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'Grand-Mosque' Projects in Copenhagen: Intersections of Respect, Tolerance and Intolerance in the Distribution of Public Space[1]

Sune Lægaard

Abstract: *This paper considers the recent Danish mosque debate as a debate about distribution of public space to a religious minority and asks whether and, if so, how the case can be described in terms of tolerance and respect. Tolerance and respect are regularly advanced at the level of political theory as concepts and values relevant to the handling of minority issues. This paper will use the concepts of tolerance and respect in relation to the Danish mosque-debate as expressed in political assemblies and public debate in two ways: It will test the applicability of the theoretical concepts and in the process draw out some general challenges and lessons concerning the practical applicability of these concepts. At the same time it will use the concepts as an interpretative framework to present and evaluate the actual policies regarding the distribution of public space for the building of mosques played out in the case. One lesson drawn from the exercise in application is that the concepts have a narrower application than often assumed and that application requires differentiation between different potential subjects of tolerance and respect.*

Keywords*: Toleration, respect, public space, mosque, Copenhagen*

1 Introduction

This paper concerns the responses to recent requests by Danish Muslims to build two prominent mosques in Copenhagen. The paper considers this case as an example of how requests by minorities for use of public space are handled. A prominent position within the political theory on minority issues proposes to view such cases as cases of *toleration*, which ought furthermore to be handled on the basis of political

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values of *equal respect* (Forst 2010; Galeotti 2002). The theoretical proposal is thus both descriptive in that it proposes a certain conceptual framework for describing and understanding such cases, and normative. This paper is an empirical investigation of the Danish case through this conceptual framework of toleration and respect asking the descriptive and interpretative question about how the case can be understood as involving toleration and respect. The paper simultaneously uses the case to suggest that the concepts of toleration and respect have to be understood in ways integrating their vertical and horizontal dimensions, i.e. toleration and respect as expressed in formal relations between institutional authorities and citizens, on the one hand, and informal relationships between citizens, on the other. The study of the case reveals how vertical and horizontal issues of toleration and respect can be interrelated and intertwined in practice, which complicates the characterisation of the case as a whole. The paper is accordingly partly an empirical investigation of the case as seen in terms of toleration and respect, partly an inductive argument based on this investigation for a two-dimensional and intersectional understanding of the concepts as applied to such cases.

Muslims are the largest and most publicly visible and politically debated religious minority in Denmark but have no places of worship reflecting this status; there are only a couple actual mosques built as such in Denmark, none of which are big or prominent. Almost all active Muslims in Denmark practice their religion in converted factory buildings, warehouses or cellars. Since the eighties there has accordingly been a continuous wish for mosques constructed as such according to Muslims' own beliefs about how proper places of worship should be designed, reflecting the size of the religious group, and making it publicly visible to a degree comparable to other religious groups. Mosque plans have, however, been opposed on the basis that Denmark is a Christian, non-immigrant country, and more recently on the basis of fear and suspicion of, and outright hostility towards, Muslim and Islam as such, often couched in security terms. The present paper investigates the most recent phase in this Danish mosque-debate as it has played out in relation to two mosque projects in Copenhagen.

The paper proceeds as follows: The conceptual framework and the issues raised by two-dimensionality are presented in section 2. The vertical/horizontal distinction is used to focus the investigation and structure the description of the cases. Section 3 presents the political handling of the case in the City Council and the political debates in the council and parliament. Section 4 provides a theoretical interpretation of this process addressing the questions about vertical toleration and applicable sense(s) of toleration. Section 5 presents an empirical investigation of public debate in the media conducted to address the horizontal dimension. Section 6 concludes by discussing the understanding of the case gained by the application

of the conceptual framework and the need for an intersectional conception of toleration and respect that it is argued to demonstrate.

2 Conceptual Framework

Toleration is routinely taken to require the presence of two components (Newey 1999; Forst 2010): (1) an 'objection component' or 'reason for interference' consisting in some negative attitude on the part of one agent towards the beliefs or practices of another which disposes the former agent to suppress, prohibit or otherwise interference with the latter; (2) an 'acceptance component' or 'reason for non-interference' consisting in some positive attitude on the part of the first agent which overrides the disposition to interfere. There are accordingly two contrasts to toleration: Intolerance (the acceptance component is absent or not strong enough and the agent interferes) and cases where the negative attitude is absent, subdividing into cases of indifference and cases where an agent only has a positive attitude towards some other.

The concept of respect is simpler than toleration, since it only involves one attitude, and of higher order, since respect may function as the acceptance component motivating toleration. Respect is a positive attitude but need not involve a specific valuing of another; *equal* respect rather consists in recognition of the equal status of others and the claim on equal consideration this implies. Respect in turn requires and may motivate certain forms of action (Galeotti 2010), one of which is toleration. Respect based toleration obtains if an agent has a negative attitude towards the beliefs or practices of someone but nevertheless respects him, e.g. as an equal citizen, and therefore does not interfere with the disapproved belief or practice, e.g. as a matter of religious freedom.

The concepts of toleration and respect are often invoked in normative discussions about how people or states *ought* to act. But toleration is a descriptive concept and respect may be used descriptively, i.e. in a way not taken a normative stand on who should be respected and what respect in fact requires. Normative discussions presuppose the descriptive applicability of the concepts and the descriptive use of the concepts is furthermore of independent interest, since characterisation of cases in these terms can provide an understanding of the types of relationships in place and the dynamics of controversies and conflicts. The present paper employs the conceptual framework of toleration and respect in this descriptive sense.

It might be objected that the concepts are inevitably normatively loaded. This is correct in the sense that one reason for considering a case in these terms is to pass normative judgement on it, e.g. along the lines of the sketched theoretical proposal. But the concepts *as such* are not necessarily normatively loaded. It is not in itself an evaluative judgement (of endorsement or condemnation) to describe an actor as

(in)tolerant (Cohen 2004). It is an open question whether specific acts or practices should be tolerated; sometimes intolerance is justified. And while 'disrespect' might imply a negative evaluation, it is also an open question what equal respect requires in specific cases. So here one might categorise reasons for action as reasons of respect without thereby taking a stance on whether the act or policy thus justified is correct or not. Furthermore, the positive and negative attitudes involved in the descriptive application of the concepts are simply those voiced by or plausibly ascribed to specific actors, not attitudes condoned by the theorist.

Anne Elisabetta Galeotti has proposed toleration as a theoretically fruitful description of minority groups in modern liberal states; in order to understand the position of certain groups, it is necessary to grasp the way in which they are seen as different and deviant from the norms and expectations of the majority (Galeotti 2002). To focus only on liberal state neutrality and the equal rights of members of all groups as individual citizens ignores the sense in which these groups are *minorities*, not just in a quantitative (numerical) sense, but in a qualitative sense having to do with asymmetrical power relations ascribing them an identity as different from the norm in a negatively valuated way (Lægaard 2008). Minority status may thus *explain* negative reactions to requests from minorities, e.g. for gaining a visible presence in public spaces, and that such cases are accordingly properly described in terms of toleration.

From a normative point of view, it has further been argued that toleration might be insufficient or defective in terms of justice if it leaves the asymmetrical power relations in place and merely concede certain permissions to the minority on the condition that it acquiesces in its minority position by not challenging the majority norms in place. The proposed antidote is to explicitly base policies of toleration on appeals to respect for the equal status of members of the minority, which is supposed to counter the repressive character of toleration as mere permission (Forst 2010) and to symbolise the full inclusion of minorities (Galeotti 2002).

Even this sketchy characterisation indicates that the concepts may be applied to cases along two different dimensions depending on who the subjects and objects of toleration and respect are: Relations are *vertical* if the subject is the state or some other public authority and the object are citizens or groups in society within the jurisdiction and regulative power of the authority. Relations are *horizontal* if both the subject and object are citizens or societal groups.

Vertical toleration is traditionally associated with absolutist confessional states only conceding qualified and conditional permission to religious minorities. According to Rainer Forst, however, a democratic form of this 'permission conception' of toleration is still relevant for understanding debates over what democratic rights to religious freedom mean in modern states (2010: 12). Even if liberal states

should in principle be religiously neutral in ways precluding official dislike of minority religions it is not obvious that even quite liberal states are in fact neutral. Liberal states might in any event still have other reasons for disapproving of beliefs or practices of some citizens (Lægaard 2010a). So there is still use for the descriptive concept of vertical toleration.

Vertical respect is usually considered to be a requirement of liberal justice; liberal states are supposed to justify their policies in ways expressing equal respect for all citizens. On some ideals of democracy, vertical respect may require citizens as lawmakers to set aside their own religious views when deliberating over how political power should be exercised. This is an expression of what Forst calls the 'respect conception' of toleration (2010: 11). This use of the concept shows that vertical and horizontal relations may be intrinsically interrelated: In such ideal models of democratic decision making, vertical respect presupposes and is a function of horizontal respect. I will call such interrelation *bottom-up intrinsic intersectionality*.

Conversely, intrinsic intersectionality is *top-down* when the vertical toleration of institutions concerns or addresses horizontal relations in society. The two dimensions are then necessarily in play simultaneously, e.g. if the state vertically enforces toleration in a horizontal conflict between citizens (Newey 1999). Peter Jones (2007) understands political toleration intersectionally as the upholding *by* the state of a regime of toleration *in* society. The state is then politically tolerant if it prevents social intolerance, even if it does not itself have negative attitudes towards the practices or beliefs in question. Galeotti's idea of toleration as recognition (2002) is also a form of top-down intrinsic intersectionality: She argues that *states* should tolerate minorities and publicly justify toleration with reference to the equal status of members of minorities in order to include them as full citizens, which is partly a matter of the *social* perceptions that other citizens have of minorities (Lægaard 2008). These examples illustrate how the application of the concepts of toleration and respect sometimes has to be two-dimensional and that the intersection of the two dimensions is essential to understanding the applicable sense of toleration or respect, whether as descriptive characterisations or normative ideals.

Relations of toleration and respect may also be *extrinsically intersectional*. This would mean that there is a contingent connection between, e.g., the vertical toleration of public authorities and horizontal toleration in society. One example of such a connection might be when vertical toleration brings about horizontal toleration. But there are other possibilities of such intersectional dynamics of toleration and respect.

My claim now is that in order to apply the concepts of toleration and respect, we need to take two-dimensionality and intersectionality, intrinsic as well as extrinsic, into account. As part of a descriptive characterisation of a case, one does not

understand how the case is one of toleration or respect if one ignores intersectionality. I will use the Danish mosque case to illustrate the distinction between vertical and horizontal relations, how the adoption of this conceptual framework is empirically informative, e.g. in the way it reveals intersectional dynamics of toleration and respect, and how the characterisation and understanding of the case as one of toleration and respect requires attention to intersectionality.

3 The Political Process[2]

Since the early eighties, the Danish state has designated a plot on the island of Amager, just outside the city centre of Copenhagen, as a potential building site for a mosque (Jacobsen 2008). The site was formerly the location of an artillery battery as part of the city fortifications and is therefore referred to as the 'Stationary Battery'. Since 1992 the plot has been regulated by a district plan designating part of the area for the building of 'cultural institutions', for instance a mosque. Several projects for building a mosque on the Battery plot never got off the ground, mainly because of lack of funding.

In 2006, the Battery plot was acquired from the state by a private investor and real estate developer who wanted to realise a spectacular building project involving several high rises. In cooperation with the municipal building administration the developer sought a partner to represent the Muslims who would use the mosque mentioned in the existing district plan, which the municipality required be built as part of the first phase of the project. In 2008 the developer reached an agreement with a newly formed organisation called the 'Muslim Council' [Muslimernes Fællesråd] allegedly representing a broad range of Sunni Muslim communities in Denmark, which was supposed to raise funds for the mosque. In 2009 preparatory work on a new district plan for the Battery plot began. The plans were discussed in November 2009 in the city council's Technical- and Environmental committee because of disagreements between the developer and the Muslims' Council over the plans for the mosque as well as apparent difficulties in raising the necessary funds.

But at this point the Battery mosque project had been overtaken by another project. On the other side of Copenhagen, the Shia Islamic religious association Ahlul Bait owns an old mechanical workshop. In 2009 the association applied to the municipality for permission to demolish the existing building and erect in its stead a proper mosque in traditional Shia Islamic style with dome and minarets (not to be used for calls to prayer).

[2] The description of the political process is based on the official agendas, minutes and annexed notes and documents for the meetings of the City Council and the Technical and Environmental Committee found (in Danish) on the homepage of the City of Copenhagen www.kk.dk These documents do not appear in the list of references but are on file with the author.

According to the Danish planning act, local councils are required to draw up district plans before large scale construction works take place, which set out the limits and requirements concerning use, access, plot ratio, building height, location and exterior, parking opportunities etc. Both the Ahlul Bait mosque and the Battery project require changes in the district plans. The drawing up of district plans is a practical planning issue, and therefore usually a routine matter. But when the draft proposal for a district plan for the Ahlul Bait mosque was approved by the Technical and Environmental committee in June 2009, the Danish People's Party (DPP) representative on the committee requested a full political debate about the case in the city council. She claimed that so-called 'grand-mosques' disturb the public order and attract extremist Muslims, obstruct integration and further segregation. The representative of the liberal party did not have any objections to the building of a mosque as such, but objected to the proposed project on the grounds that the traditional Shia style mosque would not fit architecturally into the area.

When the draft district plan was discussed in the city council in August 2009, the DPP representatives further argued against the mosque, claiming that Islam is opposed to gender equality and democracy and involves antiquated cultural norms concerning family patterns, upbringing and violence. The DPP representatives objected to permitting erection of a 'monument' allegedly publicly symbolising such views. The remaining parties represented in the council justified their support for a plan permitting the mosque to be built on a number of grounds including non-discrimination (other religious communities have their publicly visible places of worship, so why not Muslims?); the value of diversity (especially architectural); freedom of religion; integration; and the procedural point that district plans according to the planning act only concern strict planning issues and cannot take political broader issues, e.g. about Islam or funding, into account.

Although the city council approved the drawing up of a district plan permitting the construction of the Ahlul Bait mosque, this accommodating step at the local level provided an occasion for the DPP and other critics of Muslims and Islam to publicly oppose mosques. The most vocal expression of this development was a nation-wide advertising campaign launched by the DPP in September 2009, in which the party objected to both the Ahlul Bait and Battery mosques on the grounds that they were supposed to be financed from the 'terror regime' in Iran and the 'dictatorship' in Saudi-Arabia, respectively. The advertisements were illustrated by a manipulated picture of the blue mosque in Istanbul with crossed swords, symbolising the bellicose nature of Islam, placed on the roof, and demanded a popular referendum against mosques.

The DPP continued its campaign which gained unexpected momentum when a Swiss referendum in November 2009 called for a ban on minarets in that country.

The leader of the DPP called for a similar referendum in Denmark, with reference to the plans for 'grand-mosques' in Copenhagen.

The DPP pursued its campaign in the national parliament. In December 2009 the DPP asked the minister for integration to elucidate the challenges in terms of integration and security posed by the planned construction of 'grand-mosques'. During the debate in parliament in February 2010 the DPP, with explicit reference to the two Copenhagen mosque projects, called for a vote on whether Parliament should encourage the government and local councils to prevent the construction of 'grand-mosques'.[3] The proposal did not meet with approval and the parliamentary majority instead adopted a resolution stating that religious freedom includes the opportunity to establish places of worship and denying allegations that big visible mosques obstruct integration or disturb public order as unfounded.

In January 2010 the DPP proposed a Swiss-style consultative referendum on whether construction of minarets should be prohibited in Denmark to parliament.[4] At the first reading of the proposal in April, the minister for integration rejected it on several grounds, including freedom of religion. A representative of the DPP replied, with partial reference to an old quote by the Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan, that the Ahlul Bait mosque to be built in Copenhagen was not a place of worship, but 'a barracks in a campaign of conquest' and 'a propaganda centre for the Iranian theocracy'. The spokesperson for the DPP objected to minarets as parts of a general 'Islamisation' of Danish society. The proposal was rejected at the second reading in May 2010 by all parties in parliament except the DPP.

Meanwhile, in February 2010, the Technical- and Environmental committee in Copenhagen had approved the drawing up of a district plan for the Battery project, including the Battery mosque. As in the previous case of the Ahlul Bait mosque, the DPP committee representative requested a political debate in the city council, this time voicing worries about the funding of the project coming from non-moderate forces such as Iran. The representatives of the liberal and conservative parties supported the Battery draft plan, but objected on neutrality grounds to the explicit designation in the draft district plan of one building as a 'Mosque' rather than as a building for 'cultural purposes'.

When the Battery draft district plan was discussed in the city council in March 2010, the DPP representatives reiterated their objections to the mosque on the basis of concerns about Iranian funding, and denied that it was the job of the city council to facilitate the building of a mosque. The other parties represented in the council supported the inclusion of provisions for a mosque in the draft district plan on the

[3] http://www.ft.dk/samling/20091/forespoergsel/F18/BEH1/forhandling.htm#dok
[4] http://www.ft.dk/samling/20091/beslutningsforslag/B104/som_fremsat.htm#dok

basis of religious freedom and the value of diversity, and approved the drawing up of a district plan designating part of the Battery as a mosque.

Before the approval in the city council of the district plan permitting the building of the Ahlul Bait mosque in April 2010 a new voice appeared. This time the opposition to the mosque project did not come from the DPP or similar Islam- or immigration critical quarters, but from a group of Iranian exiles, who demonstrated outside the city hall against the links between the Ahlul Bait and the Iranian regime. The protest initiative 'No to Iran's prestige project' documented institutional links between the transnational Ahlul Bait and the Iranian regime and the involvement of the Iranian ambassador to Denmark in the purchase of the Ahlul Bait property and warned against Iranian funding of the mosque leading to increased influence of the regime in Denmark. The protest initiative even got an audience with the Danish Parliament's committee on immigration- and integration policy in May 2010. The protest initiative was publicly supported by local politicians across the political spectrum, but only swayed the vote of one representative on the city council from the socialist party, herself an Iranian exile.

4 Theoretical Interpretation of the Political Process

Can this political process be interpreted in terms of toleration and respect? Can the City Council and/or the Danish state be described as vertically tolerant or respectful in this case? Focusing first on the City Council as an institutional actor, note first that the fact that the Technical and Environmental committee in 2009 initiated work on district plans which would permit the building of mosques was not an expression of a specific *policy* on the part of the city council regarding mosques. The planning act requires local councils to draw up district plans when they receive applications for construction projects. Here the applications simply happened to involve plans for the building of mosques. So the council does not have a general 'mosque-policy'; rather, a general procedure for handling building applications is in place, which was followed in these particular cases.

Secondly, the decisions reached in the building cases apparently cannot be described as either tolerant or respectful in the strict sense introduced in the beginning. This is so insofar as the objection and acceptance components required for toleration and respect do not obtain; the council *as such* does not have or express either a negative or positive attitude towards the mosque projects. The acts of the council as an institutional actor distinct from the individual members of the council can arguably only be described as *permissive*, not as either tolerant or respectful, insofar as toleration and respect require the presence in some form of attitudes towards the object of the permission ascribable to the agent in question (Lægaard 2010a).

Something similar holds at the state level: Since the proposals from the DPP to require councils to oppose 'grand-mosques' and for public referenda over minarets were both rejected, parliamentary debates did not lead to any decision to intervene or change the procedures. The state as such thus remained aloof in relation to the handling of the cases in the city council.

Some might describe the case in terms of toleration due to the constitutional role of the Evangelical-Lutheran church as the 'People's Church of Denmark' supported as such by the state. Muslims might be in a relation of vertical toleration to the Danish state simply because the state is (in some, far from obvious sense) Christian. Without being able to argue the claim fully here (see Lægaard 2010b), this need not be the case. The state does not necessarily object to Muslims or mosques simply because it supports the Lutheran church, and in fact the Danish state is not only practicing non-interference towards Muslims but positively supports 'approved' Islamic religious communities in some ways. The official religious inequality rather contributes to the minority status of Danish Muslims; in addition to being a numerical minority (estimated 4% of the population), Muslims are both economically and normatively a minority. They are marked as different and divergent from the norm both officially (the Danish state supports the Lutheran church) and in public debate (which is dominated by discourses of immigration hostility, cultural assimilationism, and invocations of 'Danish values' supposedly difficult to accept for Muslims).

The *internal politics* in the council and parliament are better places to look for the articulation of objection and acceptance components characterising toleration and respect: Here there are clear articulations of objections to mosques from the DPP and partly from liberals and conservatives. Among the majority there are articulations of both objection and acceptance, the latter voiced as reasons for not diverging from standard procedure and for not allowing specific allegations (e.g. concerning Iranian funding) as reasons for withholding permission. Appeals to non-discrimination and freedom of religion might be interpreted as forms of equal respect insofar as they both explicitly acknowledge Muslims as having equal standing and publicly justify permitting mosques on this basis. One can accordingly describe individual members of the council and parliament as tolerant or respectful. But the aggregated attitudes of its members arguably cannot be ascribed to the council *as such* as long as it only approves of a district plan but does not publicly affirm reasons for objection or acceptance.

The council can be described as tolerant in Jones' broader sense: Even if the council as an institutional actor is not tolerant or respectful, it *upholds a regime of toleration* by sticking to the standard procedure for district plans. The council thereby prevents forces demanding withholding of building permissions, e.g.

as represented by the DPP in the council and parliament, from backing up their objections with political power, e.g. in the form of denying building permissions.

Already at this level of political process, intersectionality makes it appearance: Insofar as the potential intolerance is located in society in a broader sense (as opposed to being a part of the formal constitution of the public authorities) the description of the council as politically tolerant makes implicit or explicit reference to horizontal intolerance of opponents of mosques towards these building projects. The description of the council as politically tolerant is only salient and informative in relation to the particular case in light of these potentially intolerant horizontal relations, which the council's actions transform into relations of publicly enforced toleration. The political toleration in question is accordingly a case of top-down intersectional toleration.

5 Public Debate[5]

To assess the case in terms horizontal toleration and respect, an empirical investigation of the distribution of intolerant, tolerant and positive views on mosques in the public debate in the media about the cases was conducted. This empirical material provides an avenue for assessing extrinsic intersectionality in the case, since it makes it possible to investigate the relations between the public debates on the case and the political process, between the articulated reasons for views in the political and broader public debates, and how the dynamics of the debates unfold.

The investigation was conducted using the database *Infomedia*, which collects all written and electronic media in Denmark. The media survey covers the period from January 2009 to September 2010, i.e. the period where the political process took place as well as some time before that. Searches were conducted on selected key words, namely 'stormoske' ['grand-mosque'], 'moske' [mosque], and the names of the two Islamic associations responsible for the two mosque projects, namely 'Muslimerne Fællesråd' [The Muslim Council] and 'Ahlul Bait' (all including derivatives and variations in spelling).

This survey does not address the issue of agenda setting. Although some of the findings reasonably can be understood as driven by the media, the findings of the survey do not in themselves measure the agenda setting effect of the media. The focus is moreover strictly on Danish media (local as well as national). This national focus does show that national public debates are part of broader international currents, both in terms of the reverberations of specific events in other countries (e.g. the Swiss referendum on minarets) and the more general concern with Islam, integration and security. The survey does not in itself address the place of the case

[5] The data sets on which the account in this section is based are on file with the author.

in the international context or comparative issues about similarity or difference relative to other cases in other countries, since this is arguably not crucial to the interpretation of the specific case in terms of toleration and respect.

The public debate does not necessarily reflect attitudes towards mosques in society more broadly. The media are nevertheless crucial to the formation of public perceptions, which justified the choice of focus. It might be objected that public debate is likely to be dominated by more radical views and not to reflect the possibly more moderate opinions of a 'quiet majority'. Even if the public debate is skewed in the noted way, the survey can still be used to assess several forms of intersectionality: The description of the Council as politically tolerant in Jones' sense does not require any specific level of potential societal intolerance. Participation in public debate is arguably an important aspect Forst's 'respect conception' concerning citizens in their capacity as law-makers. And extrinsic intersectionality between the political process and the public debate will be of independent interest in understanding the case, whether or not the public debate reflects broader attitudes correctly or not.

The objection is further addressed by incorporating a partial test of the degree to which the public debate is skewed in the survey design: While the term 'stormoske' literally means 'grand-mosque', its use in the Danish debate does not necessarily signify anything about the actual size or the special status of the buildings in question. According to *Infomedia*, the term first appeared in Danish media with reference to a Danish context in December 1990 and February 1991 as part of the coverage of a proposal from the Progress Party, an anti-taxation and immigration-hostile protest party from parts of which the DPP later evolved. In November 1990 PP members of parliament, including the latter founder of the DPP, proposed a bill to parliament to cancel the lease of the Battery plot to a Muslim association for the purpose of building a mosque, which the bill referred to as a 'stormoske'. The term 'stormoske' makes its appearance in the public media as part of the subsequent news coverage of and public debate over the Battery lease. One might therefore hypothesize that use of the term reflects the PP's original view of mosques as inherently problematic and that the terminology functions as a discursive framing of mosque projects as more problematic and even threatening than the more simple label 'mosque' might suggest. For the DPP's part, this was confirmed during the parliamentary debate in February 2010, where the spokesman of the DPP admitted that they considered *any* visible mosque with dome or minarets as a 'grand-mosque'. The separate searches on uses of 'stormoske' and 'moske' provides a test of the hypothesis that the former is not a neutral descriptive term but a politically loaded label, which might suggest the minimal degree to which the public debate over-represents more radical views.

The results of the searches were sorted in several stages: At the first quantitative stage strict news coverage and opinion pieces were separated. The former (reports, news telegrams etc. not arguing a particular view) were counted and ordered according to date. The latter (letters to the editor, interviews etc. articulating a view) were ordered by date and sorted in to three categories: 'intolerant' (pieces arguing for not permitting the mosques), 'tolerant' (pieces articulating some negative view of mosques but nevertheless arguing that they should be permitted), and 'positive' (pieces articulating some positive view of mosques and in favour of permitting them). At this level of categorisation, 'positive' includes all views arguing for permitting mosques with no accompanying negative view, so it covers all reasons for permission, not just equal respect views.

At the second stage a qualitative reading was conducted of a subset of the entire sample selected on the basis of the degree of articulation of the views expressed and whether the author of the view was of special interest, e.g. prominent public figures, representatives of political parties, groups or organisations relevant to the case. The selected sub-set was studied to determine the more precise justifications for the more general stances, i.e. which objections to mosques informed intolerant or tolerant views, and which positive considerations were given as reasons for permitting mosques.

The survey shows the use in the public media of the key terms to be closely correlated with central dates in the political process. There are almost no occurrences in Danish media of the key terms in 2009 before the issue appears on the agenda for the meeting of the technical- and environmental committee on 24 June 2009. This first wave consists of 59 news items on 'Ahlul Bait', 'moske' and 'stormoske' on the day following the meeting. The first wave generates little public debate.

The second wave follows on the council meeting on 27 August 2009 approving the work on the district plan. The same day the media had 42 news items on 'Ahlul Bait', 'stormoske' and 'moske' and 41 the next day. Then, after a few days with only a little debate, things explode: 1 September 2009 sees 73 news items on 'stormoske', and the next four days 77, together with a barrage of opinion pieces all using the term 'stormoske' (over 30 the first week of September). The factor triggering this third wave is a news story about the funding for the Ahlul Bait mosque supposedly coming from Iran, a subsequent demand for financial transparency for any mosque project made by a prominent member of parliament from the Conservative party, which the DPP tops by a demand that all permissions to build 'grand-mosques' are withdrawn.

After a week of debate mostly about the Iranian funding of the Ahlul Bait mosque, the fourth wave is initiated on 9 September 2009 by the DPP's nation-wide campaign featuring manipulated pictures of the blue mosque, which is extensively

covered in the media (65 news items the same day using the terms 'stormoske' and 'moske'). This generates a huge amount of opinion pieces (67 using the term 'stormoske' the next three weeks), which for the first time are polarised and mainly intolerant: Whereas the first week of September saw only 1 positive, 24 tolerant and 8 intolerant opinion pieces using the term 'stormoske', the three weeks after the DPP's campaign generated 11 positive, 17 tolerant and 39 intolerant opinion pieces using the same term.

During fall 2009 'stormoske' is mainly used in relation to news stories about the projected Battery mosque and disagreements between the developer and the Muslim Council. This phase generates relatively little public debate, but now with a clear tendency towards intolerance (1 positive, 3 tolerant and 13 intolerant opinion pieces using 'stormoske' in October and November).

The fifth wave is triggered by the Swiss referendum on minarets and the subsequent demand from the DPP leader for a similar referendum in Denmark: Over 100 news items use the term 'stormoske' on 29 November 2009 and the two following days. The resulting opinion pieces replicate the earlier noted tendency towards intolerance (1 positive, 6 tolerant and 9 intolerant pieces using the term 'stormoske' in the weeks following the referendum).

The sixth wave of news coverage and public debate ensues when the city council on 15 February 2010 publishes the first draft of a district plan for the battery project. A prominent tabloid paper, *Ekstra Bladet*, seizes the opportunity to launch a journalistic campaign about the projected 'grand-mosque' on its internet based popular opinion page 'the Nation'. Unsurprisingly, given *Ekstra Bladet*'s immigration hostile record, the result is a new wave of debate with a strong tendency towards intolerant views.

The seventh wave is triggered by the council meeting on 15 April 2010 approving the district plan for the Ahlul Bait mosque, before which the protest initiative 'No to Iran's prestige project' demonstrated outside the city hall. The debate focuses on the funding coming from Iran and criticisms of the Iranian regime and is mostly intolerant (only 1 positive, but 12 tolerant and 15 intolerant opinion pieces using the term 'stormoske').

At the general quantitative level, the survey suggests that the news coverage and public debate is a function of five factors: 1) The district planning process, 2) the story of Iranian funding, 3) the DPP's campaign, 4) the Swiss referendum, and 5) *Ekstra Bladet*'s journalistic campaign. There is hardly any news coverage or public debate independently of these factors. The funding story and Swiss referendum furthermore mainly generate so much coverage and debate because they are taken up by national politicians (especially from the DPP). So the coverage and public debate seems to be directed by the political process at the local level

and the political debate at the national level. The public debate furthermore leans increasingly towards intolerance, the DPP's campaign apparently marking the tipping point.

As a methodological caveat it should be noted that the survey only demonstrates correlations, not causality. But this also points to an important qualification regarding the lessons that can be drawn from a study like the present one: Whereas the waves of intolerance mainly seem to be triggered by interventions of the DPP, and to some lesser extent by other political actors, it gives no reasons to believe that these interventions are either necessary or sufficient for the observed rises in intolerance. Most importantly, there may be further background preconditions for intolerant views that are merely activated or tapped into by political interventions. So one cannot, for instance, conclude on the basis of the noted correlations that the DPP is solely responsible for the documented intolerance in the public debate.

The distribution of intolerant, tolerant and respectful views displays some interesting features both when comparing the views expressed using different terms and the distribution of views between 2009 and 2010. The politically loaded nature of the term 'stormoske' relative to the term 'moske' is clearly confirmed by the survey. Of all the opinion pieces using the former term, 10% are positive, 32% tolerant, and 54% intolerant, whereas the distribution of those using the latter term is 30% positive, 36% tolerant, and 34% intolerant. So attitudes clearly correlate with choice of terminology. The development over time is also striking: In 2009, of all the registered opinion pieces (all four key terms), 15% were positive, 36% tolerant and 46% intolerant. In 2010, this had changed to 11% positive, 30% tolerant and 59% intolerant. This shift towards more intolerant views is also clear even within the category of opinion pieces using the more neutral term 'moske': Where 38% of these were positive, 35% tolerant, and 27% intolerant in 2009, this changes to 15% positive, 39% tolerant, and 44% intolerant in 2010. This shift is probably due to the greater saliency in 2010 of concerns about the Iranian funding of the Ahlul Bait mosque apparently shared by many who do not see mosques as such as problematic.

At the selective and qualitative level, the main picture is that the same reasons are advanced in the public debate as originally formulated by members of the city council and reiterated in parliament; with minor exceptions, no reasons for either objection or acceptance are expressed in opinion pieces that were not already articulated in the political debate.

The main reasons *against* the building of mosques are: 1) security (fear of extremism and radicalisation), 2) general anti-Islamicism (objections to political Islamism, gender inequality, undemocratic nature of Islam), 3) funding coming from Iran or Saudi-Arabia, 4) aesthetics (foreign architecture, size), 5) the neutrality of

the district plan (the reference to a mosque – this procedural concern is only voiced in the city council), 6) public presence (Denmark is a Christian country, Muslims are welcome, but should practice in private), 7) religious representativity (there should not be a shia mosque, since there are so few shias in Copenhagen – this is not voiced politically), 8) problems of integration (a 'grand mosque' will result in segregation and worse integration).

The reasons *for* permitting mosques are: 9) planning act procedure (the act does not allow decision on district plans to take controversial political and religious issues into account – this procedural point is mostly formulated politically), 10) freedom of religion, 11) non-discrimination, 12) integration and inclusion, 13) the value of diversity. All of these reasons for permission can be interpreted as forms of, or as based on concerns with, equal respect for Muslims. This is of course just a possible (although plausible) interpretation of the voiced reasons, which could also be pragmatically or strategically motivated. The analysis is concerned with the underlying intentions of actors, however, only with the views actually expressed in the public debate. Reasons 9-11 share the formal feature of treating all citizens equally in specific dimensions, which is what motivates the interpretation in terms of equal respect. Reasons 12-13 are more plausibly interpreted as expressions of the view that Muslims are valuable members of society.

The most prominent reasons voiced against mosques are reasons having to do with general criticism of Islam, e.g. for being undemocratic or oppressing women, and second to that concerns for security (radicalisation) and funding (from Iran and Saudi-Arabia). The objection having to do with funding is almost non-existing before the end of august 2009 and becomes much more prominent in 2010. This is especially the case for tolerant views, among which concerns about Iranian funding loom larger in 2010 than in 2009. Many who were not worried about mosques before the story about Iranian funding became so afterwards, and many who objected to mosques all along (e.g. the DPP) use the funding story as an additional reason or even translate their original dislike of Islam as such into apparently more publicly palatable worries about giving the Tehran regime influence in Denmark.

Among reasons for permitting mosques, freedom of religion seems to be the most prominent, although the reasons for acceptance are generally less clearly articulated than the reasons for objection.

6 Conclusion: The Intersectionality of Toleration and Respect

Respect, toleration and intolerance are central to understanding of the Danish mosque case. A description of the case that did not detail the articulation of reasons for acceptance and objection in the political and public debate would make it incomprehensible why such an apparently routine building permission case could be

so controversial and occupy so much space in the political process and media. One cannot understand the political debates unfolding in the case or why mosque building became a political issue at all without understanding how it involves questions about toleration and respect. Toleration and respect are thus central to any adequate description and understanding of the case. This is so whether or not one also adopts a normative perspective on the case, although the articulated reasons of objection and acceptance gain additional saliency if one approaches the case from the point of view of, e.g., religious freedom in general or concerns with the position of the Muslim minority in particular.

On the other hand, descriptions of either the public authorities as simply permissive or of public opinion as predominantly intolerant also seem inadequate or even misleading. The case is not simply one of unproblematic permissiveness on the basis of religious freedom, nor is it merely one of pervasive popular intolerance and Islamophobia. The development of the case can only be understood by taking both the permissiveness of public authorities and the articulation of increasingly intolerant views in public debate into consideration and by noting their interrelations.

One general finding of the paper thus is that attention to two-dimensionality and intersectionality seems crucial to an adequate description and understanding of the case, not just for the purpose of assessments of it in term of normative ideals such as Forst's democratic respect conception or Galeotti's toleration as recognition. Normative ideals such as these can be shown at the purely theoretical level to turn on specific intersections of political and social relations not captured by one-dimensional calls for tolerance. This paper shows empirically how this kind of two-dimensionality and intersectionality is also required for descriptive and interpretative purposes. This is not a trivial point, since cases of toleration, and especially of intolerance, are often simple in the sense that the attitudes of public authorities correspond to popular attitudes; in many places where authorities have denied building permission to mosques or minarets, this reflects popular dislike or fear of Muslims or Islam. But the Danish case is different in that the horizontal and vertical relations do not correspond so neatly. So to adequately describe it, we need to introduce two-dimensionality into the conceptual framework, and to understand it we have to consider the various possible form of intersectionality between the two dimensions.

The structuring of the data in terms of positive, tolerant and intolerant views provides a prism illuminating both the dynamics of the case over time and the relationships between the vertical and horizontal level; this interpretative perspective reveals to what extent the public debate is conditioned and even dictated by the political process and debate, both in terms of triggering factors, the distribution

and dynamics of views, and the reasons given for the views. This is an interesting example of what I have called extrinsic intersectionality. The investigation in these terms shows the agenda setting force of the political process in at least two dimensions: First, the public debate on mosque issues is apparently triggered by the political process and the meetings of the political bodies are among the main factors initiating the waves of public debate. Secondly, the reasons for objection and acceptance articulated in the public debate mirrors those formulated in the political process. These two aspects of intersectionality give a picture of the public debate as almost determined by the political process. A third aspect changes this picture, however, in that the majority view in both the city council and parliament is revealed as an increasingly embattled minority view in the public debate. The public debate is thus independent from the political process, but not autonomous, since it is apparently the skilful instrumentalisation of the mosque issue by specific political actors (especially the DPP) that propels the shift towards increasing intolerance in the public debate.

The survey further substantiates the description of Muslims in Denmark as a minority in the noted qualitative sense. The increasingly intolerant response supports Galeotti's hypothesis that the perceived divergence of minorities tends to transform issues involving requests by minority groups into problems of toleration despite the formal equality in liberal states; as soon as minorities make requests for public presence, they go from being more or less invisible to being a challenge to the majority's norms, which generates popular opposition (Galeotti 2002: 90-93). The survey supports the characterisation of Muslims as a minority in the normative sense. It further indicates that prospects of having visible mosques are considered as deviances from the norm in Denmark in a way triggering intolerant attitudes, at least when these deviances are instrumentalised politically for this purpose.

As further discussed in the introduction, there are prominent normative positions according to which toleration should not merely consist in permissions, but should be explicitly justified with reference to equal respect. If toleration is based on equal respect, it is not a way of entrenching power asymmetries between minority and majority, but a way of including minorities as full and equal citizens. The survey suggests that one way of understanding this claim might be overly optimistic: If the claim is understood as an empirical prediction of the effects of justifying permissions in terms of respect, then it is not confirmed in this case. Even though the majority in both the city council and the national parliament invoke freedom of religion, non-discrimination and similar reasons plausibly understood as expressions of equal respect as justifications for sticking to a planning procedure that results in permissions to build mosques, this apparently has no positive effects on public opinion – in fact, the opposite seems to be the case.

There are many qualifications to this assessment, however. First, the views expressed in public debate may not be representative, or the change in public opinion might take longer to materialise. There are weak indications that this is the case: The difference in views expressed using the terms 'stormoske' and 'moske' suggests an over-representation of intolerant views in the public debate. Further, two opinion polls conducted during the period may be interpreted as indicating a movement towards less intolerance.[6] Second, the claim might be that it is not sufficient merely to stick to the ordinary procedure; perhaps the invocation of equal respect as a reason for permissions should rather be a distinct affirmative act infusing the permission with symbolic meaning (Galeotti 2002), e.g. in the form of public statements by prominent representatives of the council in their official capacities rather than by individual members of the council. Thirdly, even if no actual effect of the envisaged sort occurs, the respect view might still be upheld as a purely normative ideal about what justice requires in cases like this.

While the investigation does not in itself say anything about how such cases should be handled, it provides information that is strategically relevant if one is trying to figure out how to translate specific normative ideals into practice in similar cases. One apparent lesson is that public opinion, at least to the extent this is expressed in public debate, is both very much conditioned by political process and debate, but is far from an automatic function of official policies. Even if a political body invokes a given value as justification for permissions, there is no guarantee that this value will inform views in the public debate. The extent to which the public debate develops out of political instrumentalisation of both internal and external factors (e.g. the funding story and the Swiss referendum) indicates that symbolic invocations of the equal status of minorities as justification of public decisions is certainly not sufficient to remove minority status. Worse for proponents of multiculturalist policies of recognition, such invocations may actually further entrench the minority status and exclusion of a group requesting increased public presence.

So two kinds of intersectionality may work against each other in cases like this: Normative ideals of equal respect may be intrinsically intersectional in the sense

[6] Immediately following the Swiss minaret referendum the research institute *Megafon* asked over 1000 people what they would vote if a referendum on banning or permitting minarets were to be held in Denmark? 51% answered that they would vote for a ban, 34% for permission and 15% did not know. In August 2010 the research institute *Rambøll* asked 970 people whether it would annoy them if a mosque with a minaret were built in the local area? 49,7% answered 'yes', 48% 'no' and 2,2% 'don't know'. These two representative polls are not strictly comparable, since the questions are different. But they indicate a less negative attitude towards mosques and minarets in 2010 than in 2009: the positive group is now almost as big as the negative group, and 'being annoyed' is arguably a less negative attitude than actually voting in favour of a ban at a referendum. One might be annoyed but still not be in favour of a ban, e.g. because of respect for freedom of religion, in which case one qualifies as tolerant. So the negative group in the second poll includes both intolerant as well as tolerant attitudes to minarets.

that they require public authorities to work (vertically) for an increased acceptance of difference in social (horizontal) relations among citizens (this is arguable part of the European Union discourse on 'equal treatment', which then prescribes a form of top-down intrinsic intersectionality). But such ideals can run up against extrinsic intersectionality, either in the form of bottom-up popular reactions to institutional impositions, or, more likely, against political instrumentalisation of the issues thus placed on the popular agenda. The latter may be what happened in the Danish case. The political response by the DPP to the prospects of building permissions for mosques did not succeed in halting the political process towards this result significantly. But it arguably prevented this political process from functioning as an occasion for fostering more positive and accepting attitudes towards Muslims and mosques in the public debate. Whether the Mosques will in fact be built is now primarily a matter of funding, which the political instrumentalisation of the issue has turned into a volatile subject that the media are certain to remain watchful and suspicious towards for some time. If the mosques are eventually built, this might move the debate and the broader popular and political focus on Muslims in new directions. But for the time being, the Danish mosque case is a peculiar one of political permissibility coupled with intolerance in the public debate.

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