

# Multiculturalism, Interculturalism and Citizenship

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## Introduction\*

In this chapter we engage with some recent authors who believe that an alternative to multiculturalism must be sought in order to understand and live with diversity. These authors are not anti-diversity, on the contrary, but they share the view that multiculturalism is no longer a persuasive intellectual or policy approach. For example, the Council of Europe's White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue (2008) included the finding that the majority of practitioners and NGOs across Europe had come to the conclusion that multiculturalism was no longer fit for purpose, and needed to be replaced by a form of interculturalism. Similar views were expressed in the UNESCO World Report, *Investing in Cultural Diversity and Intercultural Dialogue* (2008). More recently still, Ted Cattle (2012: 2) has described interculturalism 'as an opportunity to replace multiculturalism as a conceptual and policy framework', while Maxwell *et al* (2012: 429) maintain that 'Interculturalism represents a gain over Multiculturalism while pursuing the same set of most uncontroversial political ends...'. These statements therefore invite the question: in what ways – if at all - is interculturalism different, substantively or otherwise, from multiculturalism?

Is it merely the case, as Lentin (2005: 394) has suggested, that interculturalism is an 'updated version' of multiculturalism? If so: what is being 'updated'? If not, in what ways – if at all - is interculturalism different, substantively or otherwise, from multiculturalism?

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With a specific focus on the political, in this chapter we tentatively sketch out and critically evaluate four ways in which conceptions of interculturalism are being positively contrasted with multiculturalism (while these four positive evaluations of interculturalism overlap we also consider them to be sufficiently distinct to be discussed separately). These are, firstly, as something greater than co-existence, in that interculturalism is allegedly more geared toward interaction and dialogue than multiculturalism. Secondly, that interculturalism is conceived as something less 'groupist' or more yielding of synthesis than multiculturalism. Thirdly, that interculturalism is something more committed to a stronger sense of the whole, in terms of such things as societal cohesion and national citizenship. Finally, that where multiculturalism may be illiberal and relativistic, interculturalism is more likely to lead to criticism of illiberal cultural practices (as part of the process of intercultural dialogue).

It is important to register at the outset that the chapter is concerned with what we understand as 'political interculturalism', by which we mean the ways in which interculturalism is appropriated in the critique of multiculturalism (Booth, 2003, Sze and Powell, 2004; Wood, Landry and Bloomfield, 2006), in a manner that is not necessarily endorsed by wider advocates of interculturalism (in a situation not dissimilar to how western feminism (Moller Okin, 1999) may be appropriated in the critique non-western cultures (cf. Phillips, 2007; Malik, 2008)). Moreover, the purpose of this chapter is not to offer a comprehensive account of the topic, but to provide an entry point in developing a discussion, especially in relation to multiculturalism and interculturalism as frameworks for political relations in a context of cultural diversity. To do this satisfactorily we need first to elaborate something of our understanding of the intellectual character of multiculturalism, and it is to this that we now turn.

### **Liberalism and multiculturalism**

To some commentators the staple issues that multiculturalism seeks to address, such as the rights of ethnic and national minorities, group representation, and perhaps even the political claims-making of 'new' social movements, are in fact 'familiar long-standing problems of political theory and practice' (Kelly, 2002: 1). Indeed, some hold this view to the point of frustration:

If we take a very broad definition of multiculturalism so that it simply corresponds to the demand that cultural diversity be accommodated, there is no necessary conflict between it and liberalism. [...] But most multiculturalists boast that they are innovators in political philosophy by virtue of having shown that liberalism cannot adequately satisfy the requirements of equal treatment and justice under conditions of cultural diversity (Barry, 2002: 205).

The first part of Barry's statement is perhaps more conciliatory than might be anticipated from an author admired for his argumentative robustness and theoretical hostility toward multiculturalism; while the second part poses more of an empirical question. Beginning with the first part, Barry's view is by no means rejected by those engaged in the 'multicultural turn'. Modood (2007a: 8), for instance, locates the genesis of multiculturalism within a 'matrix of principles that are central to contemporary liberal democracies', in a manner that establishes multiculturalism as 'the child of liberal egalitarianism, but like any child, it is not simply a faithful reproduction of its parents'. Another way of putting this is to state that as a concept, multiculturalism is a partial outgrowth of liberalism in that it establishes 'a third generation norm of legitimacy, namely respect for reasonable cultural diversity, which needs to be considered on a par with the [first and second generation] norms of freedom and equality, and so to modify policies of 'free and equal treatment' accordingly' (Tully, 2002: 102).

Our interest in this chapter is the political implication of this 'third generation norm of legitimacy' for a concept of citizenship, which includes the recognition that social life consists of individuals and groups, and that both need to be provided for in the formal and informal distribution of powers; not just in law, but in representation in the offices of the state, public

committees, consultative exercises, and access to public fora. This means that while individuals have rights, mediating institutions such as trade unions, churches, neighbourhoods, immigrant associations and so on may also be encouraged to be active public players and fora for political discussion (and may even have a formal representative or administrative role to play in the state). One implication of this recognition means the re-forming national identity and citizenship, and offering an emotional identity with the whole to counterbalance the emotional loyalties to ethnic and religious communities (Modood 2007a).

To what extent then do we have an established 'canon' of multiculturalism as an intellectual ideal - one that persuasively distinguishes it from varieties of liberalism? It is certainly the case that theoretically there are three established policy related strands of multiculturalism. One derives from radical social theory, especially uses of Derrida, and finds ideological expression in critiques of Eurocentrism, Afrocentrism, and the wars over 'the canon' in the US universities in the 1980s. Another focuses on popular culture, everyday cultural interaction and the resulting hybridity and mixedness (Gilroy 2000), though the policy implications of such 'multiculture' are usually elusive (Meer and Modood, 2009a). It is the third strand, however, which is the focus of our interest, and which grows out of policy developments, with Canada supplying one of the maturest examples, and, pioneered by Will Kymlicka, is best expressed in engagements with liberal political theory.

This relationship to liberalism of this third strand of multiculturalism is a pertinent issue because it compels us to explore something of the provenance of multiculturalism as an intellectual tradition, with a view to assessing the extent to which its origins continues to shape its contemporary public 'identity'. We might reasonably ask this to identify the extent to which some of the criticism of multiculturalism is rooted in an objection to earlier formulations that displayed precisely those elements deemed unsatisfactory when compared with interculturalism e.g., that multiculturalism is more likely to be essentialist, illiberal, less agency-oriented, and less concerned with unity.

Before proceeding with this line of inquiry, it seems only reasonable offer the intellectual health warning that multiculturalism as a concept is – like very many others – ‘polysemic’, such that multiculturalist authors cannot be held entirely responsible for the variety of ways it which the term is interpreted. This is something noted by Bhabha (1998: 31) who points to the tendency for multiculturalism to be appropriated as a ‘portmanteau term’, one that encapsulates a variety of sometimes contested meanings (cf Meer and Modood, 2011). In this respect the *idea* of multiculturalism might be said to have a ‘chameleonic’ quality that facilitates its simultaneous adoption and rejection in the critique or defence of a position (Smith, 2010).

One illustration of this is the manner in which multiculturalism is simultaneously used as a label to describe the fact of pluralism or diversity in any given society, *and* a moral stance that cultural diversity is a desirable feature of a given society (as well as the different types of ways in which the state could recognise and support it). Moreover, in both theoretical and policy discourses, multiculturalism means different things in different places. In North America, for example, multiculturalism encompasses discrete groups with territorial claims, such as the Native Peoples and the Quebecois, even though these groups want to be treated as “nations” within a multinational state, rather than merely as ethnocultural groups in a mononational state (Kymlicka 1995). Indeed, in Europe, while groups with such claims, like the Catalans and the Scots, are thought of as nations, multiculturalism has a more limited meaning, referring to a post-immigration urban *mélange* and the politics it gives rise to. One outcome is that while in North America language-based ethnicity is seen as the major political challenge, in Western Europe the conjunction of the terms “immigration” and “culture” now nearly always invokes the large, newly settled Muslim populations. Sometimes, usually in America, political terms such as multiculturalism and “rainbow coalition” are meant to include all groups marked by “difference” and historic exclusion such as women and gays (Young 1990).

Some have turned to this variety in meaning and usage of the term as an explanation of the allegedly ‘widely divergent assessments of the short history and potential future of multiculturalism’ (Kivisto and Faist, 2007: 35), and it is to these different meanings and the contexts that generated them to which we now turn.

### **Forging multicultural citizenship**

The term ‘multiculturalism’ emerged in the 1960s and 1970s in countries like Canada and Australia, and to a lesser extent in Britain and the United States (where it was initially limited to the field of education). As we have already noted, in the case of Canada the focus was from the start on constitutional and land issues, in a way that informed definitions of nationhood and related to unresolved legal questions concerning the entitlements and status of indigenous peoples, not to mention the further issue of the rise of a nationalist and secessionist movement in French-speaking Quebec.

At the outset in both Canada and Australia multiculturalism was often presented as an application of ‘liberal values’ in that multiculturalism in these countries extended individual freedoms and substantiated the promise of equal citizenship. As evidence of this position, Kymlicka (2005a) points to the then Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau’s 1971 speech on the implementation of a bilingual framework (a pre-cursor to the later Multicultural Act). In this Trudeau promised that ‘a policy of multiculturalism within a bilingual framework is basically the conscious support of individual freedom of choice. We are free to be ourselves’ (Trudeau, 1971: 8546). In Kymlicka’s (2005a: 2) reading this statement reflected the natural outgrowth of the liberalization of Canadian social legislation in the period between the Bill of Rights of Rights (1960) and Charter of Rights (1982), because ‘the fundamental impulses behind the policy were the liberal values of individual freedom and equal citizenship on a non-discriminatory basis’.

While similar observations might be made in relation to Australia, they could only be so in so far it reflected ‘essentially a liberal ideology which operates within liberal institutions with the universal approval of liberal attitudes’ (Jupp, 1996: 40, quoted in Kymlicka, *ibid.*). This is because in contrast with Canada, Australian multiculturalist policy developed more as a means to better integrate new immigrants, by easing the expectations of rapid assimilation.<sup>1</sup> Initially, as Levey (2008) elaborates, the policy did not include Indigenous Australians until the end of the 1970s with Galbally Report (1978), which spoke of multiculturalism being a policy for ‘all Australians’ *including* Indigenous Australians.<sup>2</sup>

This kind of multiculturalism nevertheless simultaneously encompassed the recognition of discrete groups with territorial claims, such as the Native Peoples and the Quebeckers, even though these groups wanted to be treated as ‘nations’ within a multinational state, rather than as minority groups in a mononational state. In reconciling these political claims to a political theory of liberalism, Kymlicka’s (1995) own intellectual work is reflective of how an early theorization of liberal multiculturalism was developing. This is because Kymlicka proposed group differentiated rights for three types of minorities comprising indigenous peoples, ‘substate’ national minorities, and immigrant groups. The general principles common to the each of these different types of minorities, he argued, included, firstly, that the state must be seen as belonging equally to all citizens. Secondly, individuals should be able to access state institutions, and act as full and equal citizens in political life, without having to hide or deny their cultural identity. Thirdly, the state should acknowledge the ‘historic injustice’ done to minority (non-dominant) groups. He interpreted these principles

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<sup>1</sup> We are very grateful to Geoff Levey for alerting to the nuances of the inception of Australian multiculturalism.

<sup>2</sup> This inclusiveness was formalized in the first national multicultural policy, National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia, under the Hawke Labor govt in 1989. It has been retained in every subsequent version. However, while Indigenous Australians are formally included, the policy also states that their situation is distinct and requires its own special treatment and set of measures (as a consequence many Indigenous leaders themselves reject multiculturalism as being relevant to them and indeed as undercutting their special status as First Peoples). See Levey (2008).

to mean that national and indigenous minorities were entitled to territorial autonomy and separate political representation, while migration based groups, who were assumed to have no relationship to the country prior to migration, were entitled only to 'polyethnic rights', namely full civic integration that respected their cultural identities.

Outside of Canada, in the US, UK, and later the Netherlands respectively, Kymlicka's distinction between national minority rights and polyethnic rights was not easily transposed. On the one hand, multiculturalism in the contexts mostly comprised of 'polyethnicity': the policy focus was more likely to be concerned with schooling the children of Asian/black/Hispanic post-/neocolonial immigrants, and multiculturalism in these instances meant the extension of the school, both in terms of curriculum and as an institution, to include features such as 'mother-tongue' teaching, non-Christian religions and holidays, halal food, Asian dress, and so on. On the other hand, the citizenship regimes in European countries included historical relationships with former colonial subjects that were distinct from the citizenship regimes of settler nations. For example, the 1948 British Nationality Act granted freedom of movement to all formerly or presently dependent, and now Commonwealth, territories (irrespective of whether their passports were issued by independent or colonial states) by creating the status of 'Citizenship of the United Kingdom and Colonies' (CUKC). Until they acquired one or other of the national citizenships in these post-colonial countries, these formerly British subjects continued to retain their British status. Thus, post-colonial migrants to Britain clearly were not historic minorities, but nor were they without historic claims upon Britain and so constituted a category that did not fit Kymlicka's categories of multicultural citizens.

Nevertheless, the term 'multiculturalism' in Europe came to mean, and now means throughout the English-speaking world and beyond, the political accommodation by the state and/or a dominant group of all minority cultures defined first and foremost by reference to race, ethnicity or religion, and, additionally but more controversially, by

reference to other group-defining characteristics such as nationality and aboriginality. The latter is more controversial not only because it extends the range of the groups that have to be accommodated, but also because the larger political claims made by such groups, who resist having these claims reduced to those of immigrants. Hence, despite Kymlicka's attempt to conceptualise multiculturalism-as-multinationalism, the dominant meaning of multiculturalism in politics relates to the claims of post-immigration groups.

This provenance of multiculturalism has bequeathed to its contemporary instantiations the importance of reconciling ideas of multiculturalism to ideas of citizenship, within a reciprocal balance of rights and responsibilities, assumptions of virtue and conceptions of membership or civic status (Meer, 2010). While there is agreement that the membership conferred by citizenship should entail equal opportunity, dignity and confidence, different views remain about the proper ways, in culturally diverse societies, to confer this civic status. Those engaged in the 'multicultural turn' still maintain that conceptions of citizenship can frequently ignore the sensibilities of minorities marked by social, cultural and political differences (May, Modood, and Squires, 2004).

Hence the *political* multiculturalism of Modood, for example, insists that 'when new groups enter a society, there has to be some education and refinement of...sensitivities in the light of changing circumstances and the specific vulnerabilities of new entrants' (2006: 61). As such a widely accepted *contemporary* thrust of what multiculturalism denotes includes a critique of 'the myth of homogeneous and monocultural nation-states' (Castles, 2000: 5), and an advocacy of the right of minority 'cultural maintenance and community formation, linking these to social equality and protection from discrimination' (ibid).

**Beyond multicultural co-existence, towards intercultural dialogue and communication**

Outside of Canada and North America more broadly, the idea of interculturalism has hitherto more commonly featured in Dutch (de Witt, 2010) and German (Miera, 2011) accounts of integration, as well as in Spanish and Greek discussion of migrant diversity in the arena of education (Gundara, 2000). Until relatively recently it has been less present in British discourses because concepts of race-relations, anti-racism, race-equality, and multiculturalism have been more prominent (Gundara and Jacobs, 2000). While its current advocates conceive it as something societal and therefore of much broader appeal than in a specific commercial usage found in some American formulations (in terms of facilitating 'communication' across trans-national business and commerce) (Bennett, 1998; Carig, 1994), what its present formulation perhaps retains from such incarnations is an emphasis upon communication. Indeed, according to Wood, Landry and Bloomfield (2006: 9) 'communication' is the defining characteristic, and the central means through which 'an intercultural approach aims to facilitate dialogue, exchange and reciprocal understanding between people of different backgrounds.' The question is to what extent this can be claimed as either a unique or distinguishing quality of interculturalism when dialogue and reciprocity too are foundational to most, if not all, accounts of multiculturalism. To put it another way, what makes communication unique for interculturalism in a manner that diverges from multiculturalism? According to some advocates, a difference is perceptible in the social or convivial 'openness' in which communication is facilitated. As Wood, Landry and Bloomfield (2006: 7) maintain

Multiculturalism has been founded on the belief in tolerance between cultures but it is not always the case that multicultural places are open places. Interculturalism on the other hand requires openness as a prerequisite and, while openness in itself is not the guarantee of interculturalism, it provides the setting for interculturalism to develop.

The 'openness' or 'closedness' that the authors have in mind is not an ethical or moral but a sociological concern related to – if not derived from – a spatial sense of community and

settlement as discussed further below. But it is also an openness of another kind that is not more than a few steps away from what Smith (2004) characterizes as models of inter-religious dialogue. These models come from the North American context, including the 'Dialogue as Information Sharing' and 'Dialogue to Come Closer Model', which encourage religious groups to focus on commonalities, in a way that seeks to eschew differences in order to elevate mutuality and sharing. What is striking, however, is the extent to which Wood, Landry and Bloomfield's (2006) characterization ignores how central the notions of dialogue and communication are to multiculturalism. This might easily be illustrated with reference to some canonical contributions that have provided a great deal of intellectual impetus to the advocacy of multiculturalism as a political or public policy movement.

Our first example could be Charles Taylor's essay from 1992, widely considered to be a founding statement of multiculturalism in political theory and in which he characterises the emergence of a modern politics of identity premised upon an idea of 'recognition'. The notion of recognition, and its relationship to multiculturalism can be abstract but is located for Taylor as something that has developed out of a move away from conceiving historically defined or inherited hierarchies as the sole provenance of social status (in the French sense of *préférence*), toward a notion of dignity more congruent with the ideals of a democratic society or polity, one that is more likely to confer political equality and a full or unimpaired civic status upon all its citizens.<sup>3</sup>

Drawing upon his previous, densely catalogued account of the emergence of the modern self (Taylor, 1989), Taylor mapped the political implications of this move onto two cases of Equality. The first is the most familiar and is characterised as a rights-based politics of universalism, which offers the prospect of affording equal dignity to all citizens in a polity.

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<sup>3</sup> Thus making equal recognition an essential part of democratic culture, a point not lost on Habermas (1994: 113) who argues that 'a correctly understood theory of [citizenship] rights requires a politics of recognition that protects the individual and the life contexts in which his or her identity is formed'.

The second denotes a politics of difference where the uniqueness of context, history and identity are salient and potentially ascendant. For Taylor, this coupling crystallises the way in which the idea of recognition has given rise to a search for 'authenticity'. This is characterised as a move away from the prescriptive universalisms that have historically underwritten ideas of the Just or the Right, in favour of the fulfilment and realisation of one's true self, originality or worth. According to Taylor, therefore, people can no longer be recognised on the basis of identities determined from their positions in social hierarchies alone but, rather, through taking account of the real manner in which people form their identities. That is to say that Taylor emphasises the importance of 'dialogical' relationships to argue that it is a mistake to suggest that people form their identities 'monologically' or without an intrinsic dependence upon dialogue with others (see Meer, 2010: 31-56). As such he maintains that we are 'always in dialogue with, sometimes in struggle against, the things our significant others want to see in us' (Taylor, 1992: 33).

In this formulation Taylor is openly drawing upon both Hegel and Mead each of whom maintained that our idea of ourselves, what we claim to be, and what we really think we are, is dependent upon how others come to view us to the extent that our sense of *self* is developed in a continuing dialogue. Self-consciousness exists only by being acknowledged or recognised, and the related implication for Taylor, is that a sense of socio-cultural self-esteem emerges not only from personal identity, but also in relation to the group in which this identity is developed. This is expressed in Taylor's (1992: 25-26) account as follows:

[O]ur identity is partly shaped by recognition or its absence, often by the *misrecognition* of others, and so a person or group of people can suffer real damage, real distortion, if the people or society around them mirror back a confining or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves. Non recognition or misrecognition can inflict harm, can be a form of oppression, imprisoning some in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being.

This is therefore one illustration of how central a concern with dialogue and communication are to multiculturalism too. Let us consider another landmark text on this topic: Bhikhu

Parekh's *Rethinking Multiculturalism* (2000). The central argument here is that cultural diversity and social pluralism are of an intrinsic value *precisely because* they challenge people to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of their own cultures and ways of life. He explicitly distinguishes his multiculturalism from various liberal and communitarian positions. Some of the latter recognise that cultures can play an important role in making choices meaningful for their members (Kymlicka, 1995), or play host to the development of the *self* for the members of that culture (Sandel, 1982). Their argument that culture is important for individual group members is well taken but they are less successful in explaining why cultural diversity is necessary in itself. To this Parekh offers the following explanation:

Since human capacities and values conflict, every culture realizes a limited range of them and neglects, marginalizes and suppresses others. However rich it may be, no culture embodies all that is valuable in human life and develops the full range of human possibilities. Different cultures thus correct and complement each other, expand each other's horizon of thought and alert each other to new forms of human fulfillment. The value of other cultures is independent of whether or not they are options for us... inassimilable otherness challenges us intellectually and morally, stretches our imagination, and compels us to recognize the limits of our categories of thought (Parekh, 2000: 167).

His argument that cultures other than one's own have something to teach us, and that therefore members of minority cultures should be encouraged to cultivate their moral and aesthetic insights for humanity as a whole, is largely built upon a prescription of intercultural dialogue. Indeed, for both Taylor and Parekh communication and dialogue are in different ways integral features to their intellectual and political advocacy of multiculturalism, and by implication must necessarily be considered so by those drawing upon their work unless a different reading is offered. The point is that to consider multiculturalists who draw upon these and similar formulations as being unconcerned with matters of dialogue and communication is to profoundly misread and mischaracterize their positions.

Moreover, even amongst those theorists who do not elaborate a philosophical concept of dialogical multiculturalism, dialogue is important at a political level. Whatever their varying views about the importance of say entrenched rights, democratic majoritarianism, special forms of representation and so on, they all see multiculturalism as the giving of ‘voice’ in the public square to marginalized groups (Young, 1990; Kymlicka, 1995; Tully, 1995; Modood, 2007a). Specifically, these authors also argue that dialogue is the way to handle difficult cases of cultural practices such as clitoridectomy, hate speech, religious dress, gender relations and so on (see also Eisenberg (2009) on public assessment of identity claims). So, whether it is at a philosophical or a political level, the leading theorists of multiculturalism give dialogue a centrality missing in liberal nationalist or human rights or class-based approaches – and missed by interculturalist critics of multiculturalism. The multiculturalists assume, however, that there is a sense in which the participants to a dialogue are ‘groups’ or ‘cultures’ and this leads us to a second point of alleged contrast with interculturalists.

### **Less groupist and culture bound: more synthesized and interactive**

A related means through which the concern with ‘closed’ communities or groupings that advocates of interculturalism conceive multiculturalism as giving rise to, takes us to our next characterisation of interculturalism contra multiculturalism. This is found in the assertion that ‘one of the implications of an intercultural framework, as opposed to a multicultural one...is that culture is acting in a multi-directional manner’ (Hammer, 2004). This depiction of interculturalism as facilitating an interactive and dynamic cultural ‘exchange’ informs a consistent line of distinction, as the following two portrayals make clear:

Multiculturalism tends to *preserve* a cultural heritage, while interculturalism acknowledges and enables cultures to have currency, to be exchanged, to circulate, to be modified and evolve (Sze and Powell, 2004).

[Interculturalism] is concerned with the task of developing cohesive civil societies by turning notions of singular identities into those of multiple ones, and by developing a shared and common value system and public culture. In building from

a deep sharing of differences of culture and experience it encourages the formation of interdependencies which structure personal identities that go beyond nations or simplified ethnicities (Booth, 2003: 432).

This emphasis is warranted for advocates of interculturalism who maintain that the diversity of the locations from where migrants and ethnic minorities herald, gives rise not to a creation of communities or groups but to a churning mass of languages, ethnicities, religions all cutting across each other and creating a 'superdiversity' (Vertovec, 2007). An intercultural perspective is better served to facilitate management of these sociological realities, it is argued, in a way that can be positively contrasted against a multiculturalism that emphasises strong ethnic or cultural identities at the expense of wider cultural exchanges.

Notwithstanding this problematic description of how groups feature in multiculturalism, which is challenged in other readings (cf Modood, 2007a), what such characterisations of interculturalism ignore are the alternative ways in which political interculturalism is itself conceptualised. As stated at the outset, by political interculturalism we refer to ways in which interculturalism is appropriated in the critique of multiculturalism (Booth, 2003, Sze and Powell, 2004; Wood, Landry and Bloomfield, 2006), in a way that may not necessarily be endorsed by interculturalism's advocates.

Writing from the Quebec context, Gagnon and Iacovino (2007) are one example of authors who contrast interculturalism positively with multiculturalism. The interesting aspect for our discussion is that they do so in a way that relies upon a formulation of groups. They proceed by arguing that Quebec has developed a distinctive intercultural political approach to diversity that is explicitly in opposition to Federal Canadian multiculturalism. Their starting point is that two broad considerations are accepted by a variety of political positions, including liberal nationalists, republicans and multiculturalists; indeed by most positions except liberal individualism, which they critique and leave to one side. These two

considerations are that, firstly, 'full citizenship status requires that all cultural identities be allowed to participate in democratic life equally, without the necessity of reducing conceptions of identity to the level of the individual' (ibid. 2007: 96). And secondly, with respect to unity: 'the key element is a sense of common purpose in public matters', 'a *centre* which also serves as a marker of identity in the larger society and denotes in itself a pole of allegiance for all citizens' (ibid).

For Gagnon and Iacovino, however, Canadian multiculturalism has two fatal flaws, which means that it is de facto liberal individualist in practice if not in theory. Firstly, it privileges an individualist approach to culture: as individuals or their choices change, the collective culture must change; in contrast Quebec's policy states clearly the need to recognise the French language as a collective good that requires protection and encouragement (Rocher et al, cited in Gagnon and Iacovino 2007: 99). Secondly, Canadian multiculturalism locates itself not in democratic public culture but rather '[p]ublic space is based on individual participation via a bill of rights' (2007: 110-111); judges and individual choices, not citizens debating and negotiating with each other that become the locus of cultural interaction and public multiculturalism.

Gagnon and Iacovino's positive argument for interculturalism can therefore be expressed in the following five stages. Firstly, there should be a public space and identity that is not merely about individual constitutional or legal rights. Secondly, this public space is an important identity for those who share it and so qualifies and counter-balances other identities that citizens value. Thirdly, this public space is created and shared through participation, interaction, debate and common endeavour. Fourthly, this public space is not culture-less but nor is it merely the 'majority culture', all can participate in its synthesis and evolution and while it has an inescapable historical character, it is always being remade and ought to be remade to include new groups. Fifth and finally, Quebec, and not merely federal Canada, is such a public space and so an object to which immigrants need to have

identification with and integrate into and should seek to maintain Quebec as a nation and not just a federal province (the same point may apply in other multi-national states but there are different degrees and variations of 'multi-nationalism').

This characterisation then is very different to that proposed by Booth (2003), Hammer (2004) or Sze and Powell (2004) because it makes a moral and policy case for the recognition of relatively distinct sub-state nationalisms. As such it is less concerned with the diversity of the locations from where migrants and ethnic minorities herald or the 'superdiversity' that this is alleged to cultivate therein. Its emphasis on multi-nationalism does distinguish it from post-immigration multiculturalism (and post-immigration interculturalism) but not multiculturalism per se (cf Kymlicka 1995). Alternative, less macro-level interculturalism which focuses on neighbourhoods, classroom pedagogy, the funding of the arts and so on, on the other hand, seems a-political. As such they are not critiques of multiculturalism but a different exercise.

### **Committed to a stronger sense of whole; national identity and social cohesion**

A third related charge is that far from being a system that speaks to the whole of society, multiculturalism, unlike interculturalism, speaks only to and for the minorities within it and, therefore, also fails to appreciate the necessary wider framework for its success. As Goodhart (2004) has protested, multiculturalism is a-symmetrical in that it not only places too great an emphasis upon difference and diversity, upon what divides us more than what unites us, but also that it ignores the needs of majorities. It thus encourages resentment, fragmentation and disunity. This can be prevented or overcome, as Alev (2007) and other commentators put it, through invocations of interculturalism that promote community cohesion on a local level, and more broadly through an interculturalism that encourages the subscription to national citizenship identities as forms of meta-membership:

Interculturalism is a better term than multiculturalism. It emphasises interaction and participation of citizens in a common society, rather than cultural differences and different cultures existing next to each other without necessarily much contact or participative interaction. Interculturalism is therefore equivalent to mutual integration.

While multiculturalism boils down to celebrating difference, interculturalism is about understanding each other's cultures, sharing them and finding common ground on which people can become more integrated.<sup>4</sup>

These common grounds embody a kind of commonality that members of society need to have and which is said to have been obscured by a focus on difference. It is argued that European societies and states have been too *laissez-faire* in promoting commonality and this must now be remedied (Joppke, 2004), hence the introduction of measures such as swearing of oaths of allegiance at naturalisation ceremonies, language proficiency requirements when seeking citizenship, and citizenship education in schools, amongst other things. What such sentiment ignores is how all forms of prescribed unity, including civic unity, usually retain a majoritarian bias that places the burden of adaptation upon the minority, and so is inconsistent with interculturalism's alleged commitment to 'mutual integration' as put forward in Alev's account.

As Viet Bader (2005: 169), reminds us: 'all civic and democratic cultures are inevitably embedded into specific ethno-national and religious histories'. Were we to assess the normative premise of this view, however, we would inevitably encounter a dense literature elaborating the continuing disputes over the interactions between the civic, political and ethnic dimensions in the creation of nations, national identities and their relationship to each other and to non-rational 'intuitive' and 'emotional' pulls of ancestries and cultures and so forth. Chief amongst these is whether or not 'nations' are social and political formations developed in the proliferation of modern nation-states from the 18<sup>th</sup> Century onwards, or whether they constitute social and political formations – or 'ethnies' - bearing an older pedigree that may be obscured by a modernist focus. What is most relevant to our

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<sup>4</sup> New Start (7 June, 2006) It's all in the mix:  
<http://www.newstartmag.co.uk/features/article/its-all-in-the-mix>

discussion, however, is not the debate between different camps of ‘modernist’, ‘ethno-symbolist’, and ‘primordialist’ protagonists, amongst others, but the ways in which minorities’ differences are conceived in contemporary form of meta-unity.<sup>5</sup>

It is perhaps telling, however, that much of the literature on national identity in particular has tended to be retrospective to the extent that such contemporary concerns do not enjoy a widespread appeal in scholarly accounts of national identity (while the opposite could be said to be true of the literature on citizenship). This tendency is not limited to academic arenas and one of the curiosities in popular articulations of national identity is the purchase that these accounts garner from a recourse to tradition, history, and the idea of a common past (Calhoun, 1994). One implication is that national identities can frequently reflect desires to authenticate the past, ‘to select from all that has gone before that which is distinctive, ‘truly ours’, and thereby to mark out a unique, shared destiny’ (Smith, 1998: 43).

It was this very assessment which, at the turn of the millennium, informed the Commission on Multi-Ethnic Britain’s (CMEB) characterisation of British national identity as potentially ‘based on generalisations [that] involve a selective and simplified account of a complex history.’ Chaired by Bhikhu Parekh, it feared such an account would be one in which ‘[m]any complicated strands are reduced to a simple tale of essential and enduring national unity’ (cmmd 2.9 p. 16)’. It was precisely this tendency that informed the CMEB’s alarm at how invocations of national identity potentially force ethnic minorities into a predicament not of their making: one in which majorities are conflated with the nation and where national identity is promoted as a reflection of this state of affairs (because national identities are assumed to be cognates of monistic nations). For in not easily fitting into a majoritarian account of national identity, or either being unable or unwilling to be reduced to or

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<sup>5</sup> Though this concern perhaps relies on something from the cultural-imaginary form of ‘modernist’ argument most associated with Anderson (1983). Moreover, for a study of how this is happening in non-political urban contexts, see Kyrikiades, Virdee and Modood (2009).

assimilated into a prescribed public culture, minority 'differences' may therefore become variously negatively conceived. Such concerns have not been limited to the UK, however, and may be observed in the Intercultural Dialog Commission (2005) set up by the federal government in Belgium to facilitate a transition in the federal level emphasis from integration to cultural diversity. This identified several historical tendencies, concerning (i) a political pluralism that facilitated working class emancipation and wider political consultation; (ii) philosophical pluralism that incrementally led to the official recognition of various public religions (Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Islamic, and Anglican) and non-religion; and (iii) community pluralism as stemming from Flemish and Walloon movements that created the current federal State of Belgium. Importantly, the Commissioners underscored a further form of pluralism as the next step: (iv) cultural pluralism. More precisely they insisted that integration issues should take into account relevant cultural dimensions and that it no longer makes sense to qualify the descendents of migrants as 'migrant' or 'allochtone', respectively used in the Walloon and Flemish regions, instead 'cultural minorities' would be a much more relevant definition. The report on the whole focussed its conclusions on the lack of cultural recognition in a manner that invited the criticism that the Commission had been highly influenced by communitarian theories instead of 'trying to develop civic responsibility and common citizenship rather than thinking about an increasing space for cultural communities' (La Libre, 6-6-2005).

One scholarly intervention in this vein can be found in Modood's (2007a) restatement of multiculturalism as a civic idea that can be tied to an inclusive national identity, and some of the responses this has elicited (see Modood, 2007b), helps cast light upon this debate. This concern was present in his *Not Easy Being British: Colour, Culture and Citizenship* first published in 1992 where, not unusually among advocates of multiculturalism, Modood emphasised the role of citizenship in fostering commonality across differences, before recasting part of this civic inclusion as proceeding through claims making upon, and

therefore reformulating, national identities. In his more contemporary formulation he puts this thus:

[I]t does not make sense to encourage strong multicultural or minority identities and weak common or national identities; strong multicultural identities are a good thing – they are not intrinsically divisive, reactionary or subversive – but they need the complement of a framework of vibrant, dynamic, national narratives and the ceremonies and rituals which give expression to a national identity. It is clear that minority identities are capable of exerting an emotional pull for the individuals for whom they are important. Multicultural citizenship, if it is to be equally attractive to the same individuals, requires a comparable counterbalancing emotional pull (Modood, 2007b).

This restatement contains at least two key points that are central to the preceding discussion. The first concerns an advocacy and continuity of earlier forms of multiculturalism that have sought to accommodate collective identities and incorporate differences into the mainstream. These differences are not only tolerated but respected, and include the turning of a ‘negative’ difference into a ‘positive’ difference in a way that is presented in the ethnic pride currents as elements of racial equality. The second is to place a greater emphasis upon the unifying potential of an affirmation of a renegotiated and inclusive national identity therein. While the latter point is welcomed by some commentators who had previously formed part of the pluralistic left, the bringing of previously marginalised groups into the societal mainstream is, at best, greeted more ambivalently.

### **Illiberalism and culture**

The fourth charge is that multiculturalism lends itself to illiberality and relativism, such that there is often uncertainty surrounding the tackling of culturally specific practices that infringe people’s rights such as forced marriage’ (BRAP, 2012/3: 63). Interculturalism has the capacity to criticise and censure culture (as part of a process of intercultural dialogue), and so is more likely to emphasise the protection of individual rights. In Bouchard’s (2011: 467) terms:

Interculturalism is built on the basic wager of democracy, that is, a capacity to reach consensus on forms of peaceful co-existence that preserve basic values and make room for the future of all citizens...

In Europe this charge clearly assumed a role in the backlash against multiculturalism since, as Kymlicka (2005b: 83) describes, 'it is very difficult to get support for multiculturalism policies if the groups that are the main beneficiaries of these policies are perceived as carriers of illiberal cultural practices that violate norms of human rights'. This view is particularly evident in the debates concerning the accommodation of religious minorities, especially when the religion in question is perceived to take a conservative line on issues of gender equality, sexual orientation and progressive politics generally (something that has arguably led some commentators who may otherwise sympathize with religious minorities to argue that it is difficult to view them as victims when they may themselves be potential oppressors (see Meer and Modood, 2009b)).

Kymlicka (2005b: 83) narrows down this observation further in his conclusion that 'if we put Western democracies on a continuum in terms of the proportion of immigrants who are Muslim, I think this would provide a good indicator of public opposition to multiculturalism'. As Bhikhu Parekh (2006: 180-1) notes, this can be traced to a perception that Muslims are 'collectivist, intolerant, authoritarian, illiberal and theocratic', and that they use their faith as 'a self-conscious public statement, not quietly held personal faith but a matter of identity which they must jealously guard and loudly and repeatedly proclaim . . . not only to remind them of who they are but also to announce to others what they stand for'. It is thus unsurprising to learn that some attitude surveys in Britain report that 77 per cent of people are convinced that 'Islam has a lot of fanatical followers', 68 per cent consider it 'to have more to do with the middle ages than the modern world', and 64 per cent believe that Islam 'treats women badly' (Field, 2007: 453).

For these reasons Muslim claims making has been characterised as specifically ambitious and difficult to accommodate (Joppke, 2004; 2007; Moore, 2004; 2006; Pew, 2006; Policy Exchange, 2007). This is particularly the case when Muslims are perceived to be – often uniquely – in contravention of liberal discourses of individual rights and secularism (Hansen, 2006; Hutton, 2007; Toynbee, 2005) and is exemplified by the way in which visible Muslim practices such as veiling have in public discourses been reduced to and conflated with alleged Muslim practices such as forced marriages, female genital mutilation, a rejection of positive law in favour of criminal sharia law and so on. This suggests a radical ‘otherness’ about Muslims and an illiberality about multiculturalism, since the latter is alleged to license these practices

It is difficult, however, not to view this as a knee-jerk reaction that condemns religious identities per se, rather than examines them on a case-by-case basis, while on the other hand assuming that ethnic identities are free of illiberalism. This is empirically problematic given that some of the problematic practices are not religious but cultural. Clitoridectomy, for example, is often cited as an illiberal practice in the discussions we are referring to. It is, however, a cultural practice among various ethnic groups, and yet has little support from any religion. So to favour ethnicity and problematise religion is a reflection of a secularist bias that has alienated many religionists, especially Muslims, from multiculturalism. It is much better to acknowledge that the ‘multi’ in multiculturalism will encompass different kinds of groups and does not itself privilege any one kind, but that ‘recognition’ should be given to the identities that marginalized groups themselves value and find strength in, whether these be racial, religious or ethnic (Modood, 2007b).

## **Conclusions**

This chapter provides an entry point in developing a discussion on the relationship between interculturalism and multiculturalism. The question it raises is to what extent the present criteria proposed by advocates of interculturalism, in positively contrasting it with multiculturalism, are persuasive. In addressing this we maintain that whilst interculturalism and multiculturalism share much as approaches concerned with recognising cultural diversity, the answer to Lentin's (2005: 394) question - is interculturalism merely an 'updated version' of multiculturalism? - is in the main 'no'. That is to say that while advocates of interculturalism wish to emphasise its positive qualities in terms of encouraging communication, recognising dynamic identities, promoting unity, and challenging illiberality, each of these qualities already feature (and are on occasion foundational) in multiculturalism. Moreover, multiculturalism presently surpasses interculturalism as a political orientation that is able to recognise that social life consists of individuals and groups, and that both need to be provided for in the formal and informal distribution of powers, as well as reflected in an ethical conception of citizenship, and not just an instrumental one. As such we conclude that until interculturalism as a political discourse is able to offer an original perspective, one that can speak to a variety of concerns emanating from complex identities and matters of equality and diversity in a more persuasive manner than at present, it cannot at present, intellectually at least, eclipse multiculturalism.

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