minorities such as Muslims are more likely to be alienated by the kind of secular state that Laborde argues for, one which she thinks is unavoidably more suited to non-religious citizens than religious citizens (Laborde 2008: 88), and equally alienated by the kind of secular state that actively seeks to reform aspects of Islam as Bhargava advocates (Bhargava 2014).

My suggestion, then, is that Muslims and other religious minorities are seeking equality through their accommodation within something resembling a multiculturalised version of the status quo in Europe, rather than a disestablishment of Christian churches; they are pursuing an additive view of inclusivity, not a subtractive view. Typically, recognition or accommodation for minorities implies that particular social dimensions important to those minorities become *more*, not less, politically significant. Equality movements do not usually pursue diminished political importance for their social subgroups. This is the case with regard to equality movements about race, gender, nationality, sexual orientation, class, and so forth. It is difficult to see why equality concerning religion has to be treated differently. Therefore, the multicultural challenge for secularism is not how to de-Christianise Western states, but how to appropriately include newly-arriving faiths alongside older faiths.

### **Implications for Religious Education**

I hope I have given a clear statement of what I have called moderate secularism, about ways in which it does and does not allow state support for and control of organised religion and religious communities. For example, contrary to many political theorists, I do not see the presence of a state church, such as the 'established' Church of England, as contrary to political secularism, as long as it does not impinge upon political authority, is consistent with liberal democratic constitutionalism, contributes to the advancement of the public good – which in the context of religious diversity includes the promotion of multiculturalism. (As it happens I think the C o E meets these criteria or is evolving to meet them.) I turn now to briefly consider the implications of my views for religious education.

I think multiculturalist moderate secularism should support a compulsory religious education (RE) in which children of all faiths and none are taught about a variety of faith traditions and their past and current effects upon individuals and societies, upon the shaping of humanity, taught to classes comprising those of all religions and those of none. Such classes should certainly include the contribution of humanism as well as the atheistic critique of religion and can be combined with ethics as is the case in Quebec. In many countries there are advocates for RE as part of a national

curriculum.<sup>29</sup> The main issue in relation to majority precedence is in relation to religious instruction (RI), the induction into a specific faith. Broadly speaking there are two majoritarian possibilities. We have a society where there is a majority religion and that alone is allowed as RI, and minorities might be exempted from those classes but no alternative religious instruction is provided. Or secondly, the majority view is that there should be no RI in state schools, as in the USA or in France (except in state-funded religious schools). Is it fair to impose either of these policies on minorities that do want RI?

That is an appropriate subject for a national dialogue but if after that certain minorities want RI as well as RE, then a truly national system, certainly a multicultural system, must make an effort to accommodate minority RI. In my understanding then, under both the majoritarian possibilities the minorities should have their religions instructed or worshipped within the national system. On the other hand, minorities do not have the right to stop the majority from including the instruction of their religion. We should not, for example, ask schools to cease Christian RI or worship or celebrating Christmas *because* of the presence of Muslims or Hindus; rather, we should extend the celebrations to include, for example, Eid and Diwali. Such separate classes and faith-specific worship needs to be balanced with an approach that brings all the children together and into dialogue; indeed, without that it would be potentially divisive of the school and of society. But where that is in place, voluntary pursuit of one's own faith or philosophical tradition completes the multiculturalist approach to the place of religion in such schools. Learning together about different faiths, including what they have in common and – separately - being instructed in or inducted into one's faith community heritage as a normal school occurrence and not something excluded from the school community are then the two mutually balancing aspects of multiculturalism.

I here draw on three separate principles:

- i) Schools should promote cross-cultural understanding and nurture inclusivity so all can develop a common sense of belonging
- ii) The presence of minority identities should be accommodated on an **additive** not a subtractive basis
- iii) The needs of minorities should not simply be understood in terms of majority preferences: just because the majority does not want something (to display faith through dress or RI classes), it does not mean there should not be institutional provision for it if a minority strongly feels it needs it and it is not harming anyone.

This approach is reflected in *Living With Difference*, the report of the *Commission on Religion and Belief in British Public Life* (CORAB), of which I was a member.<sup>30</sup> It recommended that religious education – not instruction in a particular religion or secular beliefs – as a multi-disciplinary subject

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<sup>29</sup>. Note that all states of the European Union give funding either to religious schools or for religious education in state schools (Stepan 2011: 117).

<sup>30</sup> <http://www.corab.org.uk/>

file:///C:/Users/sotm/Chrome%20Local%20Downloads/Living%20with%20Difference%20-%20community,%20diversity%20and%20the%20common%20good.pdf

showing the nature and presence of religion and secular philosophies across time and across the world, as a focus for individuals, communities, law, society and so on should be a compulsory subject at school. It should be taught in classes comprising those of all faiths and none and without exemptions as part of the national curriculum. This knowledge, acquired in diverse classrooms, is essential for living together in mutual understanding and respect.

On the other hand, the existing English law requiring all schools to hold assemblies of a broadly Christian character – largely honoured in the breach in secondary schools - should be repealed. Schools should be free to have no assemblies or religion/belief-specific instruction or several of them or only for those who ask for them – to be achieved through discussions between parents, teachers, pupils and governors – and could take place within the formal timetable or as extra-curricular activities. An option could be all-inclusive assemblies but no single template should be imposed.

Whilst the first recommendation emphasises the need for a common level of understanding arrived at together, the second recognises the importance of allowing and supporting a diversity achieved through dialogue and practiced on a voluntary basis.

This same balance is to be found in our approach to state-funded faith schools. They constitute about a third of all state schools in England, Church of England being most common at primary and Catholic at secondary levels. They are popular with some parents and their numbers have been growing – an unprecedented half of all Jews are taught in state-funded Jewish schools.<sup>31</sup>

They are an important part of the diversity of the educational system but nevertheless they also contribute to the segregating processes in society. Whilst most educational segregation by religion and ethnicity, not to mention class, is primarily due to the neighbourhoods which feed into local state schools, and parental choice; nevertheless faith schools should not ignore the goal of inclusivity and cohesion. Whilst we did not recommend any kind of quota we urge all faith schools to seek to offer an education not confined to those selected on the basis of faith. All bodies responsible for school admissions should be required to take measures to reduce selection on grounds of religion.

### **State Support for Religion in Flanders, with Special Reference to Schools and Religious Education**

‘Today, seven worldviews are recognized (Roman Catholicism, Protestantism, Anglicanism, Orthodox Christianity, Judaism, Islam, and nonconfessional humanism), and due to their recognition, they get a lot of privileges: the government pays the salaries and retirements [pensions] of the clergy and of chaplains and nonconfessional moral consultants in hospitals and in the army; religious courses in public and nonpublic schools are financed by the government; recognized worldviews get free

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<sup>31</sup>p.22:

[http://www.jpr.org.uk/documents/JPR\\_Jews\\_in\\_the\\_UK\\_in\\_2013\\_NJCS\\_preliminary\\_findings.Feb.%202014.pdf](http://www.jpr.org.uk/documents/JPR_Jews_in_the_UK_in_2013_NJCS_preliminary_findings.Feb.%202014.pdf)

broadcasting time on radio and television; and material goods and housing for the clergy are subsidized by the state.... freedom and support for schools based on particular confessional, nonconfessional, or pedagogical views' (Franken and Loobuyck 2012: 484-485).

Drawing on lines of argument originating with John Rawls (1971), the American political theorist, Leni Franken and Patrick Loobuyck elaborate (without necessarily endorsing) the idea that the appropriate liberal egalitarian response to religious and ethical diversity is state neutrality in relation to what Rawls called 'conceptions of the good' and apply it to Belgium (Franken and Loobuyck 2012). They argue that 'under certain conditions, active state support can be defined as a kind of positive, active, benevolent, or favorable neutrality that is still within the scope of liberal neutrality'(481). The critical thing in their view is that there should be 'neutrality of justification', that the state support (or its absence) should not be based on endorsing a religion (such as Christianity) or can only be justified by reference to a religion(s), a philosophy or a worldview.

Readers of the previous sections and especially of Chapter 2 on Multiculturalism will note that this is quite different from my approach. I think promoting the national language(s)multiculturalism, ethnic harmony, sense of civic belonging, shorter working week, blue-skies science, music, alleviating poverty or a laissez-faire attitude to all these things (even at the level of justifications) and so on are all informed by one or more conceptions of the good. What I do accept is that the justifications for any of these things must reach the conclusion 'so on balance this furthers the public good or is good for society' and cannot merely be, say, 'because God says so'. I think therefore the term 'neutral state' is quite misleading as I am in favour of 'the committed state', specifically, 'the multiculturalist state', which must actively promote the good.

Franken and Loobuyck's vocabulary is grounded in contemporary Anglophone political theory but runs counter to ordinary English use of 'neutrality'. This is not just a quibble about words. I interpret the Rawlsian starting point in a more minimalist way, namely, as explained in a previous section, as a requirement for liberal democratic constitutionalism as argued by Bader; on top of that, rather than derived from that, I argue for a historically evolved moderate secularism and multiculturalism. A major consequential difference with Franken and Loobuyck and all neutralists is that a religious state – a minimal mono- or plural- or quasi-establishment(s) - is not ruled out of court. They on the other hand argue 'that a political system that is based on one state church or an established church is not in accordance with (egalitarian) liberalism' (484).

Turning to the Belgian case, they identify a number of particular problems in relation to neutrality (equality and liberty), not all of which I can pursue here. It is argued that:

to get privileges as a recognized worldview, the worldview has to be institutionally structured and there has to be one central representative for the government. This criterion is based on the internal structure and the hierarchical organization of the Roman Catholic Church, for which the bishops are the traditional representatives..... The Muslim community for example, was obliged by government to create a representative structure (the Belgian Muslim Executive), and in order to do this, the government organized elections in 1993, 1998, and 2005. Even though some Muslim leaders opposed this idea of elections and participation was weak, state intervention did not stop there: the government did not only oblige diverse Muslim communities to organize themselves within a central organ, but it also screened the elected candidates and decided that some of them were inconvenient. With this policy, the

government damages the neutrality and equality principle because it favors a specific (i.e., Roman Catholic) organizational structure. Moreover, with the organization of elections and the screening of candidates, the state did not give enough respect to the (weak) separation of church and state (p. 488-89).

Here, I entirely agree. I have argued elsewhere that multiculturalist accommodation must be open to an institutional ‘variable geometry’ (Modood and Kastrano 2006).<sup>32</sup>

However, I am not persuaded by a recommendation Franken and Loobuyck go on to make. Noting that ‘the Roman Catholic Church receives in excess of 80% of funds disbursed in relation to the above-mentioned forms of state support they discuss how this proportion needs to be revised in the light of the fact that ‘the amount of Catholic believers has decreased enormously and the amount of active Catholic churchgoers is far less than 10 percent’ (490-491). Some kind of revision here probably is due but my reservations is about how it should be calculated. They consider a number of ways of citizens registering a preference for which worldview should be funded but all of them are based on some kind of a head-count (eg., at ‘elections or when they fill in their tax form’ in which everybody may choose one or no worldview). I think this is too individualistic. Some demographic empirical reference may be necessary; here I would prefer the census, so as to keep it separate from politics and because not everyone fills in a tax form (in the UK it is employers not employees that are responsible), and an annual decision is too frequent. We, however, have to also consider whether funding a particular worldview contributes to the public good, in which case we might want to contribute to more than one, perhaps all seven, worldviews. We should not reduce the public benefit to the benefit of individual followers of a world view or members of a faith community. That would be a bit like asking only parents of schoolchildren to pay for public education (Franken and Loobuyck, indeed do consider the German *kirchensteuer*, the voluntary church tax, as a plausible solution).

I do however agree with their more general point that whether there should be any state support for any worldview should be a matter of democratic discussion and that the just state is not obliged to make available such funding; and if it funds any it must fund the others too in an even-handed way (494-496). My point is that if organised faiths, religious communities and worldviews are a public good – and they should not be funded if they are not – then all citizens should contribute to sustaining it. I would also add that as a multiculturalist I do worry about majoritarianism. While I agree with Franken 2017 that the Belgian *constitutional* requirement to give state support to religion and to religious schools is not necessary (and does not exist as such in the UK – which famously does not have a ‘written constitution’), I am slightly anxious about a western European future in which religious people are a minority and are stripped of public support on the basis of ‘I don’t need that provision for myself and so will vote against it’. As I have argued in earlier sections multiculturalism requires allowing minority needs to be supported even when they run counter to majority preferences

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<sup>32</sup> Though failed to persuade my co-author of its merits, who in the spirit of French republicanism insisted on registering her commitment to an ‘institutional assimilationism’ in a dissenting footnote: Modood, T., & Kastrano, R. (2006). Secularism and the accommodation of Muslim identities. In Modood, T., Triandafyllidou, A., & Zapata-Barrero, R. (Eds.) (2006). *Multiculturalism, Muslims and citizenship: A European approach*. Routledge.

or needs, as long as they do not harm anybody. I think this is particularly important in relation to the funding of faith schools and the instruction and worship of faith – on a voluntary opt-in basis – in non-faith schools. I noted in an earlier section, that it may be the case that sometimes the number, the location, the character or specifically the pupil selection criteria of state-funded faith schools can be detrimental to social inequality or ethno-religious segregation. This is indeed an issue in England. Under such circumstances I can see that it may make sense to consider a stipulation that schools in receipt of public funds have to show that they have made an effort to recruit pupils (say, 25% of the school roll) who do not profess the faith identity of the school. In a later piece, Franken directly argues that there is no consensus about the value and importance of religion(s) and/or state support for religion. For that reason, she holds religions should not be seen as basic or public goods (any longer), but as non-basic goods or valuable options: for some citizens, religion is still important in their (daily) lives, but this is not the case for all citizens (Franken 2017: 63). She does not rule out state support for religion, rather that p. 64 '[f]rom an autonomy-based perspective, one can argue that state support for religion is sometimes permitted in order to facilitate religion as one of the many valuable options to choose from or in order to guarantee religious freedom in an active way'. 'The state can never support religions, however, because religions are valuable', only because autonomy (or neutrality etc) is (p. 66).

It may be unnecessary to point out that while Franken's argument about when state support for religion is justified is based on appeal to autonomy qualified by neutrality, my own multiculturalist is based on appeal to three different sets of considerations:

- Identity, recognition and distinctive ethno-religious needs
- Equality, inclusion, national belonging
- Public/national good

And is qualified by liberal democratic constitutionalism.

Finally, turning to the specific questions of religious education and of state support for faith schools, I note that there is a constitutional requirement upon state schools in Flanders to provide confessional religious education/instruction in any or all of the seven recognised worldviews to students or whose parents request it. The vast majority of schools students, 75% at secondary and 62% at primary, in Flanders are enrolled in state-funded schools, 99% of which are Roman Catholic (Franken and Loobuyck 2013). Such students' religious education currently takes the form of a Catholic Dialogue School approach. Lieven Boeve describes the idea of a Catholic Dialogue School based on 'taking differences seriously' and the understanding that 'dialogue with the other is constitutive for the construction of one's identity', it is argued that [i]n such process, in catholic schools, Christians may become better Christians, because more self-reflexive Christians; in the same way as Muslims may become better Muslims, and atheists better atheists (Boeve 2014?: 11-12).

Is this simultaneous multilogue a realistic aspiration for a Catholic school? Firstly, are Catholic schools, teacher and teacher-training curricula sufficiently near-reflexive in terms of competence as well as commitment. Secondly, can such a dialogue really take place where one of the parties is totally in charge of in terms of control and numbers. Will not at best such schools produce reflective Catholics rather than what the above quote promises? For a true multilogue, each party needs to be sufficiently present in number and influence for not just mono- but multi- reflexivity to be pursued?

For the latter, are we not talking about multi-worldview schools. They seem to be in short supply in Flanders.

It is interesting, however, that empirical research suggests that more than 60% of students prefer a 'colourful' or more multicultural school and about half of adults (school staff, parents and the school leadership) surveyed see that as compatible with the idea of a dialogue school (Pollefeyt and Bouwens 2013: 2). Partly due to pressure coming from resistance shown by many students and some adults against an explicitly Catholic approach, the 'path of least resistance' frequently ends up being chosen. The result is a gradual yet clear evolution in the direction of the Colourful School (p. 3). Drawing on their study of schools in Australia Pollefeyt and Bouwens propose a *kerygmatic* Catholic school in which the purpose is not to proclaim an existing faith but in which all parties are open to transformation by the dia/multilogue.

I commend these Catholic dialogue and colourful approaches to Catholic religious education, which are very important given that the majority of pupils in Flanders are taught in Catholic schools (75% of secondary and 62% of primary), though I have also heard some doubts expressed about to what extent a dialogical approach is being pursued. Nevertheless, I understand this approach as a Catholic mono-confessional approach (what I call RI, religious instruction) and so this is not a substitute for the arguments I gave above for why I think a proper religious education (RE) should be a compulsory school subject in all publically funded schools, namely to improve religious literacy for all, an understanding of the different faiths/worldviews and an understanding of the good and the bad that religion can contribute to in the lives of individuals and in society. Such a subject based on a common national curriculum (with some limited scope for discretion at a school level) is important for building a pillar of commonality and an appreciation of diversity (for an overview of this topic but without specific reference to Flanders, see Franken 2017a; for a discussion of Islamic education in Belgium, see Franken 2017b). Conversely, RI, confessional religious education – and also collective worship – should not be a compulsory requirement in public schools but should be available for any of the seven recognised religions/worldviews on school premises if a significant number of parents and/or pupils request it. It may be however that such confessional classes and worship may have to be slotted in outside the formal timetable (eg. before or after classes or at lunchtime). Confessional schools should be free to make RI and worship arrangements that they believe reflect the mission of the school but they must allow exemptions when these are requested (but not from non-confessional RE); this is of special concern because in larger cities many Muslims attend Catholic schools, and frequently form a majority, and also the majority of parents and especially (older) students from Catholic background are not believing Catholics (Franken 2015: 77-78).

The ideal of a compulsory RE as a regular school subject within a national curriculum as described above depends upon the availability of suitable teachers. It is likely that this does not exist at the moment so such a proposal could not be implemented straight away. It should therefore be a matter of priority that teacher training colleges and university departments design suitable courses for existing teachers (including those who need assistance to teach RE after years of having only taught RI) and for a new generation of trainee teachers.

I believe my proposals, based on my work with the Commission on the place of Religion and Belief in British Public Life, as briefly described above, chime with those made by Patrick Loobuyck and Leni Franken but I cannot be certain that they do so in all respects as theirs are available only in Dutch and



my knowledge of them is based only on private emails from Franken and on Franken 2015: 72-79). It should be clear however that I take a different position to them in relation to my understanding of legitimate state support for religion and ethno-religious communities and their understanding of what support is legitimate from the point of view liberal egalitarian state neutrality (a position which they elaborate but do not necessarily endorse, Franken and Loobuyck, 2012: 479, 497).

Very finally, in the discussion of Flemish multiculturalism I noted in chapter 2 that state schools allow students to be absent on up to six holy days of all religious denominations recognized by the Belgian Constitution. This is remarkably multiculturalist and Flanders may be the only place in Europe or even the only Christian-heritage place that does this, a practice more common in Muslim majority countries such as Indonesia and Senegal, and also India (Stepan 2011). On the other hand, the ban on 'ostentatious religious dress', such as the Muslim headscarf, Jewish kippa or Sikh turban, in Belgian state schools goes in the opposite direction and aligns Flanders with some of the most anti-multiculturalist practice in Europe.

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#### **4. Ethnic Diversity, Delinquency and Terrorism in Belgium**

Frank Bovenkerk

This section addresses two issues in themselves only indirectly related to the multicultural society and diversity policy, but nonetheless often associated with them in the public debate. In Belgium, efforts are made to exercise restraint and ignore ethnic descent in the crime statistics. This is understandable since the subject can cause political aversion in some of the country's native citizens. High crime rates and terrorist attacks are unjustly cited throughout Europe as evidence of a failing multicultural society. At the same time, they are part and parcel of our daily reality and deserve to be further examined if the debate is to be conducted in a serious fashion. For some critics, research into problems of this kind in an ethnic group sends the wrong message. Summarising everything that is going wrong and emphasizing the need for integration can easily put the blame on the disadvantages of the group in question. I cannot agree with this reluctant Belgian attitude. The goal of my perspective is to promote inclusive citizenship and to avert society from growing into a system of ethnic inequality. Unfortunately that is not feasible without first making a detour to examine the problems. After identifying the problems I shall indicate what type of solutions have been successfully tried out in countries where the results of scientific results have been faced.

##### **For and against research into ethnicity and delinquency as a subject**

What do we know about the ethnicity of juvenile delinquency and the causes of modern terrorism? What are the problems facing people affected by them and those in charge of formulating and implementing policy in this field? What direction should they be looking in for solutions?

To provide initial answers, we need statistical and other factual information about ethnic backgrounds. In the first and up to now only effort to present an overview of research into immigration and crime in Belgium, Hebberecht (1997) is surprised to note there are barely any figures available. Isn't Belgium where Adolphe Quetelet (1796-1874) was from, one of the first to see the usefulness of statistics in social science and criminography? Hebberecht does his utmost to gather material from municipal authorities and police forces, but only manages to get hold of one internal Antwerp police report. He does cite prison system figures, but they only register foreigners and fail to include second-generation immigrants with Belgian citizenship.

In pursuit of recent research results, we are struck by this as a hot item. In fact as soon as the theme comes up, Belgian criminologists spontaneously reminisce about a related controversy in the year 2000. An assignment given by Minister of Justice Marc Verwilghen to criminologist Marion van San, who had recently gotten her Ph.D. in the Netherlands, to gather data about crime rates among youngsters of various ethnic minorities led to protests from fellow criminologists (Brion 2001). The Minister's later refusal to present the research results to the public led to even more objections. The report was nonetheless published in 2001 (Van San and Leerkes 2001). The quantitative data were based on material they had gathered themselves and did not include figures opponents could object to. It was not the research the colleagues objected to, it was the research theme.

The ultimate result of this unfortunate start of a potentially productive and relevant research theme in the history of criminology is a carefully considered list of *objections* to this theme. (1) Theoretical: The choice of the subject can solely be based upon essentialist reasoning. It is as if culture or ethnicity directly incite crime. In addition, it is erroneous to ascribe relatively high crime rates in certain disadvantaged neighbourhoods to minorities that live there. (2) Empirical: The research is redundant since earlier studies already demonstrated that variations in the crime rates of specific ethnic minorities can be explained by a combination of socio-economic factors and selectivity in the conduct of the police and criminal justice apparatus. This is the dominant paradigm in Belgian criminology. (3) Social and political: Research of this kind can easily encourage stigmatisation of certain groups and contribute to their marginalisation. As a matter of fact, ever since the 1980s the populist party *Vlaams Belang* has been blaming immigrants for high crime rates and other social evils. Registering national descent also goes against Belgian immigration policy. Immigrants should become Belgian as rapidly as possible and children of the second and third generations would not appreciate being called just that.

There are also arguments in favour of the theme. (1) The main theoretical objection is that researchers willfully overlook questions nonetheless relevant to formulating a theory of cultural diversity. By rejecting studies in advance, the Belgian research community loses touch with a theme in criminology. Theories on the multicultural society cannot be developed without empirical research. To be sure, studies on crime and delinquency are conducted in Belgium but often focus on social constructions of social problems and not on the problems themselves. (2) The empirical sciences can only move forward by constantly testing questions presented by the research of others. There is ample knowledge on this theme in other countries. No researcher can seriously claim to have the final answer. (3) It would seem as if the academic world in Belgium has long been faced with a taboo. Readers will be struck by how passionately the discussion has been conducted (Smet 2006). But taboos do not belong in the world of science. The question remains though whether the wariness the topic inspires in Belgium really leads to the desired result. Deliberately ignoring an existing problem entails the risk of it becoming politically unmanageable. (4) The main social argument against overlooking research into ethnicity and crime is that racist agitation cannot be refuted with scientific facts. What is more, a dearth of research makes it less politically urgent to take measures to remedy undesirable situations.

Where do stand today in 2017 with the criminology research practice? Researchers at the Youth Research Platform, where Stefan Pleysier is one of the supervisors, write about it and are more apt to blame an unfamiliarity with crime-related data in Belgium as a society of diversity on ‘general criminographic poverty’ than on denial of the problems (Cops et al. 2014, 2015). This might well be the case, but to this day, it is still impossible to precisely state the level of registered crime in a group with a specific ethnic background. As a consequence of this Belgian attitude, time and again each researcher has to compile his own research population, random sample or research group. There are research studies interviewing small numbers of usually young people with an immigration background. Self-reported delinquency studies are conducted at schools that relatively easily reach more respondents. But a larger overview is still lacking.

### **Immigration and crime**

Based upon international literature, which patterns of crime can be expected in Belgian immigration society? There are certain aspects that keep coming up in the literature. Firstly, there is the observation that immigrants themselves, the first generation, exhibit just as much criminal conduct as say the average man in Belgian society or even less. There are four reasons why. (a) Immigrants from the countryside were brought up in a society with a great deal of social control and tend to obey the rules. (b) Their legal position is still so uncertain that they do not want to risk getting in trouble with the police. (c) The men of the first generation migratory workers have a job that is not compatible with criminal conduct. (d) A successful criminal career requires a certain knowledge of the new country that they do not have yet. Bui & Thongniramol (2005) remind us that these aspects were observed in the United States for the first time in 1901 and again in 1931 by the Wickersham Commission. Robert J. Simpson (2008) demonstrates that urban neighbourhoods in the United States are now safer with immigration than without it and Lee & Martinez (2009) arrive at a simple conclusion in their title *Immigration Reduces Crime*. That the first generation is less rather than more criminal, as opponents to immigration often think, was first observed in post-war Europe by Ferracuti of the Council of Europe in 1968. After inspecting the crime figures all across Western Europe, Solivetti arrived at the same conclusion in 2010.

### **The cultural delict**

The term *cultural delicts or offenses* refers to acts by members of minorities that the dominant culture's legal system defines as punishable. Sometimes they involve relatively innocent issues such as differing funeral customs or ritual slaughter and there are also cases where perpetrators simply are not aware something is unlawful. But there are also more serious cultural customs that can involve fatalities, such as female genital mutilation or honour killings. In the suspect's group, this behaviour might be tolerated, accepted as normal or even admired. In the dominant culture, this behaviour is against the law. The perpetrators, who claim to consider these acts necessary, have allowed the views of their own culture to prevail. After honour killings, perpetrators sometimes turn themselves in to the police. During the court proceedings, people in the public gallery might express their admiration for him for defending the honour of his family. This kind of cultural conflict means a test for the viability of the multicultural society.

People unwilling to give cultural diversity any consideration hold that everyone who voluntarily settles in another country implicitly agrees to respect the laws of that country. A suspect who fails to do so needs to be held accountable before a criminal court. He cannot use the excuse that it is the fault of his culture. Countries protect the interests of all their residents (the right to live and be protected from threats and violence, and have their property and possessions safeguarded) and cannot allow members of ethnic groups to settle matters in their own way. One underlying aim is to promote assimilation. The state might prevent or discourage cultural offenses by distributing information about the democratic rule of law, but if offenses are committed, they need to be punished. If the state fails to do so, penalisation would lose its deterrent effect.

There is however also a line of reasoning that does take diversity into account. Its point of departure is that different legal cultures do exist and to a certain extent, it propagates respect for the rights of minorities. In the end though, national law is dominant and in a sense, this implies the discrimination of minorities. In the cultural relativistic approach, minorities can wish their cultural views to be taken seriously and accepted in their defense as justifications or excuses in criminal cases. This notion can

be defended by pointing out that the right to preserve and implement one's own culture is recognised in international agreements (see International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 27). Voices are heard in the United States in favour of explicitly including the cultural defense as a defense option in penal law. This did not happen there, by the way, and is not likely to happen any time soon in Europe either. The formalisation of legal pluralism, which is what this would actually imply, would produce an inconsistent and unmanageable system.

In practice, these standpoints can be reconciled. Firstly, severe offenses like homicide are punishable in any case as violations of internationally accepted human rights, which are part of the democratic rule of law and leave no leeway for compromises. And international law keeps pace with them. An agreement of the Council of Europe in 2015 on violence against women and children now specifies that honour can never be a justification for violence.

There is however space for diversity in the criminal justice system. A judge arrives at a decision on punishment in each criminal case on the grounds of the criminal act, the circumstances it was committed under, and the specifics of the individual perpetrator. Judges have a great deal of freedom in Belgium and can choose from a huge and varied arsenal of sentences and measures. In concrete cases, they can take suspects' culture into consideration, as is also done with their gender and socio-economic class. He can add the fact that a perpetrator was provoked in public to the circumstances of the case. The attitude of suspects in court sometimes comes as quite a surprise, for example if they continue to insist they are innocent despite all the evidence to the contrary. This can be a reason for a judge to want to know more about the suspect's culture. In fact the judge can invite an expert on this culture to the courtroom to help explain the suspect's behaviour. Up to now, this has rarely been done in Belgium.

All across the globe, a great deal has been written and studied about diversity and criminal law in the past twenty years. Adjustments have been made in the justice system, political decisions have been made about it by legislators, and in countries where there is an openness to a multiculturalist way of thinking, jurisprudence guidelines have been drawn up. From the very start, Belgium has actively participated in the academic discussion (see for example Foblets 1998), which however has not had much effect on the jurisprudence. Several years ago Luc Huybrechts, the retired former Department Chairman of the Court of Appeal, wrote an (undated) manuscript on multiculturalism in jurisprudence, discussing all the places in Belgian criminal law where the culture of ethnic minorities might play a role in the interpretation of behaviour. Based on this manuscript, the Legal Training Institute organised a course, but only that one time. In point of fact, barely anything has changed and it is as if the diversity of the Belgian population is simply overlooked in the criminal justice system. Very recently, however, a Green Book was presented at a city festival in Mechelen with fifteen proposals for a better justice system. Cultural sensitivity was encouraged in the jurisprudence. What is more, after half a century of mass immigration, it would not be a bad idea to appoint more than the handful of ethnic minority judges now employed at the courts. The Public Prosecutor's Office has no more than two public prosecutors with a Moroccan background in the entire country. The authors of the Green Book feel that sooner or later, continuing to deny the issue would definitely lead to a legitimacy problem. It is no longer acceptable for white people to be the only ones to judge ethnic minorities in court. What is more, the judgment of a public prosecutor of colour would be easier for ethnic minority perpetrator.

## **Second generation delinquency**

Secondly, it is clear from the literature that the children run a higher risk of getting into trouble with the police and the justice system. However, this only holds true for certain ethnic groups and certainly not for all of them. Here we come up against the inadequacy of the statistical data in Belgium. The distinction between first and second-generation immigrants often fails to be drawn and the categories are far too broad for us to truly comprehend the issue.

If immigrant groups do well and are relatively law abiding, this is usually attributed to the social and cultural capital they brought with them. If a second generation exhibits criminal tendencies, they are concentrated in young men of lower socio-economic classes. In Belgium, this is elaborated upon as regards the socio-economic lag in a model of 'social vulnerability' (Vettenburg & Walgrave 2008). According to this theory, higher crime rates are also caused by decision-making selectivity in the criminal justice chain.

But not all disadvantaged ethnic groups exhibit higher than average registered crime rates. They do not differ much as regards their structural integration and socio-economic profile but in the Netherlands, the Turkish second generation exhibits far less criminal conduct than the Moroccan. Cops et al. (2014) draw the same conclusion from a survey of 2,500 pupils in the 14-16 age group at Flemish schools in Brussels. This difference can be explained by examining the second form of integration, the socio-cultural component of the process. One might expect more rapid integration to produce less criminal conduct, but the opposite is the case. Relatively rapidly integrating groups that lag behind socio-economically are the most exposed to frustration, which can explain criminal conduct as a covert form of protest. In the words of British criminologist Jock Young (2007: 140), 'It is the second generation of immigrants who have become assimilated to the values of the wider society who must feel relative deprivation, the discontent of which frequently leads to higher crime rates.'

A serious footnote should be added to the common notion that high crime rates are caused by poverty, unemployment and discrimination acting as an obstacle to success. The causality can sometimes work the other way around. Youngsters who are juvenile delinquents even before they leave school or can apply for a job ruin their own chances in advance. To youngsters who grow up surrounded by the temptations of a life of crime, juvenile delinquency is the customary norm. Getting arrested in these surroundings does not mean you lose face and no one is really that afraid of the penalties any more. So it is not just the deprivation that leads to crime, it is also the crime that leads to deprivation.

## **Culture as explanation of second generation delinquency**

It is tempting to attribute marked differences in the crime rates of various groups similar in their extent of structural integration to the cultural factor. This explanation has given rise to so much resistance one might wonder whether a monolithic concept like culture is of any use in this connection. It might be useful where cultural crimes are concerned, but in general the crime pattern of second-generation young men can barely be distinguished from that of their peers, if at all. Here I would first like to repeat the objection that the concept of culture can be used in an essentialist way.

In early anthropology, culture is often presented as concentrated around a specific core or essence such as honour, shame or collectivism. Material facts as well as norms and values are perceived as manifestations of this essence. From this perspective, cultures constitute static entities and any mixture of various cultures is an anomaly. The *culturalisation* or *orientalisation* of concrete crimes can lead to premature conclusions. Homophobic acts of violence for example are easily ascribed to North African perpetrators without any further evidence.

In cases of concrete crimes, it is frequently extremely difficult to identify the underlying causal process. In criminology, we prefer to consider general risk factors that have been theoretically backed and empirically tested. These factors can include social control, an authoritarian style of parenting or cutting classes at school. The anthropological concept of culture can coexist with this criminological theory in so far as general risk factors of this kind are unequally divided over various ethnic groups. In Flemish criminography, I have repeatedly come across comments about second-generation Moroccan boys often being on the street late at night in a group and without supervision (see e.g. Casman et al. 1992, Duchateau 2004). This obviously has to do with the freedom Moroccan parents often give their sons. The general mechanism of absent parental control thus leads to a greater risk of crime among second-generation Moroccans.

A younger generation of researchers calls the culture they see among groups of youths *street culture* (De Jong 2007). It is clear that youngsters act very differently than their parents in every way. They have attended school in the new country and speak its language. They meet youngsters of a different ethnic background on the street. They no longer reproduce the culture of their parents, their socialization goes via their peers and piece by piece, they are actively crafting their own culture. This is most clearly illustrated in the street language they use, the way they dress, and the typical *tough guy* gestures they use. Criminologists who have observed these groups in Europe (in the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Germany and France) tend to refer to American studies on youth gangs in urban disadvantaged neighbourhoods and no longer to their immigration background.

The current fashion is to use the *cultural dissonance* theory to make deviant behaviour easier to comprehend. Youngsters with foreign roots need to find their way between the culture of their parents and the ways of the host society. The difficulties this entails are especially evident in groups where the system of traditional normative control no longer functions effectively. The more individualistic the group's mind set is, the greater the chance of social disorganization. This can lead to successful careers outside the ethnic concentration area, but it can also lead to criminal activities or psychological disorders. At the individual level, Berry (1997) distinguishes four logical ways to cope with *acculturation stress*. Once the new society has been internalised in all its aspects, we can speak of *assimilation*. *Separation* is precisely the opposite. Youngsters opt to live their lives completely inside their own original culture. *Integration* means youngsters function well in the home culture of their parents as well as the new culture of the host society. *Marginalisation* is observed when youngsters reject both the culture of their parents and the host culture. In this last case, there is a clear risk of slipping into a life of crime. Berry has found that the acculturation strategy of integration is the most satisfactory option and declares himself a supporter of multiculturalism (San & Berry, 2016).

El Hadioui (2011) classifies the options in a different way. He describes how, coming from an eminently individualistic culture, boys with a Moroccan background are faced with identity insecurity. They need to find their way between a matrifocal home culture, the feminine school



culture and the masculine street culture. It often goes well and children can easily alter the role they play whenever they switch from one circle to another. But sometimes things go wrong and youngsters run the risk of marginalisation.

With these typologies, we have now arrived at an observation style that views multicultural diversity as the product of different ethnic or cultural identities. This has the advantage that individuals can make their own choices (agency). Diverse societies produce multiple, layered and mixed forms of identities. In a hostile environment, reactive identities emerge in response to discrimination and exclusion. The film *Scarface* (1983) with Al Pacino shows a classic example of an individual who opts for a life of crime. The film is about a Cuban immigrant who takes over a drug cartel and succumbs to greed. Hellemont (2015) describes the subculture of criminal gangs of drug dealers and extortionists that developed among Congolese youngsters in the Matongé district of Brussels. This study is a good example of choosing a new identity and striving for your own gang myth. A series of American films on drug lords in black ghettos in the U.S. starting with *New Jack City* served as a source of inspiration.

### **The containment of crime**

Is there a good reason to address the issue of criminality among the second and third immigrant generations from a multicultural perspective? Our diversity and multifarious ethnic identities do not make matters any simpler. Special crime prevention projects can be developed focused on specific groups or multicultural neighbourhoods. Proposals have been made to punish youngsters in a way that is effective within their own culture. The projects often look attractive but no matter how positive and enthusiastic their designers might be about them, evaluation studies on their effectiveness are still scarce. However, by involving neighbourhood organisations in crime prevention efforts, a support system is created for social control and this seems promising. Very recently, Leerkes et al. (2017) responded to the question posed by comparing the crime figures in a number of Dutch towns that had or had not instituted a multicultural policy. The former have far better results.

Does the repressive apparatus need to multiculturalise? The answer is a categorical NO. Second-generation youngsters largely commit the same criminal acts as their peers. Why should they be treated any differently? In fact members of visible minorities are already treated differently in Belgium by the police and courts, and not in a positive way. Belgian criminology has produced ample studies demonstrating without exception that minorities are systematically treated worse than the native population. People of colour are more apt to be stopped and arrested by the police, foreigners are systematically more often kept in temporary custody and on the average, members of ethnic minorities with similar criminal records are given longer prison sentences for committing the same offences as the native population. Belgium does not differ from the rest of Western Europe in this respect. The issue of unequal treatment in the criminal justice system is a high priority on the research agenda all over and in Europe technically excellent studies have demonstrated the effects of discrimination (see for France Pager 2010 and for the Netherlands the research report on inequality in courtroom sentencing by Wermink et al. 2017). To combat this inequality, more uniform criteria for sentencing are recommended, be it at the expense of the judges' decision-making discretion (see for Belgium D'Hondt, 2004). Separate courses of cultural sensitivity for judges are also recommended, but the results are unclear. A course might open their eyes to the suspects' backgrounds, but could also easily lean towards exercises in orientalism.

## **Ethnic profiling**

In pro-active police work, ethnic profiling can be defined as a tendency to stop and search people based on their visible ethnic or racial features with disproportionate frequency in cases with no reasonable justification. In addition, the police tend to be unnecessarily rough. This tendency has been observed virtually all across Western Europe, and the objections are equally ubiquitous. In particular, picking up foreigners for a routine check is felt as intimidating. In 1991, this incited the outbreak of what was labeled riots in Vorst and St. Gilles in the Brussels area. In Belgium, researchers from Ghent followed the work of the police in this connection and concluded that the relations between police and youngsters with an immigrant background were miserable (Easton et al. 2009). According to the researchers, selective stop and search practices could be seen as a consequence of the prevailing police culture. During their training, police teach each other informally which minorities are most likely to be in the possession of drugs, arms or stolen property. This selection is based on common stereotypes.

Police work is always selective, and in these neighbourhoods the intervention police officers, who are often young and have no special ties with the district, feel they know exactly what the young men look like who they are supposed to stop. Much more thought is put into community policing, with police officers who have invested time and energy in building their relationship with the local residents. The higher police ranks implicitly go along with the practice of ethnic profiling, which makes it difficult to monitor this police method from outside. Comité P, the agency that supervises the police in Brussels, does not receive many complaints, which can be explained by a general unwillingness to come forward. Recently, the police forces of two Flemish municipalities did allow other researchers from the University of Ghent to go along in the police cars when the areas were being patrolled and observe the interaction with the public (Van Damme 2017). Their study constituted a test of the theory of procedural fairness. The strongest predictor of citizens' cooperation and respect for police work turned out to be the police behaving correctly and according to the rules.

So much research has since been conducted in Europe on police conduct and so many remedies have been tried to eliminate ethnic profiling that we know very well what doesn't work and what does. It is pointless for example to punish individual policemen for racism. What we are looking at is a structural problem. Maintaining the procedural fairness referred to above is a first step towards solving the problem. Without meaning to, the German police gave a good example. In accordance with the German criminal proceedings principle of legality, every police officer has to declare why he stopped a citizen (Lukas & Gauthier, 2011). The entire style of policing is more formalised than elsewhere. It seems to work well, because the issue barely plays a role in Germany. And in a hierarchic system like a police force, measures to achieve this will only succeed if the people in charge back them and enforce compliance.

The same holds true if the police seriously decide to implement a multicultural personnel policy. A policy of this kind is usually promoted based on the assumption that the police force stands to gain legitimacy if its personnel is a reflection of the population. There are also more practical considerations. Minority police officers can use their ethnic expertise and hopefully have a corrective effect if rules are broken. Janssens & Ferez (2015) note that diversity is not a subject taught at police academies in Belgium. This needs to change. Prospective police officers should learn that the natural police instinct to *catch the bad guys* should not mean chase the minorities. Only if they truly

understand this can they see why this practice is counter-productive. Effective police work is based on cooperation with the population. This point of departure is even more true when it comes to the last topic to be addressed here.

### **The issue of terrorism**

Shortly after the attacks at Brussels Airport and in the Metro on 22 March 2016, Kristel Beyens (2016) wrote an item in the Belgian criminology journal *Panopticon* about the frightening effects of terrorism itself and the authorities' response. It was not clear yet what the underlying causes of the violence were and it was uncertain whether state interventions were proportional and effective or perhaps counter-productive, but one thing was clear, public life had come to a halt and this was helping to disrupt multicultural society. There was no room for relativity. What does it mean that we are statistically more likely to die an unnatural death in an accident at home or in traffic than as a victim of terrorism? The frightening thing is knowing it can happen, Beyens notes that it is a risk of the *known unknowns* type. The disruptive and polarizing effect resonates with the uncertainties of life in a modern risk society.

After the huge attacks in New York and Washington on 9/11 in 2001, there were feverish efforts throughout academia to reveal what made the terrorists do it. It is true that there are also other forms of violent extremism, but from that moment on, attention has focused on Islamic terrorism. Since there is so little consensus about exactly what terrorism is and its manifestations seem to constantly alter their form and contents, conducting research has not been simple. Discourses have been written on the root causes of terrorism. Efforts have been made to examine whether it is Islam itself that incites terrorism. Assumptions have been made about a process of radicalisation always preceding a terrorist act. The motivations of perpetrators have been analysed. The activities of recruiters have been inspected. Pathways have been distinguished leading youngster towards violence. Subcultures of likeminded jihadist youngsters have been described that might be characterised as being fascinated with death. Studies have revealed an overlap with ordinary criminality in the life courses of the youngsters. The psychology of lone-actor terrorists has been analysed. The role of social media has been addressed, enabling youngsters to be inspired by ISIS. The pattern of foreign fighters leaving for the Middle East has been examined. The selection of potential targets for attacks has been recorded. The data have been incorporated into comprehensive models.

It is difficult to make academically tenable statements about the phenomenon because there are so few terrorists. Every time a perpetrator profile is proposed, there are far too many people that match the description but do not commit terrorist acts or even think about doing so. This is why the predictive value of these proposed profiles is so limited. Up to now, there has been no convincing answer to the question of why some countries witness so many attacks and others so few. Why did so many youngsters leave Belgium for Syria and Iraq? And in Belgium itself, who would expect to find a terrorist cell in a town like Verviers? Poor socio-economic conditions, the factor that usually comes to mind first in Belgium, is not so decisive after all.

In 2015, Europol concluded that 'Religion may thus not be the initial or primary drive of the radicalisation process, but is merely offering a window of opportunity to overcome personal issues. They may perceive that a decision to commit an attack in their own country may transform them from *zero to hero*' (Coolsaet 2017: 227). Olivier Roy (2015) believes that only individual trajectories lead to terrorism and there is no radicalisation of whole communities taking place. This seems to be the

latest insight. He expands upon this reasoning by stating that a radicalisation process can precede a surrender to the jihadist version of Islam instead of the other way around (Roy 2017). The proven crime-terror nexus in the career of many terrorists (Basra & Neuman 2016) makes this notion even more plausible. This provides a link to the discourse here on the nature of the criminality of second-generation immigrants.

This labyrinth of ideas has given us a whole industry of terrorism experts, profilers and specialists in deradicalising. Professionals who are close to the group where radicalisation is anticipated such as teachers, youth workers and neighbourhood police officers, are trained to recognise signs of extremism. The criminal justice system is prepared for early intervention, people returning from the Middle East have to appear in court to account for their actions and if they are convicted, they are kept in separate detention centres. It would be a blessing if these professionals knew which preventive or repressive approaches would help, but the programmes have barely been evaluated. And once again, there is an insurmountable methodological problem. When can an approach be considered successful? If there have not been any attacks? If enough attacks have been stopped? If radicalised individuals turn away from violence? It is only logical that a programme is only considered successful if there are fewer acts of terrorism than would have been the case without the intervention. But testing this notion would require a control group of violent radicals with nothing in their way, and for ethical reasons alone, this is infeasible. So for the time being, we are still in the dark.

In the analyses of the Belgian situation, numerous references are made to intervention options at the local level (Coolsaet 2017). It is thus acknowledged that this is not a problem that comes from abroad, it is about Belgian youngsters and their extremism is home grown. One of the intervention options involves various departments consulting about a case. Sometimes this goes nicely, as it did in Vilvoorde, but there are also mayors who do not want to admit that there is a problem under their watch. In Antwerp, it requires strenuous efforts to launch a cooperative network of this type.


How is deradicalisation policy addressed? Molenbeek is considered the most unruly part of Brussels and Mechelen presents itself as a town where the problem is under control. Of course the two are not comparable, if only because of the difference in the size of the Muslim population there and because Molenwijk South is a typical transit area for immigrants whereas the Muslims of Mechelen have basically settled there for good. But there are similarities. All across the country, the repression and prevention of terrorism are separate policy fields that different Ministries are in charge of. So a common difficulty is always that the people who carry out the policy have to start locally to build up mutual trust. What difficulties have to be surmounted in these two districts?

The fact that it is so difficult to combat terrorism in Molenbeek is blamed on the incapacity of the administration. Devroe & Ponsaers (2017) demonstrate to outsiders how improbably complicated the administration of this district is. In another publication, they explain why the plans made at the higher political levels simply do not reach the local level (Ponsaer & Devroe 2016). Law and order are safeguarded in Brussels by no less than six separate police forces. The size of the police force in Molenbeek, by far the most problematic district, is the smallest of the six. It is the least popular district among police officers, and instead of investing in lasting contacts with the residents, police officers generally would prefer to work somewhere else in a few years. The extra police manpower assigned here to cope with the threat of terrorism consists of no more than fifty police officers from other forces who only show up in the event of an acute danger. It is always difficult to launch

consultations among the various parties such as social workers, neighbourhood police officers and members of the security services because none of them want to violate their confidentiality obligation. Local consultations with the community are extremely problematic for the simple reason that residents with a Moroccan background do not constitute a community.

After terrorists commit acts of violence, the police and security services, and in fact the public at large as well, wonder why the individuals who must have seen this coming, the perpetrators' relatives, neighbours and classmates, didn't go to the authorities. Perhaps it is a matter of shame, maybe Muslims are sick and tired of constantly being associated with crimes they had nothing to do with. Maybe it is because the closest relatives could not imagine anything like this happening. In retrospect, there often seem to have been signs. In the context of Molenbeek, anthropologist Johan Leman (2017), who spent years living close to the Muslims there, presented a standpoint that makes matters clearer. Omertà, as he calls it, is linked in part to the solidarity among friends who lead a marginal life. It is more important, however, to follow the principle of loyalty segmentarisation characteristic of a tribal society (e.g. in the Rif mountains). A cultural explanation after all! Basically what this principle amounts to is that depending on the problem requiring a solution, people turn to a higher or lower authority within the tribal framework. It is a question of the solidarity of the nuclear familiar versus the extended family, families from one lineage or village versus other lineages or villages, people from the Rif mountains or Berbers versus Arab Morocco, Muslims versus other religions or beliefs. In Leman's view, remaining silent and refusing to talk to the authorities does not automatically mean approval of the behaviour of extremists, but it is group solidarity that wins in the end.

Alexander van Leuven, who is responsible for deradicalisation policy in Mechelen, writes that the authorities in his town responded alertly by immediately deporting recruiters for the Jihad. Then the social fabric of the Moroccan segment of the population was activated. It is not clear why it worked in this case and not in other towns and neighbourhoods with large Moroccan populations, but in the words of Van Leuven and his impassioned Mayor, Moroccans feel at home in Mechelen! This is surprising as Moroccans from the Rif are always portrayed as individualistic. There is an inclusive policy, the authorities are positive about diversity and according to Leuven, the Local Integral Security Cell that conducts regular consultations between the Mayor, the Public Prosecutor and the Police Chief, could not be going more smoothly (Van Leuven 2017). This example is definitely worth examining more closely.



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