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Combining intercultural dialogue and critical multiculturalism

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Abstract

In the last two decades, the concept of multiculturalism has come under attack in political and academic discourses. Simultaneously, European governments have accommodated key aspects of multicultural policies, both nationally and internationally. In academic debates (Antonsich 2015; Barrett 2013a; Meer and Modood 2012; Meer et al. 2016), it has been suggested that ‘multiculturalism’ be replaced by ‘interculturalism’. This paper responds to those suggestions. We argue that, while liberal state multiculturalism risks essentializing minority groups, critical multiculturalism as a social movement refers to minority struggles to be recognized as equals in relation to the majority. Interculturalism as policy opens up a space for dialogue where minoritized people, individually and collectively, can find their own voices and negotiate their own identities and interests as well as the shared values of larger society. While multiculturalism is partly about legal rights and policies, it is also about possibilities for participation, opening up public spaces for dialogue and negotiations where the voices of minoritized groups and individuals are heard, providing an opportunity for living together in a diverse society marked by mutual understanding and adjustment. We conclude with the suggestion that intercultural dialogue should be combined with critical multiculturalism. In other words, the theory and practice of intercultural dialogue needs to go beyond liberalism and take into account critical multiculturalism’s emphasis on the positionality of all perspectives. A theory and practice of genuine intercultural dialogue cannot ignore power relations, the empirical fact that some people speak ‘from above’ and others ‘from below’.

Keywords

Interculturalism, intercultural dialogue, multiculturalism, critical multiculturalism, multicultural education

Objectives

This paper comments on current debates between multiculturalists and interculturalists in the *Journal of Intercultural Studies* (e.g. Meer and Modood, 2012), in Martyn Barrett's (2013a) edited volume *Interculturalism and Multiculturalism: Similarities and Differences*, in the Cattle-Modood debate in *Ethnicities* (Antonsich, 2015) and in Meer et al.'s (2016) edited volume, *Interculturalism and Multiculturalism*. Emphasizing the positionality of perspectives and the distinctions between speaking 'from above' and 'from below' in asymmetric power relations, we seek to find a way out of these debates. We argue that interculturalism needs to be complemented by a critical multiculturalist perspective; specifically we propose to combine 'dialogue' from the intercultural tradition, and the 'critical' from the multicultural tradition in order to hear the differently positioned majority and minority voices in dialogue. While minorities' struggles to speak from their own personal experiences and perspectives and define their own identities are an essential component of multiculturalism, we believe that a dialogical form of interculturalism may allow these minority voices to be heard, included and accommodated. In line with Werbner (2012), we argue that normative positions in multicultural and intercultural theory and policy debates are all situated and positioned in power relations, speaking from above or from below. This distinction cuts across multiculturalism and interculturalism, intersected by a further distinction between dialogical and confrontational approaches. A dialogical approach can be learned and, following Parekh (2006) and Barrett (2013c), we also relate intercultural dialogue to education.

The paper first provides a brief overview of the multiculturalism and interculturalism debate in theory and policy, serving as a background to our theoretical discussion of intercultural dialogue and critical multiculturalism. To illustrate the dynamics between dialogue as policy from above and critical minority movements, we analyze the empirical case of the Mohammed cartoon affair in Norway. Unlike the more well-known Danish cartoon affair, the Norwegian case is interesting because the government approached protesting Muslims with dialogue. Similar to the British 'Rushdie affair', the Norwegian cartoon affair led to multicultural accommodation, as reflected in the Banting-Kymlicka multicultural policy index¹ where Norway shows a strong increase. Before drawing our conclusions on combining intercultural dialogue with critical multiculturalism, the paper's last part discusses the issue of positionality in academic debates between multiculturalists and interculturalists.

¹ <http://www.queensu.ca/mcp/>

The multiculturalism debates

Theories and policies of multiculturalism come in a variety of versions, situated in specific national contexts. Murphy (2012) distinguishes between seven types of multicultural policies: 1) policies that grant minorities a voice in decision making processes; 2) policies of symbolic recognition (e.g. formal apologies for injustice in the past); 3) redistribution (e.g. settlement of indigenous land claims); 4) protection (e.g. measures to preserve distinctive cultures or languages); 5) exemptions from specific legal requirements; 6) assistance (e.g. public funding of minority schools or affirmative action); and 7) autonomy. These types relate variously to different national contexts, making a distinction between, for example, Canadian multiculturalism and British multiculturalism. In North American contexts from which Taylor (1994) and Kymlicka (1989, 1995) write, the experiences of Native American and French Canadian nations are used to argue for particular rights and provisions for minority cultures ('group differentiated rights'), to compensate these groups for historical disadvantages. British multiculturalists like Modood (2007, 2013) and Parekh (2006) write from a context of post-imperial British obligations to immigrants who were citizens of the commonwealth, and their descendants. In Britain and continental Europe, unlike North America, multiculturalism is typically linked to immigration. While Canadian multiculturalism often focuses on language and nationhood, issues of race, ethnicity and religion are central in Europe (Modood, 1998; Parekh, 2006). Canada and Australia officially declared a comprehensive multicultural policy, while British multiculturalism developed pragmatically and locally 'from below' as a result of state accommodation of various minority demands (Modood, 2013). Theoretically, Kymlicka's (1995, 2002) liberal multiculturalism reflects a state perspective, and Modood's (2007, 2013) political multiculturalism starts with minority social movements.

Empirical research shows an increase in multicultural policies across Western Europe, and public opinion has also become more favorable to multicultural society (Barrett, 2013a). Using Banting's and Kymlicka's eight criteria in the multicultural policy index, Australia, Canada and Sweden have the strongest multicultural policies, while France, Germany and Denmark have the weakest. Several European countries, among them Norway, the context from which the authors of the present paper speak and the location of our empirical case, show a strong increase in the last decade. The Netherlands, a pioneer of multiculturalism, is the only country that has abandoned multiculturalism, is now placed among the least multiculturalist countries (Barrett, 2013a).

At the same time as multiculturalism has advanced across Europe in the last two decades, it has become controversial – both as policy and theory. Right-wing populist rhetoric has combined with numerous mainstream politicians declaring multiculturalism a failure, and with academic criticism and rejection of the term (Mishra, 2012). Common denominators are calls for stronger ‘integration’ and social cohesion. Many critics blame multiculturalism for failing to create integrated, cohesive societies, for accommodating immoral cultural practices, and for favoring cultural relativism. Theoretically, it is criticized for having an essentialist understanding of culture (Philips, 2007) and for an emphasis on cultural differences, which fosters a plural monoculturalism (Sen, 2006: 157). In short, critics have argued that multiculturalism’s focus on recognition of group identities, accommodation of religious practices and a preoccupation with the appreciation of *cultural* diversity has led to segregation between ethnic groups in European societies and a lack of community cohesion.

Interculturalism as an alternative?

The Council of Europe’s (2008) *White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue* can be seen as a response to these criticisms of multiculturalism. It notes, ‘Multiculturalism is now seen by many as having fostered communal segregation and mutual incomprehension, as well as having contributed to the undermining of the rights of individuals’ (Council of Europe, 2008: 19). Noting that multiculturalism as a policy has been inadequate, it proposes that it is replaced by interculturalism. In Britain, the Cattle report (2001) had already made a similar argument. It pointed to a deep segregation in British cities and communities, and called for new approaches to community cohesion including a clear national vision of a culturally diverse society. The aims of community cohesion are, in the report, listed as developing individual commitment to common values and a civic culture as well as interdependence and individual commitment to the group. In later debates on multicultural policies, Cattle sees the focus on recognition of cultural identities as one shortcoming of multicultural policy, while interculturalism seeks to achieve what multiculturalism fails to do.

As a theoretical concept, interculturalism has been commonly used in the context of intercultural communication, and specifically in the fields of education and social work, intercultural understanding focuses on culturally sensitive practices which affirm diversity and emphasize attitudes of openness and respect towards the other, flexibility, tolerance, participation, and an informed and critical attitude to one’s own cultural background. Beyond the scope of this paper, in Canada, the concept also refers to a policy approach addressing the

situation in Quebec (Taylor, 2012). In Europe, the Council of Europe's (2008) white paper builds on the focus on intercultural communication and intercultural understanding, and argues that the ability to engage in intercultural dialogue can be learned. Thus, developing intercultural competence has become a priority area in education, linked to education for democratic citizenship and human rights awareness (Barrett et al., 2013).

Zapata-Barrero (2012) describes interculturalism as a liberal (i.e. individualist) criticism of multiculturalism, one that understands culture as an expression of individual identity that is open, flexible and dynamic. Interculturalism affirms cultural diversity, emphasizes communication and relation-building between different cultural, ethnic and religious groups. The goals of interculturalism are to counteract processes of segregation and exclusion which presumably take place in culturally diverse societies, while also promoting democratic values and respect for human rights through positive interaction between groups and individuals.

In the debate in the *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, Meer and Modood (2012) argued against the alleged superiority of interculturalism as a new paradigm for diversity management. In their paper, they dispute four arguments that have been presented to make the case for interculturalism: (1) that it promotes interaction and dialogue more than multiculturalism does' (2) that it is less groupist than multiculturalism; (3) that it is more committed to the whole, i.e. integration; and (4) that it is critical of illiberal practices, which multiculturalism allegedly is not. Meer and Modood point out that intercultural dialogue is an integral and foundational part of some forms of multiculturalism, notably Taylor's 'politics of recognition', Parekh's philosophy of 'dialogical multiculturalism', and Modood's own 'political multiculturalism' which is concerned with giving voice to minorities in the public sphere. Further, they argue that, while intercultural dialogue focuses on individuals, interculturalist policy also relies on groups, holding that governments should also facilitate institutionalized dialogues between ethnic and faith communities. This latter point is a key feature also of multicultural accommodation. Rather than promoting parallel societies, multiculturalism is concerned with remaking national identity and unity to make it more inclusive. As Meer and Modood (2012) said, all prescribed unity has a majoritarian bias that is inconsistent with the spirit of interculturalism. Kymlicka's, Modood's and Parekh's versions of multiculturalism are equally committed to integration, commonalities across difference and inclusive national societies, as is interculturalism. Lastly, the claim that multiculturalism is morally relativistic rests on misconceptions about cultural essentialism and liberal prejudice against religious groups and practices (Barrett, 2013b). Modood's version of

multiculturalism recognizes both individuals and groups and calls for recognition of those identities that groups themselves deem important. As such, multiculturalism means a public acknowledgement of group difference (not just private or individual differences) combined with macro-symbolic integration (inclusive national identity beyond the structural and material dimensions of legal rights, discrimination in the labor market).

Intercultural dialogue

While interculturalism – like multiculturalism – holds a positive view of pluralism and diversity, promotes integration and structural equality and aims to eliminate racism, intercultural dialogue is arguably the main feature of interculturalism (Barrett, 2013b). Interculturalism rejects a moral relativism sometimes claimed to accompany multiculturalism. The concept of intercultural dialogue, as expressed in both the Council of Europe’s (2008) white paper and in the latest Norwegian white paper on diversity policy (Meld.St. 6, 2012–2013), presupposes shared universal values – human rights and democracy – and reconciles the apparent opposition between universalism and particularism by taking the view that abstract universal values always have to be interpreted in particular cultural contexts when put into practice (Parekh, 2006), a position that also corresponds to the conclusion drawn from Stokke’s (2012) research on multicultural negotiations in the Norwegian public sphere. While Western values and Muslim values may appear to be in conflict, when we look more closely we see that there are commonalities across differences and substantial agreement on shared values.

How do we distinguish between dialogue and negotiations? While dialogue ideally takes place among equals, the concept of negotiations more explicitly acknowledges asymmetric power relations, as between majority and minority (Modood, 2007, 2013). The outcome of negotiations is usually some kind of political compromise that reflects the differential power of the negotiating parties. Similar to Rawls (1999), Habermas’ (2005) theory of public deliberation does not explicitly distinguish between dialogue and negotiations. These liberal theories put forward an ideal of rational argumentation where citizens are assumed to be ‘free and equal’ and their social positions and cultural beliefs are abstracted away. At the same time, both theorists acknowledge that public deliberation also provides an opportunity for citizens of different social locations and cultural beliefs to learn to know each other through dialogue. In genuine dialogue, people meet as human beings rather than as abstract ‘citizens’:

They come forward not only with rational arguments, but with emotions, values and personal experiences situated in social structures (Collins, 2000; Parekh, 2006). Genuine dialogue is about developing meaningful relationships and co-operation rather than competition (Barrett, 2013b).

The concept of ‘genuine dialogue’ (Buber, 2002; Freire, 1996; Leirvik, 2011) focuses on developing empathy and transformation. The goal is not to reach a negotiated compromise or agreement but, if possible, to reach a provisional consensus after all parties have been listened to and understood, and where participants are open to transformation of their own views. Ideally, this implies that ignorance, prejudice and dogma gives way to a nuanced and empathetic understanding of others, while at the same time realizing our shared humanity and underlying commonalities across apparent differences, that we are different versions of the same (Helskog and Stokke, 2014).

Intercultural dialogue (Barrett, 2013c; Council of Europe, 2008) is primarily about openness, mutual understanding, respect and accepting differences rather than change. However, the Council of Europe (2008) also speaks about transformation and commonalities: Intercultural dialogue is an open and reflexive exchange of views based on mutual understanding and respect, aims to develop a deeper understanding of diverse world views and practices, and personal growth and transformation. Barrett (2013c), who has worked as an expert for the Council of Europe, focuses on the development of intercultural competence, understood as the skills, values, understanding, attitudes and behaviors necessary for engaging in intercultural dialogue, which are promoted in both intercultural and multicultural education. In this sense, interculturalism can be characterized as a normative and educational approach, with a main focus on developing intercultural competence and skills as expressed in the Council of Europe’s (2008) *White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue*, which overlaps considerably with both critical, dialogical forms of multiculturalism (Modood, 2007, 2013; Parekh, 2006) and multicultural education (Banks, 2004). There is considerable overlap between what Barrett (2013c) calls ‘intercultural competence’ and what Stokke and Helskog (2014) have conceptualized as ‘dialogical skills’, including listening to and understanding others’ perspectives, self-reflection and respect for human dignity and shared values, trust, empathy, friendship, openness to personal transformation and enhancing self-knowledge.

Intercultural and dialogical competences and skills are also promoted by multicultural educators like Banks (2004) and multiculturalists like Parekh (2006; see also Barrett, 2013c).

Parekh's dialogical multiculturalism, e.g., focuses on the ethics of social relations and mutual understanding:

While rightly developing the powers of independent thought, analysis, criticism and so on, it [multicultural education] should also cultivate 'softer' and less aggressive capacities such as sympathetic imagination, the ability to get under the skin of others and feel with and for them, the willingness to look at oneself from the standpoint of others, and the capacity to listen to them with sensitivity and sympathy. (Parekh, 2006: 227)

Barrett (2013c) emphasizes that intercultural competence is not just about analysis and reflection – it needs to be put into practice. When translated from policy into practice, intercultural dialogue can take assimilationist or multiculturalist directions, depending on how open the dominant side is to a genuine dialogue. Asymmetrical power relations may thus be an obstacle to dialogue: if the majority tries to set the terms of dialogue in advance (Barrett, 2013c), they will likely be met with resistance from the minority. This is what happened in our empirical case below, when the Norwegian state initiated dialogue with Muslim leaders as part of its integration policy, but Muslims with a critical perspective took to the streets when felt they were not being heard in the official dialogue. Thus, in genuine dialogue, the terms of communication must themselves be dialogically constituted, as critical multiculturalists Parekh and Modood argue against Habermas' and Rawls' attempts to put rationalist and secularist constraints on public sphere communication (Stokke and Helskog, 2014). While Modood's empirical, rather than normative-philosophical, focus directs his theory towards political negotiations and discursive struggles, he also agrees with Parekh on the ideal and possibility of mutual understanding and developing empathy through public sphere encounters – the Norwegian cartoon affair provides an empirical example, which we discuss in greater detail below.

Intercultural dialogue in practice – the Norwegian cartoon affairs

The Mohammed cartoon affair and its aftermath in Norway provides an illustrating empirical example of the dynamics between an official 'intercultural dialogue' policy from above, and a critical-minority-driven social movement from below. Analyzed through Modood's and Parekh's theories of multicultural negotiations and dialogue, the Norwegian case shows important parallels to the Rushdie affair in Britain, following the publication of the *Satanic Verses* in 1989. Both cases started with an apparent clash of values between Western liberals

and Muslims, but in the long run contributed to a greater mutual understanding of shared values. When Jyllands-Posten's cartoons were republished in Norway in 2006, the newly elected social democratic government chose a dialogue approach – in line with both its foreign policy and integration policy and in contrast to the Danish government's confrontational approach. However, Norway's dialogue policy was contradictory: While building on the existing Christian–Muslim dialogue that started from below in civil society, the government's perspective was majoritarian and it used dialogue mainly as a strategy to persuade and pacify Muslims. Rather than a genuine dialogue, it approximated a patronizing and monological form of communication characteristic of Norwegian integration policy at that time (Gressgård, 2005; Grung, 2005). The government facilitated a reconciliation meeting where Islamic Council leader Mohammed Hamdan shook hands with cartoon publisher Vebjørn Selbekk. Civil society organizations of mainstream society organized a small demonstration for peace and dialogue, heavily attended by members of government – but Muslims were absent. The main speaker, finance minister and leader of the Socialist Party at the time, Kristin Halvorsen, spoke from a white perspective about how the angry Muslims in the Middle East negatively affected Norway's national image, praised the Islamic Council for accepting the editor's regret, while downplaying the widespread anti-Muslim sentiment in Norway.

While the government had succeeded in co-opting Muslim leaders and was busy celebrating its own dialogue skills, the next day 1500 unorganized Norwegian Muslims took to the streets to protest – against the unanimous advice from Muslim organizations. While some of the protesters called for a revival of the blasphemy law, their main message was a demand for respect and an ethical appeal to the media to exercise their right to free speech responsibly and to stop the negative portrayal of Muslims (Stokke, 2012). Now, which of these demonstrations came closer to genuine dialogue – the one that was self-congratulatory and claimed the word 'dialogue' but ignored the hurt feelings of Muslims, or the one that expressed these feelings and appealed to the majority to show some empathy?

When British Muslims protested against Rushdie's *Satanic Verses*, white liberals ignored their appeals and complaints until extremists called for the author's death. In the aftermath, however, minority and majority approached each other to mutually understand their perspectives, and the developments have been theorized by Parekh and Modood as leading to greater multicultural accommodation in the longer run. When the film 'Innocence of Muslims' provoked worldwide Muslim protest in 2012, five thousand Norwegian Muslims

protested in Oslo – and this time, the Islamic Council organized the demonstration and both the bishop and mayor of Oslo attended and spoke in support of the Muslim appeal. What had happened in the six years that have passed? Stokke (2012) suggests that a major development was that Norwegian Muslims' critical voices had gained access to the public sphere. Influential sections of society had learned something about Muslim perspectives, gained some understanding and developed empathy. In other words, Islamophobic and confrontational attitudes – dominant in 2006 – had given way to a more dialogical and positive view, a shift also reflected in policy (Meld.St 6, 2012–2013). Norwegian developments are thus in line with Modood's theory of political negotiations between minority social movements whose demands are gradually accommodated by state and majority. While supporting policy accommodation of minority demands, Modood (2006) suggests that the public sphere may be more important than legislation in promoting mutual integration – reflecting a distinction between a 'hard' form of multiculturalism that focuses on law and rights (Kymlicka), and a dialogical form of multiculturalism that emphasizes the 'softer' side, in Parekh's words, of mutual understanding and empathy – which is shared by interculturalism.

In a debate with Modood in *Analyse & Kritik* in 1993, Kymlicka (1993) interpreted British Muslim protests against the *Satanic Verses* as an example of unacceptable 'internal restrictions' characteristic of conservative religious groups trying to restrict their own members' individual freedom to criticize religion, and Modood pointed out that this interpretation is based more on common prejudice than on empirical facts. Commenting on the cartoon affair, Modood (2006) discusses whether hate speech is best regulated by law or ethics. After the cartoon affair in Norway – like after the Rushdie affair in Britain – parts of the liberal majority learned what is offensive to Muslims, and Norwegian Muslims learned that restrictions on 'hate speech' resonate better with liberal principles than restrictions on 'blasphemy'. In the process, many became aware that free speech is a shared universal value among Western liberals, Muslims and Western liberal Muslims alike, but that every society places legal and ethical restrictions on it. While hate speech legislation has rarely been used against anti-Muslim expressions in Norway and Britain, mainstream media in both countries have abstained from publishing anti-Muslim images such as the cartoons. There seems to be a developing consensus on the idea of responsible use of free speech (Svare and Svensson, 2014).

Critical multiculturalism

The Norwegian cartoon affair shows the mutual dynamics between an intercultural dialogue policy and critical minority voices: In contrast to Denmark, official dialogue policy opened a space for the Muslim minority to make its voices heard and partly accommodated. Critical Muslim voices challenged the narrow majoritarian perspective, and opened a possibility for state and majority to learn about minority sensibilities – increasing (to some extent, at least) mutual intercultural understanding and empathy.

While liberal perspectives – including policies of intercultural dialogue – tend to neglect asymmetric power relations, critical multicultural theorists (Gunew, 2004; Hage, 1998; May, 1999; Werbner, 2012) point to the important distinction between multiculturalism ‘from above’ and ‘from below’, or in other words, multiculturalism as a policy approach in liberal democratic states, and multiculturalism as minority-driven social movements. In Modood’s conception, multiculturalism starts when minorities themselves mobilize to turn the negative identities and differences they have been ascribed by the majority, into self-defined positive identities they can be proud of. The African American civil rights and black consciousness movements can be seen as a prototype of this kind of social movement, and the Black struggle has inspired other minority movements worldwide. He defines multiculturalism in terms of dialogue and negotiations between minority mobilization, majority responses and state policy (Modood, 2013). Both Kymlicka (2002) and Modood (2007, 2013) conceptualize multiculturalism as an ethnic/cultural/religious counterpart to the women’s movement and the labor movement. This parallel may also throw light on the from above/from below distinction: These movements’ demands have been partly accommodated by liberal-democratic states, and social-democratic states in particular. Kymlicka (2002: 328) puts this nicely when writing that the state accommodated workers’ rights in order to ensure their integration and loyalty to the state, and prevented them from turning to communism and revolution. Similarly, Kymlicka (2002: 328) sees today’s integration policies as a project of nation-building: making nations more inclusive to prevent minority separatism. However, a problem remains that when social movement demands are partially accommodated by states, in many cases the radical rhetoric is appropriated, social movement leadership is co-opted and actual policy demands are diluted (Ålund and Schierup, 1991; Schierup and Ålund 2011). Thus, liberal forms of state multiculturalism have been criticized not only from the nationalist right, but also from below, from antiracist and minority-driven social movements. From this view, liberal multiculturalism is largely symbolic and limited to superficial celebration of differences,

essentializing cultural differences while failing to address issues of power, both structural (institutional) racism and everyday racism in interpersonal relations (Barrett, 2013a; May and Sleeter, 2010).

Critical multiculturalism can be defined in contrast to liberal state multiculturalism. Where liberal political theorists take the top-down perspective of the state – how can ‘we’ (the state) manage diversity or deal with minorities – critical multiculturalism takes the bottom-up perspective of social movements (May, 1999; May and Sleeter, 2010; Modood, 2005, 2007, 2013; Werbner, 2012). Liberal multiculturalism tends to focus on getting along and celebrating diversity, while ignoring issues of power and racism. Critical multiculturalism starts with the lived experiences of minorities, with minorities’ own analyses of the oppression they experience, and minorities’ own political mobilization through social movements and the concrete political demands they raise (Modood, 2007, 2013). Further, critical multiculturalism is concerned with the way these social movements achieve change and transformation of mainstream societies, by means of resistance, protest, negotiations and dialogue, and some of their demands are heard by the majority and accommodated by the state. In contrast to liberal multicultural theory, critical multiculturalism is more empirically grounded. Critical multiculturalism is normative in supporting the accommodation of minority demands, but not in prescribing one model of multiculturalism.

In the field of multicultural education, criticism of state multiculturalism has been particularly explicit (Banks, 2004; May and Sleeter, 2010; Nieto, 1996, 1999). Here, critical multiculturalism links up with antiracist education and critical pedagogy in Freire’s tradition. The crucial point in these approaches is that critical analysis of the current situation, and the search for solutions to the problem at hand, must start with minorities’ own experiences. In other words, solutions cannot be drafted by majority politicians with limited knowledge of minorities’ lived experiences, but must be developed through a genuine dialogue where the voices of the powerless are heard.

Positionality in the multiculturalism–interculturalism debate

In the academic debates between interculturalists and multiculturalists, there is also a certain tension that goes beyond the rational content of their arguments, a tension which has to do with how we are socially positioned in structures of power, i.e. whether we speak from a majority or minority perspective. This tension was evident in the discussions between Ted Cattle, Robin Wilson, Tariq Modood, Nasar Meer and Bhikhu Parekh at the 2012 CRONEM

conference. Notably, the interculturalists were liberal white men, while the multiculturalists were critical minority people. Cattle, speaking from a white majority position, argued that multiculturalism had failed as a *state policy*; it led to segregation and needed to be ‘rebalanced’ by a new interculturalist framework – understood as a cosmopolitan approach to today’s culturally hybrid, globalized and super-diverse society. He presented an image from Ken Loach’s film *Ae Fond Kiss* (2004), quoting a British Muslim girl saying: ‘I am a Glaswegian, Pakistani teenager of Muslim descent, who supports Glasgow Rangers in a Catholic school’ (see also Cattle in Antonsich, 2015: 7). The interculturalists used this image not only to illustrate super-diversity, but also to promote hybridity over multiculturalism by holding this girl up as a role model for British Muslims. Modood and other multiculturalists, speaking from a minority position, objected and argued that hybridity or community-orientation should be a choice for minorities, not something imposed by policy. As Modood says in Antonsich (2015: 18); ‘We cannot require all minorities to wear their identities lightly, flexibly and contextually – to do so becomes a kind of postmodern assimilationism’. In Modood’s (2013) definition, multiculturalism starts with minorities struggling to define their own identities. Thus, when white liberals hold up an image of cultural mixing as a preferred way of integration, they implicitly accuse British Muslims, who tend to be more community-oriented than British Caribbeans, of self-segregation. Before favoring one approach (interculturalism, integration, community cohesion, or whatever) over the other (usually multiculturalism), we need to examine these positions more closely.

Modood (2012) argues against the one-size-fits-all approach to diversity management, that either locks minorities into essentialized categories or demands that they embrace cultural mixing. He presents four modes of integration: (1) assimilation – understood as top-down homogenization; (2) individualist-integration – which is a two-way process of civic integration and equality; (3) cosmopolitanism or hybridity – referring to the everyday mixing of cultures, where no-one should be defined by their origins; and (4) multiculturalism. He rejects the view that multiculturalism emphasizes difference at the expense of commonality, separatism rather than mixing, group rather than national identities, and relativism rather than a defense of democratic values. Instead, multiculturalism should allow individuals the choice between all four modes of integration, either they want to assimilate, have the equal rights of integrated citizens, choose cosmopolitan mixed identities – or maintain the cultural differences of their group identities. The government should not seek to impose one particular option.

As Modood has argued elsewhere (2007: 97–114), critics of multiculturalism tend to essentialize multiculturalism, presenting it as more coherent than it is and exaggerating its emphasis on groups. Constructing a liberalist version of multiculturalism which strongly rejects illiberal practices ascribed to communitarian and religious minorities, Kymlicka (1995: 41–43) himself contributes to the prejudice against religious minorities and to the idea that other forms of multiculturalism (such as Modood's) are communitarian when defending religious minorities. Kymlicka's own biases against groups and against religion (Kymlicka, 1993; Modood, 1993, 2007) stem from the widespread liberal prejudice that 'we' (modern liberals) are more open-minded than 'they' (traditional and religious groups) are. Similar anti-religious bias also appears in the writings of Habermas and Rawls (Stokke, 2012; Stokke and Helskog, 2014).

Cantle (2012) agrees with Meer and Modood (2012) that key features of interculturalism are already present in multiculturalism, but not that they are foundational to it. Further, while Modood argues that multiculturalism from above and from below are both important and should not be opposed to each other (i.e. he defends state multiculturalism as a policy response that accommodates demands from below), Cantle (2012) wants to end state multiculturalism. Cantle acknowledges a public role for faith but, unlike Modood (2013), he advocates a reassertion of secular principles to keep religion out of decision-making and disestablish the Church. Robin Wilson (2012, 2013), who has worked as advisor to the Council of Europe on intercultural dialogue, takes a similar view and promotes interculturalism as a new paradigm of diversity management that should replace the obsolete model of multiculturalism. To sum up: while both Cantle and Wilson see interculturalism as clearly distinct and superior to multiculturalism, Meer and Modood see no substantial difference between interculturalism and more progressive forms of multiculturalism, notably Parekh's (2006) dialogical multiculturalism and Modood's (2007, 2013) own political multiculturalism.

Dialogical and non-dialogical positions are found both among the hegemonic discourses of the majority and in minority counter-discourses. Liberalism, as a majority position, can be confrontational and illiberal, or it can be dialogical. We find a similar distinction between confrontational interculturalists, like Cantle (2013) and Wilson (2013), who see their own perspective as opposed (and superior) to a multiculturalism they perceive as a failed policy, and dialogical interculturalists, like Barrett (2013c), who recognize considerable overlap between their own position and critical, dialogical multiculturalism. Likewise, minority

discourses can also be inward-looking and conservative, or they can be dialogical. Multicultural theories from below, like those of Parekh (2006), Modood (2007, 2013) and Meer (with Modood, 2012, 2013) also emphasize the overlap between interculturalism and multiculturalism and suggest a critical dialogue with liberalism. Thus, they can be understood as dialogical minority perspectives. Empirical research indicates that those speaking from below tend to be more dialogical, while those speaking from a position of assumed superiority tend to be more authoritarian (Barrett, 2013c; Stokke, 2012). Paraphrasing Freire (1996), the main problem is not that marginalized groups do not want to integrate (or that multiculturalism promotes self-segregation) – the problem is that mainstream society is not inclusive enough. The solution is thus, from a critical perspective, to transform mainstream society rather than to assimilate the outsiders. As Modood (2007, 2013) writes, antiracism is the key to integration – and that includes rooting out deep-seated Eurocentric myths that construct the other as a negative mirror image of modern society.

Conclusions

Liberal state multiculturalism tends to be based on an essentialist concept of culture, placing minority groups into different categories and assigning them group rights on this basis (Kymlicka, 2002), in a way that takes insufficient account of the differences within minority groups and the concrete political demands that minorities themselves have mobilized for. Thus, interculturalism can be seen as an advance over those forms of multiculturalism that start with a majority perspective from above. As a policy, interculturalism opens a greater space for dialogue, and thus for minority voices to be heard and promote real integration, characterized by mutual understanding, mutual learning and empathy. At the state level of policy, interculturalism may thus be preferable to multiculturalism.

We also agree with Meer and Modood that interculturalism substantially overlaps with a dialogical, critical multiculturalism (Barrett, 2013c; Stokke and Helskog, 2014). When interculturalists argue from a white majority position against a minority-driven critical multiculturalism, as we saw at the 2012 CRONEM conference and in more recent debates between Wilson and Cattle on one hand, and Meer and Modood on the other, they defeat their own purpose. Part of the confusion is rooted in liberal epistemology; in the idea that arguments and theories can speak for themselves independent of the positionality of the speaker (Habermas, 2005; Rawls, 1999). Critical approaches, including feminism,

multiculturalism and postcolonialism, emphasize that personal experiences, beliefs and backgrounds inevitably color one's perspective (Collins, 2000; Parekh, 2006).

While interculturalism emphasizes dialogue, key proponents of the intercultural approach, such as Robin Wilson and Ted Cantle, speak from a majority position. This perspective tends to make minority voices invisible, at the same time as it reinforces majoritarian rhetoric against a partially misconceived and essentialist notion of multiculturalism which fails to take account of power relations between majority and minority discourses and ignores the distinction between perspectives from above and from below. Sometimes interculturalism appears to be less dialogical than it claims, and its proponents need to practice the skills of intercultural competence that they promote.

Genuine dialogue requires that the terms of communication themselves are dialogically constituted and open to continuous interpretation and revision –they cannot be set in advance by the majority. The concept of intercultural dialogue promoted by the Council of Europe takes human rights as its framework, but acknowledges that these are shared universal values that were themselves the result of an intercultural dialogue, and which need to be interpreted in each particular context rather than understood as absolute.

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