Is multiculturalism compatible with nationalism?

A workshop convened by
Anna Triandafyllidou (CERC Migration, Toronto Metropolitan University)
and **Tariq Modood** (University of Bristol)

Thursday, May 26, 2022, 9:30 AM EDT - 3:30 PM EDT
Hybrid (In person at CERC Migration office / online via Zoom)

EVENT OVERVIEW

We are witnessing today the emergence and growth of different forms of nationalisms, conceptually and politically. While some espouse a closed society and nativism, others seek to embrace diversity. This workshop builds on the relevant literature by political theorists, political scientists and sociologists to discuss whether multiculturalism is compatible with nationalism and whether there are feasible forms of 'progressive patriotism' today, which would re-define liberal nationalism in more inclusive ways.

In our workshop, we will ask what normative shape such an inclusive perspective can take, whether it can be a political force, and if so, how? This means addressing the place of ethnic and religious minorities as well as majorities so that both can identify with the national. Is that a realistic political ideal and how does it relate to theories of ethnicity, race, citizenship and nationalism? The workshop engages with insights from Europe, North America and other world regions.

PROGRAM

9:30-10 AM EDT   Welcome reception

10 AM EDT   Welcome: **Anna Triandafyllidou,** CERC Migration, Toronto Metropolitan University and **Tariq Modood,** University of Bristol

10:15 AM-12:30 PM EDT   **Session 1: Are minority claims and majority privilege compatible? Theoretical perspectives**

Chair: Anna Triandafyllidou
Co-chair: Ashika Niraula, Research Fellow, CERC Migration

Is Multicultural Nationalism Possible? If it is, what benefits follow?
Tariq Modood

Multicultural Nationalism as Ethics of Membership

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Will Kymlicka, Queen's University

Standing Up for a Multicultural Nationalism
Gurpreet Mahajan, Centre for Political Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru
University

*The advent of a federal citizenship to give meaning to the
cohabitation of minority nations, cultural communities, and majority
nation in the context of a multinational state*
Alain Gagnon, Université du Québec à Montréal

12:30-1:30 PM EDT	Lunch break

1:30-3:15 PM EDT	**Session 2: Views from multiculturalism(s) and nationalism(s) on the ground**

Chair: Tariq Modood
Co-chair: John Carlaw, Research Fellow, CERC Migration

*Rethinking the Boundaries of the Nation: Lessons from the
Pandemic Emergency*
Anna Triandafyllidou

Critical Reflections on Nationalism and Multiculturalism
Yasmeen Abu-Laban, University of Alberta

*Nationalism, Membership and the Politics of Minority Claims-
Making*
Allison Harell, Université du Québec à Montréal
Keith Banting, Queen's University

3:15-3:30 PM EDT	Reflections and concluding remarks

PRESENTORS

- **Keith Banting**, Queen's University
- **Alain Gagnon**, Université du Québec à Montréal
- **Allison Harell**, Université du Québec à Montréal
- **Will Kymlicka**, Queen's University
- **Yasmeen Abu-Laban**, University of Alberta
- **Tariq Modood,** University of Bristol
- **Gurpreet Mahajan**, Centre for Political Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University
- **Anna Triandafyllidou**, CERC Migration, Toronto Metropolitan University

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ABSTRACTS

SESSION 1
Are minority claims and majority privilege compatible? Theoretical perspectives

Is Multicultural Nationalism Possible? If it is, what benefits follow?
Tariq Modood, University of Bristol

Modood offers a conception of nationalism and of multiculturalism that he suggests makes their compatibility theoretically unproblematic and politically desirable; and proposes that, indeed, it may even be the case that multiculturalism presupposes such a nationalism. Confining itself to post-immigration ethnocultural formations and hybrid identities (and leaving aside all territorially-based minorities) and a very broad conception of the national, and based on an understanding of equal citizenship, it is a view allied to liberal nationalism. It works with the internal dynamics of contemporary liberal/social democratic countries without, however, privileging liberalism. The theoretical benefits are that one can begin without having to have a liberal theory and is able to critically evaluate liberalism from a multiculturalist point of view, as well as vice versa. Politically, multicultural nationalism can be adapted to work with a wide range of centre-left and centre-right views; above all it allows one to be sensitive to minority identity
vulnerabilities and majority identity anxieties within an integrated framework.

Multicultural Nationalism as an Ethics of Membership
Will Kymlicka, Queen's University

Debates over the compatibility of nationalism and multiculturalism raise a number of complex issues, but Kymlicka argues that one important disagreement concerns the role of what he calls "an ethic of social membership". Social-democratic politics in the 20th-century was often tied (in T.H. Marshall's terminology) to the idea of "loyalty" to a "shared society" which is seen as a "common possession" of its members. When citizens view society as their common possession, they will feel a sense of loyalty and commitment to it and to their co-citizens, and this sense of loyalty to society as a common possession generates the solidarity that underpins the democratic welfare state. Social democrats therefore viewed it as essential to nurture this sense of forming a shared society. Recent theories of liberal nationalism can be seen as a restatement of this broadly Marshallian idea: shared nationhood creates the sense of membership in and loyalty to a shared society that enables the democratic welfare state. Critics however argue that when politics is organized around the idea of loyalty to a shared society, minorities will be excluded or marginalized.

In his presentation, Kymlicka will cite evidence that this is the case: Marshallian politics generates systematic "membership penalties" for minorities. He proposes that for some defenders of nationalism, this may simply be the price we need to pay for a solidaristic welfare state: if so, this

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leads us in the direction of a majoritarian nationalism. But for those who are unwilling to sacrifice minorities at the altar of social democracy, Kymlicka proposes we have two options for a more pro-minority politics. One option is to reject the very idea of using politics to generate loyalty to a shared society as a common possession, which leads us in the direction of a postnational cosmopolitanism. A second option is to pluralize our idea of the shared society to be more inclusive of minorities, which leads us in the direction of multiculturalism, or more accurately, a multicultural nationalism. These three broad options – majoritarian nationalism, postnational cosmopolitanism, multicultural nationalism – are in a sense familiar protagonists. But Kymlicka will argue that it is illuminating to view each of them as a response to the underlying question of an ethic of social membership, suggesting that this framework allows us to better identify the strengths and weaknesses of each of these options.

Standing Up for a Multicultural Nationalism
Gurpreet Mahajan, Centre for Political Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University

Over the last two decades multiculturalism has been pitted against nationalism. The former, it is said, speaks from the perspective of the minorities, while the latter presents the picture from the side of the majority. Not only the ultranationalists, but also the liberals and the conservatives identify multiculturalism as the problem. The effort to accommodate minorities and their diversity has, in their view, 'gone too far' and undermined the shared culture that shaped their (European or American, as the case might be) national identity.

Against this background, the paper tries to explore the question – is multiculturalism incompatible with nationalism? Is nationalism intrinsically anti-diversity, and in this sense, anti-multicultural? It argues that multiculturalism and nationalism share a common ground as both recognize the value, and the need for, community. Unlike liberalism which privileges the unencumbered individual (and this is the reason why liberal nationalism rings somewhat hollow), multiculturalism understands that individuals value community affiliations, including membership of a political community. Multiculturalism also recognizes that every identity has some cultural markers and we cannot imagine a state or a national identity sans culture. The task therefore is to find ways in which the markers of one's national identity incorporate diversity and resonate positively with members of diverse cultural communities.

The advent of a federal citizenship to give meaning to the cohabitation of minority nations, cultural communities, and majority nation in the context of a multinational state
Alain-G. Gagnon, Université du Québec à Montréal

In this presentation, Gagnon organizes his ideas around three main pillars with a view to explore briefly tensions between minorities and majorities in a complex political setting:
1.   Monism as a non-starter for political reconciliation of fragmented polities
2.   The presence of competing legitimate worldviews (national diversity argument)

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3. The advent of a federal citizenship to give meaning to the cohabitation of minority nations, cultural communities, and majority nation in the context of a multinational state.

First, to address the main theme of this panel, Gagnon argues that one needs to define what is meant by "minority" claims? and which minorities are we examining: cultural minorities? religious communities? ethnic groups? national minorities, minority nations? First nations? All of the above indistinctly?

The way we conceive the concept of minority will determine the course of actions one intends to follow. In other words, he proposes, it is crucial to know before we proceed what are the political purposes we want to achieve and the theoretical ambitions we are pursuing.

SESSION 2
Views from multiculturalism(s) and nationalism(s) on the ground

Rethinking the Boundaries of the Nation: Lessons from the Pandemic Emergency
Anna Triandafyllidou, CERC Migration, Toronto Metropolitan University

Triandafyllidou argues elsewhere that we need to pay less attention to the ethnic or civic content of national identity and rather focus more on the ways in which a given understanding of the nation and nationalist ideology interacts with 'others', whether real or imagined. She emphasizes that globalisation requires us to pay more attention to that interaction with Others and has proposed the notion of plural vs neo-tribal nationalism.

In this paper, Triandafyllidou takes this reasoning further by reflecting on how the pandemic emergency and its aftermath has pushed the boundaries of our understanding of national identity in both inclusionary and exclusionary directions. Triandafyllidou observes that the pandemic has obliged all nation-states to admit that their borders are permeable even when closed; that we are more interdependent than ever (for collaborating on medical research, exchanging data, distributing vaccines or tests and seeking to fight the pandemic); that citizens sometimes act in uncivil ways (putting their fellow nationals at risk) and non-citizens (migrant workers, including temporary migrants) can become essential to the well-being and safety of the nation. These developments have both pushed towards more inclusion on the basis of merit, civic consciousness and contribution to the public good, highlighting the importance of (effective) residence and active citizenship as criteria for inclusion. At the same time, they have exacerbated geopolitical tensions – igniting vaccine and trade nationalism – as well as anti-Asian (or also anti-Black) racism and anti-immigrant and anti-refugee xenophobia (migrants and racial or ethnic 'Others' seen as carriers of the virus). The paper discusses these developments interrogating whether the pandemic is showing the way towards a plural, residence-based, notion of political and civic membership or whether the pandemic has undermined previous advancements of plural, inclusive nationalism.

Critical Reflections on Nationalism and Multiculturalism

Yasmeen Abu-Laban, University of Alberta

From the vantage point of Canada— the first country in the world to adopt a policy of official multiculturalism— a case could clearly be made for showing the ways in which multiculturalism and nationalism are compatible in a real, existing liberal democracy. However, even from the Canadian vantage-point it is clear that contestation and conflict surround how the national "we" is defined, as made glaringly apparent in the way the Canadian flag was brandished by supporters of the "Freedom Convoy" that occupied Ottawa in 2022. This paper focusses on Canada within a comparative frame of reference. Attention is given to what Abu-Laban calls the elasticity of nations and nationalism which she argues should caution scholars against advancing categorical answers to the relationship between nationalism and multiculturalism (liberal or otherwise) or foreclosing new conversations. In particular, critical theoretical approaches, based on social movement organizing, point to the urgent need to attend to the historic and contemporary violence associated with settler-colonialism, racism and state power in advancing principles of self-rule, fairness and anti-oppression.

Nationalism, Membership and the Politics of Minority Claims-Making

Keith Banting, Queen's University
Allison Harell, Université du Québec à Montréal
Will Kymlicka, Queen's University

Previous research has shown that the public tends to see some groups as less deserving of social rights. The focus in this paper is whether they are also seen as less entitled to engage in political claims-making. Recent theorists of inclusive nationalism argue that whether minorities are seen as having the right to co-determine the future may depend on whether the majority believes minorities are morally committed to the nation. Drawing on a unique survey experiment, the authors test this intuition by analyzing how majority perceptions of minority's commitment to the larger society influence support for claims-making by immigrants and national minorities. They show that immigrants, French-speaking Quebeckers and Indigenous peoples are judged more harshly about their rights to make claims, and this is in part explained by the majority's views that they are not in fact committed members of the larger political community.