

'Interculturalism as a new narrative for the era of globalisation and super-diversity'

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Introduction

Globalisation has created an era of 'super diversity' in which most western societies have become far more dynamic and complex. This has impacted upon notions of both personal and collective identity and necessitates a re-think of policy and practice and a new vision of how we live together. Multicultural societies are the new reality and, whilst the Far Right and Popular Extremist Parties have grown across Europe on the pretence of their ability to turn the clock backwards, we must all begin to accept that all societies will inevitably become more multicultural.

We cannot stop the process of globalisation: the world is more inter-connected than ever before. Indeed, the pace of change will accelerate as political, economic and social networks become more intertwined and interdependent. But change will not be easy and tensions and conflicts are inevitable as many cultures, faiths, value systems and global forces interact and come to terms with each other. There is, however, only one direction of travel and our urgent need is to find ways in which we can make the transition as easy as possible and allow different peoples to learn to live with each other.

Globalisation will ensure that the world – and almost every country – will become more multicultural. That is to say, each country will find that its population is increasingly made up of more people from many different cultures, nationalities, faiths and ethnic backgrounds – and become 'super-diverse'. The ease of travel, the opening up of labour and financial markets means that this is inevitable.

The multicultural policies which governments had devised are no longer appropriate to mediate this new era and do not contribute sufficiently to the promotion of community cohesion. Despite some past successes, they no longer enjoy either governmental or popular support. There is now both the need and an opportunity to consider a new approach, based upon 'interculturalism'. This is not defined by 'race' and, unlike multiculturalism, embraces all areas of difference. It also recognises that cultures are more fluid than ever before and the inter-connectedness of the world demands interaction between and within cultures to build trust and understanding, and that a high level of cultural navigational skills will be necessary to enable people to accept and endorse the change process.

This is of course, a challenge for communities and the way ordinary people live their lives. However, it is also a challenge for governments, which have been slow to recognise the fluidity of population change and the impact of transnational and diaspora influences, and have hardly begun to consider the implications for the notion of national solidarity and governance. Governments inevitably cling to the idea of clear national boundaries and any suggestion of the loss of sovereignty is quickly contested. Rather than reflecting the process of globalisation, they feel threatened by the inter-connectivity of the modern world and are

not prepared to acknowledge, let alone argue for, the ceding of their power to international agencies.

The ideal of a more integrated international community, in which ideas and cultures may bridge national boundaries to create a world in which we are more at ease with each other, is seldom advanced as a desirable political objective, despite the evident interdependency of economic and political decision-making. Similarly, whilst people are themselves increasingly crossing borders, inter-marrying, building new virtual networks, and creating real and tangible personal relationships at all levels, they are often fearful about the impact of globalisation on their communities and collective identity. 'Identity politics', whether on the basis of narrow national, ethnic, faith or regional basis, often holds back the transition, rather than supporting and inspiring a new and inter-connected world.

Multiculturalism is completely out of step with this new world order. It was founded on the heavily racialised basis of majority-minority relations within each nation, in which 'accommodations' were to be negotiated or imposed. The era of transnational relationships, the growth of diasporas, new and pervasive international communications and travel, make such policies no longer tenable. 'Interculturalism', based upon a wider view of the world, must now replace multiculturalism and develop as a new positive model to mediate change across regions and nations and recognise the multivariate relationships across all aspects of diversity.

The Impact of Globalisation

One of the most evident results of globalisation is that populations have become far more mobile and willing and able to re-locate in search of better employment prospects and a higher standard of living, or because of other short or longer term considerations. In 2010 there were 214 million international migrants and if they continue to grow in number at the same pace there will be over 400 million by 2050 (IOM 2010). There are now 20 cities with more than 1 million foreign-born residents which, combined, means that these metropolitan areas have 37 million foreign-born residents accounting for 19% of the world's foreign-born stock. These few points on the globe are the destinations for one in five of the world's immigrants. There are another 59 cities worldwide with a presence of 100,000 or more foreign born residents, including 11 cities with an immigrant presence of between 500,000 and 1 million people: Atlanta, USA; Boston, USA; Buenos Aires, Argentina; Montreal, Canada; Phoenix, USA; Riverside, USA; San Diego, USA; San Jose, USA; St. Petersburg, Russia; Tel Aviv, Israel; Vancouver, Canada (Clark, 2008, p27). Many other countries have similarly high rates of internal migration and cross border movement. The growth of global business, the removal of barriers to trade and the creation of economic unions – most notably in Europe – has inevitably led to a more mobile international workforce. And meanwhile, the continuing impact of wars and conflicts, together with accelerating climate change, has contributed to population instability.

Migrant communities are also increasingly diverse and this inevitably leads to much greater diversity within nation states, particularly in the Western economies, which are often the target countries for migration. The extent of population movement is such that all western economies are now characterised by 'super' or 'hyper' diversity, with cities like London, Stockholm, Toronto, New York and Amsterdam with over 300 language groups. This has re-defined our notion of multiculturalism which had previously been seen as the then essentially White countries coming to terms with migrants from a limited number of former colonies. Multiculturalism is now much more complex and community relations are multi-faceted, no longer simply revolving around majority/minority visible distinctions.

The impact of the diversity resulting from global patterns of migration and the rise and importance of diasporas means that the homogeneity and distinctiveness of national and regional identities is seen to be under threat as external influences become more accessible and persuasive. The Far Right in many countries are increasingly exploiting the fear of the erosion of a simple national identity to build substantial popular support. There is also a more genuine and widespread concern amongst host communities about the advantages that economic migrants have to employers – willingness to accept lower pay and worse conditions, less unionised and less aware of their rights. Extreme Far Right parties take this still further and demand the repatriation of migrants, including those born in the countries to which their parents or grandparents migrated and in which they are citizens. Concerns are, then, turned into fear and hatred and an ongoing antipathy to migration and diversity.

The movement of labour inevitably follows from the movement of finance and capital and often simply reflects the shifting economic patterns, especially the huge differences between richer and poorer nations. Many national leaders are themselves caught in something of a bind as they generally continue to promise and promote economic growth and know that inward migration is often the easiest and quickest way of achieving this - migrants are generally more work ready and work willing and have a lower labour cost. They will also fill gaps in the labour market and undertake tasks which are unattractive to host populations, for example in agriculture and social care, and are more flexible on social costs, for example in respect of housing. However, governments also know that inward migration is unpopular with host communities and opposed by three-quarters of the population of just about every country in Europe.

Minorities are often the visible expression of the change brought by globalisation and whilst their movement and growth is often seen as the cause of changing economic and social patterns, it is simply the consequence of those changes. This makes them highly vulnerable.

Globalisation has also brought many new international agencies and structures into being and fundamentally altered power relationships. The new agencies have responded to a range of common issues from international finance, crime, environmental concerns like climate change, the proliferation of nuclear weapons and many more. The European Union perhaps stands out most in this regard. This, together with the process of Western de-industrialisation, the growth of global business and brands and international migration on a new scale, has created a popular sense of powerlessness and alienation. This has also had a profound impact upon the way people see themselves and the claim of nationalistic identities has inevitably been weakened. The growth of regional and separatist movements – and identity - has grown as people ‘hunker down’.

Castells (1997) supports the view that the state has been bypassed by networks of wealth, power and information and lost much of its sovereignty. Barber (2013) agrees and believes that nation states might be replaced by cities as the main instrument of the polity and are more capable of responding to cross-border challenges than are states. In later work Castells (2006) draws upon the research of Norris who has analysed the *World Values Survey* to show that regional and local identities are trumping national loyalties. Norris calculated that for the world as a whole, 13% of respondents primarily considered themselves as “citizens of the world”, 38% put their nation-state first, and the remainder (i.e. the majority) put local or regional identities first.

None of this should suggest that national identity could or should be downplayed. In fact, there is a great danger in suggesting that the one area of identity that lower socio-economic groups feel able to cling to in a time of uncertainty should be wiped away. The reality is however that national and cosmopolitan identities do now need to sit alongside each other – they are not opposed – something that multiculturalism has never acknowledged.

Solidarity and Identity

Multiculturalism as we now know it is very different from its early form and the impact upon personal and collective identity and the forms of governance and mediation of tensions has been profound. Whilst it is clear that most people are now exposed to diversity in all aspects of their daily lives – either in our local communities, schools and workplaces, or indirectly through television, social networks and other media - there appears to be something of a 'paradox of diversity' (Cantle 2011). The more diverse societies have become and the more people have exposed to difference, the more they seem to retreat into their own identity, embrace identity politics and support separatist ideologies. This may be, in part, due to the lack of real engagement with difference, a rather wary detachment which makes us more determined to cling to our own community's certainties.

Robert Putnam supports this view. Having looked at this through the lens of 'social capital' (Putnam, 2000) he has demonstrated that social capital is inversely related to diversity because 'immigration and ethnic diversity challenge social solidarity and inhibit social capital' or, more graphically expressed, 'diversity, at least in the short run, seems to bring out the turtle in all of us' (Putnam, 2007). However, in the same work he suggested that in the medium to longer term:

successful immigrant societies create new forms of social solidarity and dampen the negative effects of diversity by constructing new, more encompassing identities. Thus, the central challenge for modern, diversifying societies is to create a new, broader sense of 'we'.

This is indeed the challenge and, as yet, there is little by way of vision and established policy and practice to make the broader sense of 'we' into a reality.

Similarly, the world seems more prone to ethnic and faith conflict with over 70 per cent of conflicts having an ethnic or faith dimension (Baldwin et al., 2007). In fact, there are indications of a rising number of divisions and more ardent separatist movements, where people no longer feel able to even share the same land or government. Around 20 nations have been created in recent years, which stem partly from the break-up of previously constructed federations in the Balkans and Eastern Europe, or divisions have been turned into separation, for example in the recently divided Sudan. More divisions are possibly on the way with states like Belgium becoming virtually ungovernable as a single entity and there are around twenty secessionist movements in Europe alone, with Scotland and Catalonia being the most notable. Where we might have expected more collaboration across borders and the separate identities of regions and states to give way to common or globalised identities, the opposite seems to be true.

Sen also argues that conflict and violence are sustained today, no less than the past, by the illusion of a unique identity (Sen, 2006). He agrees that the world is increasingly divided between religions (or 'cultures' or 'civilizations'), which ignore the relevance of other ways in which people see themselves through class, gender, profession, language, literature, science, music, morals or politics. He challenges 'the appalling effects of the miniaturisation of people' and the denial of the real possibilities of reasoned choices.

Others support this view and believe that the elevation of identity is caused by the erosion of democracy which may be inherent in globalisation, and that globalisation undermines the democracy and sovereignty of the nation state and turns individuals into a 'universal tribe of consumers' who are 'economically interdependent but isolated and impotent as citizens' (Younge, 2010). Younge's argument is compelling, especially in the context of the creation of the Euro and the globalisation of brands which reduce local corporate markers, and

especially the recent financial crisis. These changes enable him to conclude that the greater the loss of control and access to democratic levers, the more we retreat into separate identities or tribes.

The sense of collective identity has changed profoundly in all Western societies, but it is inevitably interpreted and understood in different ways by minority and majority groups. This is reflected in the changing nature of personal identities, with the separate components shaped by increasing diversity in terms of faith, present locality, and ethnicity – as well as an apparently declining sense of nationality. For example, in the case of Britain, a recent Searchlight Educational Trust report (SET, 2011) found that whilst many ethnic groups saw themselves in a similar way, 'Asian' and 'Black' groups differed significantly from 'White' groups in certain respects. The three components of 'country' – nationality, country of birth and domicile – were most important for White groups (67%) compared to Asian (46%) and Black (21%) and minorities were also more likely to regard religion and ethnicity as the most important element of their identity.

The impact of diversity upon personal identities is particularly profound, with individuals often able to draw upon their heritage, faith, language, diaspora and new national identity to create hybrid or multiple identities. It should also be presumed that the variation within ethnic groups will be as great as those variations between them and there is a great danger in homogenising any particular identity. All types of hyphenated identity also run the risk of simply replacing the limited notion of a single identity with a hybrid identity which also becomes bounded and ascribed. As Brah (2007) points out, identity is a process and not a fixed category (though that is how it has often been regarded in the past).

Identity is increasingly complex and, as well as the now routine hyphenating of nationality, faith and ethnicity, the consequence of people from different identity groups sharing the same society has also led to the growth of 'mixed race' or multiple identities. This is now the fastest growing minority in Britain, for example. However, this group is not actually recognised in policy terms, there is no funding, representation, support, nor champion. This is partly for practical reasons, as the boundaries of the mixed race group are necessarily blurred and cover many different combinations of Black, Asian, White and other ethnicities and any combination of faith and nationality. But it also maintains an overtone of racial purity, whereby 'pure breeds' in ethnic or religious terms are recognised with leaders chosen to represent their particular constituency of interest, whereas 'our mongrel selves' (Slattery, 2003) have no particular identity, nor recognition.

In the face of this broader diversity and changing patterns of identity, governmental responses have been ambivalent. For the most part, they have attempted to reinforce their view of national identity through such measures as the teaching of national history and promoting national citizenship and identity. By steadfastly retaining the pretence of the integrity of national borders and governance, and by attempting to deny the interdependence brought by globalisation, they reinforce a fear of 'others'. They then appear to lag behind the current reality of multi-faceted identities within their communities and may well find that the new phenomenon of social media will begin to create new transnational relationships which transcend traditional power structures. Already there is clear evidence of a decline in traditional democratic traditions across Europe, with election turnouts and political party membership in decline.

Such policies also reinforce the outdated concept of multiculturalism, which has positioned identity as static and bounded – or ascribed and fixed. The reality for many people today, however, is that identity is transitory and, at least partly, chosen. The growth of mixed race, intermarriage across national, faith and other boundaries, means that 'you can't put me in a box' (Fanshawe and Sriskandarajah, 2011) is a reality for many people:

'In an age of super diversity where people do not identify around single identities and feel conflicted allegiance (if any allegiance at all) to pre-defined groups, activism around particular 'strands' seems irrelevant to many people and may not even be that effective in addressing the true causes of inequality. Even the very categorisations that we rely on (for example, 'black', 'gay', 'Asian' or 'disabled') no longer seem to be able to tell us much about who people, what lives they lead, who they identify with, or what services they need from government and society. And the tick box approach seems to be missing out on growing numbers of people who fall outside or across standard classifications. Yet society seems to treat ethnic identities as if they are clearly bounded, static and meaningful, and public bodies insist on a tick box classification'

(Fanshawe and Sriskandarajah, 2010 p11)

Multicultural theorists have never accepted this perspective and attempted to reinforce past conceptions of identity, supported by systems of over-protective community leaders and single identity funding which have homogenised and hardened in-group boundaries and stereotypes.

The 'Failure' of Multiculturalism

The notion of the 'failure of multiculturalism' has confused rather than assisted a debate about how we learn to live together in an increasingly interdependent and interconnected world. 'Multiculturalism' can simply describe the modern reality of most countries in that they contain a large number of migrant groups at various stages of permanent settlement and are from many different countries and indigenous peoples. In this sense, it is purely descriptive and cannot be said to have 'failed'. The idea of 'failure' is more often based upon the perception that the policies of multiculturalism have failed. The Far Right and Popular Extremist Parties (PEPs) often wilfully conflate the policies of multiculturalism with the very idea of multicultural societies, as part of their assault on all aspects of diversity.

The more recent suggestions of 'failure', however, relate to the current political and international context and specifically refer to the perceived different values of the Muslim communities within Western democracies. The UK Prime Minister (Cameron, 2011) focussed his suggestion of failure on the practice of 'state multiculturalism' in general terms, but it was the Muslim community that formed the major part of his speech. The Chancellor of Germany, Angela Merkel, in referring to the 'utter failure' of multiculturalism in Germany (Merkel, 2011), also set her remarks in the context of various reports and comments by political colleagues on the view that 'people from different cultures, like Turkey and Arab countries, find it harder to integrate'. Nicholas Sarkozy, the French President, also remarked upon the failure of multiculturalism following public debate and policies that almost entirely relate to the French Muslim communities (Sarkozy, 2011).

The Eminent Persons Report for the Council of Europe (Council of Europe, 2011) recognised this current debate but only provided a range of principles and policy guidelines rather than a conceptual framework:

We are of course well aware of this debate, but find that the term "multiculturalism" is used in so many different ways, meaning different things to different people and in different countries – is it an ideology? a set of policies? a social reality? – that in the end it confuses more than it clarifies. We have therefore decided to avoid using this

term and instead to concentrate on identifying policies and approaches that will enable European societies to combine diversity and freedom.

This rather prosaic approach, based upon a series of community based and policy interventions, has been adopted by many countries as a means of trying to ensure that diverse groups share a common society.

However, early forms of multiculturalism were not based upon a grand scheme or 'ideology', but were coping strategies that were inherently 'defensive'. The focus was on protecting minorities from racism and discrimination and on positive action programmes to begin to provide those communities with some semblance of equal opportunities. Given that in the immediate post-war period racism and discrimination were rife, policies of separateness at that time were inevitable, as were the attempts to impose tolerance and equal opportunities through legal and regulatory frameworks; and to minimise conflict and tensions by avoiding contact between different communities. It could be argued that the policies were right for the time, and the 'failure' may simply have been to subsequently modify the approach and to take account of changing social, economic and political circumstances.

Ranjit Sondhi (2009) has explained the essence of this 'failure':

"Concerned less with the complexities of integration, the practice of multiculturalism came to be centred largely on managing public order and relations between majority and minority populations by allowing ethnic cultures and practices to mediate the process. Minority languages, religions and cultural practices were encouraged, and gradually the right to be equal was overshadowed by the right to be different.

Such multicultural policies led, albeit unwittingly, to the creation of culturally and spatially distinct communities fronted by self-styled community leaders who traded in cultural, as opposed to social capital.there was everything to be gained from difference and non-mixing. The resulted in the tendency at the neighbourhood level to live in entirely separate ethnic worlds, a kind of self-imposed apartheid, a cocooned existence.

As a result, far from being a system that spoke to the whole of society, multiculturalism spoke only to each specific minority in isolation. This served to maintain the exoticism and essentialism of minority cultures hindering a two way conversation with the majority culture."

The 'right to be different' has political as well as cultural drivers. In this sense it can perhaps be characterised by the notion of identity politics and is played by both political and community leaders who seek to heighten differences in order to create a political advantage for one group or another; or is advanced by communities themselves, who have been quick to learn that the recognition of difference carries with it rewards in terms of representation and resources. Identity politics therefore militates against community collaboration and encourages competition and perhaps even conflict. This phenomenon was difficult, though manageable, when the number of minorities was limited, but has become extremely problematic in an era of super diversity.

The earlier forms of multiculturalism have been built upon and developed with a view to both avoiding the assimilationist tendencies of some European countries and at the same time avoiding the reliance on the separationist British model. The Canadian approach perhaps most exemplifies this model (a view perhaps only challenged by the French speaking provinces of Canada – see below). The Canadian Government¹ believes that, in 1971, they

¹ <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/multiculturalism/citizenship.asp>

were the first in the world to adopt multiculturalism as an official policy, setting out their vision in these terms:

‘...all citizens are equal. Multiculturalism ensures that all citizens can keep their identities, can take pride in their ancestry and have a sense of belonging. Acceptance gives Canadians a feeling of security and self-confidence, making them more open to, and accepting of, diverse cultures. The Canadian experience has shown that multiculturalism encourages racial and ethnic harmony and cross-cultural understanding.

‘...As Canadians, they share the basic values of democracy with all other Canadians who came before them. At the same time, Canadians are free to choose for themselves, without penalty, whether they want to identify with their specific group or not. Their individual rights are fully protected and they need not fear group pressures.’

Multiculturalism encompasses a range of notions of both ‘multi’ and of ‘culture’ and is always heavily contextualised. It will therefore be understood in many different ways around the world and the policies and practices will also have very developed in many different ways. Nevertheless, ‘progressive multiculturalism’ in the Canadian sense leans towards the concept of interculturalism and relies upon the development of commonality and a sense of belonging and inclusion across all areas of difference.

The Growth of the Far Right and Popular Extremist Parties

The failure of multicultural policies is no more evident than in the growth of the Far Right and Popular Extremist Parties across Europe. Multiculturalism has been firmly rooted in racial constructs and has failed to notice that ideas about difference have profoundly changed. Sexual orientation, gender, faith and disability and other aspects of identity are now firmly in the public sphere and contributing to notions of personal identity alongside race and ethnicity. The Far Right appear to have accepted the change more readily than avowed multiculturalists and are now less preoccupied with race and instead trade on the supposed threat of ‘others’ in both economic and social terms. They also try to engender a fear in the host community of a loss of identity and their way of life, as a result of ‘being overrun’ by foreigners. Indeed, they have found that their former appeal, based on the supposed biological superiority of the white ‘race’ no longer resonates with the electorate and have now focussed on the cultural dimensions of difference (Goodwin, 2011).

The Far Right have used this approach to gain an increased level of popular support across most of Europe, including France, Switzerland, Netherlands, Austria, Belgium, Germany, Greece and Italy. And even the traditional liberal countries of Scandinavia have seen an unprecedented growth in Far Right support, with parties in Norway, Finland and Denmark growing to around 20% of electorate support, and in Sweden with around 6% where this has been converted to a significant level of power and influence due to the system of proportional representation. Goodwin (2011) suggests that the British National Party has become the most successful extreme right in British history and points out that since 2001, its support in general elections has grown 12-fold; support in local elections increased by a factor of 100 and membership sevenfold. However, in electoral terms it has generally remained under 5% in most elections, considerably less than most other European countries.

What they all share, however, is not only hostility towards settled and new migrants and ‘fascism’s adaptation to the transformed historical conditions’ (Griffin, 2011), but also an

apparently better understanding of the impact of globalisation than that of centrist politicians. Marine Le Pen, the new French *Front National* leader, sums this up as “now the real divide is between nationalism and globalisation”, and complains that “France’s sovereignty has been sucked dry by the EU”, with “cultural identity under attack through massive immigration” (Le Pen, 2011).

The Concept of Interculturalism

The concept of Interculturality is not new and can be traced back to 1959, while European perspectives date from the 1980s and 1990s (James, 2008). It has also been used in the particular context of education (Gundara, 2000 and 2001). However, there has been little by way of academic development until very recently (Rattansi, 2011; Cattle, 2012) nor agreement over the term and neither has it been adopted in policy and practice to any great degree on a consistent basis. Within the differing approaches to interculturalism, however, there would appear to be some acceptance that the key features are a sense of openness, dialogue and interaction. A cautionary note was introduced by Wood and Landry (2007) to the effect that although openness provides the setting for Interculturalism to develop, it does not a guarantee that it will take place.

Meer and Modood (2011) have described the different tenets of interculturalism as:

First, as something greater than coexistence, in that interculturalism is allegedly more geared toward interaction and dialogue than multiculturalism. Second, that interculturalism is conceived as something less ‘groupist’ or more yielding of synthesis than multiculturalism. Third, 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).

However, as supporters of the retention of multiculturalism, Meer and Modood stretch credibility by attempting to argue that the above features were ‘foundational’ elements of multiculturalism. They produce no real evidence in support of this and their view has been contested (Cattle, 2012a).

Interculturalism should nevertheless build upon the essential elements of multiculturalism - the framework of rights to equal treatment and non-discrimination are critical - as well as developing the interaction and belonging programmes initiated by community cohesion. Creating a culture of openness which challenges identity politics and otherness and the entrenchment of separate communities is essential, but not sufficient. Bloomfield and Bianchini (2004) support a wider view and argue that the intercultural approach goes beyond equal opportunities and respect for existing cultural differences to the pluralist transformation of public space, institutions and civic culture. It does not recognise cultural boundaries as fixed but in a state of flux and remaking. An intercultural approach aims to facilitate dialogue, exchange and reciprocal understanding between people of different backgrounds.

The Contribution of Community Cohesion²

² For a fuller discussion of community cohesion see Cattle, 2008 and Cattle 2012

The concept of 'community cohesion' was established following a number of riots and disturbances in England in 2001 (Cantle, 2001). It represented a fundamental challenge to the then multicultural model, and found that White and Asian communities in some areas of England lived in 'parallel lives' which:

often do not seem to touch at any point, let alone promote any meaningful interchanges and are based upon:

separate educational arrangements, community and voluntary bodies, employment, places of worship, language, social and cultural networks.
(Cantle, 2001)

The first formal definition within the UK was constructed by representatives of the co-authors of the *Guidance on Community Cohesion*, the Local Government Association, the then Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, the then Commission of Racial Equality and the Inter-Faith Network (LGA et al., 2002):

A cohesive community is one where:

- There is common vision and a sense of belonging for all communities;
- The diversity of people's different backgrounds and circumstances are appreciated and positively valued;
- Those from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities; and
- Strong and positive relationships are being developed between people from different backgrounds in the workplace, in schools and within neighbourhoods.

Community cohesion programmes represented the first real attempt in the UK to promote meaningful interaction between communities from different backgrounds and to promote trust and understanding and to break down myths and stereotypes. Initially, these programmes were regarded as 'cross-cultural' interaction, though this began to give way to, or to be used interchangeably with, 'intercultural' and the notion of intercultural dialogue gathered pace from about 2008.

The programmes attempted to build understanding between different groups and to create mutual trust and respect by breaking down stereotypes and misconceptions about the 'other'. Community Cohesion thus rehabilitated the concept of 'contact theory', building on earlier work of Allport (1954) and others. New models based on this approach clearly demonstrated that prejudice and intolerance can be reduced by direct contact and interaction (e.g., Hewstone et al., 2006, 2006a).

However, as the above definition indicates, community cohesion was predicated upon wider programmes of change. In addition to the small scale programmes focussed on divided communities, community cohesion tackled inequalities and was also developed at a city-wide level to promote unity and to develop a broader consensus in support of diversity. This often included high profile campaigns featuring people from a range of backgrounds who 'all belong' and contribute to the economic and cultural life of the area. These campaigns were important in that they tried to present a new positive picture of diversity and, whilst recognising the value of cultural heritage and distinctiveness, they placed a new emphasis on the commonalities between groups and thereby contributed to a less defensive and more progressive form of multiculturalism. These local forms of intercultural programmes have not, however, been supported by a compelling national narrative or international perspective. Further, apart from a limited number of mainstream programmes, such as the statutory duty to 'promote community cohesion' in all state schools in England from 2006, they developed through a series of very local and contextualised programmes and whilst they have

seemingly created improved conditions within local communities (DCLG, 2011), an overarching interculturalism metanarrative would have provided much greater coherence.

Interculturalism and Intercultural Dialogue

It is also important to distinguish interculturalism from intercultural dialogue (ICD). They have often been used synonymously but should be viewed as very different concepts. Intercultural dialogue has certainly helped to challenge 'otherness' in a spirit of openness, utilising processes of interaction. ICD however, is simply an instrumental part of interculturalism, contributing to and fostering understanding and empathy with others. It is almost entirely 'relational' in both concept and practice. Interculturalism represents a broader programme of change, in which majority and minority communities think of themselves as dynamic and outward looking, sharing a common objective of growing together and overcoming institutional and relational barriers in the process.

This confusion between terms is illustrated by Meer and Modood (2012) who rightly see the European ICD approach, as typified by the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue in 2008, as 'relatively apolitical, offering civil society-based local encounters and conviviality in everyday life to critique multiculturalism', but they unfortunately refer to it as one type of interculturalism. James (2008) also suggests that the European Commission understands interculturality to be 'about dialogue between different cultural groups.... to enable European citizens to acquire the knowledge and aptitudes to enable them to deal with a more open and complex environment'.

The concepts of 'interculturalism' and of ICD had been little used as a policy driver in the UK. The introduction of the iCoCo national *Awards for Bridging Cultures (ABCs)*³, supported by the Baring Foundation, is the only recognisable ICD programme and this ceased in 2011. This built upon the ideas of community cohesion which, from its inception in 2001, had urged 'strong and positive relationships between people of different backgrounds' (LGA et al., 2002) and this was later developed into programmes for 'cross-cultural' interaction. The UK programme was based on the premise that 'intergroup contact reduces prejudice and improves intercultural dialogue and communication' (James, 2008).

Whilst the emphasis has been different and despite the separate genesis, the 'cross-cultural interaction' component of community cohesion programmes and ICD activities have been used for a number of similar purposes, including:

- To disconfirm stereotypes, change attitudes and behaviours to 'others'
- To promote understanding and tolerance more generally (for example as in inter-faith dialogue)
- Create the conditions for peaceful co-existence, following conflict
- As a component of wider programmes of community cohesion (in the UK and more recently some other countries)
- To promote more positive views of nation states and their citizens across national boundaries
- As a means of building social capital, neighbourliness, trust in local institutions and 'good citizenship'

The British Council (British based, but with many offices around the World and involved in the promotion of community relations) has also invested in exploring both the concept and practice of intercultural dialogue and (with iCoCo) produced a 'toolkit' and resource guide to

³ www.bridgingcultures.org.uk

promote their ideas (British Council, 2010). This work has also usefully set out to define ICD in the following layered terms:

National - A dynamic process by which people from different cultures interact to learn about and question their own, and each other's, cultures. Over time this may lead to cultural change. It recognises the inequalities at work in society and the need to overcome these. It is a process which requires mutual respect and acknowledges human rights.

International - Intercultural dialogue aims to equip individuals with the knowledge and skills - so-called "intercultural competences" - to participate in increasingly diverse societies. Knowledge of democratic values, citizenship and civil rights are essential elements of dialogue. (EU – European Year for Intercultural Dialogue 2008)

Global -The idea of 'intercultural dialogue' takes as its starting point the recognition of difference and multiplicity of the world in which we live. These differences of opinion, viewpoint, and values exist not only within each individual culture but also between cultures. 'Dialogue' seeks to approach these multiple viewpoints with a desire to understand and learn from those that do not see the world in the same way as ourselves.

Whilst, on its own, the BC/iCoCo toolkit focuses on ICD, it does begin to recognise the wider basis of interculturality to shape community relations. Gerard Bouchard (2011) also suggests that interculturalism should shape our ways of living together in the future and sees it as a search for balance and mediation between often-competing principles, values, and expectations. In this sense, he suggests that it is a sustained effort aimed at connecting majorities and minorities, continuity and diversity, identity and rights, reminders of the past and visions of the future; and that it calls for new ways of coexisting within and beyond differences at all levels of collective life.

Bouchard draws upon the work of the Council of Europe (2008) to define interculturalism as:

- (a) the rejection of multiculturalism, which was associated with fragmentation and seen as harmful to social cohesion;
- (b) the rejection of assimilation due to the violation of individual rights that it entails;
- and
- (c) the choice of interculturalism as a middle path, as a model of balance and equity.

Viewing interculturalism as some sort of middle way between assimilation and separation, however, fails to develop the potential of this new model and perhaps reflects Bouchard's preoccupation with the relationship of the French speaking province of Canada, drawing upon his report (with Taylor) for the Government of Quebec (Bouchard and Taylor, 2008). The Bouchard-Taylor Report was developed on the basis of the rejection of Canadian multiculturalism (which was seen as the vision imposed on French-speaking Canadians by English-speaking Canadians – see earlier) and proposes its replacement by 'interculturalism'. Bouchard's alternative concept of interculturalism is a form of integration based on agreed accommodations but proscribed by the embedded 'fundamental values' of Quebec society: presented as gender equality, secularism, and the French language. Given that these 'accommodations' amounted to the children of new migrants, including those from English-speaking backgrounds, being required to attend schools where teaching is conducted in French and who are denied the choice of English-speaking schools in the same province, and that English is generally not permitted in many aspects of the public sphere, including road signage and by retailers, this concept of interculturalism may therefore be seen as somewhat limited and coercive.

Such conceptual problems arise where integration is positioned on a simple linear path between the extremes of separation and assimilation and fails to recognise that there are several domains and many more layers of integration which can be operate at different levels. It also fails to recognise the dynamic nature of societies which are constantly in flux and cannot rest upon a fixed notion of 'culture'. In addition, the 'middle way' rests upon the idea that culture revolves around some form of mediation between the host community(ies) and newcomers, rather than a more dialectical view of the modern globalised world in which both national and international parameters are also changing.

Bouchard's view of interculturalism, however, does begin to recognise the dynamic nature of societies and that integration is neither a process in which migrants are assimilated into a host culture, nor one which results in the adaptation of the host community to the extent that their fundamental nature is eroded:

interculturalism concerns itself with the interests of the majority culture, whose desire to perpetuate and maintain itself is perfectly legitimate, as much as it does with the interests of minorities and immigrants—we thus find no reason to oppose either the defenders of the identity and traditions of the majority culture on one side, or the defenders of the rights of minorities and immigrants on the other; it is both possible and necessary to combine the majority's aspirations for identity with a pluralist mindset, making for a single process of belonging and development. (Bouchard, 2011)

Many majority communities would, no doubt, find Bouchard's thesis very re-assuring, as almost any form of change can be unsettling and threatening. However, the reality is that host communities too are in a state of flux and ever more so in a period of globalisation. The arrival of migrants is only one part of the change – though often the most visible. As a result migrants are often identified with the change and seen as the cause rather than the consequence of the underlying processes of globalisation which are much more pervasive – and inevitable. Trying to 'buck the market' of cultural change by holding on to a fixed conception of culture is a fairly useless exercise, even for a majority group – making some communities even more isolated from the real world and the likelihood that even greater change more sudden and difficult.

Ironically, the concept of multiculturalism advanced by the Canadian Government, and so soundly rejected by the Bouchard-Taylor Report, may be somewhat nearer to more generally accepted ideas about interculturalism. It is the case that the idea of more dynamic and outward looking communities applies to majorities as much as to minorities – indeed they need to share a common objective of growing together.

'Interculturalism' is then, much more than 'intercultural dialogue'. Whereas ICD may be considered as the process by which two or more communities with different identities interact, break down barriers and build trust and understanding, interculturalism envisages a society in which people are at ease with difference more generally and an opportunity for themselves and other cultures, from within and beyond national borders, to engage and develop along a mutually agreed growth path, overcoming institutional barriers in the process. In this sense, programmes of community cohesion, which rely upon more deliberative programmes to tackle inequalities, promote diversity, belonging and interaction, contribute from a more localised and grassroots basis.

Interculturalism and policy development

In terms of policy development, however, we have not yet seen the full potential of the concept of interculturalism and there is little by way of an accepted body of academic opinion

on the subject (it is notable that only 2 of the 26 references cited by James (2008) use the term in their title), with the first academic text based on interculturalism appearing only in 2012 (Cantle, 2012). There is even less by way established practice. The Eminent Persons Report for the Council of Europe (2011) has recently set out the ways in which they believe 'peaceful co-existence' can be achieved. They reject the concept of 'multiculturalism' and set out 17 'guiding principles' for living together. These mainly revolve around legal rights, which apply equally to all, with an emphasis on citizenship and participation, in which people retain their distinctive cultural heritage, possibly hyphenated with nationality or faith. They argue for early voting rights for migrants and for tolerant and respectful leadership. There is little new in the report and much of it could be attributed to a 'progressive form of multiculturalism' referred to earlier. However, there is more emphasis on integration, particularly from the perspective that 'in order to live together in peace people need skills or "competences" which are not 'automatically acquired'.

Interculturalism is constructed around the multi-faceted nature of 'difference', whereas, multiculturalism was founded – and remained rooted – on the outmoded concept of 'race'. This was based upon spurious notions of physical distinctiveness, or on other salient and contextualised differences, such as language or religion which were then became essentialised as a 'culture'. Multiculturalism generally developed throughout Europe into a policy based on ethnic difference and faith divisions, some of which were identified as 'racial' groups for the purposes of public policy and essentially became viewed in much the same primordial sense. And, in terms of the 'failure of multiculturalism' referred to earlier, they became understood in this way. Progressive forms of multiculturalism embraced ideas about hyphenated identities, often combining the country of origin or domicile with ethnicity and/or faith. However, these dual or multiple identities also tended to become singular and fixed in much the same way as those based upon just one conception of identity.

Interculturalism recognises the dynamic nature of culture and all aspects of difference and that, in this era of globalisation, also includes wider geo-political and international components. However, the visionary sense of internationalism which emerged in the post war period, with the creation of a number of international bodies, including the United Nations, appears to have been diminished in recent years. Rather like the 'paradox of diversity' referred to earlier, the growth of international institutions appears to drive people towards separate identities instead of a shared conception of themselves. Younge (2010) explains this in relation to the introduction of the Euro currency, which he sees as the ceding of national power over interest rates and economic sovereignty and the loss of an important element of national identity through the much reduced symbolism and national markers that individually designed currency notes and coins contained:

But the truth is that, when it comes to identity, the global and the parochial have a symbiotic relationship. The smaller the world seems and the less control that we have over it, the more likely we are to retreat into the local spheres where we might have influence.

As was also noted earlier, the forces of globalisation may cause people to 'hunker down' into their own identities and to build bonding social capital around their own identity group, rather than engage with difference. Some see this as just a natural tendency of people to want to be with people who are superficially like themselves – as in 'birds of a feather, flock together'. But as we have seen in the 'race' debate, the evident support for the idea of primordial distinctions has been a false and dangerous path and in reality difference is determined by cultural, political and economic frameworks. In other words, we soon begin to think of others as being the same once we engage and the metaphorical and literal 'skin deep' differences are superseded by deeper understanding and more nuanced relationships.

Implications for Policy and Practice

The perspective for interculturalism in conceptual terms is becoming settled but the consequential implications for policy and practice have been little considered. However, there is growing agreement on the following points:

- Leadership and vision is needed to give effect to interculturalism. This should be in the form of a new meta-narrative, replacing the outmoded ideas and divisive conception of multiculturalism.
- Part of the vision must be for one of mixed communities, in which shared spaces – schools, communities and workplaces – are facilitated. This does not mean creating ‘melting pots’ where groups lose their heritage, but rather dispensing with those segregated environments that are so ‘bonded’ to be almost impermeable by outsiders. This has to go hand in hand with equality programmes which ensure that people have access to shared spaces and so that all communities believe that they are being treated fairly.
- Too many political leaders – at a national and local level – rely on identity politics and the fear of other nationalities, faiths and backgrounds to engender the loyalty of their own constituency or interest. This, sadly, also includes some faith leaders who nevertheless preach ‘goodwill to all men’. We need a new vision of a future society in which people collaborate across boundaries on a shared agenda.
- Political leaders should be prepared to experiment with new democratic structures which can reflect the needs of mobile populations and hybrid and fluid identities. These may, however, also emerge through social media with people connecting across boundaries on a horizontal basis, rather than through more traditional ‘top-down’ and vertical systems.
- The notion of identity needs to be reformed, so that fixed and ascribed conceptions are replaced by developmental and chosen forms; and, rather than constantly imagining and flagging difference, new ways need to be found to value what we have in common. Taking pride in our particular identity or identities is not threatened by an additional universal or cosmopolitan form which is shared. This will require replacing the outmoded ‘tick box’ classification system of identity.
- It is vital that pervasive programmes of intercultural education and experiential learning opportunities are provided to develop cultural navigational skills and the competence and confidence in people to relate to those who are different to themselves and to see ‘others’ as an opportunity rather than as a threat.
- People of multi-race, multi-faith and multi-nationality should be valued on an equal basis to those who claim a single or pure identity. This means an end to the privileges of financial and representational benefits enjoyed by people of supposed single identities.
- In a multi-faith society (which also includes people of no faith), space should be provided for genuine belief systems as part of democratic debate, but if faith is in the public sphere those communities must expect their views to be contested too. And they should not expect to have special funding or state aid for promoting their particular views or for providing services.
- In the sense that faith is part of the public sphere, the idea of a ‘secular society’ is no longer appropriate, but ‘secular governance’ must be more clearly delineated to ensure that no faith is privileged over another, or that faith systems are not privileged over non-faith views.

In more visionary terms Sondhi (2009) suggests it is fundamentally about a ‘new kind of living dialogue’:

So what then is different about the new concept of interculturality? The basis of this approach lies in the creation of a new kind of living dialogue - creating the space and opportunity and the inclination for two different entities to know a little more about how to reassure and interest the other while also avoiding those things that might insult or alarm them, thus minimising the potential obstacles to the transaction. But it is more than just a tool of communication – it is a process of mutual learning and joint growth. This implies a process of acquiring, not only a set of basic facts and concepts about the other but also particular skills and competencies that will enable one to interact functionally with anyone different from oneself regardless of their origins. This implies a different way of reading situations, signs, symbols, and of communicating which we would describe as intercultural literacy. This indicates the acquisition of an intercultural competence, a certain frame of mind, which in a diverse society, becomes as important a competency as basic numeracy and literacy. No child should leave school without it and no public official with responsibility for deciding on local policy and resources should be without it either.

However, a cohesive society also depends upon a model of interculturalism that has a clear sense of justice and equality to enable the barriers associated with particular backgrounds to be overcome and for a spirit of belonging to be established. Interculturalism must therefore draw upon some of the progressive elements of multiculturalism but develop policies and practices which are less hidebound by rigid conceptions of identity and provide for new cultural competences. Interculturalism must also embrace, and give effect to, the idea of identity as a dynamic process which can accommodate the international and transnational impacts of globalisation.

Suggestions for Further Reading

Cantle, T., (2012) *Interculturalism: the era of cohesion and diversity* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan). This recent book provides a fuller account of the issues raised in this chapter and also discusses how the silo based approach and 'evidence-free' approach of some academics have protected the outmoded concept of multiculturalism. An earlier work by Ted Cantle (*Community Cohesion: A New Framework for Race and Diversity*. 2008 (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan)) sets out the history of race relations and the journey to community cohesion in the UK which gave rise to early programmes of 'cross-cultural' interaction.

Castells, M (2006) 'Globalisation and Identity: A Comparative Perspective' in *Transfer, Journal of Contemporary Culture* 01 Nov.2006 (Barcelona: VEGAP). This article neatly encapsulates some of Castells more developed work (*The Power of Identity: The Information Age, Economy, Society and Culture*. Revised Edition 2010 (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell)) and he explains that globalisation will not result in a single universal culture, though as identities are socially constructed they are subject to considerable change.

Council Of Europe (2011) *Living Together – Combining Diversity and Freedom in 21st Century Europe* (Strasbourg: Council of Europe) (www.coe.int). This report by an independent group of 'eminent persons' and published by CoE identifies the risks facing Europe, including rising intolerance and the development of parallel societies. It also develops a range of largely practical responses and tends towards a more intercultural view of modern societies.

Gundara, J. (2000) *Interculturalism, Education and Inclusion* (London: Sage Publications). Gundara uses his personal experience to effectively argue for more inclusive education which goes beyond a narrow national story. He suggests a more global perspective for education which goes beyond the school and ranges from the role of the state to discuss basic issues in intercultural education.

Rattansi, A. (2011) *Multiculturalism, A Very Short Introduction*. (Oxford: OUP). Rattansi's work is relatively short – only 177 pages, based on a small format – but he packs a great deal in. He is not

afraid to confront some of the most difficult questions, such as 'Is multiculturalism bad for women?'. His conclusion is clear: that across Europe, the period of multiculturalism is over and that the time has come to 'move on' to interculturalism.

Wood, P., Editor (2004) *Intercultural City: Intercultural City Reader*. (Stroud: Comedia). This Reader has around 30 contributions from notable academics, policy makers and practitioners. The opening scene setting by Leonie Sandercock sets out the 'struggle for interculturalism against fundamentalism' particularly well. As a whole, the *Reader* places great emphasis on the value of diversity in terms of innovation and entrepreneurship. It is supported by a number of more practically based sister publications including Wood P, Landry C and Bloomfield J (2006) *The Intercultural City* (Stroud: Comedia); Wood, P., Landry, C. and Bloomfield, J. (2006a) *Cultural Diversity in Britain: A toolkit for cross-cultural co-operation* (York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation); and Wood, P., Landry, C. (2007), *The Intercultural City: Planning for Diversity Advantage*, (London: Earthscan)

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