



Public Lecture Series

Friday, 12 May 2023

Can Multiculturalism Contribute to De-polarizing the Current Political Polarization?

Tariq Modood, University of Bristol

Discussant: Matteo Gianni, University of Geneva, nccr – on the move

17:00 – 18:30 h

This talk will be held in person at the University of Neuchâtel, 1er Mars 26, room C46, on WEBEX ([link](#)), as well as live-streamed on the nccr – on the move YouTube channel ([link](#)).

Abstract

We seem to have a deepening polarization between those who are pro-diversity (possibly also pro-immigration) and those who feel that this is going too far and/or too fast and feel that their national identities are being demoted at the expense of other identities. Moreover, it's not only minorities who have identity-anxieties but also majorities. Indeed, it is suggested that multiculturalism has contributed to these anxieties and thereby to the polarization. I shall consider this suggestion but my primary interest is in how we can tackle and lessen this polarization which is fostering mutual distrust and threatening the national, democratic citizenships upon which any multiculturalist, egalitarian and unifying project must be built. I do not think this involves giving up on multiculturalism but, rather, developing a multicultural national identity, to which all citizens can have a sense of belonging without giving up other identities that are important to them. Such national and group identities cannot be conceived as monistic or static, rather interactive and dialogical. I argue that such a multicultural sense of the national can be adapted to work with a wide range of center-left and center-right views; above all it allows one to be sensitive to minority identity vulnerabilities and majority identity anxieties within an integrated theoretical and political framework.

Short Biography

Tariq Modood is Professor of Sociology, Politics and Public Policy and the founding Director of the Centre for the Study of Ethnicity and Citizenship at the University of Bristol and the co-founder of the international journal, *Ethnicities*. He has held over 40 grants and consultancies, has over 35 (co-)authored and (co-)edited books and reports and over 350 articles and chapters. He was awarded a MBE for services to social sciences and ethnic relations in 2001, was made a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences (UK) in 2004 and elected a Fellow of the British Academy in 2017. His latest books include *Essays on Secularism and Multiculturalism* (2019), *Multiculturalism: A Civic Idea* (2nd ed; 2013); and as Special Issues co-editor, with T. Sealy, *Beyond Euro-Americancentric Forms of Racism and Anti-racism* (*Political Quarterly*, 2022) and *Global comparative analysis of the governance of religious diversity* (*Religion, State and Society*, 2022).

Selected Publications

- Modood, T. (2005). *Multicultural politics : Racism, ethnicity, and Muslims in Britain* (Vol. 22). U of Minnesota Press.
- Modood, T. (2013). *Multiculturalism*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Modood, T. (2019). *Essays on Secularism and Multiculturalism*. ECPR Press.
- Modood, T., & Sealy, T. (2022a). *Beyond Euro-Americancentric Forms of Racism and Anti-racism*. *The Political Quarterly*, 93(3), 433-441.
- Modood, T., & Sealy, T. (2022b). *Developing a framework for a global comparative analysis of the governance of religious diversity*. *Religion, State and Society*, 50(4), 362-377.