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INTERVIEW

Intellectual Biography, Empirical Sociology and Normative Political Theory: An Interview with Tariq Modood

Damián Omar Martínez

Keywords: British multiculturalism; Public intellectual engagement; British Muslim identity; Public sociology; Ethnic minorities; Integration

Introduction

Tariq Modood is Professor of Sociology, Politics and Public Policy at the University of Bristol, the founding director of the Centre for the Study of Ethnicity and Citizenship, and the co-founding editor of the international academic journal *Ethnicities*. During his academic career he has worked widely on ethnic and religious minority issues: from disadvantages and opportunities in higher education and the labour market to ‘ethnic capital’; from the theory and politics of multiculturalism and secularism to political conflict and political accommodation. His approach to minority issues has always been characterised by a special focus on religious identity and a special commitment to the British Muslim community and to British multiculturalism.

His work – an interdisciplinary approach which combines the normative political theory of multiculturalism and the sociology of post-migration ethnicity – is broadly acknowledged in the field of ethnic minority research (Law and Swann 2011:5). Modood has developed a particular contribution to this field, as well as to the Anglophone academic debates of multiculturalism. Theoretically influenced by Bhikhu Parekh, Charles Taylor and Iris Young, Modood’s work has been aimed at rethinking the role of religion in public life, and constructing a civic theory of multiculturalism for British institutions that takes into account religion as a

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legitimate source of group pride. Contemporary Muslim assertiveness has – according to Modood – nothing to do with reactionary theological demands, but rather its arguments are political, and in fact are inspired by other identity politics movements, such as those seeking gender or ethnic equality (Modood 2003). He has consistently rejected the post-national frame, arguing that multiculturalism is a ‘civic idea’, a reforming and remaking of national citizenship (Modood 2007).

The Sociology Professor of Bristol University intends his work to be also relevant to policy. Actually, he has participated in more than 20 policy-orientated reports and surveys, including the *Parekh Report* (Commission on Multi-Ethnic Britain 2000), and the British *Fourth National Survey of Ethnic Minorities* (Modood et al. 1997) where he was, in fact, principal researcher. His work, then, has also this third feature: An empirically grounded and normatively framed theory of multicultural citizenship with the aim of being policy relevant. Finally, public engagement is one of the other key features of Modood’s intellectual profile, with contributions to British media – like *The Guardian*, *BBC Radio 4* – as well as non-British – such as the Australian *ABC*. Through this public engagement, he has contributed to British public debates on minority issues with his particular perspective summarised above, trying to foster discussion on what does it mean for the UK to be a multicultural society, and how can ethnic and religious minorities need to feel that they belong to the British society.

In the interview we present here¹ – conducted at the *Centre for the Study of Ethnicity and Citizenship* in February 2011 – we discussed some of the issues indicated above among others, always in relation to his intellectual and academic trajectory. We discussed, for instance, the criticism he has received, on the one hand, for the position he has developed regarding religious identity and British Muslims, and on the other hand for his role as a public intellectual. We also spoke of his main intellectual influences, both philosophically and as role models (see Modood 1992: 3–4; Modood 2005: 1–5; Modood 2010: 1–2, for earlier autobiographical statements). Given his leading and controversial position in the field, and his interdisciplinary approach, his case is a very interesting one for the history of contemporary social sciences on cultural diversity.

Bristol, 17 February 2011

Damián Omar Martínez (DO): You were born in Karachi, Pakistan and your family migrated to London. Do you think there is a connection between this migrant background and your academic work?

Tariq Modood (TM): Yes, of course, I think there is a very strong connection. I came to Britain when I was eight years old. I went to a socially mixed primary school and then to a working-class secondary school as I failed my ‘11+’ exams. It was initially very white, and then white and black, with Asians as a minority. It was the time when there were ‘skin-heads’, and what was called ‘Paki-bashing’ and so I experienced some

racism and bullying at my secondary school. I went to Durham University – in fact, I was the first person to go to university from my school – to study Philosophy and Politics, and at that point, I didn't have any thoughts about multiculturalism. I was interested in issues of racism, but mainly in terms of 'anti-apartheid' in South-Africa. I was active in the Anti-Apartheid Movement and went on demonstrations, and of course I wanted to resist racism in Britain. At Durham, I studied a course called 'Indian Civilization', and that really awakened my interest in my heritage. I determined to go back to Pakistan and India, when I could, in order to learn a little bit about my heritage. I took a year out to do so between my Master's and the beginning of my PhD.

So when I came back to Britain in 1976 I had a lot more sense of being of Pakistani heritage, and later in Oxford I was active with the Oxford Council of Community Relations. That, if you like, began my current trajectory. But I still didn't think of myself as writing or working on Multiculturalism. My work in political philosophy was very English and American; I was particularly interested in philosophical method, which was what my PhD was on. So, it had nothing to do with issues about racial equality.

The only ambition I had was to become an academic. I was unable to pursue a career in academia because the jobs were disappearing at that time. This was the period of Thatcher's cuts in the 1980s. After a period of temporary academic jobs and a couple of years of unemployment, I ended up working as an equal opportunities officer. Nothing to do with research, nothing to do with my intellectual interests. But, by then I had some strong political interests. And from that point onwards, which was 1987, I developed new intellectual interests based on racial equality work. So, unlike a lot of academics, I had experience of the world outside academia, and then I came back in. But when I eventually came back in, I came with a stronger sense of wanting my work to be politically relevant. What I mean is that I didn't just come back as an academic. I came back with a new set of interests: from racial equality work I went on to work on with the *Fourth National Survey of Ethnic Minorities* (Modood *et al.* 1997), where I was doing sociological work, whereas my PhD was in political philosophy. So, since then I have sought to combine these three things: empirical sociology within a normative political theory framework and seeking to be relevant to public policy.

And of course, I went into racial equality work because of my personal experiences of being an Asian in Britain. I think this is very strongly reflected in all my work subsequently. In the positions that I have adopted, I think there is a certain kind of 'Asian background orientation', and in particular, a 'Pakistani Muslim orientation', as well as a strong British character.

DO: I see your work as strongly normative, but also with a strong sociological orientation. Do you think this strong normative side of your work has to do with where you come from (this Asian background)?

TM: I wouldn't put it as directly as that. I think it reflects my intellectual biography rather than where I come from. Because I started off in normative philosophy and I

then got into policy work on race and minorities, and then I got into sociology with *Ethnic minorities in Britain*. So, it combines those interests; I don't think that combination is to do with being Pakistani in Britain. Except that without that I wouldn't have some of the particular interests I do.

DO: And what about the religiosity of your family, and your own religiosity in the context of your family?

TM: My father was a very devout Muslim. But for various family reasons we were quite isolated from other Pakistanis and other Muslims in our early years in Britain. So, he brought us up as Muslims, but not in a very active way. We learnt a lot about Christianity at school. In particular, I participated in Christian assembly and in carol singing at Christmas at school, with my dad's support. My dad brought us up on his own because my parents divorced, so I didn't have a mum in Britain. I guess I have always had a little bit of religious interest, but I wouldn't say I was deeply religious. In fact, as a teenager, I became much more kind of an intellectual atheist. Therefore, perhaps emotionally religious, but intellectually I couldn't see how it worked.

My dad became a more practising and devout Muslim as he became older and after he retired. So, the influences of Islam on me actually were not during my childhood, or even my teenage years, but in my adult life, through my dad. On the other hand, as I said, I had a good knowledge of Christianity from school. So, I have always had some degree of interest in religion, but I haven't been settled in my religious beliefs; because I had these two different influences in different periods of time, and an intellectual doubt as well.

I didn't really think of myself as a Muslim for quite a lot of my adult life, and then when I did begin to think of myself as a Muslim, it wasn't to do with religious experience, but to do with political experiences. Because the crisis, the controversy of 'The Satanic Verses' suddenly became a big issue. Frankly, there were very few Muslims who knew how to engage intellectually with this controversy. I was in a small minority, but I wasn't very religious; and so, I turned to my father and I said to him: 'What should I do?' Because he was very upset about the book, but he was equally upset about the terrible way in which some Muslims were protesting and which he thought was giving Islam a bad name, and creating even more antagonism in society. So, at that time he was split. He wished the book hadn't been written. He wanted the book banned. Later he softened his views, but at the time, the emotional impact was strong. He was disgusted about what he heard about the book. He didn't read it in any detail. There were some passages that were picked out and circulated in the mosques. So, I said: 'What shall I do?' And he said: 'You are very privileged to have the education that you have; to have the skills and knowledge that you have. You must use those to help Muslims be understood in British society. But, don't get entangled with the Mullahs. A lot of them are ignorant. A lot of them won't like you, won't think you are a good Muslim ...' even though he was very religious. And I took his advice.

That was 1989, and since then I have studied British Muslims, but also if you like, I have quite a strong degree of advocacy, speaking up for British Muslims, but without making any theological or religious argument. All the arguments are sociological or political, or normative. They are basically arguing for a position of multicultural accommodation. In my work I don't begin with Islam. I begin with the idea of 'equal citizenship', and the idea of 'difference'. These are the concepts that I use. I don't use religious concepts. But I am strongly motivated in the way that my dad encouraged me to work for the well-being of Muslims in Britain, as well as the well-being of British society. I don't see the two as antagonistic. There are conflicts, of course. But we have to work through the conflicts and can do so if we have a commitment to both those goals.

DO: How did other intellectuals receive your way of positioning in the field?

TM: I think a lot of people were disappointed, even annoyed by the position I developed. I lost friends. I think anyone who stood up at the time of the 'Rushdie Affair' and said 'We can't just condemn Muslims. We have to listen to them' lost friends. I suspect Bhikhu Parekh, who is not a Muslim, but definitely took the same point of view as I've just mentioned, lost friends. I know others did. People told me I was being illiberal, and that I was making way for religious extremism and fundamentalism. They said that in 1989 and have continued to do so. Even though, I go out of my way to show that my position is a moderate one. A lot of Muslims don't like the word moderate, because it implies that you are agreeing with the government or you are trying to be pro-Western. I reject those implications, but I do think it is a moderate position, and I use this terminology. Nevertheless, I think a lot of people are uncomfortable with how centrally I place religious identity in the multicultural reform of British institutions and British identity.

DO: Coming back to what you pointed out before. You said that there was a moment where you were not able to work in academia because jobs were disappearing at that time. What kind of jobs did you have, and what academic position did you have when you came back to academia?

TM: I worked in the London borough of Hillingdon as an equal opportunities officer, specialising in employment policy work. This was a non-intellectual job – of a certain complexity but policy work. I worked there from 1987 to 1989. I then was promoted to the Commission for Racial Equality, which was like the central headquarters in London of racial equality work. Again, a non-research job. But, in 1991 I got a Fellowship at Nuffield College Oxford. At the time of my policy work I had started writing under my own name in the newspapers, arguing from my point of view, including in relation to the 'Rushdie Affair'. And on the strength of that bit of writing, plus the fact that, I had a PhD in philosophy from earlier, I managed to get a visiting position for one year at Nuffield College, and there I finished my first

collection of essays, called 'Not Easy Being British', which were then published in 1992 (Modood 1992).

After that I got another Fellowship at Manchester University for two years; and on the strength then of the writing that I had been building up, I got a research post at the Policy Studies Institute (PSI) in London, which I started in March 1993 to work on a very big national project called 'The Fourth National Survey of Ethnic Minorities'. It's really then that I was clearly doing research. So, I was in policy work for about four and a half years. I was then in 'ethnic minority research' for about five years, and then I had the professorship at Bristol University, which I started in December 1997, where I have been ever since, founding the current Research Centre for the Study of Ethnicity and Citizenship in 1999, building on a current at Bristol which Michael Banton started in the early 1970s.

DO: In the acknowledgements of your *Multicultural Politics* (Modood 2005) you mention that you didn't have experience of primary research when you were appointed as principal researcher for the PSI Survey known as 'Ethnic Minorities in Britain'. Can you tell me more about this?

TM: I wasn't a sociologist. I hadn't studied sociology at University. I studied a little bit of sociology at school. Yet they made me the principal investigator of this £1 million survey. So the question is why?

The person who appointed me was David Smith. He was in charge of the PSI work on ethnic minorities; he later became a Professor of Criminology at Edinburgh University. So, after they offered me the job, and I had signed the contract, I said to him: 'Why me?' And he said: 'We know how to do surveys. This is our expertise. What we really need is someone who is at the cutting-edge of thinking about ethnic minorities; because that we haven't got. So you complement us very nicely. And hopefully you will learn something about surveys. But we are willing to take the burden of the survey mechanics in order to benefit from your insight, which we would like to see fed-in, in order to create a more sophisticated survey, which is sensitive to ethnic differences'. That was a very big gamble that David Smith took and I am very pleased to say it paid off, because the survey had a very good reception and came to be highly acclaimed. It was a real team effort. I could never have done it without other people having survey expertise, people like Richard Berthoud and James Nazroo. We combined our different expertise and the result was a success.

DO: Did the Fourth Survey then make you a sociologist?

TM: The 'Fourth Survey' is a systematic piece of research made possible by a team around me. In most of the areas I have worked in sociologically (issues to do with discrimination law, educational qualification and entry to higher education, self-employment, labour market), I basically don't develop a full expertise, but I go in, in order to open up the territory by arguing what I think is the case, and where I think

that existing studies are using the wrong frames. Although I do want detailed empirical knowledge, it seems to me that you got to have the right frame. I came to the empirical material with a certain political or normative point of view. I really had an aspiration to be a public intellectual, rather than an empirical sociologist. Whether I agree with them in detail or not, the kind of public intellectual leadership that people like Bhikhu Parekh or Stuart Hall were trying to offer to Britain was my inspiration.

DO: Have you conducted some fieldwork after the 'Fourth Survey'?

TM: I have done many empirical projects (Modood 2013). But I have always employed research assistants or had colleagues, who through a division of labour, do the fieldwork. And the projects that I have worked on have largely tended to be qualitative, whereas the 'Fourth Survey' at the PSI was highly quantitative. I have increasingly let others pursue the quantitative work. So, I would say I try to combine some qualitative work with normative analysis, and over time my interests have shifted from employment and education to politics and normative discourses; I am now more interested in political campaigning, political conflict, political compromises and the politics of identities. I have tried to develop a theory of Multiculturalism that fits the British political life of minorities. For this, I have obviously been influenced by racial identity politics in the US and Britain and by theorists like Bhikhu Parekh, Charles Taylor and Iris Young. I would say those are my main influences. I don't think my views are always the same as theirs, but I can see that my views are based in the intellectual space that they have created. This is particularly true of Bhikhu Parekh, who has been a role model to me from before I got to know him in the late 1980s. He combines a sophisticated philosophical perspective with contemporary relevance, with the clarity and accessibility of a democratic public intellectual who is highly committed to public service. Additionally, Bhikhu has a feel for British Asian concerns that was missing from many of those who worked professionally or academically on racial equality and ethnic minority issues in the 1980s and 1990s. Bhikhu's public intellectual engagement has been exemplary. He was most significant, for instance, in articulating, stimulating and leading a multiculturalist position at the time of *The Satanic Verses* Affair. He was Deputy Chair of the Commission for Racial Equality at the time and of course later was the Chair of the Commission on Multi-Ethnic Britain, which produced what is known as the Parekh Report, one of the best public documents in its field.

DO: What role do you think intellectuals in general and political philosophers in particular should play in the development of public debates and public policies?

TM: For me, public intellectual engagement is the gold standard. That's been my goal since I got into issues of equality and multiculturalism. I personally feel that if some academics only want to do very specialist academic work that is only of interest to

fellow academics, that is fine. We need people like that. But, if everybody had to follow that track, I think that our public culture would be intellectually impoverished. Nevertheless, I have had to some extent argue with colleagues that what I am doing is legitimate. Some people feel that I sometimes simplify a complex theory into two or three sound bites, because that is what the media needs; that I risk being superficial or that I am not theorising enough and I am leaving arguments underdeveloped. There may be some trade-off between intellectual detail and public engagement but I feel that the kind of balance between theory and public engagement that I have been following now for 20 years or so, works for me and is legitimate.

DO: And going a step further, what about public intellectuals advising politicians and policy-makers and therefore, having a direct influence in the creation or reform of policies?

TM: Having worked in policy for four years, where I was directly responsible for formulating and implementing policy, I didn't want to repeat that. I am a commentator on policy, I suggest policy directions, but I don't want to be a politician, or a policy-maker. I always keep some distance from the Government, whether it is Westminster or local government or European Union or whatever. I prefer to influence through public debate, through writing for *The Guardian*, through debates on Radio 4, and of course public lectures and debates. So, I have tried to create a public profile; occasionally I am asked to join seminars in Whitehall and so on, and to advise and so on. I do that to a small extent, but with some distance. I think I may have had some influence on New Labour in relation to ethnicity and religious discrimination in the late 1990s and early 2000s. But I don't work with the Government or for the Government.

And nor for any advocacy organisation. For instance, I am a friend of The Muslim Council of Britain, but I am not a member. I say to them: 'Yes, if you would like my advice, I am willing to meet you once a year'. They initially wanted it to be more often but came to appreciate that I wanted to stay independent, and I basically want to influence as an intellectual, not as a policy-maker. If someone says to me: 'what is wrong with this law? Can you help us to get it right?' I say: 'Well, no. That's not my expertise. I can tell you conceptually and in terms of evidence. But I am not a politician'.

DO: Did you think this way when you were working at the Fourth Survey also, or it has been changing over time?

TM: Yes, I had the same perspective then. Because, I wasn't that happy when I was working in policy. It's partly to do with personality. I feel that I am more of an intellectual, and therefore I should do what I am good at; and I shouldn't be trying to do what I am not good at.

DO: After this 'Fourth Survey', have you been working on other Surveys or Reports?

TM: Yes, definitely. Steve Fenton and I did a major report on Racial Equality in Higher Education (Carter *et al.* 2000), which has been quite influential in British Universities. I have done reports with Judith Squires on anti-discrimination legislation, a comparative study looking at what British policy and law making can learn from other countries (Dhami *et al.* 2006). So, yes, I have done a number of policy-oriented Reports and I have done a number of empirical projects, increasingly on a comparative European basis with Anna Triandifyllidou at the European University Institute. But always my orientation is to think in terms of a bigger picture, of the evolution of multicultural accommodation and multicultural politics. I like to think that the empirical and policy work is part of my contribution to a conception of multicultural equality and citizenship which opens them up to religious identities and to the accommodation of Muslims in Europe, which I take to be the major contemporary challenge of multiculturalism.

DO: At the end of the 'Parekh Report' there are some 'policy recommendations'. Are there any policy recommendations in the 'Fourth Survey of Ethnic Minorities'?

TM: No. It's far more general than that. We were trying to understand sociological trends, old and new, and don't have specific policy recommendations.

DO: Have your policy recommendations been influential to a large extent?

TM: This is very difficult to answer as even when policy-makers pay attention to what you are saying and converge with one's views, you can never be sure of what other influences and motivations are at work. I think I have been influential in shifting people's thinking. When I first started this work in the late 1980s, everybody thought in terms of black and white. I was one of the first people to challenge that. So, that was a very major shift. Everybody thought that if you weren't white you were going to be at the bottom of the socio-economic structure, and indeed many people are at the bottom. But I argued that actually there was a distribution across the range of positions, and that Indians specifically were developing a middle-class profile. A lot of people agree with that now.

I argued for extending anti-discrimination legislation to cover religion. When I first started, people said there was no need; that it was totally unnecessary; even Jack Straw held this position. When he came to launch the 'Fourth Survey' Report in 1997, I said to him that we were producing data to show that religious discrimination was an issue. And he said that it wasn't. And he carried on saying that for two or three years afterwards – including in a letter to me – but of course a few years later New Labour outlawed religious discrimination and incitement to religious hatred. More generally, I have argued for the centrality of religion to multiculturalism in western Europe when nearly all the multiculturalists, anti-racists and liberal egalitarians of the 1980s and later assumed that religion was and ought to be marginal. In a completely unanticipated way, western Europe is beginning to rethink

the secularist bias that assumes that it is oppressive to confine gender, ethnicity and sexuality identities to a private sphere but ok to do that with religious identities.

I contributed very actively to the ‘Parekh Report’ and am proud to have done so. I was one of the core members, and I introduced the idea that we should have citizenship ceremonies, and then the committee accepted the idea, and introduced it into the recommendations. When I first met Bhikhu Parekh, who is a very good friend of mine, and obviously I respect him as a leader in the field, he was against the idea that there should be state funded faith schools. I took the opposite view, and Bhikhu too came to that view. Bhikhu Parekh originally took a view of national identity which said that it was all to do with political membership, and therefore the bearers of the national identity were political institutions. My view was that was too narrow. A sense of country means a citizenship core, but it is wider than that, and so then we have to talk about things like Britishness and so on, and Bhikhu has moved in that direction. When I first started, few thought that issues about racial equality had anything to do with national identity, or with secularism. Now, most commentators agree with that. Another example is that I argued that simply targeting ethnic minorities in terms of, let’s say, extra educational resources, was not a wise policy; because actually Indians and Chinese were doing better than white people. So, instead of targeting policies to a general category of ethnic group, I argued that we needed to do it by ethnic group, like Pakistanis, Bangladeshis and African-Caribbeans. The New Labour government accepted that.

So I think I have may been influential in changing the terms of the debate, as well as specific policy changes, but unfortunately one can never tell. Perhaps it is more accurate to say that some of the ideas, perspectives and policies that I have argued for, now have a critical mass of proponents and some have been made into laws and policies. I also note that in the last few years new vocabularies have achieved a prominence in relation to prioritising security, and discourses around community cohesion. I am outside that, although, I have emphasised national identity from the beginning, which I think, is a related concept to community cohesion. But nevertheless, I refuse to give up the vocabulary, and if you like, the flag of Multiculturalism. I still wear that badge. When I see government people I am still talking about multiculturalism. And they find it a little bit uncomfortable, because they feel that it is out of date. Nevertheless, I think that over the last decade when multiculturalism is supposed to have died or been in retreat, policy has not been drastically altered and the balance of scholarly opinion may be coming to accept that. I have increasingly made explicit that multiculturalism is a mode of civic integration, not the opposite of integration, and recently have offered an analytical framework for understanding assimilation, individualist integration, cosmopolitanism and multiculturalism as interpretations of the core democratic concepts of liberty, equality and fraternity, with each mode as trying to meet the democratic deficit of the previous mode, multiculturalism doing so most satisfactorily. It is a theoretical contribution but it is also a public contribution as I hope it offers a bridge across the polarised positions in public debates today (Modood 2012). If I am wrong about influence on

public affairs I can still take pride in what my ex-students and ex-researchers are achieving as some of them have now developed academic careers of their own, and it is gratifying to receive emails from and meet young researchers at conferences who say that their work has been inspired by mine – and who knows, maybe they will have some influence upon the world.

DO: Now I will change the path again, to your academic biography, and to some theoretical questions. I would like to know who your PhD supervisor was. You told me that Michael Oakeshott was the external examiner for your MA dissertation.

TM: Yes, for the Master's dissertation. He has certainly been a major philosophical influence in ways that people may find surprising. I think my sense of the importance of subjectivities, and of conserving them, of national traditions, and of anti-rationalism and anti-monism in political theory and social sciences more generally comes from him and from Wittgenstein. It was a taught course, and then a dissertation. I got a distinction. And he was my external examiner.

DO: And your supervisor?

TM: Well, you wouldn't have heard of him. I chose to do my PhD in the Philosophy Department at Swansea University because there was a certain 'school of Wittgenstein' that I admired (perhaps the best known person associated with it was Peter Winch). But for various personal and intellectual reasons I received limited supervision and I dropped the study of Wittgenstein. My thesis was on 'R. G. Collingwood, M. J. Oakeshott and the Idea of a Philosophical Culture'. In terms of my career, I would say my mentor and role model has been Bhikhu Parekh. He has never formally been my supervisor or anything like that. His presence in creating certain kind of arguments, and creating the space for and courageously leading certain debates has been important to me, and has helped me enormously. Not only is his masterpiece, *Rethinking Multiculturalism* (Parekh 2000, 2nd ed. 2006) one of best philosophical statements of multiculturalism, and I am a great admirer of his public intellectual engagement, but he also has been personally very supportive at various stages of my career. In developing my own thinking I think Stuart Hall as well has been very influential, in for instance his concept of 'new ethnicities', and his general approach of recognising that issues of identity and of non-economic dimensions of social life were very important. Charles Taylor and Iris Young too have been important in shaping the multiculturalist outlook I bring to bear on politics and sociology.

DO: What has been the shape of your academic career?

TM: To begin with, I was teaching Political Theory, Philosophy of Social Sciences and a little bit of British Politics (but not to do with race, but to do with political

parties and government in a Politics Department). That was all in the early 1980s. Then I became unemployed and outside academia I did policy work, and then when I came back to academia, I came with a completely different portfolio. Most of my work in Bristol University has been in research. I haven't done a lot of teaching. Basically, I have been supervising PhD students, and for a long time I just did one Master's unit, called 'The Theory and Politics of Multiculturalism', which is based on my research. It's only been in recent years that I have started teaching undergraduates and I have prepared a new unit on Religion and Politics in the West.

DO: Before we finish, I would be interested to know what kind of political philosophers you taught in the 1980s, in that early phase of your academic career?

TM: I did a history of Political Thought course. So, that was Plato, Aristotle, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, John Stuart Mill ...

DO: So, it wasn't 'Rawlsian Political Philosophy'?

TM: Yes, to some extent. Having the Oakeshott influence makes me a little bit distant from Rawlsian political philosophy; because Oakeshott saw political philosophy as much more historically located, and also he didn't think that one begins with liberal premises, in the way that Rawls does, or Rawls tries to justify liberal premises, by having a certain view about reason or conceptions of the good and so on. So my approach to political philosophy was more historical; I taught a course that we sometimes call 'From Plato to Nato'...

DO: Thank you, I just wanted to be clear about your early philosophical orientation. Thank you very much for this interview.

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- [1] This interview is part of a doctoral research project, funded by the Spanish Ministry of Education (AP2006-04395) as part of the National Programme for Human Resources for Research. The main project is aimed at constructing an intellectual history of social scientific and philosophical investigations on cultural diversity – taking into account the intellectual trajectories of four influential scholars in the field (T. Modood, S. Vertovec, G. Baumann and W. Kymlicka), whereas the dissertation focuses on a comparative study of the processes of importation and reception of W. Kymlicka's and G. Baumann's theories in the Spanish field. Materials from the broader project, including those gathered in this and other interviews, will be the basis for further long-term research.

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