'Next Wave' Multiculturalism, 'Multiplexity' and Diversity Management

Shenaz Bunglawala and Mohammed Aziz

It is remarkable that more than a quarter of a century on from the election of a previous Labour Government in 1997 - which brought with it a new discourse on equality and integration - and almost a quarter of a century since the Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain gave expression to what a model of national cohesion in a multicultural society might look like, British Muslims still find themselves contending with what seem to be perennial questions about their identity, belonging and place in society (Modood, 1992, Modood, 2010). Seen as a 'suspect community', the 'Trojan horse', and the 'enemy within', Muslims are the least favourably regarded faith group in the UK (Bunglawala, 2020) who casually experience 'dinner table prejudice' (Jones and Unsworth, 2022), which has led some prominent British Muslims to declare that Islamophobia is 'Britain's bigotry blind spot' (Warsi, 2024).

As we look forward to the next quarter century, one might forgive British Muslims for thinking they are stepping into Doctor Who's Tardis and travelling back in time. Reading the copious amount of commentary in our media at the start of 2024 surrounding the prayer ban at the Michaela School and the legal challenge mounted by a Muslim pupil to have the ban revoked, it brought to mind the emphatic refrain of a former Prime Minister, Theresa May, 'nothing has changed, nothing has changed.' Observing the far-right racist riots that took place in towns and cities in the UK in the summer of 2024, and reflecting back on the causes and responses to the race riots in cities in the north of England in 2001, it can sometimes feel to British Muslims as though 'nothing has changed' in the intervening period.

Since the Michaela Affair, articles impugning the perils of accommodating religion in a secular education system (Toynbee, 2024) abounded amid accusations of the 'grievance industry' (Nelson, 2024) and Islam as a 'hostile ideology' (Timothy, 2024). However, despite critics from left and right deriding the notion and lampooning any deviation from a strict secularism, multiculturalism in the UK is lived out every day in the myriad ways in which faith is accommodated in our public sphere (Uberoi and Modood, 2012). But what the events surrounding the controversy around the school's invocation of a prayer ban and a Muslim pupil's attempt to have it lifted reveal is a deeper tension at the heart of multiculturalism that impacts faith identity and manifestations of faith in the public sphere – as identity is wont to do.

This paper explores why and how these tensions exist and persist. It examines the foundational elements and key characteristics of multiculturalism and assesses the specific limitations in its application to religion as illustrated through examples drawn from the British experience. The article argues that multiculturalism, arising from a specific socio-political history with its secular bias in liberal theory, results in ontological and epistemological deficiencies when applied to religion in a multicultural society. It further introduces the concept of 'multiplexity' as a promising 'new wave' in thinking about diversity management for the full and proper treatment of religion in a pluralist society, drawing on the influence of contemporary political theology on discourses on multiculturalism, and thereby initiates a specifically Islamic variant as a contribution to the field.

Enduring importance of 'living well together' in a diverse society

Muslims are the second largest faith group in the UK, after Christians, and the vast majority of British Muslims live in England, according to the latest census. As with the previous census, Muslims are more likely to identify with a 'British only' national identity than any other. Over seventy per cent of Muslims living in England identify with a 'British only' (72%) national identity compared to less than one per cent who identify as 'English only' (0.95%) and just over one and half per cent (1.7%) who identify as both 'British and English' (ONS, 2023). The propensity to favour a British identity has been variously imputed to the openness of Britishness to other ethnic groups, principally those of non-White ethnicity, over racialised and politicised conceptions of Englishness which are deemed ethnically charged and exclusionary. Other polling, however, suggests ethnic minority attitudes towards English national identity is evolving, with up to a third of minorities claiming to feel equally English and British (British Future, 2022). Though the distribution of ethnic groups in British Muslim communities is changing, and Muslims remain the most ethnically diverse of all religious groups in the UK, the greater proportion of Muslims continue to derive from non-White ethnic groups.

As seen in the results of the most recent general elections, British Muslims are a significant, and growing, social, cultural and political presence. The election of four British Muslims as Independent candidates to Parliament in closely contested campaigns against Labour incumbents in July 2024, on the basis of the main political parties' stance on Gaza – an issue with strong feelings amongst Muslims, giving rise to accusations of 'sectarianism' in mainland British politics – is illustrative of the 'Muslim litmus test' that multiculturalism is often subjected to. The 'litmus test' refers to the differential treatment Muslims perceive when engaging in acts that would otherwise pass without remark were they to be committed by another group in our democratic society. Taken as a sign of the perceived failure of integration, criticism is levelled squarely at what is frequently characterised as a permissive political culture that places a greater onus on difference over cohesion. It would be facile to remind just how derided multiculturalism has become as a result in our public discourse, from proclamations it has 'failed' (Cameron, 2011) to edicts that it is 'dead' (Modood, 2011, 2013). The nature, quality and breadth of derision, however, serve to signify just how potent contemporary conversations are on the need to successfully manage diversity in a multi-ethnic, multi-religious society that simultaneously holds the whole together while liberating the parts of its sum to pursue, nurture and celebrate difference.

For Muslims, it can often feel like the derision reserved for multiculturalism as theory and practice for managing diversity is singularly applied to their particular group. It is important here to distinguish between discourse that is driven from within the Academy, which has its own history of appraisal of multiculturalism as a theory conducive to managing diversity and the public discourse, which here refers to political rhetoric, media commentary and public intellectual polemics. The latter in recent times has been blunt and forthright in its rejection of multiculturalism as a successful tool for managing diversity, with Muslims finding themselves in the crosshairs of critics from both left and right (Phillips, Cameron, 2011). The outpouring of commentary involving the Michaela School incident is just one case in point and demonstrative of the enduring challenges facing British Muslim communities when it comes to staking their claim to recognition and their rights to the accommodation of difference (Holmwood, 2024). There are many other such cases.

The tendency to fixate on religion as a marker of identity and difference that is indisposed to accommodation is not, however, merely a symptom of a malignant public discourse or the

problematisation of certain types of difference when it comes to Muslims. We would argue that the problem emerges in the way in which religion has been 'tacked on' to discourses on difference, identity and recognition, presenting ontological and epistemological weaknesses within the theory and practice of multiculturalism itself. Whatever the motivations of malign actors who deride multiculturalism for its supposed leniency and therefore detraction from a robust model of integration, our argument is that multiculturalism as a theory suffers from innate weaknesses in its handling of religious difference. However, the enduring need for, and importance of, living well together in a diverse society remains – and hence the need to interrogate and remedy the weaknesses as identified.

Multiculturalism and the politics of difference
Multiculturalism as a concept and tool for managing diversity emerges from the academic literature on difference, identity and recognition and derives from the political philosophical traditions of liberalism and pluralism (Uberoi and Modood, 2019). As Modood argues, reflecting on his pioneering work in the field, he was driven by a desire to remain 'faithful to a certain intellectual position or intellectual legacy, which I identify with Will Kymlicka, Bhikhu Parekh, and Charles Taylor' (Modood et al, 2024: 21). That intellectual position centres on the ways in which minorities are recognised and accommodated in diverse societies and where equality is not merely procedural but substantive in its quest and impact; where recognition of difference is viewed as 'a vital human need' (Taylor, 1994: 26) – the 'withholding' of which 'can be a form of oppression' (Taylor, 1994: 36).

Contrasting multiculturalism to older, outdated or oppressive models of diversity management, such as assimilation, individualist integration or cosmopolitanism, Modood distinguishes the public/private and majority/minority dynamics involved in the different models. Assimilation is seen as a one-way street 'where 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' (Modood, 2011: 4). Faith identities may persist but in a purely private capacity. Such would correspond to the 'withholding' description that Taylor considers 'a form of oppression'.

Individualist integration acknowledges that change is a two-way street, but invokes differential burdens on groups in society, privileging those for whom group-based identities are less significant by being the majority, and placing a greater onus on 'individualist' forms of interaction and integration by those from minority groups. The result, Modood argues, is that 'minority communities may exist as private associations but are not recognised or supported in the public sphere' (Modood, 2011: 4). Such a reading of integration accords with liberalism's preference for the 'unencumbered self' but presents stark disadvantages to minority communities for whom group-based identities are either an essential or functional way of organising in the public sphere.

Multiculturalism, by contrast, subverts the public/private distinction and upends the majority/minority asymmetry by rendering the responsibility for cohesion as co-owned, that is, of majority and minority concern, which plays out in both public and private spheres. 'Multiculturalism', Modood writes, 'is where processes of integration are seen both as two-way and as involving groups as well as individuals and working differently for different groups' (Modood, 2011: 4). Modood draws a distinction between multiculturalism that places groups at the centre of discourses on difference, identity and accommodation, and that which recognises the concept of difference but undermines or vacillates on the subject of group identities, organisation and recognition. The former, for Modood, is multiculturalism, the

latter, cosmopolitanism. Modood's work in the area of multiculturalism stands out for three principal reasons: the importance given to group identity and accommodation, the primacy given to religion as a marker of difference and identity (Modood, 2007) and the significant engagement with the British context (Modood, 2007, 2013).

Commenting on the emergence of the new social movements and the evolution of political theory and practice to recognise and accommodate these 'new' conceptions of identity in the public sphere – gender, race and sexuality – Modood's work challenged the restrictiveness of these categories on identity formation and expressly posited the exclusion of religion as a marker of identity as a problem for discourses on equality and equal citizenship. His work has championed the widening of the politics of difference, the 'multi' in multiculturalism, to recognise 'religion' as a key variable in diverse societies, particularly but not exclusively in the UK context, and marshalled a theory for managing diversity and creating the conditions for successful social cohesion through the proper recognition of groups based on their self-ascribed identities, including religion. As Modood observes, 'any political norm that excludes religious identities from the public space, from schools and universities, from politics and nationhood . . . is incompatible with multicultural citizenship; and 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' (Modood, 2019: 186).

The Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain, of which Modood was a member, represented this idea of multiculturalism in their preferred description of the UK as a 'community of individuals' and a 'community of communities' (The Parekh Report, Runnymede, 2000). Central to the pursuit of cohesion here is a human rights framework and culture that guarantees the right to difference and protects individuals from discrimination (liberalism), underpinned by an effort at crafting an intertwined, national narrative in which majority and minority communities find voice and representation (pluralism). Moving beyond the Parekh Report, the three limbs on which Modood builds his work are liberty, equality and fraternity (or solidarity), encompassing the 'community of individuals' and 'community of communities' in demonstrative and affective ways with a human rights framework governing individual rights and responsibilities, and an integrative national narrative giving shape to depths of feeling and reciprocal bonds to foster a sense of cohesion and inclusive nationhood among the 'community of communities' (Runnymede, 2000).

A relevant observation to be made at this point is that the 'politics of difference' invariably also entails 'politicking' about difference; and, in many ways, the work Modood has contributed to this field is illustrative of this phenomenon, where efforts to modulate multiculturalism theories to make them amenable and accessible to minority experiences run into obstacles with some communities but not others when the application of theory to practice involves lacklustre or expedient political will with regards to those communities. For many years, British Muslims laboured to have their case heard that theirs was not merely racial discrimination, for which the UK had enacted legislative and administrative instruments, but religious discrimination, for which few provisions existed and, even then, unequally, e.g. state-aided faith schools, of which there were Christian and Jewish institutions but no Islamic ones. Indeed, it was only by virtue of a European legislative instrument that religious discrimination came to be introduced into the UK legal context for the first time, with the introduction of the 2003 EU Directive on employment discrimination on grounds of religion (amongst other characteristics) (Modood, 2003), before evolving to the protections currently available under the 2010 Equality Act, which also extends to goods and services

and the public sector equality duty. In other words, however genial the theory, the proof of the pudding is in the practice, and the latter may diverge significantly from the stated aims of the former. Such has, to some extent, marked the experience of British Muslims rendering multiculturalism a much-recognised theory for diversity management, but not always a reliable one.

British Muslims have lengthy firsthand experience of such politicking with religion expediently weaponised or instrumentalised. For example, when religion has been keenly articulated or problematised in political speech and policy debates even as policies advancing equal treatment for Muslims under the law have been deficient in their regard for religion as a site of difference. The onset of the war on terror from 2001, and the London bombings in 2005 in particular, vastly altered the Muslim presence in the public sphere. After years on the margins of politics 'pushing against the dominant culture and asking for spaces to function' (Modood et al, 2024: 4) with their demands for equality and protection against discrimination on grounds of religion, Muslims came to occupy centre stage. With it came the paradoxical scenes of both the left and right wing of politics engaging with religion in the public sphere, undercutting the secular traditions of the former and the individualist leanings of the latter, though mostly to homogenise Muslims as a group that needed to get their house in order (Blair, 2005, Kelly 2006). Religious 'ideology' was blamed for a panoply of social ills affecting Muslim communities, from gender inequality and female underemployment to youth disaffection and a presumed propensity to anti-systemic violence, all the while championing the engineering of sanitised versions of Islam by favouring certain Islamic orientations and Muslim organisations over others (Communities and Local Government Select Committee, 2010).

It would be wrong to assume that such politicking is a matter of the past. Its traditions live on in the present, with government disengagement with mainstream British Muslim organisations existing alongside efforts to foster a new discourse on diversity, race relations and nationhood by characterising some structural inequalities as the product of 'lifestyle choices' and 'feelings of victimisation', with the politics of victimhood blamed for the rise of far right groups in British politics (Mirza, 2010), and where efforts by British Muslims to campaign for the official adoption of a definition of Islamophobia is characterised as 'grievance-monger[ing]' (Ehsan and Mansfield, 2024: 17), whilst the same was not said in relation to the campaign for the official adoption of a definition of Antisemitism. In the case of British Muslims, multiculturalism has seemed like a tent they have struggled to find a place within even as the tent has been battered and bruised by the winds of change prevailing at any given time and often using them as the target group. The purpose of rehearsing this recent history here is not to settle scores but to underscore that multiculturalism, though clearly not without its critics, bears structural deficiencies when it comes to the accommodation of religion in the public sphere, and that this emerges as much from its politically expedient manipulation as its intellectual legacy.

'Moderate secularism' and liberal presuppositions

Modood and others working with him have more recently tried to address the theoretical and application differences of multiculturalism as applied to religion and particularly Muslims. This new work has been styled the 'Bristol School of Multiculturalism' for its considered and considerable contribution to the field of equality and multicultural citizenship, differentiating it from liberal theories of multiculturalism (Levey, 2019a). There is no doubting the immense contribution Modood (and other members of the Bristol School) have made to the centring of religion as a marker of difference and identity in multiculturalism theory, but there are

problems that persist with the model despite the strides that have been made over the years, and these continue to impact religion and religious identities. The School's limitations are evident on two fronts: ontological/epistemological and political/practical, to which we now turn.

A defining trait of the Bristol School of Multiculturalism is its emphasis on the need for a 'moderate secularism' (Modood, 2009a; 2010, Sealy, 2019) as a governing principle for multicultural citizenship in diverse societies. 'Radical' or 'ideological secularism' of the continental European tradition, with its strict separation of church and state, presents obvious difficulties to the accommodation of religion in the public sphere. 'Accommodative or moderate secularism', Modood argues, is not just the observable reality in most Western European nations, where 'there are points of symbolic, institutional, policy and fiscal linkages between the state and aspects of Christianity' (Modood, 2010: 5), it is also the pragmatic foundations on which the accommodation of minority religious identities can proceed. Moreover, buttressing the centrality of moderate secularism to the Bristol School, Modood has done more recent work on 'rethinking secularism' (Modood, 2019), devising typologies to explain the variable geometry of state-religion connections in different parts of the world and highlighting how claims for the defence of ideological secularism are more populist hyperbole than political or institutional practice (Modood and Sealy, 2022).

While we would acknowledge that state-religion relations in the UK, and elsewhere, are more complex in reality than evoked by secularist or populist cries to keep religion, or Islam specifically, out of the public sphere, we would contend that even 'moderate secularism' as a governing principle or 'condition' for the recognition and accommodation of religion presents an endemic weakness to multiculturalism as a theory. The first argument offered in relation to this critique is that 'moderate secularism' fails to problematise secularism itself as a default setting in a diverse society. It grants the majority culture's historical legacy, constitutional and institutional framework, and political practice and trajectory, a privileged status that may not accord with minority religious views where any separation between religion and the public sphere may not be recognised to the same extent. Moreover, it renders minority religious accommodation in the public sphere contingent on the majority tradition rather than treat it as constitutive of society as a whole. If, as Parekh argues, intercultural dialogue is essential to recognising and negotiating identity and difference in a diverse society, moderate secularism privileges the majority viewpoint from the outset with minorities, to repeat the Parekh quote, 'pushing against the dominant culture and asking for spaces to function' (Modood et al, 2024: 4).

The second, related, argument is that the contingent nature of the accommodations on offer leave minorities grappling with the terms on and by which they are able to articulate their needs and interests. To take the British example, religion as a site of difference has been an evolutionary journey for Muslims quite at odds with the subjectivity of Muslims as a religious group. While British Muslims for decades have been establishing their religious roots in Britain with the provision of halal butchers and the development of Muslim places of worship, religious supplementary schools and cemeteries, all of which have at times required negotiations with state institutions, the 'race' repertoire on offer for ease of intercultural dialogue meant that these conversations proceeded on the bases of 'Pakistani', 'Bangladeshi' or 'Indian' community needs, not explicitly on grounds that these were religious needs and interests. Similarly, the dominance of race over religion in the British context has meant that Muslims have, for a time, organised under racial categories to advance their interests until these became illusory and unworkable. This was deemed necessary because it was felt by

Muslims (and other minority faith groups) that the secular framework would be more antagonistic to the same demands if they were articulated in the language of religion rather than race.

Perhaps the most important reason for articulating religious needs in the race relations repertoire, however, was how the accommodation of religion in law initially developed through race relations caselaw. The case law characterised, protected and met the religious needs and demands of Sikhs, and subsequently Jews, as 'racial groups' under extant race discrimination legislation. Muslims and other minority faith groups believed they would have to follow the same route into the recognition and accommodation of their religious needs and demands. However, caselaw denied Muslims inclusion in the category of race, revealing its limitations and deficiencies as a basis of equality for all minority religious groups, and hence the necessity and emergence of the argument for protection against religious discrimination as a separate ground from race. The rise of religion as a separately recognised site of difference thus owes its trajectory to 'racial equality' that inevitably, as case law evolved, ended up disadvantaging Muslims even as it purported to address their needs on grounds of their race. And these limitations persist when we consider more recent policy interventions which, again, have been narrowly concerned with 'race' though the impacted groups are invariably differentiated by religion (Pakistanis and Bangladeshis); for example, the Race Disparity Audit and the recent announcement of a Equality (Race and Disability) Bill, which seeks to extend gender pay gap reporting to ethnicity and disability but not, markedly, religion.

The point is that where religion was/is not treated *a priori* as a constitutive part of a diverse society, the model of multiculturalism employed did/will invariably reinforce inequalities even as it attempts, through policy and other instruments, to tackle it. Sealy in his work advancing religiosity, and not just religion, as a site of difference in multiculturalism theory, argues that 'sociology with a 'theological ear' (Sealy, 2019) is able to modify the extant limits of multiculturalism thereby broadening the basis for religious accommodation. He argues that it is 'religiosity as the basis of difference that requires recognition if the promise of multiculturalism's positions with regard to social equality and social justice are to be realized with respect to religious subjects' (Sealy, 2019). In similar vein, Thompson and Modood contend that 'if the state treats certain religious communities favourably, then that may enable members of those communities to identify with their political community' (Thompson and Modood, 2022: 5), thereby enabling the pursuit of 'social equality and social justice'. However, we would argue that lending a 'theological ear', while a necessary move, is not a sufficient condition to give full realisation to the deeper limitations of multiculturalism as a theory for diversity management vis-à-vis religion.

Parekh in his rejection of approaches by liberal theorists on multiculturalism highlights the role their liberal presuppositions play in their conceptualisation of minority rights, arguing that where such presuppositions are not critically examined or problematised they inflect liberals' discourses with innate biases. As Parekh notes, 'a [liberal thinker] is… a member of a specific group, within a specific society', whose specific experience is 'taken for granted' (Parekh 2000a: 10, 14). Rather than problematise this position and critically engage with other perspectives, liberals advance their presuppositions to the exclusion of other (minority) ways of thinking reinforcing both their bias and privilege. In more recent work, Parekh presents his differing stance to other members of the Bristol School by emphasising his interest in 'culture' over identity in considerations of multicultural citizenship in a diverse society, noting that he 'give[s] cultural diversity an ontological and epistemological status.

That is cultural diversity, by which I realize and recognise myself. The recognition is not only a recognition of who I am, but that I am. That I'm recognized gives me an affirmation of my identity' (Modood et al, 2024: 3). He explains the relevance of culture to identity formation, communication and reproduction stating that 'Every culture has its repertoire, their own idioms, in terms of which its members reason and learn that manner of discourse' (Modood et al, 2024: 17, Parekh, 2000a). It is notable to us that Parekh conceptualises 'culture' as requiring an ontological and epistemological status. In doing so, he not only invokes the primacy he accords to culture in his theorising on its recognition in a diverse society, he also calls into question the ontological and epistemological foundations of multiculturalism theory in so far as it accepts or rejects the status granted to culture. We argue that the status Parekh argues for culture in this discourse should also be accorded to religion.

These are thus two ways in which Muslims have been disadvantaged when it comes to the 'affirmation of identity'. The first is the secular bias that prevails in British politics even, or especially, on the left which is claimed to be more congenial to the politics of difference. In this regard, Muslims have had to struggle to assert their right to have religion recognised as a site of difference separate to race and analogous to race, gender and sexual orientation. The second is in relation to claims of 'moderate secularism' as a prerequisite to accommodate minority religions, which leaves Muslims in the precarious position of fighting to preserve moderate secularism even as they struggle to carve out their niche within it. If the condition is a requirement for any degree of accommodation, Muslims are left in the position of pushing for 'moderate' secularism to prevail even when they are disadvantaged under it relative to other religions (either in terms of praxis or problematisation of Islam specifically). As British society grows more secular with each passing decade, as evidenced in the decennial census, will 'moderate' secularism survive into the future?

We would argue this demarcation of presuppositions and the revisiting of the ontological and epistemological foundations of multiculturalism theory, whether the liberal or Bristol School, is a helpful starting point and a necessary one to unpack the 'specific group(s), within a specific society', whose thoughts and ideas have thus far shaped the ways in which religion is conceptualised, treated and managed in multiculturalism theory, as well as identifying those whose voices and perspectives have been notably absent. We argue that there should be a more neutral starting point than one which starts with privileging some over others. While the Bristol School advances the cause of religion as a site of difference, we would argue that the ontological and epistemological limitations of multiculturalism remain. Thus, one of the authors here has described his starting point as one of 'integralisation or integralism' by which he means 'a new model characterised by "integ'ation with integrity" on all sides, which would commence with all parties starting from their own terms and respectfully negotiating with those of others towards proactively contributing to and buying into new [national] narratives focused on "the common good" – the process allowing in particular, from the British Muslim perspective, frank dialogical exchanges on liberty of values and their manifestations (whether arising from religious sources or otherwise), equality of accommodation of those manifestations in the public space, and multiple identities, allegiances and loyalties, including theo-political ones, without pre-existing frameworks of domination and expectations of uniformity and conformity towards a particular preconceived vision of fraternity' (Aziz, 2018: 281).

Modood acknowledges the contemporary work of 'next wave' multiculturalism theorists who are engaging and critically appraising the contribution of the Bristol School's primary advocates, noting that their work 'identifies omissions, silences and weakness in the thought

of BSM [Bristol school of multiculturalism] scholars' and by which they seek to 'improve and expand BSM scholarship in the years to come' (Oberoi and Modood, 2019: 17). It is in this vein that we introduce 'multiplexity' as a complimentary theory for diversity management, drawing on an Islamic intellectual heritage that contends with both the ontological and epistemological biases inherent in multiculturalism, whilst proposing a model for social cohesion built on a culture of rights (*adamiyyah* or universal rights) and pluralism (*futuwwah* or altruistic ethics). Futuwwah (which literally means chivalry) or altruistic ethics underlies the 'benign' aspect of pluralism under multiplexity. It contrasts liberalism's focus on individual rights, and the isolating effects of anomie in a society of 'unencumbered selves', with multiplexity's embrace of pluralism with its proper regard for others, hence 'altruistic'.

Political theology and multiculturalism

Going beyond Sealy (2019) and sociological conceptions of multiculturalism 'with a theological ear', Shannahan approaches the question of equality in a diverse society from a viewpoint that argues difference is 'not a problem to be solved' but *a priori* and a manifestation of 'the character of a God who rejoices in difference' (Shannahan, 2010: 43). Shannahan situates his position in political theology to 'fashion a new discourse on diversity' (Shannahan, 2017:1) where a 'hermeneutics of liberative difference can enable the deconstruction of a narrative that problematises difference and [pave] the way for a new progressive discourse of diversity' (Shannahan, 2017:4).

For Shannahan, 'a critical dialogue with political theology can help us in this enterprise because of its engagement with the ethical and belief systems that shape attitudes to diversity' (Shannahan, 2017:20). Central to this endeavour is a recognition of the particular contribution political theology can make to arid discourses on multiculturalism, whether characterised by politicking that renders difference a political football thrashed about on a field marked by left/right polarities or ontological and epistemological shortcomings that leave the recognition and accommodation of religion to the vagaries of a dominant culture and the prevailing zeitgeist. In both instances, religion and its accommodation sits on a precarious perch. Shannahan, drawing on the work of Luke Bretherton, suggests political theology can offer a way out of multiculturalism as a moribund conversation or malign predisposition by appreciating the need for a 'politics that can live with deep plurality over questions of ultimate meaning and…the fact that many communities and traditions contribute to the common good' (Bretherton, 2010: 50).

Using the work of other Christian thinkers, Shannahan posits the dialogical discourse essential to a successfully cohesive diverse society as issuing from a belief in the 'Christian understanding of creation' and the imprimatur of a 'divine bias to the stranger' (Shannahan, 2010: 225), where the qualities of 'hospitality' and 'mutuality' (Shannahan, 2017:29) inform and guide interactions with the other. Shannahan develops his 'hermeneutics of liberative difference' as a means to 'resist the problematising of difference and to embrace diversity as a source of potential liberation' (Shannahan, 2017:29).

As Muslims, we share the conceptual ideas of Christian thinkers such as Shannahan, about difference, dialogical encounters and the imprimatur of a 'divine bias' to interactions with and treatment of strangers. We believe these values exist in all the major religious traditions of the world. The Qur'an postulates analogous ideas on the fundamental equality of all

human beings,[1] dialogical discourses as intrinsic to and evocative of a life of faith,[2] and a belief in difference as divine will.[3] Moreover, the Qur'an explicitly sets parameters when it comes to dialoguing on differences with a verse that exhorts Muslims to 'Call [people] to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good teaching. Discuss with them in the most courteous way'.[4] It is herein that we argue that 'multiplexity' has a contribution to make that shares with political theology an interest in foregrounding theories on diversity management in an ontology, epistemology and a lexicon that derives from religious sources, in this case, Islamic sources.[5] While such an approach may seem of obvious interest to Muslims, we would argue that multiplexity has something to offer to all, not just Muslims.

Introducing 'Multiplexity'
Multiplexity, according to its key theorist, Recep Şentürk (Şentürk and Nizamuddin, 2008, Şentürk, 2011), arises from the work of the Muslim historian and sociologist Ibn Khaldun, particularly from his work on the sociology of civilizations. Khaldun's work develops a cyclical model of history regarding the rise and fall of civilisations and posits morality as a key variable in the trajectory and lifespan of a given civilisation. For Khaldun, morality or ethics plays a decisive role in the rise or decline of a society, state or civilisation with values being positively correlated to a society's fortunes. Where morality and ethics guide politics and social behaviours, a society flourishes; where the reverse is the case, a society's foundations collapse and the cycle begins anew.

For our purposes here, we wish to focus on a few central and concrete themes. The first is the notion of civilisations as 'open' or 'closed'. Akin to efforts of Christian thinkers, like Shannahan, to address contemporary social issues through an openness to others and other thinking, 'open/closed' concepts of civilisation refers to the presence (open) or absence (closed) of dialogical encounters and exchanges among peoples, disciplines or worldviews. A civilisation is regarded as closed where it adopts a chauvinistic and hegemonic attitude towards other cultures or belief systems. Conversely, a civilisation is considered to be 'open' where it is willing and capable of engaging with others in a manner similar to Shannahan's notion of 'liberative difference'. For Şentürk, 'open civilisation' marks the experience of Muslim history where recognition and accommodation of differences among peoples and cultures was commonplace and embedded in the political structures – note, for example, the Convivencia in Muslim Spain, the Millet system in the Ottoman Empire and the syncretic approach to religion in Akbar's Mughal Empire.

---

[1] "O humanity! Be mindful of your Lord Who created you from a single soul, and from it He created its mate, and through both He spread countless men and women." (Qur'an 4:1).

[2] "O humanity! Indeed, We created you from a male and a female, and made you into peoples and tribes so that you may get to know one another. Surely the most noble of you in the sight of God is *the most righteous among you*. God is truly All-Knowing, All-Aware." (Qur'an 49:13). Emphasis added.

[3] "To each of you We have prescribed a law and a way of life. Had God willed, He could have made you one community, united in belief/religion, but He intended to test you in what He has given to you – so, compete in all that is good. To God is your return, and He will then inform you as to your differences." (Qur'an 5:48).

[4] Abdel Haleem, M. A. S. (2016). *The Qur'an, English translation with parallel Arabic text*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press). 16:125, p 282

[5] We acknowledge here that critics of Islam may allude to different verses of the Qur'an to suggest a less charitable treatment of others mandated by Islamic sources. However, we would argue that such verses are either misinterpreted or stripped of contextual meaning and provenance to infer behaviours that sit outside normative exegesis of the Qur'an by the majority of Islamic scholars.

Şentürk notes that an 'open civilization is one that adopts an approach of social inclusivity towards other civilizations as it disavows all kinds of discrimination, religious or cultural' (Şentürk, 2023: 7). In contrast to the approaches of multiculturalism that emerge from either liberal multiculturalism or the Bristol School of Multiculturalism, multiplexity's 'open civilisation' approach doesn't prejudice the recognition or accommodation of religion. Under a multiplexity paradigm, religious groups are not disadvantaged in the public sphere either by a dominant (and varying) secular culture or a methodology/epistemology that is selectively sympathetic to notions of difference. Multiplexity as an alternative achieves two main things: (a) groups as *a priori* in the organisation of society, not an appendage in a liberal conception of society of unencumbered selves. Moreover, groups are not jostling for recognition nor competing with each other for 'favoured' status in a hierarchy; and (b) diversity is seen as intrinsic, not a weakness to be overcome, but a reality to be preserved, harnessed and celebrated. As with Shannahan's political theology approach, multiplexity views difference as divine, not as a 'problem seeking a solution'. Under multiplexity, the concept of *adamiyyah,* or universal human rights, grants all groups a place in the public sphere on equal terms.

If diversity management is a noble endeavour, how does multiplexity hold difference together such that, to quote Bretherton, a 'deep plurality over questions of ultimate meaning' and 'many communities and traditions contribut[ing] to the common good' takes place and shape? Here, Şentürk argues that a multiplex approach 'prevents intellectual differences degenerating into social and political conflicts because it accommodates together different discourse groups such as religions and schools of thought'. Moreover, where profound differences arise, these are contained at the discursive level. That is, differences do not descend into punitive or prejudicial treatment of those with whom one differs. Şentürk offers examples from the Prophet Mohammed's lifetime and from Islamic jurisprudential sources to illustrate the richness of discursive debate, whilst preserving the cohesiveness of a religiously plural society. For example, while the Prophet preached a strict monotheism which contrasted with the triune doctrine of Christianity, these doctrinal differences were at no time permitted to cross into threats of harm or derogatory speech towards Christians. Similarly, Şentürk points to legal rulings that require Muslims to compensate non-Muslims for any injury incurred, even where the injury pertains to matters that are forbidden to Muslims. A Muslim smashing a non-Muslim's bottle of wine is required to duly compensate him for loss of goods. Wine is forbidden to Muslims in Islam, but its proscription does not apply to other communities, and compensation applies in connection with the rules governing the injured party.

Under multiplexity, difference is not merely recognised and accommodated, it is to be preserved in accordance with the rights enjoyed by all groups in society. Şentürk differentiates multiplexity from multiculturalism, with the former insisting on the co-existence of multiple cultures in a shared space without descending into cultural relativism or chauvinism. Whereas Shannahan regards his approach to liberative difference as a call for the 'recognition of multiple epistemologies rather than a flattening of multiple identities' (Sealy, 2019: 30), multiplexity embraces this heterogeneous approach with its insistence on difference as divine and dialogic. Multiplexity, Şentürk argues, also considers 'existence, knowledge, values and truth [as having] multiple levels and cannot be reduced to a single layer' (Şentürk, 2011: 50). Thus, reductionism, whether in the form of ontological and epistemological chauvinism or cultural assimilation and domination, has no place in a multiplex worldview.

A second limb to multiplexity and its approach to diversity management is the concept of '*futuwwah*', or altruistic ethics. Şentürk elaborates on the 'ethics of governance' in Ibn Khaldun's work that informs the basis and modus operandi of political leadership in a society. *Futuwwah*, Şentürk explains, refers to the 'promot[ion] [of] noble virtues and principles such as altruism, sharing, caring, humility, forbearance, generosity, courage, justice and empathy' (Şentürk, 2022: 23). If the rise and fall of civilisations is contingent on the role of morality and ethics, the observance and application of civic ethics becomes a matter of existential importance. A society that adheres to the application of civic ethics is a burgeoning one, a society that demurs from such virtues is one that is in a state of decline. Essential to multiplexity, then, is the 'instill[ing] [of] a sense of responsibility, moderation, and social consciousness, [and] encouraging individuals to prioritize the well-being of others and the greater community over personal gains' (Şentürk, 2023: 23).

For Şentürk, drawing on Ibn Khaldun, the key altruistic/civic values are 'generosity' and 'justice'. He states, 'Generosity, in Ibn Khaldun's conception, is not merely a matter of bestowing material wealth. It extends to honouring and respecting various members of society... as well as those in disadvantaged positions like the poor and strangers' (Şentürk, 2023: 34). Under multiplexity, difference as divine impels society to treat difference with 'generosity'. As to justice, Şentürk explains that this 'pertains to the fair treatment of all members of society, and the fair allocation of societal resources and roles. It involves ensuring that everyone is accorded their rightful place, treated with fairness, and that their needs and rights are acknowledged and respected' (Şentürk, 2023: 34). It is not contingent on group legacy or size. Here, there are echoes of the notions of 'hospitality' and 'mutuality' that arise in Shannahan's work. Needless to say, approaching the question of diversity management from religious viewpoints will, invariably, lead to some overlaps given the common emphasis in religious traditions on virtues, bearing witness and charity. As Christianity in the UK declines and comes to occupy minority status in society, along with Islam, the scope for political theology and multiplexity to engage in robust conversations about difference and diversity management is wide and open. This engagement should be extended to people of all faiths and none. As Şentürk contends, the more we dispense with the problematisation of difference, the more likely we are to see that 'we have more in common than we thought with other... traditions' (Şentürk, 2011: 51).

If multiculturalism began its journey as a concern for minority difference, more recent lines of inquiry pertain to 'the normative status of the majority and majority cultural legacies' (Modood et al, 2024: 6). If, as Parekh notes, multiculturalism emerged from a concern for minorities to seek spaces to function within a dominant culture, newer scholarship is interested in a concern for the majority to feel 'included' in the new national narrative on difference and recognition. Under multiplexity, difference as *a priori* sets the tone for a dissimilar approach. Here, the concern is not with majority or minority status but with an openness to different ontological and epistemological approaches. Difference is not something to be weaponised by the majority against a minority, nor something to be weaponised by the minority against the majority. For those who might claim that they 'feel like strangers in their own country', multiplexity recognises their right to articulate and contest difference – what it does not do is permit and privilege the assimilationist tendencies that sometimes underlie claims of cultural displacement or demotion. Multiplexity, with its emphasis on openness to contrasting (and competing) ontologies, epistemologies, cultures and traditions, attempts a broad dialogical encounter, both intra-group and inter-group, to engage in problem-solving without problematising difference.

It is worth pointing out here that multiplexity's handling of diversity management is intended to enable the whole to hold together successfully even as it affords an expansive space for dialogical encounters between contrasting and competing worldviews. It shares, in some respects, the aforementioned ideal of a 'community of communities' in which groups are recognised and celebrated for their distinctiveness as well as seeking to forge a cohesive whole from its composite parts, something it shares with the concept of 'multicultural nationalism'.[6] The emergent 'nationalism' is one that is richer than the insipid civic nationalism of liberalism. Multicultural nationalism is, as Modood argues, an effort to 'allow people to hold, adapt, hyphenate, fuse, and create identities important to them as national co-citizens *and* members of socio-cultural, ethno-racial, and ethno-religious groups' (Modood, 2019b: 236, emphasis added). A higher-level narrative constructed from the tapestry of the nation's constitutive parts yields the telling of a national story of 'us' and the formation of a national culture that is accessible to those of indigenous (majority) and settled migrant (minority) backgrounds.

Multiplexity as community and state policy in public life
During the Conservative leadership contest last year, Kemi Badenoch, the successful candidate, argued for a better integration strategy stating, 'We cannot be naïve and assume immigrants will automatically abandon ancestral ethnic hostilities at the border, or that all cultures are equally valid. They are not.' Setting out her 'hard-nosed' views on immigration, she wrote, 'Those we chose [sic] to welcome, we expect to share our values and contribute to our society. British citizenship is more than having a British passport but also a commitment to the UK and its people' (Badenoch, 2024). As we have argued here, multiplexity attempts to address this chauvinism that derides other cultures as 'not equal' whilst forging dialogical pathways to create an inclusive discourse capable of responding to the question of how minorities can authentically express and evince a 'commitment to the UK and its people'. Multiplexity, with its insistence on multiple ontologies and epistemologies existing in the same space on an equal footing, does not summarily exclude 'ancestral' practices as an unfitting contribution to life as a British citizen. It offers opportunities for such practices to be espoused, and, importantly, to evolve, in dialogical encounters with others.

By embracing multiple ontologies and epistemologies, multiplexity 'allows different views to coexist in the culture without relativising them' (Şentürk 2011: 58). In this way, it is akin to Parekh's concern for the ontological and epistemological status of 'culture' in a multicultural society. Beyond assimilation, chauvinism and 'thin multiculturalism', where difference is mediated through 'liberal and individualistic world views and values' (Denham, 2023), multiplexity adopts a dialogical and 'anti-exceptionalist' position that privileges 'an emphasis on commonalities' (Şentürk 2011: 59) amidst difference in its approach to problem-solving. Thus, under multiplexity, the public sphere is 'opened to other voices from our own [native] culture and tradition and the voices of the others from other… cultures and traditions, be they secular or religious' (Şentürk 2011: 58).

As to the management of inter-group dialogue, in contrast to the particularist rules that apply at an intra-group level, this must be mediated by secular (i.e. shared/dialogical) reasoning alone. As Şentürk notes, one cannot employ the lexical framework of Islam in a dialogue with one who is not of the same faith. Dialogical encounters with others in the public sphere necessitates the use of a common vernacular and this discourse, Şentürk argues, is to be

---

[6] Şentürk illustrates this with reference to the Madinah Constitution where all constitutive groups of Madinan society, Muslims, Jews, Pagan Arabs, etc, were addressed in terms of their rights and responsibilities to each other as members of the same nascent 'ummah' (nation).

conducted in the language of secular reasoning alone. It is important to express that secular reasoning here is not 'secularised' reason; people of faith are not disadvantaged in terms of the influence of religious scripture or teachings on their ideas. Rather, secular reasoning here refers to a mode of intersubjective reasoning in the public sphere that facilitates value pluralism without prejudicing mutual intelligibility or individual/group integrity. *Futuwwah*, or altruistic/civic ethics, would guide this process on the part of Muslims where a conscientious concern for the rights, wellbeing and welfare of others, premised on *adamiyyah*, would inform their discursive articulations when staking their claims in the public sphere. That value pluralism might, at times, engender a 'boisterous and contentious public square' (Chaplin, 2008: 11), is not to deter from its purpose: to enable a 'solution [that is] genuinely open' (Modood, 2017a: 86) and where dialoguing with difference paves the way for 'commonalities in different… traditions' to emerge.

There are two arguments to reiterate here. The first is in relation to the problematisation of religious difference; the second concerns the problematisation of Islam or Islamic values specifically. Taking debates on gender and sexual rights as an example, we have witnessed how policy debates on these issues have often derided religious views, with religious groups struggling to escape derogatory labels for espousing positions that cohere with their religious traditions (Woodhead, 2008; Woolf, 2012). Here, the problematisation of difference is attributed to religions in general. However, we would argue that a double problematisation exists in relation to Muslims who articulate views shared with the other Abrahamic religions on gender and sexual rights which are often presented as a specific challenge to Muslim communities in diverse societies (Butt, 2009). In this regard, multiplexity offers scope for upholding (general) difference as well as the opportunity for dialoguing with (specific) difference without undermining the claims of religious (or other) groups on issues pertaining to gender and sexual rights.

Multiplexity avoids the exclusion of religious perspectives on gender and sexual rights by recognising multiple ontologies and epistemologies, and circumvents inhibiting religious voices from taking part in public debate by fostering a dialogue on difference that, in the first instance, upholds the inviolability of the fundamental rights of all human beings (*adamiyyah*). Difference as divine in this context accepts difference even when it runs counter to the values of religion(s) or belief(s), and difference as divine mandates the handling of the dialogue on difference under a strict regard for *futuwwah* (altruistic/civic ethics). It is, in Woodhead's framing of the possibility, an effort at 'maximum toleration and accommodation for religious practices without surrendering support for minimal morality and basic human rights' (Woodhead, 2008: 57). Juxtaposed to the 'closed' civilisational worldview that sees itself as the arbiter on gender and sexual rights against religions, where the '[liberal secular] privileged become the possessors of pure truth, transparent rationality, and the engines of progress' (Woodhead, 2008: 57), multiplexity's 'open' civilisation recognises and appreciates the ontological and epistemological foundations of religious views on gender and sexual rights without jeopardising concern for individual rights. As with Bretherton's observation that 'many communities and traditions contribute to the common good', multiplexity accords an institutionalisation of 'other voices from our own [native] culture and tradition and the voices of the other... cultures and traditions, be they secular or religious', such that dialogue on difference is not arbitrarily privileged, hierarchically accessed or intermittently exercised.

Furthermore, multiplexity maintains protection against any social and political impacts of value dissonance by restricting difference to its discursive context, and even at this discursive level, rules on dialoguing on difference apply. Thus, Muslims (and other religious groups) are

free to espouse views on gender and sexual rights that derive from their religious scriptures and teachings without encountering condescension, and they may engage in public debates articulating such views in a language that is premised on a values discourse, but they may not engage in acts of harm or injury against those with whom they differ. Furthermore, multiplexity allows diverse views, but once laws have been made, it does not allow breach of those laws – i.e., in a democracy all views should be heard, but once laws have been made, the rule of law will apply to all equally. Thus multiplexity's treatment of difference as constitutive of society, a divine intervention designed to draw individuals and groups together in curiosity and common purpose, places an onus on engaging deeply and meaningfully in ways that grants full recognition to others' identities and differences without seeking to undermine the higher purpose of social cohesion or the stability of the state. Multiplexity's dialogical ethos based on engaging with multiple ontologies and epistemologies attempts not to eliminate difference or 'flatten' identities but to create the conditions for genuinely and authentically living well together with difference.

Conclusion

As mentioned at the start, it is more than fifty years since race relations legislation was introduced into UK law and almost thirty years since the neologism 'Islamophobia' was coined to name the very specific challenges facing British Muslims in British society. We've seen generations of Muslims grow up under the shadow of both. Our younger generation risk facing a more fractious future as 'culture wars' gain currency and we hear more talk of integration as an assimilationist policy. Against this backdrop, we witness both the growth in size of British Muslim communities and a stalwart commitment to faith as an intrinsic facet of their British identity (Ipsos Mori, 2018). Religious and national identity are core components of who they are, how they wish to be seen, and how they shape their contribution to society. Whether we speak of the increasing numbers of British Muslims who are entering higher education, and thereby contributing to our future skilled workforce, or the millions that are donated in charity every year, British Muslim contributions can be quantified and are observable. However, in the area of policymaking and public life, their contribution can seem adjunct when it is not overtly scorned.

We argue that this stems from the ontological and epistemological limitations of multiculturalism in theory and practice, and propose multiplexity as a more credible formulation for enabling Muslims to engage in public life *qua Muslims* by treating difference, including religious differences, as constitutive of society. This applies to all religions in our society, not just Muslims. Multiplexity creates conditions that allows for the inclusion of all religions and beliefs, including secular ones, in public dialogue without incurring (unequal) disadvantages by positioning the ontological and epistemological tenets of faith firmly in the fold. Multiplexity treats difference as *a priori,* not as a problem to be solved, and it takes difference to mean more than the 'thin multiculturalism' of liberal individualists. Multiplexity treats difference as foundational, seeks 'deep pluralism' and sets the dialogue on difference on an ontological and epistemological footing that can readily engage with 'other ethical and belief systems'. Multiplexity engages in problem-solving in society without problematising difference and allows for the widening of the field for dialoguing with difference to include ontological and epistemological sources that emanate from religious, including Islamic, traditions. We argue that the fundamental values of *adamiyyah* and *futuwwah* correlate with political theology ideas that regard difference as divine and dialogue as godly.

The majority of Britain's minority ethnic and faith communities, including Muslims, live in England. As England's self-identifying Christian population falls below an overall majority

15

(i.e., 50%), and some cities and regions of the country grow in their ethnic dominance, we would argue that now is an opportune time to consider whether our current diversity management strategy is fit for purpose. The current Labour Government is in the process of speeding up and widening devolution in England with a proposed English Devolution Bill announced in the King's Speech for this parliamentary session. The plans aim to 'establish a new framework for English devolution, moving power out of Westminster and back to those who know their areas best.' This is indeed an opportune moment not just to rethink our management of diversity at the UK level, but also within the context of each of its nations, including England.

The Bill honours a manifesto commitment to 'transfer power out of Westminster and into our local communities [...] as well as empowering communities to transform their neighbourhoods, high streets and important community assets.' A key goal of the devolved powers is to unleash regional economic potential for sustained growth and to address geographic inequalities. The Bill holds much potential for the inclusion of ethnic and religious minorities in local decision-making as new frameworks for exercising devolved powers come to be established. This bears particular relevance in areas of the country where ethnic and religious minorities are concentrated and for whom economic exclusion and geographic inequalities are a major hindrance to social mobility. As governing structures change and more opportunities arise for minorities to engage, will devolution replicate the disadvantages religious communities face when it comes to engaging in the (UK/national/regional) public sphere? As England evolves to manage its greater religiously plural profile, might multiplexity offer a better and more authentic pathway to dialogue with difference in this country that all, including Muslims, call home?

Modifying Modood's table on Multiculturalism

We have attempted to encapsulate the ways in which multiplexity engages with and challenges the multiculturalism approach to diversity management with some modification to the table presented by Modood (2011).

	Assimilation	**Individualist Integration**	**Cosmopolitanism**	**Multiculturalism**	**Multiplexity**
Objects of Policy	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'.	Individuals and groups (whether from the majority or minority) marked by 'difference' (including religion or belief), especially their treatment through discriminatory practices of state and civil society, and societal ideas, especially of 'us' and 'them' – emanating from a chauvinist/ exclusivist ontology/ epistemology.
Liberty	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.	Members of all communities should be free to mix and match or to cultivate/transfer group membership, and manifest such membership in values and practices, in proportions of their own choice – so long as within shared standards of human rights (adamiyyah) and civic ethics (futuwwah).
Equality	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.	The public sphere is fully representative of self-ascribed group identities, values and practices. Equality is not just about treating everyone equally, but equitably, respecting deeper difference – i.e., based on ontology and epistemology. Discriminatory treatment is actively eliminated.

Fraternity	A strong homogenous 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.	Citizenship and national identity built on firm foundation of group identities, not their negation; the relationship between groups is dialogical and horizontal rather than paternalist, hierarchical or uniform. National identity also does not exclude international identities – e.g., with World Jewry, the Catholic Church or the Global Ummah.

Bibliography

Aziz, M. A. (2018). *The Integration of Muslims in Britain: An account and analysis of the legal and non-legal equality and security initiatives during the New Labour years of 1997-2010, British Muslim engagement with them and their impact on Muslim integration in British society.* PhD thesis.

Badenoch, K. (2024). 'Migrants who come to Britain must uphold its traditions, not change them' *Daily Telegraph*, 28 September 2024

Blair, T. (2006). *"Our Nation's Future"*, Speech at Downing Street, 8 December 2006.

Brahm Levey, G. (2019a). The Bristol school of multiculturalism. *Ethnicities*, 19(1), 200-226

Bretherton, L. (2010). *Christianity and Contemporary Politics*. Wiley-Blackwell.

British Future (2022). *'Sense of belonging in England is increasing, across ethnicities*'. Available at: https://www.britishfuture.org/sense-of-belonging-in-england-is-increasing-across-ethnicities-new-research/

Bunglawala, S. (2020). 'Rewriting rule #1: 'I utterly refuse to condemn...'. in Siddiqui. A., ed., *I refuse to condemn: Resisting Racism in Times of National Security*. Manchester University Press

Butt, R. (2009). 'Muslims in Britain have zero tolerance of homosexuality, says poll', *The Guardian*.

Cameron, D. (2011). *PM's speech at Munich Security Conference*, Prime Minister's Office, 10 Downing Street. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pms-speech-at-munich-security-conference

Carey, G. and Carey, A. (2012). *We Don't Do God: The Marginalization of Public Faith*. Monarch Books.

Chaplin, J. (2008). *Talking God: The Legitimacy of Religious Public Reasoning*. Theos

Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain. (2000). *The Parekh Report: The Future of Multi-Ethnic Britai*n. Runnymede Trust.

Communities and Local Government Committee - Sixth Report, 'Preventing Violent Extremism', 16 March 2010

Denham, J. (2023). '*To tackle hate and division, Labour must reflect on what multiculturalism means'*, Labour List, 13 November 2023. https://labourlist.org/2023/11/to-tackle-hate-and-division-labour-must-reflect-on-what-multiculturalism-means/

Ehsan, R. And Mansfield, I. (2024). *A Portrait of Modern Britain: Ethnicity and Religion* Policy Exchange.

Holmwood, J. (2024). 'How the UK has failed to protect Muslim religious rights', *Middle East Eye*, 19 April 2024

Jones, S. H. And Unsworth, A. (2022). *The Dinner Table Prejudice: Islamophobia in Contemporary Britain*. Birmingham: British Academy

Kelly, R. (2006). *'Britain: Our values, our responsibilities'*, Department of Communities and Local Government, 11 October 2006.

Mirza, M. (2010). Rethinking race, *Prospect magazine*, 22 September 2010. https://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/essays/54493/rethinking-race

Modood, T. (1992). *Not Easy Being British: Colour, Culture and Citizenship*. Trentham Books Ltd

Modood, T. (2003). 'Muslims and the Politics of Difference' Political Quarterly, 74 (1), pp 100-115

Modood, T. (2007). *Multiculturalism*. Polity, Cambridge

Modood, T. (2009a). 'Moderate secularism and multiculturalism', *Politics*, 29(1), pp.71-76

Modood, T. (2010). *Still Not Easy Being British: Struggles for a Multicultural Citizenship.* Trentham Books Ltd

Modood, T. (2011). *Multiculturalism and Integration: Struggling with Confusions*. ACCEPT PLURALISM 7th Framework Programme Project, European University Institute.

Modood, T. (2013). *'The Strange Non-Death of Multiculturalism'*, Max Weber Lecture No. 2013/03, European University Institute, Max Weber Programme

Modood, T. (2017a). 'Intercultural public intellectual engagement'. In Mansouri F (ed), *Interculturalism at the Crossroads: Comparative Perspectives on Concepts, Policies and Practices*, Paris: UNESCO Publishing, pp. 83-103

Modood, T. (2019). *Essays on Secularism and Multiculturalism*. London, ECPR Press.

Modood, T. (2019b). 'A Multicultural Nationalism?', *Brown Journal of World Affairs*, XXV(II) pp 233-246.

Modood, T and Sealy, T. (2022). 'Developing a framework for a global comparative analysis of the governance of religious diversity' in *Religion, State and Society*, 50(4), 362-377.

Modood, T., Parekh, B., Uberoi, V. and Connelly, J. (2024). 'Multicultural conversations: The nature and future of culture, identity and nationalism', *Ethnicities* Vol 0(0), pp 1-24

Mortimore, R and Gottfried, G. (2018). ' A review of survey research on Muslims in Britain'. Ipsos Mori.

Nelson, F. (2024). 'The 'trial' of Katharine Birbalsingh is a battle for the future of Britain'. *Daily Telegraph*, 18 January 2024.

Office for National Statistics, England and Wales Census 2021, Table RM088: National identity by religion, 17 April 2023. Available at: https://statistics.ukdataservice.ac.uk/dataset/england-and-wales-census-2021-rm088-national-identity-by-religion

Parekh, B. (2000a). *Rethinking Multiculturalism*. Palgrave Macmillan

Phillips, T. (2005). *'After 7/7: Sleepwalking to Segregation'*, speech at Manchester University

Sealy, T. (2019). *Identity, Difference, Religion: Multiculturalism and British Converts to Islam*, PhD Thesis, University of Bristol.

Şentürk, R. (2011). Unity in Multiplexity: Islam as an Open Civilization. Center for Interdisciplinary Study of Monotheistic Religions, 7. pp. 49-60.

Şentürk, R. (2022). *Futuwwah: Noble Character*. Usul Academy

Şentürk, R. (2023). *Ibn Khaldun and Multicivilizational World Order: A Multiplex Philosophy of Politics*. Conference presentation, Usul Academy.

Shannahan, C. (2010). *Voices from the Borderland: Re-imagining Cross-cultural Urban Theology in the Twenty-first Century*. Equinox

Shannahan, C. (2017). 'Zombie multiculturalism meets liberative difference: Searching for a new discourse of diversity,' *Culture and Religion*, vol 17, no. 4, pp. 409-430

Taylor, C. (1994). The Politics of Recognition in *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition*, edited by Amy Gutmann. Princeton University Press.

The King's Speech 2024: background briefing notes, 17 July 2024.

Thompson, S. And Modood, T. (2022). The multidimensional recognition of religion. *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy*, 1–22.

Timothy, N. (2024). 'Multiculturalism is becoming a Trojan horse for Islamist domination'. *Daily Telegraph*, 21 January 2024.

Toynbee, P. (2024). 'Banning prayer rituals in school? Just get religion out of education completely', *The Guardian*, 23 January 2024

Uberoi, V., & Modood, T. (2012). Inclusive Britishness: A Multiculturalist Advance. *Political Studies*, 61(1), 23-41.

Uberoi, V., & Modood, T. (2019). The emergence of the Bristol School of Multiculturalism. *Ethnicities*, 19(6), 955-970.

Warsi, S. (2024). *Muslims Don't Matter*. The Bridge Street Press

Woodhead, L. (2008). 'Secular privilege, religious disadvantage', *British Journal of Sociology* 59 (1): 53-58.

Woolf, M. (2012). 'Church stuck in Dark Ages, says minister', *The Sunday Times*, 11 March 2012.

Shenaz Bunglawala is a researcher, writer and strategist. From 2008-2017 she was head of research and policy at MEND (2008-2017) where she led research on Islamophobia in the British media, racial and religious equality and the impact of counter-terrorism legislation on British Muslims. Her work has been published in Just War on Terror? Christian and Muslim Perspectives (Ashgate, 2010); Race Matters: Widening Ethnic Diversity in Journalism (2012); What is Islamophobia?: Racism, Social Movements and the State (2017); Islamophobia: Still a Challenge for Us All (2017) I Refuse to Condemn: Resisting Racism in a Times of National Security (Manchester University Press, 2020), and The Church, the Far Right and the Claim to Christianity (SCM Press, 2024). She is a Trustee of the Muslim Institute.

Mohammed Aziz has worked in community development and social justice work for most of his life. He was the founding CEO of the Forum Against Islamophobia and Racism and the Aziz Foundation. He is a past Chair of the European Network Against Racism and Vice Chair of the Equality & Diversity Forum (now Equally Ours). He has served as a Commissioner at the Commission for Racial Equality and the Equal Opportunities Commission, and as a Senior Advisor to various Cabinet Ministers on Race, Religion and Community Cohesion. He is currently a Trustee at Muslim Aid and Demos, and a Commissioner at the Independent Commission on Counter-Terrorism.