JEMIE
Journal on Ethnopolitics and Minority Issues in Europe

Journal on Ethnopolitics and Minority Issues in Europe
VOL.25, NO.3, 2026

BOOK REVIEW OPEN ACCESS

Anti-racism, multiculturalism and human rights: Reconceiving the politics of diversity in employment and education

Arun Verma
University of London, United Kingdom

Anti-racism, multiculturalism and human rights: Reconceiving the politics of diversity in employment and education

by Pier-Luc Dupont

Palgrave Macmillan, 2025

ISBN 978-3-031-87360-7 (hardback)

ISBN 978-3-031-87362-1 (paperback)

ISBN 978-3-031-87360-7 (eBook)

The book *Anti-racism, multiculturalism and human rights* is a timely contribution to a contemporary debate in political and societal systems that are increasingly divided. It is here the book presents a series of cases, arguments, and provocations that allow more relational thinking, respectful dialogue, and connectedness which continue to be decentred in policy making, implementation, and practice. In particular, the author demonstrates well-established expertise in the field. He provides meaningful commentary on the topics outlined in the title and directly tackles the challenge of polarisation and the ways it manifests itself across different geopolitical contexts. Through critical reflection and inquiry, the book seeks to unearth and restore sense and sensibility to a discussion fuelled by political expediency and fast-moving media rhetoric.

Journal on Ethnopolitics and Minority Issues in Europe
Vol.25, No.3, 2026
pp.139–141
DOI:
https://doi.org/10.53779/ARVE1610

AUTHOR:
Arun Verma
University of London, United Kingdom
hello@arunverma.co.uk

LICENCE:
Copyright (c) 2026
Arun Verma

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International Licence.

The opening chapter provides a comprehensive backgrounding and contextualisation of how such recent social, racial, and cultural justice movements have spurred mainstream conversation, political debate, and public discourse. The author critiques the utility of anti-racism plans and highlights key areas of good practice that can often be neglected. Central to this is the need for a clear conceptualisation of what racism is in specific contexts, how it manifests itself, and what series of actions will address issues both sustainably and systemically. Multiculturalism is positioned as both a lever and an opportunity to mitigate the risks and gaps of anti-racism plans, which allow deeper reflection and action on understandings of 'equality, freedom and citizenship', which are endorsed to enable more sophisticated policies around issues of race, ethnicity, and religion. The opening chapter provides the foundations of the book's compelling case for the utility of multiculturalism as a core principle of anti-racism.

As the central argument develops, the author highlights the contested uptake of 'multiculturalism' across the world. The book calls for the reclamation of 'multiculturalism' as a lever for addressing systemic racial injustice. Drawing on learning and events from the 1990s, the chapter posits arguments that anti-racism work should lean into the framework of multiculturalism and connect this work more to a rights-based approach, rather than being led by fluctuating public and political opinion. The book's aims are very clear and are well-needed to integrate the framework of 'multiculturism' as a means of eradicating racism, whilst mobilising the language of human rights to foster connectedness in a polarised world.

Chapter 2 explores the positionality of 'multiculturalism' to racial justice and the politics of identity. The author describes the ways in which multiculturalism lends itself to facilitating fairness, constructive integration, and effective participation (p. 24-25). Importantly, multiculturalism does not reject majority cultures, but seeks to broaden the frame – one that recognises and addresses the 'identity anxieties' accompanied by social change and instability. Chapter 3 extends this analysis, accounting for the structural drivers of racism in relation to national research and identities. The author identifies the ways in which society continues to pit groups against one another, which only decelerates the policies required to achieve more socially just and cohesive communities.

The chapter on positive action provides a clear definition drawing on international examples which are needed in current discussions. The author continues to draw together learning and insights from across the world and continues to remain highly attentive to British legal and societal contexts. I note that it is often the case that political and media rhetoric continues to misrepresent 'positive action'. Given the persistent misrepresentation of positive action in political and media discourse, a more explicit engagement with these discursive dynamics would have been welcome. Nevertheless, the chapter effectively examines the ways in which positive action can be used to improve cultural cohesion whilst reducing racial prejudice. The author demystifies any confusion between 'positive action' and 'positive discrimination', as stated in British law, and puts the discussion to bed. The discussion is grounded in evidence and acknowledges the voluntary nature of positive action, as well as the practical challenges associated with its implementation – particularly in recruitment -

drawing on lessons from jurisdictions such as Canada to illustrate differing levels of legal and political maturity.

The book takes an interesting pivot to examine multiculturalism in school curricula as a lever to advance good relations between majoritised and minoritised communities. Whilst the connection between employment and education is conceptually justified, these areas could have been a little more interwoven through sustained centring of the voices of those racially minoritised as the unifying analytical thread. Building on this thread, Chapter 5 provides significant debate on the future of education, critically investigating the diversity of subjects and perspectives in the school curriculum, where the author identifies gaps in knowledge and skills in domains where racial minorities have contributed to British excellence, society, and culture. His discussion of counter-terrorism and the principle of 'impartiality' in teaching practice raises important questions about how schools navigate the tension between condemning racism and avoiding explicit endorsement of particular policy interventions, highlighting the constraints that shape educational practice.

In the final chapter, the author reiterates the argument that "multiculturalism should not be viewed as separate from or inimical to anti-racism, but rather as a cornerstone of any institutional strategy to tackle racism" (p. 114). While the chapter effectively synthesises the book's core themes, the absence of engagement with the European Union's Anti-Racism Action Plan represents a missed opportunity to extend the critique of anti-racism strategies beyond the UK context. Nonetheless, the author underscores the sustained and large-scale evidence base of structural racism that remains both pervasive and persistent, whilst recognising the sociopolitical barriers that still – and too often – prohibit progress towards racial and social justice and a more inclusive society. The call for bystanders and peripheral actors to take a more active role in supporting multiculturalism, alongside efforts to translate international human rights law into institutional change, offers a constructive framework for future policy development.

Overall, the book presents multiculturalism as an overlooked opportunity for advancing anti-racist action, grounded in international human rights law and comparative insights. The closing assertion that "racism will persist as long as the world remains divided" (p. 128) is one that is sobering, yet the book ultimately invites productive provocation. It invites reflection on what successful anti-racist work looks like through a multicultural lens and allows for further inquiry into this area through research and scholarship. While some anti-racist scholars may contest the framing or language employed, the book offers a compelling intervention that merits engagement from those working across research, policy, and practice.