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Why We Still Need Multiculturalism: A Critical Review of Approaches to Cultural Accommodation

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Abstract

In the twenty first century we see an increasingly interconnected world with greater possibilities for the movement of people across national borders. Despite the rhetoric of nationalist politicians across the globe, migration will continue to be an important feature of contemporary societies in most of the advanced industrial economies. Furthermore, political questions related to sub-state nationalism remain an important part of the social landscape in many states. The question of how best to accommodate diversity has a significant history explored in a wide body of theoretical literature. Throughout the latter part of the twentieth century, the doctrine of multiculturalism became a common feature of approaches to diversity across the majority of liberal democratic states. More recently, multiculturalism has been the subject of a range of political and theoretical controversies. Critics suggest that this approach has the effect of dividing people into arbitrary categories, failing to promote real integration. This article contributes to this debate through carrying out a critical review of approaches to the accommodation of cultural diversity. It is argued that despite the appeal of other theoretical frameworks, that multiculturalism still represents the best all-round package to help us understand diversity and to accommodate difference in an equitable fashion.

Introduction

In the era of globalisation, international migration has expanded massively and continues to impact upon the cultural landscape in the majority

of advanced, industrialized nation-states. The UN estimates that around 258,000,000 people were international migrants in 2017 (UN, 2017). Additionally, there are a range of political pressures emanating from internal national minorities at sub-state level across the world (Hepburn, 2011). The myth of the homogenous nation state has been displaced with the undeniable fact of rich and complex diversity (Cantle, 2014). However, this raises questions about how the state should seek to ensure equality across the full spectrum of ethnic, religious and racial diversity within its borders. This problem has given rise to a wide body of theoretical literature that will be considered as we progress through the paper. For reasons of brevity it must be recognized that this contribution cannot do justice to each of the models under consideration, nor of the controversies that divide them. However, the article will offer a working account of a range of differing models and provide a critical assessment of each. It will be argued that despite a range of criticisms levelled at multiculturalism, that it remains the most logical manner in which to accommodate cultural diversity.

The article begins by outlining the idea of cultural assimilation often referred to in common terminology as the "melting pot". This theory proposes active measures to be taken in order to reduce the divisive aspects of diversity (Park, 1914; Park & Burgess, 1933; Gordon, 1964; Glazer, 1993). With this position established, we will consider the idea of liberal neutrality as an approach to the management of cultural pluralism (Marshall, 1963; Rawls, 1999). Thirdly, we will outline the concept of multiculturalism as an ideational framework for the accommodation of different racial, ethnic and religious groups present within contemporary, diverse societies (Kymlicka, 1995; Parekh, 2001; Modood, 2007). Finally, we will review the concept of interculturalism through an examination of its critical engagement with multiculturalism. It will be shown that interculturalist scholars claim to have adopted a superior approach based on principles of dialogue and interaction. However, it will be noted that multiculturalists have mounted persuasive counter-arguments claiming that criticisms of their theory are unfounded.

Ultimately, the paper will conclude that multiculturalism is able to withstand the criticisms that it has faced. It will be suggested that inter-culturalism should be seen as a framework that draws heavily on certain multicultural ideas whilst explicitly eschewing others. (Wood, Laundry, & Bloomfield, 2006; Bouchard, 2011; Meer & Modood, 2012a; Modood & Meer, 2012b). The basic contours of each of these conceptual ap-proaches will be mapped out using relevant contributions to academic literature. It will be suggested that while assimilation and liberal neutrality seem normatively appealing, they fail to take account of the realities of group-based inequality and varieties of discrimination based upon diversity. We will now turn to the first section which examines the central tenets of assimilation theory.

Assimilation Theory

Advocates of assimilative approaches to the management of diversity argue that processes of intergenerational contact between different racial, ethnic and religious groups present in society, will see cultural differences gradually diminish until diversity no longer holds social and political salience. This concept first came to prominence in countries such as the United States of America, Canada and Australia. Each of these territories had witnessed indigenous peoples becoming marginalized due to the in-fluence of European colonization. Each had become dominated by an English speaking, white, Anglo-Saxon majority. Furthermore, all of these countries witnessed further waves of subsequent immigration (Kymlicka, 1995). These states were consequently marked by multiple strains of diversity. The similarities in historical context in Australia, New Zealand and North America lent themselves to some convergence on how best to manage forms of cultural difference within a common civic framework. Often, this approach revolved around measures taken to actively anglicise members of minority cultures in order that they may fit more neatly into the cultural mainstream. Whilst assimilation was generally expressed in terms of helping minorities integrate into the host society, in practice

it often involved illiberal measures, such as the banning of minority lan-
guages or certain forms of religious observance (Parekh, 2001).

The concept of assimilation found its clearest expression in academic
literature written in the United States in the early part of the twentieth
century (see Park, 1914; Park & Burgess, 1933). In order to highlight
some of the central features of assimilation theory, it becomes necessary
to examine some of the key pieces of literature associated with this canon.
Some of the earliest examples of assimilation theory are located in the
work of a group of sociologists collectively termed the Chicago School
(Alba & Nee, 1997). One of the seminal texts on the subject was written
by Park and Burgess (1933) who describe assimilation as:

> A process of interpenetration and fusion in which persons and
> groups acquire the memories, sentiments and attitudes of other
> persons or groups, and by sharing their experience and history
> are incorporated with them in a common cultural life (Parks
> & Burgess, 1933, p. 735).

Their contribution contends that assimilation is a benign process in
which groups separated by fault-lines of race, ethnicity and religion may
gradually overcome their differences in order to forge a common identity
based on mutual cultural exchange. The idea of distinctions gradually
eroding is undoubtedly appealing. This reflects—to some extent—the
manner in which Western European settlers in the United States gradually
forged shared identities as citizens (Glazer, 1993). However, in practice,
assimilation is deeply flawed as a means to accommodate cultural plural-
ism in diverse societies for a number of reasons.

Firstly, processes of cultural exchange are unequal, they tend to
favour the largest ethnic group at the expense of minorities. Imbalanced
processes of assimilation do not result in a common, shared identity.
Rather, smaller groups tend to become swamped by the mainstream
culture, losing their sense of distinctiveness due to the pressures of
mainstream dominance in areas such as language, artistic expression and

religious practices. (Taylor, 1994). Secondly, assimilation is not necessarily a benign and organic process. Often, state driven attempts to enforce unity from above, have the potential to promote illiberal outcomes for minority groups. Such results are observable when we consider attempts to enforce Anglo-conformity upon Native Americans in the United States, or legislation banning head scarves in France (Hoxie, 2001; Chrisafis, 2011).

Thirdly, groups that are perceived as "too different" from the mainstream to easily assimilate can become ghettoised in response to the experience of racism and discrimination thereby undermining the possibility of forging a unified citizenry. A prime example of this type of process is evident in the United States where African Americans in particular have suffered generations of group-specific inequality based on historical injustice and antagonistic racial differentiation. The effect of such forms of institutionalised discrimination have served to hinder the possibility for an inclusive cultural melting pot in the territory (Glazer, 1998).

The idea of coercive assimilation still permeates political discussions related to immigration and integration. For instance, a number of overtly anti-immigration parties operating throughout Europe have increasingly adopted narratives based on the perceived failure of some groups to assimilate into the norms of the host society (Bunzl, 2005). Such narratives are deeply flawed in that they assume the existence of a common, uniform national culture into which immigrants can easily assimilate, whilst offering no credible attempt to outline what this model could look like in practice. Furthermore, assimilation can serve to provide justification for illiberal measures taken to be against cultural minorities in order to promote homogeneity. Due to these weaknesses and the possibility for its abuse, assimilation represents a logically flawed and potentially dangerous approach to the management of cultural difference in societies marked by diversity. The next section considers an approach that contains appealing aspects when taken in purely theoretical terms, but fails to engage with some of the unfortunate realities of group-based prejudice and discrimination. The following section will consider the concept of

difference-blind neutrality, most commonly associated with European, post-war liberalism.

Difference-Blind Liberalism

In the post-war era, the dominant approach to the accommodation of cultural pluralism in the majority of Western liberal democracies has been described as "difference-blindness," "liberal-neutrality" or "benign neglect" (Kymlicka, 1995, p. 108). The theoretical underpinnings of this approach are rooted in liberal traditions. Firstly, neutrality assumes that the state has no place interfering in matters such as religion, culture or personal identity. Secondly, where identity is concerned, individuals are seen as participating in a kind of market-place, in which some cultural forms prosper and others wither according to the extent that individuals find them to be valuable. Thirdly, the liberal conception of citizenship, in which individuals participate in the public sphere as uniform citizens, provides an important foundation for the concept of difference-blind neutrality. These ideas have been articulated more or less explicitly in a number of post-war liberal texts on the concept of citizenship.

This is evident when we consider Marshall's conception of the homogenous citizenry participating in a shared civilization (Marshall, 1963). Corresponding views can be located in John Rawls' discussions of individuals arriving at universal principles of justice through imagining away their unique identity and placing themselves behind a veil of ignorance (Rawls, 1999). However, this approach ignores the existence of indigenous diversities that are a feature of many societies. Furthermore, the colour-blind framework lacks the intellectual tools for accommodating immigration-generated diversity in a sensitive fashion. It must be recognized that the conception of the neutral state has an understandable theoretical appeal. It makes sense to allow all forms of cultural observance to flourish or to expire according to the preferences of individuals making free, informed choices. In an ideal-world, citizens would leave identity

in the private sphere and coalesce around universal principles of justice to which all could subscribe. However, in practice, to ignore difference in the name of neutrality serves to favour more powerful groups and to marginalize minorities. In large part, this is due to the realities of group-based prejudice and discrimination such as racism and sectarianism.

The stubbornly persistent nature of group-specific forms of inequality means that the state has a duty to take matters of identity seriously, and to actively redress certain imbalances based on pivots of racial, ethnic and religious identity (Glazer, 1997). The first reason why the state must play an active role in matters related to identity is because of the pressing and widespread reality of group-based forms of discrimination such as racism and sectarianism. Racism as understood in this paper follows the definition outlined by UNESCO in its International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, which states that:

> Racial discrimination shall mean any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life (UNESCO, 1967).

While the definition of racism is highly contested in some areas of academic writing, the UNESCO version has the advantage of being sufficiently wide to capture most of its attributes without becoming excessively enmeshed in theoretical controversy (for an overview of wider debates on this matter see Miles & Brown, 2003; Garner, 2017). Sectarianism represents a similar form of group-based discrimination, but one that is derived from a religious basis rather than biological or ethnic origins (Geoghegan, 2010). However, on many occasions, sectarian division and ethnic differences overlap and intertwine; with religion acting

as a form of demarcation between distinctive cultural groups (Modood, 2007; Jarman, 2012). Both serve to establish contours of discrimination and inequality based on arbitrary distinctions between categories of people in a diverse society.

Whilst difference-blind liberals may believe that matters such as racial, ethnic or religious identity are the preserve of the private sphere, and that citizens should participate in a uniform manner, society itself seldom meets this ideal. If all citizens genuinely received equality of treatment regardless of their racial or cultural characteristics, then the state would be justified in taking a passive approach to the accommodation of different identities. However, racism, sectarianism and other forms of bigotry are an unfortunate reality in the majority of culturally diverse societies (Miles & Brown, 2003). Prejudicial behaviours, far from being the preserve of a handful of committed bigots, are a wide ranging phenomenon and a persistent feature of social reality in societies marked by cultural pluralism (Modood, 2007; Krogstad & Lopez, 2016).

Through failing to recognize and engage with the deeply ingrained nature of discrimination, the state may actually facilitate inequality and the type of social fragmentation that liberal theorists seek to avoid. The idea of the neutral, difference-blind state is built on erroneous logic. In order for the state to be neutral, it must be actively engaged with tackling the imbalances that derive from the realities of prejudice and discrimination. The state must seek to build solidarity between the various different racial, ethnic and religious groups present within the broader society. To fail to do this is tantamount to turning a blind eye to the deeply unfair practices that emerge from racism, sectarianism and other forms of discrimination based on fault-lines of identity.

A second problem with difference-blind liberalism is its excessive focus on the idea of the cultural market-place. While the market-place theory may seem to provide an equitable means to pursue the accommodation of diversity, there is a key factor that prevents this aim from being achieved: The effects of swamping (Kymlicka, 1991). The na-

tion-state is not neutral: It is built upon the idea of a shared culture that ties citizens together. National citizenship assumes the confines of a community built upon common traditions and a degree of homogeneity. In practice, this means that the state inevitably favours a dominant cultural group (or in some cases dominant groups). This is highlighted by the fact that the state explicitly recognizes particular cultural events through measures such as conferring public holidays that tie in with such occasions (Parekh, 2001). Furthermore, the state favours one or more linguistic groups through recognizing some languages as official, and carrying out governmental work in the tongues that are deemed to be of greatest importance to the largest number of citizens (Kymlicka, 2001; Kymlicka & Patten, 2003).

Whilst supporters of difference-blind approaches to the accommodation of diversity may argue that it is a mere matter of common sense to favour the majority language group, or to explicitly recognize mainstream cultural practices while ignoring others, this hardly achieves the requirements of individual equality that underpin liberal ideals. It may make sense from a purely utilitarian perspective that the state confers official recognition on majority practices, but where does this leave indigenous minorities, or citizens that may not speak the majority tongue as their first language? The answer to this is that it leaves them marginalized by a state that claims to be neutral. Hence, in the interests of equality, there is a need for the state to actively redress these forms of cultural imbalance wherever they arise. The failings of the difference-blind approach to diversity bring us now to the concept of multiculturalism. Multiculturalism represents a more sensitive and balanced approach to the accommodation of difference than either active assimilation or passive difference-blindness.

Multiculturalism

Multiculturalism represents a response to the management of difference that recognizes the value of diversity and seeks to ensure recognition

for individuals and groups outside of the cultural mainstream. Multiculturalism principally emerged as a means for managing difference in societies marked by indigenous internal minorities (Taylor, 1994). However, as western societies have become increasingly diverse in recent decades due to the greater possibilities for living and working across national borders, multiculturalism has become a key feature of debates over the accommodation of migrants in the receiving states (Modood, 2007). The term has become maligned in some sections of public discourse, giving rise to the claim that there is a "backlash" against the multicultural ideal in the early part of the 21st century (Vervotec & Wessendorf, 2010). The following section outlines some of the core principles of the theory, before highlighting a number of the key criticisms levelled at this school of thought. It will be argued that despite the contributions of these critics, multiculturalism represents the most pragmatic and sensitive approach to the accommodation of cultural pluralism in diverse societies.

Multiculturalism begins with an endorsement of the liberal ideal of individual equality, but recognizes that forms of inequality may arise when the state ignores diversity. Some multicultural theorists see their approach as an adjunct of liberalism itself (for instance Kymlicka, 1991; 1995), others argue that multiculturalism should represent a more totalistic perspective that goes beyond the limited aims of liberalism, seeking to reconstitute the state and to create a "community of communities" (Parekh, 2001, p. 340). This paper favours the more overtly liberal approach. This perspective recognizes the value of liberal freedoms, rejecting difference-blindness, whilst maintaining a practical approach to the enduring relevance and merits of the liberal democratic nation-state. Multiculturalism, when employed properly, should be seen as a toolkit for overcoming the failings of difference-blind liberalism rather than as a replacement for liberal principles more broadly.

Difference-blind liberals have tended to assume that formal equality, guaranteed by universal rights, was a sufficient and fair basis to pursue egalitarian outcomes (Barry, 2001). However, when some cultures or

identities are given official recognition by the state, and others are ignored, this has the effect of creating a two-tier system of citizens: Those who are deemed to belong, and others who are to be tolerated, or pressured into assimilation. The argument proposed by the majority of multicultural scholars, is that in some cases, the state should be prepared to accord group-rights to the members of minorities so that they can be protected from the swamping influences of the majority culture. This is most obvious when we refer to indigenous minorities such as Aborigines or Native Americans (Taylor, 1994). There are strong arguments that such groups should have additional rights alongside universal freedoms, in order to protect their way of life from the overwhelming pressure toward cultural assimilation in diverse societies. Furthermore, such arguments suggest that sub-state, national minorities within diverse states should be afforded measures of self-governance where practicable (Kymlicka, 1995).

There has been some degree of controversy within the multicultural canon as to where theoretical distinctions ought to rest between sub-national groups and immigrants. For instance, theorists in the Canadian school have tended to prioritise the needs of sub-state national groups. The argument goes that sub-state nations constitute a distinct societal culture in a geographically defined region of the state in which they form a majority (Kymlicka, 1991, 1995). Furthermore, it is claimed that because indigenous minorities have usually arisen as a result of historic conquest, they did not choose to become a minority culture. Immigrants, by contrast, are presented in such accounts as being territorially diffuse and having chosen to move to the host society in which they now constitute an ethnic minority group. Hence, Kymlicka (1995) in particular makes a moral distinction between the two forms of diversity and the levels of accommodation that they may expect to receive from the state.

However, this distinction is somewhat heavy-handed. For instance, it cannot cope with demands of immigrant groups that settle in the host state and form a distinctive minority of citizens. This issue is highlighted in the work of Modood (2007) who argues that Kymlicka "distorts the

circumstances of some kinds of migrants in order to highlight the condition of national minorities and indigenous people" (p. 34). Similarly, Parekh claims that Kymlicka "draws too neat a distinction between immigrants and citizens the former are not casual visitors but have come to settle, and are what I might call probationary citizens or citizens in waiting" (Parekh, 2001, p. 103). There is validity in these arguments, whilst it is necessary to draw distinctions between varieties of diversity and to recognize that some minority groups have different needs to others: it is not appropriate to consign immigrant groups to assimilatory pressures. This argument can be highlighted most lucidly through reference to the issue of minority languages.

Kymlicka (1995) argues that because the minority culture cannot be replicated in the host state, matters such as language become an issue for the private sphere and that families should keep their language alive within the home. However, this approach is not far removed from the assimilatory processes that he purports to oppose. It is legitimate for a receiving state to recognize the value of language diversity and to afford a greater degree of protection than the one outlined in Kymlicka's approach to polyethnic rights (Modood, 2007). While the state cannot give official status to every language spoken in the territory, it is appropriate to afford some measure of support for the full range of linguistic diversity in the society (Bianco, 2010). This may be achieved through the formal educational system or by providing financial support for migrant community groups to allow them to act in the public sphere to maintain their home language, thus ensuring that linguistic diversity can be passed on to future generations. While some immigrants may not wish to maintain bilingualism, others will, and there is no reason to deny this opportunity to such groups. However, this position is contentious: critics from outside the multicultural school often take issue with the idea of any form of differentiated civic rights.

Firstly, critics of multiculturalism have argued that the theory serves to foster societal disunity. The suggestion here is that through engaging with racial, ethnic and religious diversity, the state gives such identities

greater status and a sense of permanence that they would not enjoy other-
wise (Kukathas, 1992; Barry, 2001). Secondly, it has been argued that
multiculturalism harms internal minorities such as women, children and
homosexuals, through privileging established elites within groups, who
tend to be conservatively biased older men (Okin, 1999).

The suggestion that multiculturalism creates division is a common
criticism. One of the leading proponents of this argument was Brian Barry
in his piece *Culture and Equality* (2001). The broad scope of Barry's
argument is that universal rights promote a sense of solidarity amongst
citizens and that attempts to recognize difference undermine the
possibility for civic unity. Additionally, he argues that group-rights
are unnecessary as an antidote to discrimination, claiming that
equality is enshrined within the liberal model of colour-blind justice.
His approach is well illustrated by his suggestion that differentiated cit-
izenship is best understood as "the exaltation of what divides people
instead of what unites them" (Barry, 2001, p. 8). Barry goes further,
arguing that because the politics of difference separates people into
groups, it becomes difficult to achieve a broad consensus amongst all
disadvantaged individuals in order to tackle the real evil of socio-econom-
ic inequality. However, while a universal approach to citizenship is nor-
matively appealing, the facts of negative stereotyping, discrimination and
the alienation of some individuals from full participation in society under-
mines the possibility for uniform treatment.

In some cases, the state must recognize difference in order to make
equality possible. Multiculturalism does not create division it merely rec-
ognizes that division exists. If some groups are marginalized on the pe-
ripheries of society, then the answer should surely be more activity to
remedy such social ills, certainly not to ignore difference and hope it
will go away, or to coercively assimilate the members of cultural minor-
ities into following a simplistic formula for national identity. This argu-
ment is well captured in the statement below that was taken from Tariq
Modood's piece "A defence of Multiculturalism" (2005):

> And when subordinate groups claim equality within the society,
> they are claiming that they should not be marginal, subordinate
> or excluded; [···]. Why, they ask, should we have our identities
> privatised, while the dominant group has its identity uni-
> versalised in the public space? (Modood, 2005, p. 65)

This type of argument is important in that it illustrates something
that is not addressed in Barry's conception of cultural difference. For
Barry, culture and equality are entirely separate concepts, Modood high-
lights the fact that they are inextricably intertwined. Furthermore, there
is no suggestion in multicultural theory that group-rights should enforce
illiberal measures on internal minorities. While critics such as Susan Okin
have argued that multiculturalism is harmful to women, this suggestion
is countered in multicultural texts (Okin, 1999). For instance, in the liberal
account of multiculturalism conceptualised in the work of Will Kymlicka,
he is very careful to argue that multicultural policies should provide
"external protection" for minority groups, rather than to enforce "internal
restrictions" on group members (Kymlicka, 1995, p. 35).

Anne Phillips (2007) directly tackles Okin's criticisms suggesting
that multiculturalism and feminism are compatible features of a pro-
gressive march towards equality for both women and ethnic minorities.
Phillips takes issue with Okin's claim that differentiated citizenship will
inevitably lead to the subordination of women within minority groups.
She argues that Okin denies the possibility for female members of minor-
ity groups to exercise agency. Hence, Okin suggests that women exposed
to Western liberal cultural norms are capable of autonomy, and that
women in other communities are passive victims of circumstance
(Phillips, 2007). Phillips argues cogently that this vastly oversimplifies
the real position of women in minority communities. Furthermore, she
explicitly favours an approach to multiculturalism that upholds "the
rights of individuals belonging to particular groups rather than the rights
of groups" (Phillips, 2007, p. 164). This is a valuable distinction as

it recognizes the potential for tension between group membership and individual equality and creates conceptual space to mediate between them.

It is right that any conception of group-based rights must work alongside universal rights, rather than contradict them. The protection of individual equality should not be compromised by the promotion of illiberal practices within a particular group. According to multicultural theory, differentiated rights should only be established in order to remedy forms of inequality experienced by individuals due to their membership of a minority group. Ultimately, the equation here is quite simple: Multiculturalism is about the pursuit of equality; any attempt to impose restrictions on individuals, due to group membership, does not adhere to multicultural principles. None-the-less, despite the fact that multi-cultural theory is able to withstand these criticisms, it has suffered from the effects of a political backlash and has been displaced in recent years by the adoption of interculturalism in policy frameworks aimed at the management of diversity.

Interculturalism

As the criticisms of multiculturalism have grown in intensity, a com-petitor model has emerged that seeks to maintain a healthy recognition of diversity whilst fostering societal unity. This approach is commonly referred to as interculturalism. The next section will outline the key as-pects of intercultural theory through examining its critical engagement with multiculturalism. We will see that this has led to a sizeable body of academic debate between multicultural scholars and proponents of interculturalism. In this endeavour we will begin by discussing a number of core criticisms levelled at multiculturalism by proponents of intercul-tural theory. It will be argued throughout this section, that not all of the criticisms of multiculturalism levelled by interculturalists withstand scrutiny, and that the theory draws upon certain ideas associated with multiculturalism.

The primary argument made by interculturalist scholars is the suggestion that multiculturalism has placed exclusive focus on the needs of cultural minorities and failed to consider the views of national majorities (Bouchard, 2011). Furthermore, similarly to the liberal criticisms discussed earlier in our review of Barry (2001), it is suggested that multiculturalism is excessively groupist in focus, tending to divide rather than to unite (Wood et al., 2006). Linked with this is the claim that multiculturalism is insufficiently subtle to deal with the realities of the "super-diversity" associated with modern societies in an era of globalisation (Cantle, 2014). These theorists present interculturalism as the solution to such problems, claiming that respectful dialogue between cultural groups on terms that are acceptable within mainstream cultural norms are likely to promote the formation of new hybrid identities. The suggestion is that through interaction and dialogue it is possible to create a type of cultural blend that is more than the sum of its parts: simultaneously respecting difference and promoting solidarity. In order to examine these arguments further, we will begin by considering Bouchard's (2011) suggestion that interculturalism pays greater attention to the needs of national majorities than multiculturalism.

Though Bouchard critiques various aspects of multiculturalism, perhaps the key feature of his work is the argument that measures taken in the pursuit of cultural accommodation should recognize the national majority as well as minorities. Moreover, he argues that dominant cultural norms should provide a framework for intercultural dialogue. He moves on to claim that multiculturalism is not equipped to provide the same type of accommodation for cultural majorities. This type of argument becomes evident when Bouchard states that "interculturalism is on the whole very sensitive to the problems and needs of the majority culture, which multiculturalism cannot provide since, [⋯] it does not recognize the existence of such a culture" (Bouchard, 2011, p. 465). These criticisms lead Bouchard to the suggestion that interaction and dialogue between cultural groups in order to promote blending and sharing is the correct approach to managing diversity.

The second major criticism of multiculturalism that is commonly expressed in intercultural approaches is the suggestion that the theory is inherently fragmentary in its outlook. This is to say that multiculturalism prevents crossover and integration between cultural groups. This sentiment is evident in the work of Wood et al. (2006) who suggest that "The creative challenge is to move from the multicultural city of fragmented differences to the co-created intercultural city that makes the most of diversity" (p. viii). Similar views are expressed in the work of Zapata-Barrero (2016) who states that "interculturalism presents itself as a framework that tries to challenge the way multiculturalism(s) have always tended to categorise people through origin and nationality" (p. 158). Most accounts of interculturalism proceed from a departure point suggesting that multiculturalism divides people according to cultural traits and that interculturalism by contrast will promote dynamic relationships in which group barriers are eroded by mutual interaction.

The third key strand in the intercultural argument is that multiculturalism has failed to engage with the nuances of diversity as it has developed during the era of globalisation and "super-diversity" (Vervotec, 2007, p. 1024). The result of this is that while people are participating in forms of cultural exchange on a daily basis, creating new forms of hybrid identities in a multiplicity of different blends, that multiculturalism is rooted in an outdated understanding of diversity. This finds its clearest expression in the work of Ted Cantle (2014) who argues that:

> The multicultural policies followed by the UK and most European governments have become ever more exposed and, it is argued, are no longer appropriate to mediate the new era of globalisation and super-diversity. (Cantle, 2014, p. 313)

Cantle argues that it is necessary that the accommodation of difference is rooted in a multi-level civic space which operates both above and below the level of the nation-state and the national community. In this sense, his arguments follow very closely those of theorists such

as Linklater (2001) and Held (2003) who have argued for cosmopolitan democracy in recognition of the impact of globalisation on the nation-state.

Having outlined this range of criticisms against multiculturalism, interculturalists argue that their theory recognizes difference and cultivates positive change through dialogue and respectful interaction between cultural groups. What unites these approaches is the suggestion that multiculturalism is ill-suited to the realities of contemporary diversity due to the fact that it does not take account of majority preferences, is inherently fragmentary, and lacks the subtlety to engage with the complexity of diversity in the era of globalisation.

However, these arguments have been rejected by multiculturalists who argue that interculturalism is not a distinctive theoretical innovation, but rather a politically expedient rebranding exercise in response to the criticisms of multicultural policies. Such scholars tend to point to existing texts within the multicultural canon that cover similar ground to the theories articulated by interculturalists (Kymlicka, 2012; Meer & Modood, 2012; Modood & Meer, 2012). Furthermore, a number of theorists suggest that interculturalism may heighten the assimilatory pressures being placed on cultural minorities (Brahm-Levey, 2012; Taylor, 2012).

One of the key battle-grounds between multicultural and intercultural scholars is the argument that multiculturalism favours minorities at the expense of the majority. In response to this claim, multiculturalist scholars have argued that interculturalism has the potential to lead to swamping due its emphasis on maintaining majority norms. This type of argument is expressed in the work of Meer and Modood (2012) who state that:

> All forms of prescribed unity, including civic unity, usually retain a majoritarian bias that places the burden of adaptation upon the minority, and so is inconsistent with interculturalism's alleged commitment to 'mutual integration' (Meer & Modood, 2012b, p. 188).

Furthermore, multiculturalists have taken issue with the suggestion that their theories fail to promote dialogue across cultural boundaries. In order to highlight this, it is useful once again to begin with the work of Meer and Modood (2012). Meer and Modood argue that not only is dialogue between cultural groups a component of multiculturalism, that it is a foundational aspect of the model. Their arguments are supported by surveying multicultural literature. For instance, Parekh argues that "every culture represents a limited vision of the good life and benefits from a dialogue with others" (Parekh, 2004, p. 24). In an earlier text on multiculturalism, Charles Taylor states that "discovering my own identity doesn't mean that I work it out in isolation, but that I negotiate it through dialogue, partly overt, partly internal, with others" (Taylor, 1997, p. 103). Both of these quotations serve to provide examples of multiculturalist scholars endorsing the types of dialogue espoused by interculturalist theorists. Further to this, multiculturalists have argued that the driving force behind interculturalism was the need for a new political narrative in response to the political backlash against multiculturalism.

For instance, Taylor argues that the origins of interculturalism in the Canadian territory of Quebec were derived from the political imperatives of the Francophone majority in the region and the desire of elites to distinguish the territory from Anglophone Canada. This type of sentiment is further outlined in the work of Brahm-Levey (2012) who argues that:

> Whether interculturalism differs substantively from multiculturalism is very much beside the point. Rather, what matters is that the term 'multiculturalism' has become so mired in controversy and is so maligned in public debate that its semantic capital, as it were, has been spent. (Brahm-Levey, 2012, p. 223).

Both of these texts locate the tendency towards greater political and scholarly endorsement for interculturalism within the context of diminishing popular enthusiasm for multiculturalism. On balance, it is

fair to suggest that these scholars highlight key areas in which certain interculturalists have overstated their case. However, this does not mean that there are no elements of theoretical innovation within interculturalism. Interculturalism is best seen as a refinement of specific multicultural principles which places emphasis on dialogue, explicitly rejecting the divisive tendencies that have been associated with certain "multicultural" policies that do not reflect the aims of multicultural theory. The tone of the debate is marked by tribal divisions between these two scholarly camps, yet the two approaches should be seen as complementary.

Interculturalism is built upon foundations laid by multiculturalists, but has evolved to some extent to suit different needs in the context of globalisation and vastly increased movements of people (Cantle, 2014). Because multiculturalism has always encompassed a range of per-spectives, some of which emphasise communitarian roots (Parekh, 2001) and others which identify more closely with liberal ideals (Kymlicka, 1995) this has left a lack of clarity over exactly what it is that multi-culturalists stand for. Interculturalism cuts through this theoretical fog by explicitly rejecting those aspects of communitarian multiculturalism that could be interpreted as placing impermeable boundaries around exist-ing cultural groups (Werbner, 2012).

Conclusion

The politics of diversity and immigration has arisen in various gui-ses across a vast and expansive literature. Each of these pools of liter-ature is marked with its own range of intricate controversies, creating complex webs of interwoven debates. In this paper we have provided an overview of the key theoretical approaches to the management of cultural accommodation. We have evaluated some of the most important approaches as they have emerged in the context of academic literature. Four positions were subjected to a critical examination: assimilation, difference blind liberalism, multiculturalism, and interculturalism.

It has been argued that despite a degree of normative appeal asso-

ciated with assimilation and difference blind liberalism, these approaches do not offer equality of citizenship in diverse societies. Assimilation is prone to abuse if it becomes an expectation that is placed upon cultural minorities. Difference blindness fails to engage with the drivers of social inequality based on cultural difference. This paper has argued in favour of multiculturalism as a counterweight to the pervasive nature of cultural swamping and group-based forms of discrimination present in societies marked by diversity. It has been argued that an active approach to the management of diversity is a precondition of equality in a diverse society and that multiculturalism meets the necessary requirements for the pursuit of this goal.

   Finally, we considered further range of criticisms against multiculturalism derived from the intercultural school. It was suggested that multiculturalists had mounted an effective defence of their theory. Intercultural scholars deliberately overlook the explicit emphasis on dialogue found in the work of many multicultural theorists. This tendency is a side-effect of intercultural attempts to overstate their case against multicultural principles and to mark their own approach as distinctive. While interculturalism clearly has merits, it must be understood principally as an adjunct built upon the foundations of multicultural theory. Regardless of the assertions of its many critics, multiculturalism continues to have enduring relevance and provides us with the most well-rounded approach to the accommodation of cultural diversity.

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