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Migration and Cultural Diversity Challenges in the 21st century[1]

Introduction

'It is hard to find a democratic or democratizing society these days that is not the site of some significant controversy over whether and how its institutions should better recognize the identities of cultural and disadvantaged minorities'. So declared Amy Gutmann (1994, p. 3), two decades ago. In the intervening period this trend has continued in debates concerning the separation of public and private spheres (Parekh, 2000), the way in which a country's self-image is configured (Uberoi and Modood, 2013), as well as in what either could be characterised as mundane or highly political questions of dietary or uniform changes in places of school and work. What these all share in common is the view that citizenship cannot ignore the internal plurality of societies that play host to 'difference'. As Benhabib (2002, p. vii) summarises, 'our contemporary condition is marked by the emergence of new forms of identity politics around the globe. The new forms complicate and increase centuries-old tensions between the universalistic principles ushered in by the American and French Revolutions and the particularities of nationality, ethnicity, gender, "race", and language'.

In this discussion we will consider some of the literature that seeks to take stock of the challenges and opportunities for liberal citizenship regimes that follow processes of migration; a body of thought that has variously centred on ways to reconcile political unity with ethnic, cultural and religious difference (e.g., Young, 1990; Taylor, 1992; Kymlicka, 1995; Parekh, 2000; Modood, 2007). In addition to this prevailing 'canon' there is a sustained and interdisciplinary body of theory and research exploring configurations of national membership, within and across a number of European polities, especially in terms of citizenship and national identity (e.g., Brubaker, 2001; Joppke, 2004; Koopmans *et al*, 2005; Banting and Kymlicka, 2006; Jacobs and Rea, 2007; Uberoi; 2008; Joppke, 2009; Meer, 2010; Faas, 2010; Triandafyllidou *et al*, 2011; Modood, 2013). We begin by noting the perpetual role that migration plays in unsettling existing configurations, before elaborating a rationale for remaking forms of collective membership in a manner that includes new groups too. Multiculturalism, we argue, is the foremost example of this even though its political fate remains uncertain. To support our reading we positively contrast it with categories such as interculturalism and superdiversity.

Migration and cultural diversity

'Give me your tired, your poor, Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, The wretched refuse of your teeming shore. Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me, I lift my lamp beside the golden door!' So begins the inscription at the foot of the Statue of Liberty. Taken from a poem entitled *The New Colossus* (Lazarus, 1883), it speaks of the millions of migrants who flocked from Europe to the United States through Ellis Island, and then the Lower East Side of New York, between the mid-eighteenth and early twentieth century. While migration has become a more complicated phenomena than the sentiments betrayed in this poem, the core impulses (e.g. to seek out and create a better life for oneself and family), and the questions that these aspirations may raise (e.g. how to reconcile unity with perhaps novel diversity), remain constant. The important point for scholars is that the phenomenon of migration cannot be explained as restricted to an outcome of individual choice. Instead, migration occurs in tandem with wider economic and social forces that can draw or push movement (e.g. labour recruitment or social conflict), or group networks that facilitate the process (e.g. established communities which support migrants), as well as political climates that may be hostile to some kinds of migration (e.g. unskilled) but favourable to others (e.g. skilled) – despite 'the

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line between preferences and discrimination' being 'a morally thin one that is easily crossed' (Weiner, 1996: 178).

The prevailing context for contemporary migration is that the majority of the world's population resides in 175 poorer countries relative to the wealth that is disproportionately concentrated in around twenty. Against this landscape and with levels of migration increasingly fluctuating and anxieties widespread, it is common to hear governments and other agencies favour 'managed migration' which, though meaning different things in different places, understands migration as an intractable feature of contemporary societies the world over. As Pécoud and de Guchteneire argue (2007: 5), 'migration is now structurally embedded in the economies and societies of most countries: once both sending and receiving countries become dependent upon migration, migration is almost impossible to stop'. A large part of human history reflects the implications of coming to terms with this diversity throughout cycles of migration and patterns of settlement, where upon the intermingling of diverse cultural, religious and ethnic mores renews and/or unsettles established social and political configurations for all concerned. How should we respond to this?

Theorising New Cultural Diversities

One way of approaching this is to argue that there is a philosophical rationale that should guide our responses. This begins by saying that in addition to appeals to freedom and equality, both of which informed the accommodation of class-based movements throughout most of the twentieth century, a further major idea established itself in the last quarter of that. This idea contained the view that in order to satisfy the requirements of equal treatment and appeals to justice under conditions of cultural diversity, public policies and discourses should show sensitivity to the uniqueness of context, history, and identity of cultural minorities (Taylor, 1992). Such *recognition* tries to appeal to more than individuality as the terrain on which rights are afforded. As we will see there are ethical reasons for this shift (e.g. the ways in which autonomy can become more meaningful when groups are taken into consideration), as well as critical challenges to an implicit bias in the ways in which prevailing ideas of individuality may be conceived. As Scott (1999: 8) argues:

> The problem has been that *the individual*, for all its inclusionary possibilities, has been conceived in singular terms and typically figured as a white man. In order to qualify as an individual, a person has had to demonstrate some sameness to that singular figure. (The history of civil rights and women's rights has involved arguing about what this sameness might mean.) The difficulty here has been that the abstraction of the concept of the individual has masked the particularity of its figuration.

The broad implications of this idea are wide-ranging and multi-dimensional in posing questions for the cultural composition of national identities (Modood, 2013), the role and status of cultural groupings (Young, 1990), assumptions of public virtue (Parekh, 1994) and conceptions of membership or citizenship (Kymlicka, 1995). These issues are joined by a reinvigoration of debates surrounding the actual and ideal formulation of church–state relations and religion in the public sphere more broadly, especially with regard to Muslims and Islam in the West (Levey and Modood, 2009). Each nonetheless centres on what has become known as multiculturalism (and the challenges to it); something that is most widely understood to refer, first, to the fact of pluralism (Rawls, 1993) or cultural diversity in any given society (Parekh, 2000), and, second, to the reasonable accommodation of cultural diversity (Kymlicka, 1995). While the fact of difference can continue to raise hostility and opposition, in recent years it is the latter that has been the focus of political controversy, often centring on how public policy may be calibrated to address these concerns, something to which we now turn.

Multiculturalism and Liberalism

The precise provenance of the label multiculturalism may be traced to the 1960s and 1970s in countries like Canada and Australia, and to a lesser extent in Britain and the United States. The policy focus was often initially on schooling and the children of Asian/black/Hispanic post-/neo-colonial

immigrants, both in terms of curriculum and as an institution, to include features such as 'mother-tongue' teaching, non-Christian religions and holidays, halal food, Asian dress, and so on. From such a starting point, the perspective can develop to meeting such cultural requirements in other or even all social spheres and the empowering of marginalised groups. In Canada, however, the focus was much wider from the start and included, for example, constitutional and land issues and has been about the definition of the nation. This was partly because it had a continuous and recent history of ethnic communities created by migration, usually from different parts of Europe; and because there were unresolved legal questions to do with the entitlements and status of indigenous people in those countries; and, in the case of Canada, there was the further issue of the rise of a nationalist and secessionist movement in French-speaking Quebec. Hence, the term 'multiculturalism' came to mean, and now means throughout the English-speaking world, the political accommodation by the state and/or a dominant group of all minority cultures defined first and foremost by reference to race or ethnicity, and, additionally but more controversially, by reference to other group-defining characteristics such as nationality, aboriginality, or religion. The latter is more controversial not only because it extends the range of the groups that have to be accommodated, but also because it tends to make larger political claims and so tends to resist having these claims reduced to those of immigrants (see Meer and Modood, 2012 and then Wievorka's 2012 response). To some commentators the staple issues that multiculturalism seeks to address, such as the rights of ethnic and national minorities, group representation and perhaps even the political claims-making of 'new' social movements, are in fact 'familiar long-standing problems of political theory and practice' (Kelly, 2002 p. 1). Some indeed hold this view to the point of frustration:

> Liberals have had to recognise that they need to create a better account of what equal treatment entails under conditions of diversity… If we take a very broad definition of multiculturalism so that it simply corresponds to the demand that cultural diversity be accommodated, there is no necessary conflict between it and liberalism. . . . But most multiculturalists boast that they are innovators in political philosophy by virtue of having shown that liberalism cannot adequately satisfy the requirements of equal treatment and justice under conditions of cultural diversity. (Barry, 2002 p. 205)

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

Groups and Categories

The status of groups however is a contested one. Outwith the purely conceptual considerations of how tension between generality and specificity may challenge the coherence of group categories (and how this challenge can be met), some commentators point to the formation in large metropolitan centres of population categories that escape conventional group registers, and pose qualitatively novel policy questions in 'super-diverse' contexts across Europe e.g., Amsterdam, Antwerp, Berlin, Birmingham, Copenhagen, Marseille and Malmo, amongst others (cf Open Society Institute, 2010), . Hence Ted Cantle has combined a previous interest with social cohesion in such contexts, with interculturalism.

Drawing upon the argument put forward by Fanshawe and Sriskandarajah (2010: 5), Cantle in particular sounds 'superdiversity' as a death knell for multiculturalist policy. In Fanshawe and Sriskandarajah's (2010: 5) view, 'people do not identify around single identities and feel conflicted allegiances (if any allegiance at all) to predefined groups, activism around particular 'strands' seems irrelevant to many people and may not even be that effective in addressing the true causes of inequality'. It is clear to us that people do identify with groups, and though they do so in a number of ways that may give emphasis to different subjective boundaries (which in turn may shift over time), it is implausible to suggest that group identities based around 'standard identifications' have withered away. In particular, in their reading, Fanshawe and Sriskandarajah (2010) appear to retreat to a 'choice' based view of social identity which, to take one example, ignores how processes of racialization may create new groups not necessarily chosen by minorities themselves (though of course how a minority will respond to this process of racialisation will vary). This has implications for conceptions of interculturalism, as super-diversity understood as the undermining of group categories, appears politically naïve and analytically simplistic. No less important, however, is how some proponents of super-diversity understand and use the concept as a means to add to and broaden out (instead of eliminate) the role of standard group categories. Much of course hangs in super-diversity on what is in addition to multiplicities of ethnic categories, religions, languages and other cultural differences; namely that which is conceived as novel that super-diversity is seeking to explain. To this end, Vertovec (2007) identifies some core features, from which three related characteristics stand out. Each, however, are arguably more about registering and taking seriously the implications of diversity rather than pointing to qualitatively new experiences of it. One, for example, turns on the following possibilities for methodological innovation:

> Research on super-diversity could encourage new techniques in quantitatively testing the relation between multiple variables and in qualitatively undertaking ethnographic exercises that are multi-sited (considering different localities and spaces within a given locality) and multi-group (defined in terms of the variable convergence of ethnicity, status, gender and other criteria of super-diversity) (Vertovec, 2007: 1046).

So a concern with superdiversity would be more responsive to space, multiplicity, and flux than conventional registers of diversity. The key question here is whether this is best pursued by replacing or refining existing approaches. For example, in one study of capturing super-diversity in survey and census questionnaires *where an ethnicity question is posed*, the author concluded that the most viable approach would necessarily be 'paired with traditional categorical question [e.g., what is your ethnic group] only where space on the schedule and human resources permit' (Aspinall, 2012: 362). Notwithstanding the methodological discussion of what is plausible and meaningful in terms of data collection, being sensitive to superdiversity has implications for policy formulation in a number of respects, not least minority participation in governance regimes. Here channels of engagement and representation need to be alert to 'smaller, less (or not at all) organized groups' in addition to larger and well established associations (Vertovec, 2007: 1047). This includes the danger that 'new immigrant populations are effectively ''squeezed out'' of local representative structures and consequently wield little power or influence' (quoted in Vertovec, 2007: 1047). It is a question of participation which spans a range of sectors 'concerning the assessment of needs, planning, budgeting, commissioning of services, identification of partners for collaboration and gaining a broader appreciation of diverse experiences in order generally to inform debate' (ibid. 1048). What is striking, however, is that such an activity requires a significant governmental commitment that is facilitated by a wider political consensus that is supportive of the kinds of comprehensive examination of superdiversity's implications for public services that Vertovec would like to see. To a large extent then this depends on a deepening and enriching commitment to many of the core features of multiculturalism, e.g., tailoring social policies for the needs of different groups more precisely, and targeting them more accurately.

A Backlash Against Multiculturalism?

The emphasis of interculutralism and superdiversity occur within a context that multiculturalism is seen to be in decline. In one interesting observation, Banting and Kymlicka (2006: 7) maintain that the current backlash does not indicate a retreat from multiculturalism per se, for if it was the case that Britain, the Netherlands and other countries with policies resembling multiculutralism are currently engaged in a 'retreat' from it, it would follow that these states would 'also have rejected the claims of sub-state national groups and indigenous peoples *as well as* immigrants'. The former of course constitute much greater challenges for programs of citizenship, as well the configuration of the public sphere, when contrasted with the kinds of accommodations that typically arise from migration related diversity. Since this has not come to pass, Kymlicka (2007) identifies three factors in particular as important to understand the backlash against migration related multiculturalism.

The first concerns levels of illegal migration in so far as 'it is very difficult to gain public support for immigrant multiculturalism if the main beneficiaries are people who entered the country illegally' (ibid. 53). Conversely, where such issues do not feature prominently, 'the temperature of the debate is lowered, and citizens feel secure that they are in control of their own destiny' (ibid). Of course he recognises that some countries experience higher levels of illegal migration than others, and the issue of migration is more broadly politicised, indeed racialized, in some countries than others. A second factor that Kymlicka (2007) identifies is the extent to which multiculturalism is perceived to encourage a net contribution or net dependency on finite public expenditure:

> This is partly a matter of economic self-interest, but there is also a moral component. The welfare state is seen as something that has been built up by the sacrifices that each generation has made to protect the next. If newcomers who have not contributed to the pool take away resources, that will leave less for our children (ibid. 55-6).

The point being that in countries where multiculturalism is deemed to be a net cost that benefits minorities, this corresponds to hostility and popular opposition. Again, he recognises that this varies from one country to another. It is however the third issue that Kymlicka raises that we would like to dwell on. This he suggests turns on the relationship between multiculturalism and perceived illiberal practices contained within the kind of culture that is being accommodated. More precisely: 'It is very difficult to get public support for multiculturalism policies if the groups that are the main beneficiaries of these policies are perceived to be carriers of illiberal cultural in order to maintain these practices' (ibid. 54). Elsewhere Kymlicka (2005: 83) narrows down this observation further in his conclusion that 'if we put Western democracies on a continuum in terms of the proportion of immigrants who are Muslim, I think this would provide a good indicator of public opposition to multiculturalism'.

With different emphases, Parekh (2006: 180-1) maintains that there is a perception that Muslims are 'collectivist, intolerant, authoritarian, illiberal and theocratic', and that they use their faith as 'a self-conscious public statement, not quietly held personal faith but a matter of identity which they must jealously guard and loudly and repeatedly proclaim . . . not only to remind them of who they are but also to announce to others what they stand for'. This is something that has arguably led some commentators, who may otherwise sympathize with Muslim religious minorities, to argue that it is difficult to view them as victims when they may themselves be potential oppressors (Meer and Modood 2009). The visible presence of Muslims in Europe who are considered to be promoting a way of life that is antithetical to liberal democratic norms and conventions is deemed to have resurrected religious disputes from an earlier age, specifically unstitching secularism's peace compacts. It is at this intersection therefore that 'the Muslim presence challenges the liberal secular state and condemns the liberal multicultural state' (Levey 2009: 3), in a manner that brings together different sides of the political spectrum.[2]

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[2] Levey (2009: 3) summarises the view that: '[t]he 'Muslim question' requires an ever more resolute insistence on 'core' liberal values and the established liberal settlements governing religion and politics, while multiculturalism is blamed for encouraging cultural relativism and social segregation, and for sowing confusion about the appropriate boundaries of the tolerable'.

Conclusions

The emergence of Muslim political mobilisation has led some multiculturalists to argue that religion is a feature of plural societies that is uniquely legitimate to confine to the private sphere. This prohibiting of Muslim identity in public space has so far been taken furthest in France, where in 2004 Parliament passed, with little debate but an overwhelming majority, a ban on the wearing of 'ostentatious' religious symbols, primarily the hijab (headscarf), in public schools. This is accompanied by a 'multiculturalism is dead' rhetoric that has led to, or reinforced, policy reversals in many countries, even pioneering ones such as the Netherlands, and is most marked by the fact that a new assimilationism is espoused not just on the political right, but also on the centre-left and by erstwhile supporters of multiculturalism. In contrast we maintain, firstly, that the work undertaken by different kinds of multiculturalists in debates over remaking national identities across different national contexts, including in terms of common membership and meaningful forms of integration, should be recognised as on-going tasks. If – as some argue – European societies are becoming even more plural (or 'super-diverse'), then advocates for pluralist modes of integration will need to build on past successes rather than seek to erase them. Secondly, in both theory and practice, Equality and Diversity go hand in hand. Policy makers cannot pursue programmes of equal treatment without registering and accommodating features of cultural, ethnic and religious diversity. Recognising diversity alone, however, is an insufficient means of tackling socio-economic and political disparities. Policy makers must therefore register that disadvantage is sometimes experienced differently by different groups. Moreover, this cannot be overcome by way of polices configured to individuals alone, in a manner that ignores how disadvantages occur at a group level. Experience throughout the EU shows that the most effective policies are those which take community context into account. A genuinely democratic public sphere can only thrive if minorities (as well as majorities) feel confident enough to participate and audible enough to contribute. This includes religious minorities too. Europe is an increasing religiously diverse continent which, more often than not, has given religion a place within the public square. Newer religious minorities should not therefore be deterred from developing publically recognised infrastructures. This can generate forms of civil society capital that are able to contribute to the well-being of society as a whole. Thirdly, political leaders at local and national levels should bolster consultative forums so that minority voices can become more audible. This means listening to and encouraging the participation of representative groups from ethnic and religious minority communities no less than non-ethnic or non-religious minority communities (e.g., Lesbian, Gay and Trans-Sexual Groups; Women's Organisations and Disability Rights lobbies). Finally, meaningful data collection is key, and some research is better than none. Policy makers should therefore seek to collect information on the social and economic experiences of minorities through general (e.g., Census) or dedicated (e.g., research study) investigations. This should be a routine activity which updates not only the data that is generated but is also open to revising the identity categories through which this information is collected.

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