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## Cohesion and Integration: From 'Multi' to 'Inter' Culturalism

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### Biographical notes

Professor Ted Cante has held a wide range of senior positions in public service at national and local level focusing, in particular, on urban regeneration and key social and environmental problems. He was Chief Executive of Nottingham City Council from 1990 to 2001 and has worked in health, housing, public works, media and environmental agencies.

In August 2001, Ted Cante was appointed by the Home Secretary to lead the review of the causes of the summer riots in a number of UK northern towns and cities. His report – known as “the Cante Report” – introduced the concept of “community cohesion” and was subsequently adopted by the Government. It was widely seen as a critique of the then policy of multiculturalism, based upon “parallel lives” or separateness and heralded a new framework for race and diversity based on interaction and positive values for diversity.

He is now Professor at the Institute of Community Cohesion (iCoCo), which is the UK’s leading authority on community cohesion and is supported by a range of partners. iCoCo develops and promotes good practice, provides guidance and conducts research and is sponsored by governmental and non-governmental departments as well as the business sector and other agencies. He was awarded the CBE in 2004 and is the author of *Community Cohesion: A New Framework for Race and Diversity* Published by Palgrave Macmillan (updated Edition 2008).

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### Summary

Globalisation has created an era of 'super diversity' in which most western societies have become far more dynamic and complex. Multicultural societies are here to stay and indeed, will become more so. However, some of the policies which governments have devised to mediate these changes are no longer appropriate and do not contribute sufficiently to the promotion of community cohesion. The notion of 'multiculturalism', by which these policies have become understood, also no longer enjoy either governmental, nor popular support. There is, then, an opportunity to consider the development of 'interculturalism', which is not defined by 'race' and embraces all areas of difference. It also recognises that cultures are more fluid than ever before and the interconnectedness of the World, supports interaction between and within cultures to build trust and understanding, and promotes cultural navigational skills to enable us all to accept and endorse the change process.

# **Cohesion And Integration: From 'Multi' To 'Inter' Culturalism**

## **Introduction**

We cannot stop the process of globalisation: the World is more inter-connected than ever before. Indeed, the pace of change will probably accelerate as 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, that each country will find that its population is increasingly made up of more people from different cultures, nationalities, faiths and ethnic backgrounds. The ease of travel, the opening up of labour and financial markets means that this is inevitable. But this also means that the *policies* of multiculturalism, which many governments have used to mediate these changes may no longer be appropriate and will need to be reconsidered. The concept of 'interculturalism', which implies more positive interactions between communities and higher levels of 'cultural navigation' skills, is more fitting for an era of super diversity and globalisation and; will be necessary if our societies are to become more cohesive.

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 national sovereignty and maintain the pretence that they still command all activities within their borders – this is fundamental to their contract with the people that vote for them. Any suggestion of the loss of sovereignty is quickly contested and, rather than reflecting the

process of globalisation, Governments find it difficult to acknowledge the limits of their influence over their citizens and are not prepared to argue for the ceding of their power to international agencies.

One of the consequences of this is that 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 as it undermines the power base of the separate political elites. 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 on their communities and collective identity. ‘Identity politics’ often holds back the transition, rather than supporting and inspiring a new and inter-connected World. ‘Interculturalism’ can replace multiculturalism and develop as a new positive model to enable us to learn live together, but this will require significant changes in policy and practice – and will depend upon a new vision for a globalised and super diverse world.

### **Globalisation and ‘Super Diversity’**

There is little clarity about what the term ‘globalisation’ actually means, but its origins lay in the process of enabling financial and investment markets to operate internationally, largely as a result of deregulation and improved communications. The term has been in regular use since the 1960s, though its origins are much older and the extent and nature of international trade has developed over the centuries. The technological developments in communications, together with the opening up of financial markets has though, dramatically speeded up the process of change, to the extent that it is now often presented as a threat to local markets and democratic local systems. The anti-globalisation movement has recently succeeded in giving the idea much more political salience, though the opposition to the apparent continued march of globalisation has, ironically, generated a movement which Sen (2006) describes as ‘the most globalised moral movement in the world today’.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to chart the continual and inexorable rise of globalisation in business, finance and other terms. It is however, intended to give some consideration to the consequent impact on human relations.

In the first place it is clear that 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).

Secondly, the migrant community is 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 countries coming to terms with their colonial pasts and, in particular, those overwhelmingly White nations attempting to accept and integrate Black and Asian minorities from their former colonies. Multiculturalism is now much more complex and community relations are multi-faceted, no longer simply revolving around majority/minority visible distinctions.

Thirdly, 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 prevalent. The Far Right in many countries are increasingly exploiting these concerns to build substantial popular support.

Fourthly, globalisation challenges - and possibly disempowers - local and national democratic processes, with the ability to transcend national borders and regulatory

mechanisms, with global companies possessing more economic power than many governments and beyond specific and national democratic controls.

Minorities are often the visible expression of these changes and whilst their movement and growth is often seen as the cause of changing social and cultural patterns, it is simply the consequence of that change. This makes them highly vulnerable.

### **The Dimensions of Globalisation – and the ‘Paradox of Diversity’**

The principal dimensions of globalisation primarily revolve around business and commerce, with companies now able to exploit the increasing openness of markets. International trade is certainly more global than ever before, with multi-national companies not only trading across the globe, but establishing themselves as employers and with supply chains in many countries. There are now a wide range of global brands, which are instantly recognisable in hundreds of countries and are more distinctive – and economically larger - than many nation states. As markets have become global, so too have the movement of financial capital and the interdependence of economies is clearly undeniable, as the recent banking crisis has shown. However, the movement of people has clearly followed decisions to invest (and disinvest) across borders and has increasingly determined the mobility of labour and population settlement patterns.

Technological change has dramatically reduced the cost of all forms of international communication. The use and availability of the internet, satellite based news and information services and telephony have aided the development of international trade and the growth of companies across national boundaries. However, the reduced cost of travel and the massive disparity between richer and poorer nations has made the flow of migrants on a mass scale possible and inevitable. This has also supported wider patterns of tourism, a market in international education and the development of new social and cultural exchange. Together with the more recent development of ‘social media, the new communication networks have enabled people to develop new frames of reference which transcend national boundaries, or re-affirm heritage and diaspora linkages. There are

signs that these are competing with national networks and changing our notion of personal and collective identity.

The ease of travel, communications and the development of international education have also enhanced the ability of diasporas to form and sustain themselves, often irrespective of the freedoms, cultures and norms of the countries in which their members live. Diasporas transcend national boundaries and inevitably foster shared historical perspectives, beliefs and values which will not necessarily match those of any one nation. The co-existence of diaspora identities and the many nation states in which they are found often gives rise to the phenomenon of hybrid identities, such as 'British Muslim' or 'Black British'. Indeed, many people now claim multiple identities, generally a mixture of faith, nationality, ethnicity and place of residence.

The impact of tourism should also not be underestimated and has become much more extensive, both in scale and in terms of the nature of the experience. For example, there are around 25 million tourists visiting the UK each year and around 70 million tourist visits from the UK to other countries. Some of these are simply for a short break, with little interaction with the people and cultures of the host country. However, even in these cases, it is inevitable that social and cultural bonds develop. At the other end of the scale, tourism becomes life changing. For example, around 700,000 UK residents are now permanent 'tourists' in Spain with many more in other countries. There are also many other forms of tourism which also promote deeper experiences, perhaps as part of a language study course or to learn about the wildlife or other educational purpose. Again, it is inevitable that some of these 'exchanges' lead to more permanent relationships and transnational connections.

Political systems have adjusted to the extent that there is some agreement on the need to develop regulatory systems that transcend national boundaries and a number of institutions have been set up to facilitate this. However, the impact on democratic traditions and the suggestion that globalisation creates a sense of powerlessness in the face of corporate power is a key issue that has to be explored. Similarly, the impact on identity and cultural and social networks, which develop in many new ways as a



consequence of these changes, may potentially at least, become more influential than the traditional forms of relationships which have been dependent upon intra-national familial and parochial cultural networks.

As a result of globalisation, societies are becoming more and more multicultural – or ‘super diverse’ - often despite the many attempts by nation states to resist migration and to create higher hurdles for migrants in order to protect the integrity of their borders. Political leaders cling to the hope that not only can they control their borders, against the tide of globalisation, but also that they can remain as the most significant influence over the daily lives of their citizens, with the electorate continuing to support them and be influenced by them. This is an ever more difficult challenge as the nature of international communications is now such that people can access many new channels of information and develop much broader frames of reference. The level of turnout in most elections has fallen across Western democracies and ‘identity politics’ based upon spurious ideas about ‘difference’, may be one way in which political leaders seek to retain their relevance and influence.

In respect of migration, 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. Nevertheless, many host communities object to increasing the population through migration, often precisely because of the advantages that they have to employers, and are constantly demanding limits, or even a complete halt, to inward migration. Extreme Far Right parties, which are enjoying rising levels of support across Europe, go still further and demand the repatriation of migrants, including those born in the countries to which their parents or grand parents migrated to and in which they are citizens. The continuing debate over diversity and multiculturalism has led to a widespread populist view that multiculturalism has ‘failed’.

## 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 mediating 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 engagement with difference, a rather wary detachment which makes us more determined to cling to our own community’s certainties.

Living alongside each other, but in separate spheres in what Sen (2006) has called ‘plural monoculturalism’ and where cultures may ‘pass each other like ships in the night’, and reflected to a greater or lesser extent in all western democracies, is not sufficient. In such circumstances, any sense of a shared society, in which common experiences can take place and an understanding of each other’s needs and attributes can develop, is very unlikely. Rather, stereotypes and prejudices can flourish and irrational fears can emerge with the possibility of a demonization of the ‘other’. It is this analysis of ‘parallel lives’, following the riots in English northern towns in 2001, which gave birth to the programme of community cohesion (Cantle, 2001) and was reinforced in 2007 by a similar study. (CIC, 2007)

There are, however, relatively few ways in which ‘solidarity’ can be measured. It is often based upon a number of objective indicators, such as the incidence and nature of hate crime and the level of inequalities, or the perception of people themselves about how they feel about ‘others’ and how well they relate to them (Home Office, 2004). Robert Putnam however, has looked at this through the lens of ‘social capital’ a term which has been around for many years, but made especially salient through his seminal work *Bowling Alone* (Putnam, 2000) and especially his more recent work (Putnam, 2007)

which demonstrated that social capital was inversely related to diversity because ‘immigration and ethnic diversity challenge social solidarity and inhibit social capital’ or to, more graphically expressed:

inhabitants of diverse communities tend to withdraw from collective life, to distrust their neighbours, regardless of the colour of their skin, to withdraw even from close friends, to expect the worst from their community and its leaders, to volunteer less, give less to charity and work on community projects less often, to register to vote less, to agitate for social reform *more*, but have less faith that they can actually make a difference, and to huddle unhappily in front of the television. Note that this pattern encompasses attitudes and behavior, bridging and bonding social capital, public and private connections. Diversity, at least in the short run, seems to bring out the turtle in all of us.

Putnam did not suggest that this situation would remain indefinitely, however, and 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 this 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 constructed federations in the Balkans and Eastern Europe, but is true of other areas too, for example in Sudan, which has recently divided. More divisions are possibly on the way with states like Belgium becoming virtually ungovernable as a single entity and

secessionists movements in Quebec, Scotland, Catalonia and many other places, as strong as ever. 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. Indeed, old ideals of internationalism, often inspired by progressives, particularly following the last World War, also seem to be on the wane.

Sen 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 minaturisation 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 (Young, 2010). Younge suggests 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's argument is compelling, especially in the context of the many examples he provides, from the creation of the Euro, the globalisation of brands which reduce local corporate markers, and the recent financial crisis, which enable him to conclude that with this loss of control and access to democratic levers, the more we retreat into separate identities or tribes. Younge also quotes David Hooson (1994) from his *Geography and National Identity* in support of his argument:

'The urge to express one's identity and to have it recognised tangibly by others, is increasingly contagious and has to be recognised as an elemental force even in the shrunken, apparently homogenizing high-tech world of the end of the twentieth century'.

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. In 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 – see Table 1 below.

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.

Table 1. Most important element of identity. UK		SET	2011
		Asian	White
Nationality	16%	37%	10%
Country where you were born	15%	25%	6%
Your village/town/city	8%	16%	11%
Religion	24%	6%	16%
Your estate/neighbourhood/community	4%	5%	11%
Ethnicity	17%	6%	40%
Country you live in now	15%	5%	5%

This view is also supported by the UK’s community cohesion programmes (see later sections), where despite the stated desire of the Government to reinforce national values and identities, it is local campaigns around a ‘sense of belonging’ which have proved to be most efficacious.

The impact of diversity upon personal identities is particularly profound, with individuals often able to draw upon their heritage, faith, language and new national

identity to create hybrid or multiple identities. It should also be presumed that the variation within ethnic groups, such as those set out in Table 1 above, 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 multiple identity which is just as limited. As Brah (2007) points out, identity is a process and not a fixed category (though that is how many would like to regard it).

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 group is constantly growing and in Britain, the fastest growing minority is 'mixed race'. 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 suggests 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. This is also a function of the ambivalence towards inter-marriage, which still faces many religious and cultural barriers in nearly all majority and minority communities and may also be regarded with hostility and shame.

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. On the other hand, by remaining steadfastly nationalistic and promoting the integrity of national borders and governance, eschewing any suggestion of the erosion of sovereignty and by attempting to deny the interdependence brought by globalisation they appear to lag behind the current reality of their communities.

Whilst it is clear that diversity does have an impact on social solidarity, in the short term it is less clear whether this is transitional and whether the sense of alienation and the loss of democratic power can be re-balanced in the longer term. Can the institutions of government themselves adapt, will the new phenomenon of social media create new transnational relationships which transcend traditional power structures?

### **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' simply describes 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 based upon the perception that the policies of multiculturalism have been an inadequate response to this change and that multiculturalism remains a threat to social stability and solidarity. This argument might be advanced on the basis of both the objective reality – significant levels of inequality, racism and community tensions – and the subjective reality – continued emotional resistance to diversity and a desire to halt or reverse the trend, are suggestive of failure. In particular, they have been based upon a view that these policies promoted separatism.

The more recent suggestions of 'failure', however, relate to the current political and international context and specifically refer to the relationship of Muslim communities within Western democracies. The UK Prime Minister (Cameron, 2011) recently focussed his suggested failure of 'state multiculturalism' almost entirely on the Muslim community and this 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).

A recent report by the Council of Europe recognised this current debate in launching its own report *Living Together* (Council of Europe, 2011) and only felt able to provide 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 positive action programmes to begin to provide those communities with some semblance of equal opportunities. However, this approach depended upon a significant degree of separation as a means of avoiding contact and conflict. Positive action programmes did narrow inequalities, but ironically also had the effect of reinforcing differences and promoting separate development. In Britain, this commitment was based upon protecting the heritage of minorities and a rejection of assimilation, with an appreciation of diversity and a culture of tolerance and fair play.

Whilst migration has only recently developed on a mass scale, it is not new and has taken place over the centuries (Winder, 2004) and consequently resulted in many



controversies based on 'race'. But the focus of a host community's hostility changes over time. For example, it was focussed upon the Jewish community prior to the first World War in Britain, concerns about the Irish minorities stretch back still further, but have almost disappeared in the last 20 years ago. The relationship with the Black Caribbean community has also been difficult, they experienced a high level of racism at least up to the 1970s and were the centre of riots in the 1980s, but appeared to have become almost universally accepted in recent times. By contrast, the Muslim community has become demonised since 2001, but within a period of super diversity in which relationships are formed not only by reference to migrant populations but also within diaspora and transnational frames of reference.

The idea of multiculturalism only emerged with post war migration, which was both on a different scale to previous migratory episodes, but was also much more 'visible' and clearly determined by 'race'. Britain's journey to multiculturalism in this period has not been an easy one. Like many other European countries, the influx of minorities provoked resentment and hostility.

Like migrants before them, the new wave of predominantly Caribbean and South Asian people in the 1950s and 1960s found themselves pushed into manual occupations, linked to poor housing, often clustered around those employers which provided low skilled and low paid employment.

The new migrants were received with great suspicion and, in many cases, hostility. The fact that migrants were needed to fuel the post war re-construction effort and provide essential public services did little to assuage the resentment of the majority, who had been nurtured on the idea that Britons were a superior 'race' and that 'coloureds' – a term used in official reports at that time, as well as in popular discourse - were, by definition, inferior. Demands to limit migration were often repeated and many administrative restrictions were agreed in response. Even though anti-discrimination legislation was eventually introduced in 1965, the atmosphere remained highly charged, perhaps culminating in Enoch Powell's 'rivers of blood' racist rallying call which gained some considerable popular support in 1968. Not surprisingly, minorities built defensive

support systems around themselves and anti-racist supporters, often associated with the Left, were quickly rallied when any criticism of minorities began to emerge.

A defensive and protective policy based upon multicultural separateness gained support from both sides of the political divide. The right opposed integration and racial mixing in principle and the left feared that it would precipitate further hostility and that the cultural heritage of minorities would be undermined in a wave of assimilation. There were nevertheless, attempts to ‘promote good race relations’ - which were actually enshrined in legislation in 1968, and remaining on the statute book until the present day – but these were never implemented with any real sense of purpose (Cantle, 2005) and any discussion of the emerging multicultural model appeared to provide an opportunity to excite even more racist sentiment and to give greater oxygen to the far right. Demands for social justice were, however, impossible to ignore and during the late sixties an assertive ‘black’ political consciousness, with support from developments in the United States, began to gather steam. This gave rise to a number of remedial programmes, often targeted at geographical areas and neighbourhoods where minority ethnic groups were concentrated. This was also supported by a range of equal opportunity policies, mainly aimed at tackling discrimination in the workplace and key services like social housing.

Given that in the immediate post war period racism and discrimination were rife, the policies of that time almost inevitably had to attempt 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.

The failure to adjust policies in the UK, at least, may have been due to the belief that whilst there had been a continual level of racism and xenophobia over the years, this was far less overt and directly discriminatory in nature, supporting the view that cultural diversity had become more generally accepted. This appeared to be confirmed by the growing success of many people from minority backgrounds in just about every

professional sphere and increasing levels of inter-marriage and little by way of Far Right political organisation within the majority community, nor riots or protests by the minority communities since the 1980s.

This view turned out to be somewhat complacent and was challenged by the community cohesion reviews in 2001, which followed the riots in a number of English northern towns. The reviews focussed on the ‘parallel lives’ led by different communities and the failure to promote interaction between them and the consequent fear misunderstanding between them (Cantle, 2001). The reviews pointed out that, whilst there appeared to have been a lack of real opposition to the then policies of multiculturalism, it was apparent that there had been little by way of positive support for them either and that the deep seated resentment of minorities by the majority community had never really been dealt with and what was seen as an overbearing culture of ‘political correctness’ had kept the hostility below the surface. The reviews also suggested that the policies of multiculturalism up to that point had had the impact of institutionalising separation and had limited the opportunities for people from different backgrounds to learn about each other and to disconfirm stereotypes and myths.

It was not suggested that the previous policies had in any way set out to encourage separateness. Indeed, most of the policy interventions were focussed upon preventing discrimination and were essentially ‘defensive’ in nature to provide protection to minorities who were faced with racism and discrimination and the hostility from the host White community who had not, or could not, come to terms with the change.

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. The scale and depth of difference became the very currency by which importance was judged and progress made. In other words, in the distribution of goods and services, 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 in which whole generations could exist without ever having to get engaged in wider social issues, or to read about and experience other peoples cultures, or even to have dinner with families other than those from one's own ethnic, religious, cultural or linguistic background.

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. It was also silent on the question of what to do with the deprived and disadvantaged sections of the indigenous community, driving its members further away from the goal of tolerance and into the arms of extremists”.

Sondhi makes the point that the ‘right to be equal was overshadowed by the right to be different’. This does not imply any sympathy for assimilation and the loss of heritage and distinctiveness of minorities, merely that all communities should be able to develop commonalities with others, without losing their identity. Such a view is widely shared amongst commentators and apart from some extreme positions, is also shared across the political spectrum. The problem, however, remains as to how this, almost universally agreed, principle is put into practical effect. Hasan (2009) illustrates the depth of disagreement chastising Parekh for advancing ‘tendentiousness and specious arguments’ in *The Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain* Report (Parekh, 2000a) and his book *Rethinking Multiculturalism* (Parekh, 2000b). Hasan is particularly critical of what he sees as Parekh's desire to put up a ‘do not disturb’ sign around minority cultures and paying lip service to any real sense of critical engagement with other cultures which

would enable them to adapt and change. Rather he sees Parekh wanting to create a special and separate place for minorities, in which ‘Western states must veer away from their public commitment to liberal universalism so as to accommodate these minority cultures and faiths’.

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 (which is further discussed in later sections) 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 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 (though this conception has been challenged by the French speaking provinces of Canada – see below). The Canadian Government<sup>1</sup> who believe that, in 1971 they were the first in the World to adopt multiculturalism as an official policy, set 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.

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

Mutual respect helps develop common attitudes. New Canadians, no less than other Canadians, respect the political and legal process, and want to address issues by legal and constitutional means.

Through multiculturalism, Canada recognizes the potential of all Canadians, encouraging them to integrate into their society and take an active part in its social, cultural, economic and political affairs.

...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.'

It is also fair to say that the British approach has attempted to end the separation in some spheres, especially in terms of service provision and functional terms. These 'domains of segregation and integration' (Cantle, 2005) are rarely uniform across any country, or even within particular cities and regions. For example, the domain of 'spatial segregation' is most noticeable in the northern towns of England (between White and Asian communities) and in Northern Ireland (between Protestant and Catholics). Separation is less pronounced in English cities in the Midlands and least pronounced in the South, especially London. Nevertheless, both the Midlands and the South of England, including London, do have a number of highly segregated areas. The patterns of spatial segregation and integration often dictate much of the cross-cultural contact in the other domains, perhaps especially 'social and cultural' and 'functional' areas. So, for example, schools and the friendship patterns they provide along with local employment arrangements, access to housing and recreational arrangements are often shaped by physical proximity. The British approach to equal opportunities and positive action have had some impact in determining access to education and employment in particular and closing the performance gap between communities. This in turn, creates new forms of contact with others and on a more equal footing. Equality programmes therefore not only provide a greater level of fairness by re-balancing opportunities, but also create many more opportunities for contact which transcend high levels spatial separation.

It is also important to note that the nature of multicultural societies are very different, even within Western style democracies. Bouchard (2011) identifies four types of societies which all have a very different history and population composition and have therefore developed different approaches to the 'management of ethnocultural diversity'. Bouchard's typology is:

- where the nation is composed of ethnocultural groups placed on equal footing and with no recognition of a majority culture (the 'nations' of Australia and Anglophone Canada are included in this category)
- a paradigm of homogeneity (commonly seen as the assimilationist model) which fundamentally asserts an ethnocultural similarity in public life (nations such as France Italy and Japan are included in his examples)
- a bi - or multi - polarity set of societies composed of two or more national groups or subgroups, sometimes officially recognized as such and granted a kind of permanence. (Nation-states such as Malaysia, Bolivia, Belgium, Switzerland are included here)
- a paradigm of duality, where diversity is conceived and managed as a relationship between minorities from a recent or distant period of immigration, and a cultural majority that could be described as *foundational*. (Bouchard includes the French speaking province of Quebec, alongside the Aboriginal communities)
- paradigm is that of *mixité*. It is founded on the idea that, through miscegenation, the ethnocultural diversity of a nation will be progressively reduced, eventually creating a new culture separate from its constituent elements. (Examples are primarily in Latin America, notably in Brazil and Mexico).

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' can relate to all forms and depends upon both the promotion of cultural distinctiveness and the development of commonality and a sense of belonging and inclusion across all areas of difference.

## **Far Right and Populist Appeal**

In terms of opposition to multiculturalism, however, a common bond seems to be shared by the many national Far Right groups who are pre-occupied with race and immigration and constantly trade on the supposed threat of ‘others’ in both economic and social terms. The Far Right, in particular, now 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).

Far Right parties are growing and they have become a significant electoral force in many European countries. In the UK, they have also grown significantly, though they have generally failed to achieve any significant electoral success. Nevertheless, they gained more than 10 per cent of the vote in no fewer than 52 local authority areas in 2010 and overall, they won around 560,000 votes and only a year earlier they had received 1 million votes as two BNP candidates were propelled into the European parliament securing their one notable electoral achievement (iCoCo, 2011). Goodwin (2011) suggests that the BNP 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 by seven fold.

It is very clear that, despite some year on year ups and downs, their overall trajectory has been rapidly upward for the last 10 years or so and, as the Institute of Community Cohesion (iCoCo), which monitors Far Right activities as part of an ongoing concern for tackling community tensions, found in its 2011 report, that they have succeeded in broadening their appeal, even within rural and suburban areas (iCoCo, 2011).

However, mainstream politicians have generally been very mistaken in their belief that the hostility towards ‘others’ is in some way confined to extremists and they have failed to recognise that the resentment towards multicultural policies in general and



migration in particular, goes a lot deeper. In this sense, multiculturalism can also be said to have ‘failed’ because cultural diversity and migration do not enjoy popular support – as evidenced by a recent *Hope and Fear* Report (SET, 2011). This report, commissioned by the Searchlight Educational Trust, set out to explore the issues of English identity, faith and race. With 5,054 respondents and 91 questions it is one of the largest and most comprehensive surveys into attitude, identity and extremism in the UK to date.

It concludes that:

there is not a progressive majority in society and it reveals that there is a deep resentment to immigration, as well as scepticism towards multiculturalism. There is a widespread fear of the ‘Other’, particularly Muslims, and there is an appetite for a new right-wing political party that has none of the fascist trappings of the British National Party or the violence of the English Defence League. With a clear correlation between economic pessimism and negative views to immigration, the situation is likely to get worse over the next few years.

Further, the SET Report (2011) demonstrated how limited the support for multiculturalism is at present. They identified what they call six ‘identity tribes’ in modern British society. These are: ‘confident multiculturalists (found to be eight per cent of the population); ‘mainstream liberals’ (16%); ‘identity ambivalents’ (28%); ‘cultural integrationists’ (24%); ‘latent hostiles’ (10%); and ‘active enmity’ (13%). Those identified as ‘identity ambivalents’ could easily be pushed further towards the Right, unless mainstream political parties tackle the social and economic insecurity which dominates their attitudes. This Report therefore, somewhat alarmingly, suggests that only one quarter of the population are comfortable with our present model of multiculturalism.

Goodwin (2011) appears to confirm this rather depressing attitudinal picture, providing a really useful analysis of the opinion polling on migration and race related issues over the last 10 years or so. Over this period, the public have generally viewed the Government’s performance on immigration in a negative light. The views have not been ambivalent with around 80% supporting suggestions that ‘immigration is not under

control'; that the Government is 'not being open and honest' about the scale of migration; and that immigration policies are not sensible or credible. Even more worryingly, when opinion polls have asked which political party have the best policies on immigration, the majority of those polled generally feel that it none of them do, or they don't know. These results suggest that the ground is wide open for the Right to cultivate.

The Far Right have, more evidently, gained an increased level of popular support across most of the remainder of Europe, including France, Switzerland, Netherlands, Austria, Belgium, Germany 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 Sweden with around 6% finding that this has been converted to a significant number of seats due to their system of proportional representation. The recent tragic events in Norway may at least mean a reconsideration of the real challenge they pose.

Messina (2010) seeks to distinguish the types of Far Right party with a comparative European perspective. He offers a distinction between 'generic groups' that are exclusively obsessed by animus towards settled and new migrants; 'neo-fascist groups' who are inspired by an over-arching ideology, embracing the core tenets of pre-Second World War fascism; the 'opportunistic right' who are driven by a calculated desire to win votes rather than an obsessive race-centred ideology; the 'new radical right' who aspire to govern and have more formal membership and regular electoral activity and; the 'ethno national right' who are primarily single issue parties, placing ethno-nationalism centre stage, with anti-migrant appeals in second place. The British BNP are placed in the Neo-Fascist camp.

What they all share, however, is hostility towards settled and new migrants and 'fascism's adaptation to the transformed historical conditions' and the growth of 'neo-populism' (Griffin, 2011), possibly inspired by France's *Front National*. This exploited populist concerns about the threat to 'Frenchness' and the French way of life. This seems to suggest that the Far Right understand the impact of globalisation better than centrist politicians. Marine Le Pen the new *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).

In common with all other Far Right parties Le Pen also calls for ‘immigration to be stopped and cultural identities to be preserved’, as though it is possible to halt any, or one, aspect of the process of globalisation that has been gathering pace for many decades. But her kind of political leadership also depends upon appealing to one section of the population over another and building a power base to represent their ‘difference’. Gary Younge (2010), who is on the left of the political spectrum, is also asking some of these more profound questions, as in his book, *Who Are We?* He points out that when it comes to identity, the global and the parochial have a symbiotic relationship – the smaller the world becomes and the less control we have over it, the more likely we are to retreat into the local spheres where we might have influence.

The early forms of multiculturalism were necessarily defensive, both to protect minorities from the hostility and racism they faced and to promote fairness and social justice. Some elements therefore need to be retained. However, as both majority and minority communities came to terms with living side by side, the early policies failed to adjust and to facilitate a shared society. The Far Right have exploited these concerns, which are more widespread than generally acknowledged. The advent of community cohesion in the UK in 2001 began a process of change with a series of progressive measures to create engagement, whilst still retaining the principles of fairness and rights. The concept of ‘interculturalism’ may be able to take this process still further and respond to the challenges of globalisation and super diversity.

## **The Contribution of Community Cohesion**

The concept of ‘community cohesion’ was established following a number of riots and disturbances in England in 2001. It represented a fundamental challenge to the then multicultural model. Cohesion programmes were introduced from 2002 onwards, though they were initially on a limited and piecemeal basis, they gradually developed across the UK and have now also become part of many ‘mainstream’ activities – for example as part of the statutory duty to ‘promote community cohesion’ on all state schools in England from 2006. Community cohesion programmes have attempted to build understanding between different groups and to build mutual trust and respect by breaking down stereotypes and misconceptions about the ‘other’. In some cases, there are clear and measurable impacts of such programmes and generally measure attitudinal and behavioural change in the programme participants, or in the wider local community.

In addition to the small scale programmes focussed on divided communities, community cohesion was also developed at a city-wide or area level to develop support a broader consensus in support of diversity. These 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, it placed a new emphasis on the commonalities between groups and thereby contributed to a less defensive and more progressive form of multiculturalism. It is suggested that cohesion programmes will be equally necessary in the development of interculturality.

There have been at least three formal national definitions of the concept, each building upon the other over the six-year period from 2002 to 2008. All refer, however, to the need for strong and positive relationships between people from different backgrounds, tackling inequalities and developing a positive climate of opinion to support diversity. There are also a large number of local definitions, which draw upon the formal national definitions but tend to add a local context.

The first was built directly on the Cattle (2001) and Denham (2001) reports, and 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.

Some five years later the Commission for Integration and Cohesion (CIC, 2007) proposed a number of amended and additional points, which offered a more complex and somewhat convoluted definition and sought to add concepts of 'trust', 'rights' and 'responsibilities' – perhaps owing more to ideas about citizenship which was a Government pre-occupation at the time.

A further layer of complexity was added when the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG, 2008) in response to the CIC report. It is doubtful that either of these later definitions has added much to the original.

The policy domain has been particularly productive in producing published documentation. This in itself can be organised into three phases. First, before and after the disturbances in Burnley, Oldham and Bradford in 2001 a range of interventions at a national and local level were generated. These included Ouseley (2001), Ritchie (2001) and Clarke (2001) as well as the Cattle Report (2001). The initial reports stemmed from inquiries into the various disturbances (though the Ouseley Report was commissioned prior to the disturbances in Bradford) and established a set of common themes that have framed much of the debate on community cohesion during the last seven years. The focus was on fragmented communities divided on faith and ethnic lines living in poor towns

and cities. The reports recommended, to a lesser or greater extent, improved interaction and contact between different groups together with the development of common values.

The second, was a formalisation of community cohesion from 2002 onwards. By this the focus was on defining community cohesion, generating guidance to support local government and related agencies to implement strategies and assess their impact. Guidance issued on community cohesion (LGA *et al*, 2002) emphasised the importance of ‘common values’ and cross community and cross-disciplinary working, as well as the need to continue to tackle inequalities and disadvantage. Moreover a Government Community Cohesion Unit was established in 2002 to co-ordinate national work and implement practice where necessary. This was supported by an independent panel of practitioners who helped to develop guidance and best practice on cohesion. Its work concluded with a final report *The End of Parallel Lives* (Cantle, 2004) that stressed the importance of mainstreaming cohesion into local government services. Much of this thinking was brought together by the Home Office publication *Improving Opportunity, Strengthening Society* (Home Office, 2005). Building community cohesion was one of the four key themes alongside addressing inequality, promoting inclusiveness and taking out racism and extremism.

The third phase, concentrated on the importance of integration and identity. This included political interventions (Blunkett, 2004) and a specially appointed Commission on Integration and Cohesion which published its findings in 2007 (CIC, 2007) and whilst supporting government policy it also emphasised the importance of local integration measures and this heralded a raft of new initiatives which were intended to promote various forms of citizenship and participation.

In contrast to the policy literature, academic publications were much more limited. On the whole they tended to be critical of the concept of community cohesion since the publication of the Cantle Report (Cantle, 2001), though this now appears to be changing. The initial concerns in this literature were about the concept and its application. It was suggested that the responses to the disturbances in Oldham, Bradford and Burnley in 2001, together with the negative debates on asylum and immigration,

could be seen as counter-productive to the goals of shared identity and citizenship. In short, new and old migrants are less likely to feel any obligation to contribute to community cohesion (and thus engagement) when they are being identified as being part of the problem (Burnett, 2004) This criticism is despite the care taken by the authors of the original reports to avoid identifying minority communities as the problem and that they equally criticised majority communities and drew attention to structural inequalities. It is suggested that the initial academic response was very much part of the ‘defensive’ nature of multicultural policy discussed earlier and that any reports were always likely to be seen as ‘an attack on minorities’.

The search for common identity was, to some extent, also viewed as problematic. The emphasis on ‘citizenship’ and ‘common values’, including the suggestion that the English language should be pervasive and demanded as a necessary condition of a shared society, was again seen a threat to minority identity. In reality, say the critics, minorities are not prepared to fully trade a clear minority identity for unclear notions of citizenship within an increasingly secular society. Access to shops, places of worship and family networks may remain important to these economically mobile residents. They claim that, the changing nature of debates on ‘race’ has helped to shift the imperative to integration. As has been seen, the agenda is driven by building shared norms, common identity and stable communities, expecting diverse groups to ‘buy into’ British institutions, organisations and processes (Kundnami, 2002).

However, there are now numerous academic studies which appear to support many of the underlying principles of community cohesion. In particular, Thomas (2011) has produced the first appraisal of community cohesion based upon empirical evidence. Thomas points out that community cohesion has been out of step with most academic analysis, but that analysis has been ‘completely free of empirical evidence, resting instead on national governmental reports and discourse’. Thomas’s study is based on evidence from the areas which have the ‘profound ethnic segregation, and the separate, oppositional and potentially dangerous ethnic and religious identities’ that community cohesion policy was concerned with. Indeed, Thomas chides the critiques of cohesion for

developing 'evidence free' views and for ignoring the empirical data that had been produced.

Further, Thomas dismisses the charges that cohesion was in some way a return to assimilationism or a shift away from tackling inequalities. He found that community cohesion was simply 'a critique of particular forms of multiculturalism policy formation and operation that have focussed exclusively on the needs, identities and concerns of each separate ethnic group without consideration of relations, links and experiences shared between those groups'

Thomas also found that, rather than promote assimilation, 'community cohesion practice accepts and works with distinct ethnic and social identities, whilst augmenting them with overarching identities based on common connections, needs and experiences'.

In addition, there are a number of related policy areas which provide overwhelming support for the practice and process of community cohesion.

These include:

- Firstly and perhaps most notably, in respect of intergroup relations and contact theory, a number of academic studies, building on earlier work of Allport (1954) and others, have clearly demonstrated that prejudice and intolerance can be reduced by direct contact and interaction (Hewstone *et al*, 2006 and Hewstone *et al* 2006a).
- Secondly and similarly, the academic and practical work on peace and reconciliation has demonstrated that inter group relations can be re-built by going through painful processes of discussing and resolving differences (Leaderach 1997).
- Thirdly, the work on social capital developed by Putnam (2000), demonstrates the importance of 'bridging social capital' and the impact of diversity upon its



development (Putnam, 2007). This leads on to the important considerations of the role of citizenship and the development of shared values

- Fourthly, communitarian theories (Communitarian Network, 2002) have developed with a new emphasis upon shared identities (Sen, 2006) and ideas about interculturalism have begun to gain currency

British multiculturalism was based upon a policy of integration which emphasised the maintenance of immigrants' 'national characteristics and culture ... in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance' (Jenkins, 1966). This vision of integration provided re-assurance to the UK's immigrant community (and to liberal minded commentators) and was soon to be supported by strong anti-discrimination legislation and a number of positive action programmes to try to ensure equal opportunity. It stood in contrast to the approach of other European countries, notably France and Germany, which appeared to favour assimilation, in the case of France, or the 'guest worker' model in which long term citizenship and rights were denied, as in the case of Germany.

In many respects the UK policy appeared to work well with falling levels of discrimination and growing integration in housing terms, especially in the south of the country and a broader enjoyment of inter-cultural activities, such as festivals, arts and music events and activities. Rates of inter—marriage had also been steadily increasing and became the highest in Europe.

However, in 2001 the independent review (Cantle, 2001) of the race riots in a number of northern towns revealed that the acceptance of multiculturalism was far from universal and that White and Asian communities in some areas at least, 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.

It appeared that the existence of parallel lives meant that there was, in fact, very little trust, nor understanding, between communities and that it was relatively easy for any rumour or problem associated with either community to be turned into resentment, anger and violence – especially aided and abetted by Far Right groups. More generally, whilst the idea of multiculturalism did enjoy support at one level, it appeared that, for many, it had become associated with ‘political correctness’, with little real ownership and commitment enforced by State led political and cultural imperatives.

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 be used interchangeably with, ‘intercultural’ and the notion of intercultural dialogue gathered pace from about 2008.

### **The Concept of Interculturalism**

The concept of Interculturality is not new and can be traced back to 1959, while European perspectives date from the 1980’s and 1990’s (James, 2008). However, there has been little by way of academic development and agreement over the term, nor has it been adopted in policy and practice to any great degree on a consistent basis. Indeed, it has sometimes been used as a variant of multiculturalism – itself a contested term and used in many different ways.

Within these differing approaches to interculturalism, 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.

It is suggested here that interculturalism requires a good deal more – it must build upon the essential elements of multiculturalism, the framework of rights to equal treatment and non-discrimination; develop the interaction and belonging programmes initiated by community cohesion; and create a culture of openness which effectively challenges identity politics and ‘otherness, and the entrenchment of separate communities.

The concept and experience of ‘multiculturalism’ was developed from the post-war period of mass migration and was inevitably addressed through the lens of ‘race’, with the emphasis on dealing with the discrimination and intolerance by monocultural host communities who felt threatened by ‘difference’ and offended by what they saw as unacceptable social and cultural minority norms. This did give rise to progressive anti-discrimination legislation and many attempts at positive action to create more equal opportunities, though unfortunately often at the expense of a separation of communities to try to avoid tensions and the accusation of ‘special treatment’ which also created a sense of unfairness in some quarters.

### **Interculturality and intercultural dialogue**

Interculturality and intercultural dialogue 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 an instrumental part of interculturality, rather than an end in itself, in other words, contributing to and fostering understanding and empathy with others.

The concept of ‘interculturality’ and programmes of ICD had been little used as a policy driver in the UK prior to the introduction of the iCoCo national Awards for Bridging Cultures (ABCs), supported by the Baring Foundation ([www.bridgingcultures.org.uk](http://www.bridgingcultures.org.uk)). 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 model is supported by ‘contact theory’ and is

based on the premise that ‘intergroup contact reduces prejudice and improves intercultural dialogue and communication’ (James, 2008).

The European Union’s contribution came some seven years after the introduction of community cohesion with the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue (EYICD) in 2008, but took a particular approach, which rather reduced interculturality to ICD. James (2008) states 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’. However, the Year had a very limited impact, particularly in the UK and tended to focus on ‘culture’ in the artistic sense and also prioritised intra-EU integration.

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 for example in some British council programmes and in the EYICD)
- 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 promote their ideas (BCIDRG) (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.

## **Positioning Interculturalism**

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.

It is:

a search for balance and mediation between often-competing principles, values, and expectations. In this sense, 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 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 and indeed draws 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 its replacement by 'interculturalism', Bouchard's alternative concept of interculturalism is a form of integration based on agreed accommodations but dependent upon 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.

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 can not 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 not either a process in which migrants are assimilated into a host culture, nor that integration results in the adaptation by 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 reassuring, as almost any form of change can be unsettling and threatening. However, the reality is that all communities 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 they 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 – 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.

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 concept of interculturality was further developed, in practice, by a series of annual iCoCo Awards (iCoCo 2008) which were based on innovative work by the Baring Foundation who were very clear that they saw 'interculturalism' as a means of 'providing a critique of multiculturalism' which 'moved the debate forward'.(Sondhi, 2008) This supported the thesis that whereas multiculturalism is concerned with respecting and acknowledging cultural diversity, allowing different cultures to co-exist whilst in a sense reinforcing differences, the key feature of interculturality, and what differentiates it from multiculturalism, is its sense of openness, dialogue and interaction between cultures leading to long term change.

The explicit aim of the Baring Foundation was to 'promote interculturality'. This aim is in no way undermined by the use of the more user friendly brand 'awards for bridging cultures (ABCs)' and applicants were clearly told of the underlying philosophy of the scheme in the ABCs guidance (iCoCo, 2009). The Guidance goes on to define interculturality in the following terms:

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.

The Baring Foundation commissioned a study by Malcolm James (2008) and this was intended to support that critique and develop the new theoretical framework. A further study ‘outlined a move away from models for post-colonial society based on sealed cultural groups towards a more multifaceted notion of interculturalism’ (James 2009) (though James’s work appeared to confuse rather than clarify the approach and somewhat bizarrely suggested that community cohesion and multiculturalism both supported closed and sealed societies, even though most other commentators criticise cohesion precisely because they believe it to be a critique of multiculturalism).

‘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 and build trust and understanding, interculturalism envisages a society in which people are at ease with difference more generally and see other cultures as an opportunity to engage and develop, rather than as a threat. In this sense, programmes of community cohesion, which rely upon more deliberative programmes to tackle inequalities, promote diversity, belonging and interaction, can help to create such a society.

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 used by James (2008) use the term in their title) and there is even less by way established practice.

The Council of Europe (2011) have 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 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 also about all types of 'difference', whereas, multiculturalism was founded – and remained rooted - upon the outmoded concept of 'race' based upon spurious notions of physical distinctiveness, or on other salient and contextualised differences, such as language or religion which were then taken to define 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 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. Community cohesion similarly came into being on the basis of a review of the race riots in a number of English northern towns but cohesion programmes quickly recognised the wider notion of difference, with programmes developed to tackle divisions and conflicts based on sexual orientation, disability, age, social class and other differences.

In the UK, this wider concept of difference underpinned the creation of a single equality body, the Equality and Human Rights Commission, and the combining of equality legislation under the Single Equality Act 2010. This change supported the idea that 'difference' is about everyone and should be dealt with on a consistent basis.

Interculturalism has the potential to take this further, recognising the dynamic nature of culture and all aspects of difference and that, in any era of globalisation, it 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. This is exactly the reverse of what might have been expected in the light of this new era globalisation and super diversity. The current ‘politics of identity’ are therefore, fundamentally at odds with the aspirations of the immediate post war period in which the United Nations and many other international bodies were established.

However, rather like the ‘paradox of diversity’ referred to earlier, the growth of international institutions, appears to drive people towards separate identities rather than 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 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 ‘the same as themselves’ – as in ‘birds of a feather, flock together’. But as we have seen in the ‘race’ debate, the notion of primordial distinctions has led us up a wrong and dangerous path in the past. Primordial distinctions are often in reality socially engineered and dependent upon cultural, political and economic frameworks.

This perspective for interculturalism in conceptual terms is, then, still far from settled and the consequential implications for policy and practice have been barely considered.

In 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, it would seem that a cohesive society would also depend upon the model a much clearer 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 and 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.

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