

The centre for the study of ethnicity and citizenship: Multiculturalism, racialisation, religion and national identity twenty years on

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Abstract

In November 2019, a conference was held at the University of Bristol to mark the twentieth anniversary of the Centre for the Study of Ethnicity and Citizenship. This special issue of *Ethnicities* brings together a set of articles by a number of the keynote speakers at that conference. By doing so, it celebrates the Centre's achievements over these two decades, reveals how the field has changed over the last twenty years, gives a good indication of the range of the Centre's current activities and also hints at some of the directions which it may take in the future.

Keywords

Ethnicity, racism, minorities, islamophobia, multiculturalism, Bristol School of Multiculturalism, British Muslims, moderate secularism, national identity

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The Bristol Sociology Department was the first to have a research centre on race and ethnicity at a British University. Founded by Michael Banton, and funded by a national research council as a national centre (1970-78), this unit initiated a workstream that went beyond Banton's retirement in 1992. Indeed, the 'Bristol School of ethnic relations' was part of the legacy that made the current Centre of Ethnicity and Citizenship from 1999 to the present so successful at the University of Bristol (Modood, 2020a). For over two decades, this Centre has been at the forefront of research on racial, religious and cultural diversity, and, like the unit Banton led, it is where a number of important scholars began their careers or made their intellectual home and together form a diaspora (Levey, 2019; Uberoi and Modood, 2019).

There are a number of ways to study racial, religious and cultural diversity and the Centre for Ethnicity and Citizenship has been home to many different approaches. There have been qualitative studies of particular groups and the political claims they make (Akhtar, 2013; Bolognani, 2009; Dobbernack et al., 2015; Guy, 2001; Lewicki et al., 2013; Meer and Modood, 2009; O'Toole et al., 2013), as well as the nature of different forms of racism (Modood, 2015 [1997]; Meer and Modood, 2009). Others focus on whether the policies that minorities advocate and the type of politics that minorities engage in are normatively defensible (Modood, 2013 [2007]; Uberoi, 2018). Yet other scholars track the evolution of policy changes (Meer and Modood, 2009; Uberoi and Modood, 2013; Uberoi, 2009; 2016) or explanatory frameworks for studying integration (Charsley et al., 2017; Teo, 2019).¹ Yet others consider the normative significance of religion and of different relationships between religion and the state (Modood, 2019; Modood and Thompson, 2021). These and other approaches have all been common at the Centre and the articles in this special issue reflect such an interdisciplinary approach to capturing changes and new directions in the field of racial, cultural and religious diversity.²

In the rest of this introduction, first we survey some changes to the field over the last twenty years. Second, we identify some of the key elements, some quite distinctive, of an approach to the study of racial, cultural and religious diversity that have crystallised at the Centre. Third, we briefly discuss each article in the special issue and how they relate to one another.

Developments over the last 20 years

The changes in the study of racial, religious and cultural diversity over the last twenty years are considerable and we will only survey some salient changes in which those in the Centre for Ethnicity and Citizenship have been involved. Consider first multiculturalism as a political theory and the so-called 'retreat' from multiculturalism. Political theories of multiculturalism take different forms (Kymlicka, 1995; Parekh 2006 [2000]). But the political philosophers who write them seek to clarify how we should think about the racial, religious and cultural diversity of contemporary societies by showing, for example, how such diversity disturbs many of our assumptions about homogenous nation states, what our conceptions of equality imply about what those marked with racial, religious and cultural differences are entitled to and how such differences requires us to alter prevailing views about what political arrangements are most defensible.

The most important political philosopher for some at the Centre has been Bhikhu Parekh. He mentored two of the authors of this article (TM and VU) who see an approach in his work that differs from the dominant liberal approaches, and who have written works that complement, draw on, clarify and extend Parekh's work in different directions (Modood, 2013 [2007], 2022; Modood and Thompson, 2018; Uberoi, 2018, 2021a). But the two decades under consideration have been ones in which important philosophical critiques of multiculturalist approaches have appeared (Okin, 1999; Barry, 2001; Miller, 2018). Such critiques highlight how multiculturalists allegedly ignore individual rights, essentialise culture and groups, exaggerate what equal opportunity requires, ignore the demands of social unity and national identity and much else. These criticisms have often been directed not only at political theories, but at policies of multiculturalism too.

Yet rumours of the death of multiculturalism in theory and practice have been greatly exaggerated as such policies have often not been reversed (Banting and Kymlicka, 2013; Banting, 2021). In the United Kingdom, cohesion and integration policies that many claimed were opposed to multiculturalist policies actually rebalanced such policies (Meer and Modood, 2009). The latter were abandoned in some countries such as the Netherlands, but in others, multiculturalist policy ideas continued to be promoted even among politicians who opposed policies of multiculturalism (Uberoi and Modood, 2013). Likewise, the Canadian policy of multiculturalism has just celebrated its 50th anniversary (Uberoi, 2021b). Turning to theoretical debates, the liberal theoretical foundations of Will Kymlicka's 'liberal multiculturalism' were recalibrated in Alan Patten's *Equal Recognition* (2014). Parekh's multiculturalist ideas relating to national identity were advanced and taken in new directions by some (Uberoi, 2018). When others began to argue that a new doctrine of interculturalism should replace multiculturalism, Meer and Modood, (2012) showed why the ideas that some attributed to interculturalism, such as intercultural dialogue and non-essentialised groups, have long been part of multiculturalist thought, as Parekh's work shows (2000); other aspects of interculturalism were a retreat from multiculturalism, and this mixture of the old and the new could not be said to be a new public policy paradigm (Modood, 2017).

Equally, interculturalism, as formulated by, for example, Bouchard (2010), accorded 'needy majorities' a precedence in the public domain that some multiculturalists had not done. But some in the Centre began to show that while the needs of cultural majorities should not be ignored, the arguments for the precedence of their symbols or norms in the public domain were not as defensible as some interculturalists thought (Modood, 2014a). Equally, they showed how some multiculturalists had said more about acknowledging dominant majority groups and their political needs than others (Uberoi, 2021a; Modood, 2022).

In addition to analyses of multiculturalism, discussions of race have been central over the last twenty years. Banton had skilfully mixed history, a Popperian understanding of science, and a constructivist understanding of race as the product of a social – not biological – process of 'racialisation'. He can also be said to be at one with the thinking which gave rise to the US civil rights movement. He describes this thinking as follows:

The political movement for racial equality in the first half of the twentieth century organised around an attack on mistaken racial beliefs and their use to justify racial inequalities. The idea that people could be meaningfully divided into racial categories and that they should be treated according to their category membership rather than their individual merits, was vigorously denied. The categories should be dissolved (Banton, 1988: p. 85).

Modood and many at his Centre adopted a different approach. Modood was much more sympathetic to group identities, where they expressed a sense of self and social location, and where they were mobilised to grow a sense of collective pride and oppose racial domination. He was influenced not only by the lessons of the U.S. political ethnicity of the 'black and proud' politics (Omi and Winant, 2014; 1986) for British Asians, especially British Asian Muslims, but also by Charles Taylor's idea of group 'recognition' (Taylor, 1994) and Parekh's understanding of British Asians as cultural communities. This difference with Banton on the relation between individuals and group identities was compounded by not sharing Banton's sense that sociology needed to primarily understand ethnicity in terms of interests (whether expressed through 'rational choice' or 'racial competition') rather than through identity and saw it as something which explains social outcomes and is not merely explained by them. In this way, members of the Centre countered a perennial tendency in sociology to explain or explain away ethnicity by reference to the socio-economic or racism (Modood and Khattab, 2016).³

Having said this, the new Centre continued to use the idea of racialisation, the idea that races are produced by racist ideas and the differential treatment and oppression based on those ideas. The classic case in Anglophone sociology is different ethnic groups in West Africa being made into a so-called black race, an identity they did not possess till some Europeans affixed it upon them, making them into a single, homogeneous 'black' race. From there followed a history of oppression, slavery and exploitation that we are familiar with. Viewing that history, Robert Miles, one of - if not the - pioneer of the idea of 'racialisation', saw it as integrally connected to capitalism (Miles 1993). Banton had already disconnected it from any particular economic system but still saw it as connected to economic interests and above all to phenotypes, especially human populations differentiated by skin colour. Modood radically broadened the range of 'racialisation' - Miles had warned against 'conceptual inflation' - by completing the distancing from economics (making the connection contingent rather than intrinsic) and by arguing that when groups with non-white appearance were racialised, it could be their culture, including religion, that was racialised (Modood 2005). He thus analysed the treatment of Britons of South Asian origin as a form of cultural racism. While they were identified on the basis of their brown appearance, their alleged inferiority and the determination of their allegedly uncivilised behaviour was due to their family and community structures, to their beliefs and religious membership. For some, the problem with them was how they were brought up and how they lived, not their genes (Modood, 2015 [1997]). It was a short step from there to conceptualising Islamophobia, not as an issue of religious bigotry, but as a form of cultural racism (Modood, 2005).

This idea became central to what Geoffrey Brahm Levey (2019) calls the Bristol School of Multiculturalism that will be discussed in the next section; and came to be a

feature of a number of doctoral studies at the Centre, most notably that of Nasar Meer, who went to expound this position in a number of joint writings with Modood, and in his work comparing and contrasting the concept of Islamophobia with antisemitism and with other racist currents such as Orientalism and postcolonialism (Meer, 2013, 2014). A related focus on the British state's treatment of Muslims within a security as well as an equality rubric is to be found in a Centre project led by Therese O'Toole, in which Modood and Meer, together with Daniel DeHanas and Stephen Jones, participated (O'Toole et al., 2013).

There were concurrently other strands of work on racism at the Centre, which also took racialisation as their central concept. Steve Fenton, who was at Bristol from 1969 to 2008, saw race, ethnicity and national belonging as related concepts, often doing similar work in different historical and social contexts and related them to socio-economic locations (Fenton, 2010). He was also one of the first to begin sociologically researching how a certain conception of Englishness and nationhood was emerging in which the idea that England and English civility was somehow spoilt by too many ethnic minorities who did not share the requisite sensibilities; that for some racism and Englishness were becoming entwined, mutually shaping each other (Fenton and Mann, 2011; Mann and Fenton, 2017). Jon Fox has come to argue that recent Eastern European migrants in Britain may be racist against brown, black and Muslim Britons but at the same time are themselves racialised by white Britons (Fox et al., 2012, 2015; Mogilnicka, 2022). The fact that they are white and might even subscribe to white supremacist ideas does not make them immune from not just being discriminated against, but thought of as a distinctive race, as in some sense not fully white.

The study of migrants and minorities is incomplete without some understanding of what is happening in terms of social disadvantage and social mobility and this was present at the Centre, primarily in relation to education (Caballero et al., 2007), higher education (Ahmad, 2001; Fenton et al., 2000; Modood, 2004) and the labour market, where the quantitative skills of Nabil Khattab were deployed to measure the nature and scale of the ethnic and the ethnoreligious 'penalties', without reducing them to racism or materialist explanations (Modood and Khattab, 2016). Most of these different strands of research and theory came together in a Leverhulme Programme, jointly conducted over eight years with a team at University College London led by John Salt, and which was the single biggest project that brought the Ethnicity Centre members into a single project as can be seen by the project showcase book (Modood and Salt, 2011).

One of the features of British, indeed European research on minorities and multiculturalism from the turn of the century has been cross-national multinational comparative projects and here the Centre found a most congenial and productive partner in Anna Triandafyllidou (formerly of the European University Institute, now a Canada Research Excellence Chair at Ryerson University), with Modood and Meer participating in EMILIE (Triandafyllidou et al., 2012), and Modood, Fox and Dobbernack in ACCEPT Pluralism (Dobbernack and Modood, 2013) and has continued into 2022 with the project on Governing Religious Diversity and Radicalisation (GREASE), with Modood and Thomas Sealy, going well beyond Europe and covering parts of the Middle East and North Africa, South Asia, South-East Asia and Australia (<http://grease.eu.eu/>). Concurrently, Modood,

Sealy and Dupont have been working with other European partners on PLURISPACE (<https://www.sciencespo.fr/ceri/plurispace/>).

With the Bristol Centre being responsible, among other things, for developing the theoretical framework for understanding the countries studied in GREASE in terms of a variety of modes of political secularism, this brings us to a topic that the Centre has played a particularly pioneering role in raising and in developing it in relation to multiculturalism. We have mentioned how the Centre came from early on to focus not just on race and ethnicity but on religious minorities, specifically British Muslims. As is evident, this developed in a number of different directions such as theorising about Islamophobia or Muslim political participation.⁴ One of these was challenging the argument that religious groups could not be part of a politics of multiculturalism because in contemporary secular liberal democracies religion belongs to the private sphere only. Modood responded by questioning whether this was an accurate description of the political secularism of our societies and developed the concept of ‘moderate secularism’ to describe more accurately the actual modes of contemporary secularism (Modood, 2019). Moderate secularism was, he argued, amenable to being ‘multiculturalised’ and this became the basis of the GREASE project (Modood and Sealy, 2021). Aspects of this theme have also been pursued with Simon Thompson (Modood and Thompson, 2021).

In addition to the various theoretical aspects of its work, the Centre has also successfully enabled and developed public intellectual engagement or what has come to be called ‘impact’. Parekh’s engagement has been a role model, with both him and Modood strongly engaged in understanding what was at stake in *The Satanic Verses* Affair, dismissing the freedom of speech versus religious fundamentalism framing, and acting as a bridge of understanding between the mutually uncomprehending angry and humiliated Muslims and angry and shocked wider British society (Parekh, 1989; Modood, 1992; Modood and Thompson, 2016). Parekh went on to chair the Commission on Multi-Ethnic Britain, to which Modood was the academic adviser and a key shaper of the report, and Parekh going on to be a member of the House of Lords. Modood went on to serve on the National Equality Panel and the Commission on Religion and Belief in British Public Life. Meer served as a Race Equality Advisor to the UK Cabinet Office’s Race Disparity Audit; an adviser to the Scottish Government’s COVID-19 and Ethnicity Expert Reference Group and as a Commissioner on the RSE Post-COVID-19 Futures Inquiry. Work begun at the centre went on to be included in three ‘impact’ case studies that were submitted to indicate how research could have an impact beyond academia in the UK’s Research Excellence Framework (REF). This work influenced the work of the Muslim Council of Britain, the UK media, Labour party politicians in the UK, the Canadian Department for Citizenship and Immigration and the European media (Modood, 2014a, 2014b; Uberoi, 2014), and these case studies scored highly in the 2014 Research Excellence Framework (REF). Charsley, O’Toole, as well as Modood had impact cases submitted to the 2021 REF and while they will be made public in the middle of 2022 on the REF website, they are currently not publicly available.

This intellectual work in different areas has pointed in different directions and covered many topics in different ways. But over two decades, some of its work by a range of authors has culminated in what is now often called the ‘Bristol School of

Multiculturalism' (BSM) (Levey, 2019; Chin, 2019, 2020; Armstrong, 2020; Lægaard, 2021; Ahmed et al., 2021; Dikici, 2021). This work is among the most distinctive that the Centre members have carried out, and it is to the defining features of this work that we now turn.

The Bristol School of Multiculturalism

The Australian political theorist Levey (2019) coined the term the 'Bristol School of Multiculturalism' (BSM). He showed that a number of British multiculturalists such as Parekh, Meer and Uberoi had become closely associated with Modood and his Centre at the University of Bristol and had developed certain commonalities that not all political theorists of multiculturalism share. Such theorists are many in number and include Charles Taylor, Joseph Carens, Anne Phillips, Jeff Spinner-Halev, Chandran Kukathas, Melissa Williams, James Tully and Iris Marion Young.⁵ BSM scholars have learned much from the insights of these scholars and we do not have the space to discuss how they have also come to differ from them. We will thus more simply note three commonalities that exist among the BSM scholars and, where necessary, note how they differ from Will Kymlicka's political theory of multiculturalism as it easily the most prominent. The three commonalities relate to intellectual influence, methodological and substantive ideas.

First, the leading members of the BSM were not as influenced by Rawls, Dworkin and other liberal analytical philosophers as Kymlicka (1989) and many others have been. Instead, BSM scholars were directly or indirectly influenced by the anglophone philosophical work of late British Idealist thinkers such as Michael Oakeshott who may seem like an unlikely source of multiculturalist ideas as he was a well-known conservative thinker. But he was a 'great influence' on Parekh (2006, p. 388) when he was a graduate student at the London School of Economics. In particular, Oakeshott (1933, p. 348) defends the idea of philosophy as a presuppositionless inquiry in *Experience and its Modes*, and Parekh (1979, pp. 409, 501; 1982, p. 231; 1991, p. 102) explicitly endorses this conception of philosophy in Oakeshott's *Experiences and its Modes*. This conception of philosophy has been shown to have influenced the way in which Parekh structures his argument in *Rethinking Multiculturalism* and Oakeshott's lectures in the history of political thought are shown to have influenced Parekh's idea of a 'community of communities' (Uberoi, 2021a, pp. 738, 747). Likewise, Modood's (1984) doctorate focused on Oakeshott's and R.G. Collingwood's work, and Modood explicitly uses Oakeshott's conception of ideology in his work on multiculturalism. This work also explicitly makes use of Oakeshott's idea of 'pursuing the intimations' of traditions of political behaviour (Modood and Thompson, 2018). Parekh has passed on this idea of philosophy to Uberoi (2021a, p. 753), and Modood has passed on the idea of pursuing the intimations of a tradition to both Meer (2010, p. 2) and Uberoi (2020). Thus, while some of Oakeshott's ideas are taken to exemplify a kind of traditional conservatism, some members of the BSM have shown that in fact some of his key theoretical ideas can influence how we argue for an egalitarian and context-sensitive multiculturalism (Modood and Thompson, 2018; Uberoi, 2021a).

Turning to the BSM's methodological approach, BSM scholars do not assert the ontological or moral primacy of the individual over the group (Kymlicka, 1989, p. 140). The BSM is not committed to the claim that individuals are 'the ultimate units of moral worth' and that cultural groups are constructed from such individuals (Parekh, 2000, p. 251). Rather they note how it is not easy to distinguish individuals from cultural groups as the patterns of thought that influence individuals often come from a cultural group which thus constructs individuals as much as individuals construct cultural groups (Uberoi and Modood, 2019, p. 7). At a strategic level, the BSM also notes how, at times, thinking of people as individuals is important so as to uphold their individual rights, and at other times, it is important to think of people as part of cultural groups so as to, for example, combat stereotypes, which by definition focus on groups. Moreover, while Kymlicka sees the normative significance of 'group rights' in instrumental terms, these rights 'compensating' minorities for not being part of a majority, the focus of the BSM is on minorities as being part of a whole but who can only be equally accepted parts of the whole if their needs are recognised and accommodated. For example, the remaking of Canadian identity in a way that makes minorities part of that identity would be a process welcomed by the BSM. So, the fundamental concept is not compensatory rights but the goal of belonging to a citizenship. Specifically, a national citizenship that an identity group is actively participating in sharing in its own way and therefore partly remaking citizenship and national identity. An ideal that, like all democratic politics, requires mobilisation and moments of contestation and conflict as well as consensus building and positive inclusion.

Equally, with the exception of Parekh, the BSM engages in multi-disciplinary work that combines political theory and empirical research. For example, their interest in minority identity and national identity had led them to lead surveys on minority identity and national identity (Modood et al., 1997; a topic also pursued by Saffron Karlsen, eg., Karlsen and Nazroo, 2013), and to clarify conceptually what identity and national identity and their relationship to nationalism are (Uberoi, 2018; Modood, 2020a, 2020b). Their interest in traditions of political behaviour relating to multiculturalism has led them to interview activists, journalists and politicians and conduct archival work into this tradition and to defend normatively various parts of this tradition (Meer, 2006; Meer and Modood, 2019; Uberoi; 2009; Uberoi and Modood, 2012; Modood, 2013 [2007]).

There are also a number of substantive ideas that are common among the BSM. First, its scholars approach multiculturalism with a particular type of cultural minority in mind: racially marked immigrants who have become citizens and their descendants (Parekh, 1974; Modood, 1992; Meer, 2006; Uberoi, 2007). It may thus seem like BSM scholars ignore certain types of cultural minorities such as national minorities or indigenous peoples. But debates about multiculturalism in Europe, unlike in Canada, are not about national minorities and indigenous people and BSM scholars maintain a certain European, and even British, approach to multiculturalism. In focusing on immigrants who became citizens and their descendants, BSM scholars have focused particular attention on a minority group – British Muslims – who are central to various controversies such as the Rushdie affair, 9/11 and debates about the hijab and niqab. Muslims are often central to such debates and the difficulties that they endure entail Islamophobia as a form of racism; thus, BSM scholars focus on racism in a way that, for example, Kymlicka does not. The

same is true for religion and rethinking secularism as it is central to the BSM's idea of multiculturalism (Modood, 2019) in a way that is not true for Kymlicka (2015a, 2015b).

A second substantive area that is common among the BSM, but perhaps not others (Kymlicka, 1995, p. 76; Patten, 2014, p. 11), begins to become clear once we note that justice and rights play a more limited role in the vocabulary of BSM scholars, even for the most philosophical of them (Parekh, 2006). Indeed, justice played less of a role in the works of mid twentieth century thinkers, such as Oakeshott, who influenced BSM scholars and who would have disagreed with the different type of thinkers who argue that 'justice is the first virtue of social institutions' (Rawls, 1971, p. 3) or that 'justice is the primary subject of political philosophy' (Young, 1990, p. 3). BSM scholars emphasise the importance of the political in understanding minority identities but do so without giving primacy to rights-based conceptions of justice rather than the relational dynamics of resistance to ascribed identities and the power of community-based identities (Meer, 2019; Modood, 2022). They locate the political needs of the groups who they focus on elsewhere. For example, majorities often fear the cultural and religious differences that immigrants bring, and this exacerbates the discrimination and exclusion that immigrants and their descendant endure. Thus, BSM scholars show, at length, why cultural and religious differences should not be feared but valued as a source of intercultural learning (Parekh, 2006 [2000]; Uberoi, 2022). Equally, the state upholds the rights of minorities and formally treats them as equals; yet other citizens may see and treat them as outsiders because of their skin colour, religious dress and so on. BSM scholars thus focus on how citizens can reconceptualise what their countries are (national identity) so that racial, religious and cultural minorities are not treated as outsiders and their differences accepted and valued (Uberoi, 2018; CMEB, 2000; Modood, 2020b).

Levey captures well these and other commonalities among the BSM's ideas that have emerged among those who have become close to the Centre for Ethnicity and Citizenship over the last twenty years. These ideas focus, as we have seen, on extending an understanding of racialisation to British Muslims and Islamophobia, to political theories of multiculturalism and the place of religion and the secular state within that, ideas of nationhood, and, most recently, considering the needs of cultural minorities and majorities together. The articles in this special issue do too and it is to them that we now turn.

The Special Issue

Even if considered collectively, the five articles which comprise this special issue could not cover all of the themes discussed in this introduction thus far. What they can do, however, is to offer a number of insightful analyses of some of the key themes of the Centre's work over the past two decades, including the relationship between majority and minority cultural rights, the politics and politicisation of cultural practices, the role of religion and religious identity in achieving important social goals, the development of the study of nationalism through a series of distinct phases and the evolution of political policies towards minorities from forms of inclusion to forms of securitisation.

The articles begin, as some in the Centre do, with multiculturalism. One of the most difficult issues that have emerged for multiculturalists in recent years is the way that the

reasoning for minority rights has been used to argue for cultural majority rights (Bouchard, 2010; Orgad, 2015; Taylor, 2015). Rainer Bauböck considers the case of 'needy majorities', and the claim that just as cultural minority rights exist, so do cultural majority rights as this turns minority rights 'upside down'. Bauböck endorses Patten's (2020) argument that cultural majorities in most European countries do not exist and should not be conflated with democratic majorities. This helps to undermine the idea that there are cultural majority rights, but Bauböck also explores whether it is right to claim that many such majority groups are vulnerable and concludes they are not. He then goes on to sketch an alternative approach to defending cultural rights that does not lead to majority rights but does enable the states that majorities and minorities live in to maintain a shared public culture. As we shall see, this tension between majorities and minorities manifests itself in different ways in the other contributions to this special issue.

Yael Tamir then turns to another familiar theme in the Centre and the BSM: the fear of Islam in Europe and how it influences the types of multicultural dilemmas that become salient. Here Tamir picks up on Bauböck's theme of majority/minority relations but places it in a more explicitly legal context. She accepts the pandemic has resulted in 'normative changes'. Face coverings and not shaking hands were only a few years ago signs of significant difference between Muslims and non-Muslims in European societies, but now they are widely practiced by all. Yet an unwillingness to shake hands, withdrawing girls from swimming lessons and banning burkinis have been the subject of important court cases. Tamir shows that such issues should not be controversial and have only become so because of a fear of Islam and a majority who want to ensure that the public sphere continues to reflect their norms. Instead of focusing on such cases, there should be a focus on genuine harms such as child-marriage, bigamy, sexual abuse and the oppression of women in multiple ways. Public debate and court cases are focusing on certain types of multicultural dilemmas that are not as threatening as they seem instead of focusing on other multicultural dilemmas that are more troubling.

While Tamir offers a critique of arguments that religious minorities' cultural practices should not be permitted, Grace Davie presents a positive case for religion, arguing that religious diversity can play a positive role in the achievement of social progress. She develops this thesis by presenting the work of the International Panel on Social Progress (IPSP), of which she was a member. The objective of the IPSP was to assess the state-of-the-art knowledge that bears on social progress across a wide range of economic, political and cultural questions. The goal was to provide the target audience (individuals, movements, organisations, politicians, decision-makers and practitioners) with the best expertise that social science can offer. Davie provides an account of the chapter of the final report on religion. Too often religion is seen as either irrelevant (since the victim of secularisation) or as reactionary (thus an impediment to social progress). Davie argues that neither is true. Rather she seeks to demonstrate that researchers and policy-makers pursuing social progress will benefit from careful attention to the power of religious ideas to motivate, of religious practices to shape ways of life, of religious communities to mobilize and extend the reach of change and of religious leaders and symbols to legitimate calls to action. A short postscript makes this case by considering the positive role of

religious communities (more especially religious minorities) as they confront the ravages of a global pandemic: COVID-19.

The special issue then turns to the topic of nationalism that has been a central concern for the Centre and BSM scholars, although as readers will discover, this also connects to other themes, including, for example, multicultural citizenship. Anna Triandafyllidou argues that while the purpose of nationalism over time may not change, authors emphasise particular aspects of it at particular times because of the prevailing social, political economic concerns of the period in which they are writing. She divides the last forty years of sociological and historical theories of nations and nationalism into three periods. The first is the 1980s until the early 1990s where the focus was on when nations emerged and what form did they take; this was the period of debates between modernists and perennialists. The second period began in the mid-1990s until the mid-2000s when theories of multicultural citizenship and inclusive nations emerged, the EU expanded and fear of Muslims increased. In this period, the focus was on whether nations can last and what role do smaller minority groups have within nations. The third period runs from the second half of the 2000s to the late 2010s and this is a period when the role of diversity within nationalism is central in the new currents of multicultural nationalism (Uberoi, 2007; Modood, 2019). Through this distinctive periodisation, Triandafyllidou's paper shows how historical and sociological nationalism studies reflect certain concerns of a period and then she goes on to show how nationalism studies will change in relation to the pandemic, a theme also discussed at the end of Davie's article.

The final article reflects the public policy interests of those in the Centre, and in particular it focuses on how policy change can affect racial, religious and cultural minorities. Therese O'Toole analyses the key changes that have taken place over the last several decades in the ways the Muslims have been integrated in British public and political life. In doing so, she engages with a range of themes discussed in the other papers, including the relationship between multiculturalism and national identity, and the relationship between national majorities and religious minorities. She argues that there has been an ideological retreat from a pluralistic approach to recognising and accommodating minority religions, to a more 'muscular liberal' approach that seeks to defend a particular set of 'fundamental British values', and implicitly asserts an identitarian form of Christian majoritarianism that limits the conditions for the political inclusion of British Muslims. O'Toole claims that this fundamental shift has been driven by the Prevent and associated Counter Extremism agendas as they have developed over time. To make good on this claim, she examines: modes of governing areas of Muslim settlement; the schooling of British Muslims; the introduction of forms of sousveillance of Muslims within public institutions and the framing of integration, British values and equalities through the Counter Extremism agenda. O'Toole argues, however, that it is important to recognise the incomplete nature of civic integration as a governing project, due to the assemblages of different governance actors, professional norms and competing agendas that characterise the fields of governance through which civic integration is implemented.

With this Special Issue, we are pleased to mark the contribution of the Bristol Ethnicity Centre to our sociological and political theory research communities, and to thank the contributors that now follow this introduction for their participation in the Twentieth

Anniversary Conference and for developing those key note talks into the articles presented here.⁵

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Notes

1. For studies relating to asylum seekers, see [Griffiths 2015](#) and [Tschaler 2020](#).
2. Some of these have been published in the Centre's book series with Palgrave, Politics of Identity and Citizenship Series, edited by Varun Uberoi, Nasar Meer and Tariq Modood <https://link.springer.com/series/14670> and in the journal, *Ethnicities*, edited by Stephen May and Tariq Modood <https://journals.sagepub.com/home/etn>
3. For an excellent appreciation of Banton's contribution to the sociology of ethnic relations by one of the Ethnicity Centre members, see [Barot \(2006\)](#).
4. Another direction research went was [O'Toole and Braginskaia \(2016\)](#); for one of the earliest book length quantitative studies of Muslims in Britain, see [Hussain \(2008\)](#).
5. Young did not call herself a multiculturalist but many others do. See Miller, 1995, p. 131; Joppke, 2017, p. 11.
6. We also thank two anonymous reviewers who helped improve each of the papers in the Special Issue. The conference took place on 8-10 November, 2019, twenty years after the launch of the Ethnicity Centre at a conference in September, 1999, organised by Stephen May, Tariq Modood and Judith Squires.

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